Philosophy in 14th Century Literature and Theology

Rethinking the Nominalist Controversy, Bradwardine, and Chaucer

Dissertation
zur Erlangung des akademischen Grades eines
Doktors der Philosophie
am Fachbereich Philosophie und Geisteswissenschaften
der Freien Universität Berlin

Vorgelegt von:
Menno van Munster

Berlin, 2021

Erstgutachter:
Univ.-Prof. Dr. phil. Andrew James Johnston

Zweitgutachter:
Prof. Dr. Wolfram R. Keller

Tag der Disputation:
27.01.2023

Selbstständigkeitserklärung
Name: van Munster
Vorname: Menno

Hiermit versichere ich an Eides statt, dass ich die vorliegende Dissertation selbstständig und ohne Benutzung anderer als der angegebenen Quellen und Hilfsmittel angefertigt habe. Alle Ausführungen, die wörtlich oder inhaltlich aus anderen Schriften entnommen sind, habe ich als solche kenntlich gemacht. Diese Arbeit hat in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form noch keiner anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegen und wurde bisher nicht veröffentlicht.

Berlin, 03.02.2025

Declaration of authorship
Name: van Munster
First name: Menno

I hereby declare that I have completed the submitted dissertation independently and without the use of sources and aids other than those indicated. I have marked as such all statements that are taken literally or in content from other writings. This dissertation has not yet been presented to any other examination authority in the same or a similar form and has not yet been published.

Berlin, 03.02.2025

Abstract

This study is concerned with the interdisciplinary analysis of representations of philosophy in 14th-century England, particularly in works by Thomas Bradwardine and Geoffrey Chaucer, and the exploration of the intellectual and literary-aesthetic contexts in which these works have been placed. These contexts involve a conception of intellectual history that sees the 14th-century as dominated by a fierce polemic between the philosophical schools of nominalism and realism. Past scholarship has typically associated 14th-century nominalism with a progressive, humanist, and empiricist mind-set, and in this capacity has frequently portrayed nominalism as a precursor of the Renaissance and modernity. Realism, on the other hand, has been associated with a reactionary conservatism, and a clinging to increasingly outdated scholastic methods. Debates between nominalism and realism, also characterized as a 'battle of the ways' between a *via moderna* and *via antiqua*, were supposed to have resulted in a decisive nominalist victory. In this fashion, the 'nominalist controversy' has come to represent the symbolic enactment of a period shift from Middle Ages to Modernity. This conflict has been understood to have excited heated partisan debates not only amongst academics and theologians, but also in other cultural spheres, particularly that of literary production.

While this model of intellectual history provides a clear and self-enclosed narrative of epochal transition, it has lately been subjected to withering critique: Not only has the 'modernity' of the canonical nominalists been called into question, even the notion that nominalism and realism can be said to represent distinct traditions of thought has now been largely abandoned by specialists. While these developments are increasingly absorbed in the field of the history of philosophy, they have had undeservedly little impact in other areas: In literary criticism, the methodology of the research paradigm of literary nominalism still dominates analyses on the role of philosophy in 14th century literary works. Literary nominalism perpetuates an obsolete model of intellectual history, which assumes nominalism to have embodied a proto-modern *Zeitgeist*. It heavily emphasizes analogic readings, and the 'claiming' of authors for either the nominalist or realist camp. It sees textual features like heteroglossia, play, open-endedness, and irony as resulting from a nominalist mind-set, rather than inherent features of the literary text. Apart from its insistence on a nominalism / realism dichotomy, the way literary nominalism conceptualizes the interaction between philosophy and literature is also highly problematic, as it places literary works in a dependent hierarchical relationship to philosophy, allowing literature little generative force of its own.

The central aims of this study are as follows: It contributes to the ongoing re-assessment of the 14th-century intellectual landscape through an analysis of Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei,* and its place in the 'nominalist controversy'. Bradwardine was frequently associated with a realist school and the *via antiqua*, and was placed in an antagonistic relationship to supposedly nominalist peers like William of Ockham. This study analyses the paradigm of literary nominalism, with the goal also of exposing the central flaws in its understanding of 14th century philosophy, its methodology, and in the relationship between philosophy and literature it proposes. It suggests potential methodological amendments, which are applied in a reading of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, whose interpretation was also heavily warped by the problematic application of literary nominalist theories.

Table of Contents

Chapter I

Introduction

This work considers critical debates on the role of certain traditions of thought in philosophical and literary texts in 14th century England. As primary sources, Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute causarum*, and Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* were selected. This study not only analyses the way in which philosophical issues are portrayed in these two authors' works but is especially concerned with the larger intellectual and literary-aesthetic contexts in which they have been placed, and seeks to re-assess the critical interpretations of their import. Critical debates on 14th century philosophy have tended to revolve around a supposed controversy between the rival philosophical schools of nominalism and realism. This controversy was portrayed to have taken place not only in the context of Christian theology, but to have quickly excited partisan debates in other cultural spheres, particularly that of literary production. Debates between realists and nominalists have often been likened to a *Wegestreit* between a *via antiqua* and *via moderna*, respectively representing a regressive Medieval and a Renaissance humanist and empiricist attitude. This 'battle' was supposedly won by the progressive nominalists, who swept away their realist opponents, and the foundations of scholastic methods along with them. The 14th century 'nominalist controversy' has come to represent the symbolic enactment of a period shift, with the Medieval 'old way' of the realists making way for the new way of the *moderni,* and the replacement of scholastic epistemology with the foundations of the modern scientific method. This study, joining other recent specialist inquiries, argues against the validity of this totalizing model of intellectual history: In light of more recent developments in specialist studies, neither the notion of nominalism and realism as philosophical schools, nor the conventional interpretation of their historic roles are tenable any longer. Particularly within the field of literary studies, however, shifting attitudes to the issue of the 'nominalist controversy' have not yet been fully appreciated, which has resulted in severe distortions of critical analyses of the role of philosophy in 14th century literary works. Likewise, the reception of individual scholastic thinkers continues to be negatively impacted by the persistent historiographical narrative of an entrenched battle between realists and nominalists.

This general introduction outlines the overall structure of this study and the major claims made in it. Chapters two and three of this study are likewise introductory in nature. Chapters four and five provide a close reading of Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei*, which showcases the main concerns and common methods of 14th century philosophical inquiries. Bradwardine himself is intimately connected to common theories on the 'nominalist controversy', and is frequently interpreted as William of Ockham's[1] realist antagonist. Chapters six through eight concern themselves more directly with historiographical representations of the nominalist controversy, from the perspectives of both historical philosophy as well as literary studies. These chapters highlight the necessity of a thorough re-conceptualisation of

[1] William of Ockham has typically been portrayed as the inceptor of the nominalist movement.

common historiographical approaches to intellectual life in the 14th century. Chapter nine provides a reading of the manifold representations of philosophy and philosophical discussions in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and serves as a case study for general principles laid out in the two chapters that precede it. The tenth and final chapter makes a number of closing remarks, and suggests some potential avenues of approach for future scholarship.

The subjects of the (ir)reality of universal categories, free will, grace, divine foreknowledge, and the (pre)determination of future events are key features of philosophical debates in the 14th century, and are also frequently thematized in the works of Bradwardine and Chaucer. As issues related to free will are fundamental both to a general conception of the central issues in 14th century thought, as well as to an analysis of individual works by Bradwardine and Chaucer, introductions to the subject from the perspectives of both contemporary philosophy as well as Christian theology are made in the second and third chapters of this study. In 20th-century scholarship, nominalists were typically interpreted as emphasizing free will and human autonomy[2], whereas realists were understood to have emphasized God's primacy over man, sometimes even to the point of (unintentionally) effacing free will. Bradwardine has typically been interpreted as a realist and member of the *via antiqua*; a significant critical tradition even sees in him an 'inhumane genius' who altogether does away with free will to establish God's omnipotence and omniscience[3]. Chaucer has been typically associated with nominalism, though he has occasionally been considered a realist. The association of these writers with particular *viae* has been harmful to the critical interpretation of both.

Though scholarly approaches to the issue of free will have been highly diverse, certain key issues seem particularly linked to our conception of a free will. Recurrent issues are the question of whether the future is contingent or predetermined, whether free will requires access to genuine alternative possibilities, and whether an agent can be morally responsible for their actions in the absence of such possibilities. Developments in theology, science, politics, art, and societal structures have also heavily influenced which solutions were offered and for what reasons. Several perspectives on these issues, and the theories they result in, are discussed in the second chapter of this study in the context of modern philosophy. The thoughtful categorisation of different types of free-will theories in recent decades is helpful in disambiguating unclear terminology and categorisation in late-Medieval works.

The third chapter of this study describes the history of the free will debate in philosophy and theology from antiquity to the early 14th century, and makes some notes on the historical development of the battle over the universals, the 14th century incarnation of which (as the theory of an embattled nominalism and realism) is the main subject of this study. It

[2] Though the nominalists are generally portrayed to base their argument for human autonomy and free will on the absolute power of God.

[3] This study takes a strong stance against this reading of Bradwardine, whose work is fundamentally concerned with establishing the *compatibility* of human free action and divine foreknowledge.

distinguishes between debates on the universals in the narrow and broad sense[4]. The chapter does not attempt to provide a complete overview of developments in the free will debate, but rather focuses on those aspects, conflicts, and developments that seem of especial relevance to the purposes of this study. Free will is discussed as a construct which finds its roots (amongst other sources) in the stoic theory of assent, which proved highly influential as it spread rapidly to other philosophic schools, and later to Christian and Islamic theology. A cursory account of the development of the free will debate and related issues in a specifically Christian context is provided, tracing and describing some of the main argumentative strands and positions offered through the centuries. Augustine, and his conflict with the 'Pelagians', both of which are of great significance to interpretation to Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei*, are discussed at length. This overview of free will theories in Christian theology also serves to describe how the main positions in the 14th century came into being, and how they related (or did not relate) to previous theories and controversies. Emphasis is placed on those authors who directly influenced or informed the works of Bradwardine and Chaucer analysed in this study.

Chapters four and five focus on Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei,* and pursue three general objectives. The first is to analyse the predestination theory developed in *De Causa Dei,* emphasizing the role human free will plays in Bradwardine's predetermined universe as well as the integration of methodological strategies from several scientific disciplines in this work. This integration can be seen as broadly exemplifying Kurt Flasch's categorisation of the 14th century as marked by an interest in the exploration of the implications of 13th century synthetic thought and an increasing suspicion of common metaphysical models. These attitudes found expression in a marked tendency to cross boundaries and combine philosophical methodologies hitherto kept separate[5]. Furthermore, these chapters posit counterarguments to earlier critical evaluations of *De Causa Dei*, thereby joining in a process of critical re-appraisal of Bradwardine's works and their historic import that began in the 1990's and is still ongoing[6]. Two traditions especially characterized previous Bradwardine scholarship: The first[7]

[4] The 'narrow' sense being debates solely concerning the reality or irreality of universal concepts (e.g., 'man', 'dog', 'justice'), the 'broad' sense being the thorough extension of the (perceived) scope of debates in its 14th century incarnation.

[5] To this end, a number of Bradwardine's scientific works are also introduced and incorporated into the analysis of his *De Causa Dei.*

[6] A number of excellent monographs and longer articles on Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei* have been published since then, most notably by Genest, Dolnikowski, Lukács, Berganza, and Sbrozi. It is unfortunate that a linguistic barrier may also hinder further dissemination of these works, as they are written in French, English, German / Latin, Spanish, and Italian (respectively). A note on citations from non-English languages: To preserve legibility, this study translates all citations from sources not in the English language into English in the main body of the text. For transparency and accuracy, these citations appear in their original, untranslated, forms in the footnotes.

[7] The connection of Bradwardine and reformist thought was first made by early protestant commentators seeking to establish a genealogy for their beliefs. It was advanced in the 1930's by J.F.

portrayed him as a radical free will denier and a 'proto-reformist' whose influence is felt in an ideological chain stretching from Wyclif and Hus to Luther and Calvin. The second[8] saw in Bradwardine a conservative Augustinian, whose main value was in his elegant reformulation of Augustinian theories on free will and grace. This tradition criticized Bradwardine's stance on (original) sin, seeing in it a fundamental misinterpretation of Augustinian doctrine[9]. Both focused almost exclusively on the theological components of *De Causa Dei*, while ignoring the integration of methodologies from other scientific disciplines. Both critical traditions were also in agreement that Bradwardine represented a protagonist in the 14th century of the *via antiqua*, and served as antagonist to allegedly 'modern' contemporaries such as William of Ockham. Finally, my analysis of *De Causa Dei* seeks to demonstrate how past critical evaluations of Bradwardine's works have contributed to (and were influenced by) a skewed perception of the overall intellectual climate of the 14th century, namely common historiographical narratives on the 'nominalist controversy'.

The fourth chapter of this study focuses on outlining Bradwardine's conception of God, the role He takes in human existence and actions, and discussion of other issues concerning divine grace and (original) sin. The fifth chapter seeks to describe the positive role of free will, and its compatibility with divine foreknowledge in Bradwardine's determinist worldview. The polemical content of *De Causa Dei* directed against free will deniers is also discussed, as this element of Bradwardine's theology has been undeservedly neglected.

The sixth chapter of this study focuses on the various ways in which the common account of 14th century intellectual life (i.e., in terms of partisan debates between schools of nominalist and realist philosophers) has shown itself to be outdated, and how this shift in critical interpretation affects the approaches taken to the works of Thomas Bradwardine. Bradwardine has typically been defined through contrast with his peers, particularly William of Ockham but also including Robert Holcot, Adam Wodeham, Thomas Buckingham, and others. Ockham especially has frequently been cast in the role of a forward-thinking member of a 'new way' of nominalism, and as a radical sceptic[10] whose theories thoroughly dissolved the unity of scholastic methods. Wodeham, Holcot, and Buckingham are seen as followers of Ockham's 'new way'. Bradwardine, through his status as primary antagonist of Ockham's, and his common portrayal as a thoroughgoing determinist, has by extension become associated with the 'old way' of realism.

Nominalism, understood in the narrow sense, denies the reality of universal categories (whether concrete categories like 'chair', or abstract ones like 'justice'). Realism, on the other

---

Laun, and popularized by a monograph by Gordon Leff in the 1950's.

[8] Advanced in particular by Heiko Augustinus Obermann.

[9] This study argues that Bradwardine's deviation from Augustine is more likely deliberate than accidental, as it is entirely in line with the *More Geometrica* of inductive reasoning he applies throughout the *De Causa Dei*.

[10] More recent interpretations have, however, called this view into question.

hand, affirms the existence of universals in some fashion[11]. The problem gained particular traction in a Christian context during the time of Abelard, though it was already vigorously pursued in the time of Plato and Aristotle, and was discussed extensively by Boethius. The terms 'nominalism' and 'realism' in the context of the 14th century are, however, typically applied in a *broad*, rather than narrow, sense. Rather than being 'merely' a debate on the status of the universals, these concepts are expanded to encompass distinct and incompatible epistemological systems, organized in schools.

The rejection of the universals by nominalists is considered to result in an understanding of the universe in terms of individuals rather than through absolute categories. This supposed rejection was typically interpreted as reducing the scope of what is knowable, leaving only the physically demonstrable as capable of producing genuine knowledge. This reduction was often portrayed to be the result of a thoroughly sceptical attitude on the part of the nominalists[12]: As religious truths like God's existence and nature cannot be demonstrated empirically, they must be taken on faith. This is supposed to have led to a radical divorce of theology from rational science, as the inability to provide empirical evidence for religious doctrine would seem to preclude any real knowledge of it. Because of its apparently empiricist attitudes, separation of science from theology, and insistence on human autonomy, this broader understanding of nominalism in this form was long granted the historical role of precursor (or even enabler) of Renaissance humanism and the modern scientific method. In recent decades, however, advances in research on these purported empiricist and sceptic nominalists have cast heavy doubts on this interpretation: While many of the supposed nominalists were definitely *interested* in questions on the limits of human knowledge[13], their thinking took them in different directions, and they cannot be said to have constituted a *movement*, much less a school. The association of nominalism and scepticism has also increasingly come under attack. Finally, the notion of 14th nominalism as being radically new or 'modern' in the Burckhardtian understanding of the term has also come under severe scrutiny. While nominalism was interpreted as a medieval precursor to modernity, realism, on the other hand, was typically portrayed as a conservative countermovement clinging desperately to the increasingly outdated conservative scholastic attitudes now under siege by nominalist innovations. This narrative thus presented a conflict between nominalism and realism as representing the dramatic enactment of an epochal shift, in which a waning Middle Ages meets

[11] Note that an affirmation of the existence of the universals need not necessarily be understood only in the Platonic sense, i.e., with the universals having an objective, extramental existence.

[12] Especially in earlier critical works, Ockham and his supposedly nominalist contemporaries are often considered to have been radical sceptics. This opinion has come under withering critique in recent (Ockhamist) scholarship, though some scholars continue to attribute radically sceptical attitudes to nominalism, sometimes attributing such attitudes by proxy to Ockham's 'followers'. The association of nominalism with scepticism is still highly influential in discussions of nominalist influences on medieval literary works within the paradigm of literary nominalism.

[13] As well as related issues, like human autonomy and free will, determinism, and the nature and knowability of God

an onrushing tide of modernity, a tide in which the realists were inevitably swept away.

It remains nebulous, however, what ideas the realists supposedly held in common, or which principles united them as a 'school': Certainly, none of the supposed realists professed kinship to or recognition of belonging to a single movement, and their ranks include a highly diverse cast of characters[14]. The debate between nominalists and realists in a narrow sense focused on the reality or irreality of universal categories. Even in this reduced scope, there is a remarkable heterogeneity of opinions on the part of the 'realists': While some (like Duns Scotus) do indeed affirm the existence of universal categories in some fashion, others (like Thomas Aquinas) suppose all things in this world to be singular[15]. Yet others, like Thomas Bradwardine, have little to say about the reality of universals altogether; the *Doctor Profundus* only posits some form of real universals (love, justice, goodness) as attributes of the divine mind[16]. Paradoxically, the canonical realists in the broad sense *cannot unanimously be considered realists in the narrow sense*. While there are at least some tentative links between the supposed nominalists, there is very little common ground between the realists, other than seemingly being a 'greatest hits selection' of superb scholastic thinkers. That the battle between nominalists and realists should have resulted in a resounding victory for nominalism (and a symbolically enacting the victory of a nascent early modern period over a vanquished Middle Ages) is a claim for which there, too, appears to be little positive proof. Indeed, scholastic methods remained the dominant mode of teaching and learning at universities for *centuries afterwards*, so any claims that 14th century nominalism quickly and decisively wiped the slate clean should be met with suspicions.

Recent advances in studies on figures traditionally associated with nominalism, as well as the hazy definition of the realists, demonstrate with ever-increasing clarity that an interpretative model of the 14th century as a sharply divided and defined battle ground does not work. However, this outdated perspective continues to be an influential interpretative model, the reach of which stretches far beyond the confines of theological inquiry: It still manifests itself with particular persistence in the field of literary studies. Its allure is obvious: It taps into and conforms to widespread beliefs about periodization, and provides a clear and attractive narrative of transition: The Middle Ages is in its death throes, Renaissance humanism is struggling to break free from its clutches, doing so by destroying scholastic methods through a thorough scepticism and a radical divorce of faith from science, making space for man in an arena previously occupied wholly by God.

[14] The 'realist ranks' include, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, Anselm, Abelard, Robert Grosseteste, Duns Scotus, and Thomas Bradwardine.

[15] Which would, paradoxically, make Aquinas a *nominalist* in the narrow sense.

[16] One should be careful of extrapolating from this a realist-leaning epistemology of *human* knowledge, as Bradwardine on various occasions (such as in his conception of time) draws a sharp distinction between divine and human modes of experiencing and knowing, insisting that the two must be kept separate.

This sixth chapter of this study is also concerned with tracing the *origins* of this obsolete model of intellectual history, which became particularly prominent from the 1950's onward. It seems to have evolved from a theory of cultural history inherited from the previous century, namely the notion of a 'battle of the ways' or '*Wegestreit'*, between a forward-thinking *via moderna* and a conservative *via antiqua*. The former of these two allegedly incompatible epistemological systems took their inspiration from Ockham and his followers, while the latter drew on great medieval thinkers like Anselm, Abelard, Aquinas, Scotus, Bradwardine, and others. The *Wegestreit*, too, was interpreted as a dichotomy between conservative scholastics facing a radical group of forward-thinking sceptics whose empiric focus acted as a prefiguration of the humanist attitudes of the Renaissance. The theory of the *Wegestreit* sought to locate the origins of the Renaissance in an earlier period[17], centring its attention particularly on English intellectual debates of the 14th century, as well as developments in Germany and France in the two subsequent centuries. The *Wegestreit*-concept is structurally highly similar to later notions of an embattled nominalism and realism, and was advanced in particular by Prantl.

There is indeed more than sufficient evidence to confidently establish that there *were* groups in late Medieval and Early Modern universities (in the 15th and 16th centuries) that self-identified as a *via moderna* and a *via antiqua*. These names were used interchangeably with the designations of 'nominalists' and 'realists' respectively[18]. While the proponents of the *via moderna* used as their central authorities more recent figures like Ockham, Marsilius of Inghen, and other 14th and 15th century thinkers, the *via antiqua* mostly relied on the works (and continuations of those works) from the great scholastics of earlier periods, ranging from Abelard and Anselm to Aquinas and Scotus. These two schools engaged in vigorous debates, and vied for control of university chairs and positions to the point that occasionally one or the other schools was banned at a university, or that debates between schools were forbidden in order to prevent fractionalisation. These partisan debates are well-attested and a matter of historical record. On much less solid ground is the assumption that the nominalists represented a progressive attitude and the realists a conservative one: There were conservatives and progressive thinkers in *both* camps. The association of the *via moderna* with progressive values was due in large part to a misunderstanding of terms: The name '*via moderna'* was interpreted in a Burckhardtian understanding of the term 'modern' (i.e., as the self-identification of being part of a new and cohesive movement with progressive ideas and ideals that consciously break with established tradition). However, the designation of *via moderna* was not based on an agenda of progressivism, but rather referred to the relative *temporal newness* of its main sources of inspiration, as the movement typically drew on thinkers from the 14th century on-

[17] In this fashion, the *Wegestreit* theory arose as a continuation of Burckhardt's influential postulations about an Italian Renaissance in the 12th century. That this model interprets the word 'modern' in the *via moderna* in a Burckhardtian fashion is thus neither surprising nor accidental.

[18] Though it was primarily proponents of the *via antiqua* who stressed an association of the *via moderna* with nominalism and William of Ockham, above whose theories hung a pervasive cloud of suspicion of heterodoxy.

wards. The '*moderni*' should not be mistaken as being *modern* in a Burckhardtian fashion: In a number of cases, nominalists were even explicitly criticised for enforcing a stifling sense of conservative dogmatism on the students in their university courses.

This misapplication of the term 'modern' is a root cause of the mislabelling of the *via moderna* as proto-modern and the *via antiqua* as conservative. The inaccuracy of Prantl's interpretation of the term was the driving force behind Ritter's rebuttal of the *Wegestreit* theory in the 1930's. While, in the wake of Ritter's critique, the relevance of the *Wegestreit* theory was greatly diminished in the field of cultural history, it, under a different guise, remained a dominant mode of interpretation in the field of theology[19]: The narrative in intellectual history of the nominalist controversy in the 14th century is structurally nearly identical to the original *Wegestreit* theory, and even uses the terms *via antiqua* and *via moderna* as interchangeable synonyms for realism and nominalism.

Chapters seven through nine of this study approach the issue of problematic representations of the 'nominalist controversy' from a literary studies perspective, a field in which the influence of the narrative of a nominalism / realism dichotomy is still strongly felt. Here, too, past approaches have focused on the interpretation of 14th century intellectual life through the lens of a fierce polemic between nominalists and realists. This stance is principally defended by the research paradigm of literary nominalism. It focuses on the rereading of late-Medieval texts, and was pioneered by Richard J. Utz, who wrote a monograph and (co-) edited two major anthologies on literary nominalism. Hugo Keiper later made significant amendments to central methodological approaches of the paradigm, which improved its approach to literature as a medium, but carried over a number of problematic assumptions from earlier developments in the paradigm. Literary nominalism takes nominalism in the 14th century to have represented a major break with traditional scholastic methods. It is portrayed to have stressed human autonomy and free will, and Ockham and his followers are typically read as (radical) sceptics[20]. Literary nominalism's understanding of the historical role of philosophical nominalism is based in large part on the works of Gordon Leff and Étienne Gilson[21]. It also takes realism to stand for rigid and conservative thought, whereas it associates nominalism with progressive values and a dawning Renaissance. It also extends the sphere of influence of nominalism a great deal further, as the paradigm sees nominalism not only as relevant in an academic setting, but claims that it embodies the '*Zeitgeist*' of the *entire 14th century*. Literary nominalism studies the ways in which this alleged *Zeitgeist* influenced and shaped contem-

[19] And later in the field of philosophy of the Middle Ages.

[20] Though this was not uncontested amongst the critics working within the paradigm: Utz himself, for instance, cautions against this approach.

[21] Gilson pursued the interpretation of nominalism as extreme scepticism vigorously. Leff was encountered earlier in this chapter as the critic who popularized a reading of Bradwardine as 'inhumane genius' and free will denier. Leff's early writings portray Ockham as a radical innovator who was instrumental in the dismantling of the scholastic method. While Leff later recanted and revised this interpretation of Ockham, his earlier theories nevertheless remained highly influential.

porary literary production. Discussion in the earlier chapters of this study, which conclude that such a view of intellectual history is reductive and outdated, underline the need for thorough revisions to the philosophical background of literary nominalism. However, literary nominalism also suffers from further conceptual issues, particularly in its problematic conception of the *interaction* between literature and philosophy.

Literary nominalism tends to assume that the different epistemologies that arose from the polemics between nominalists and realists were so incompatible, that even a poet engaging in philosophical debates would need to declare themselves for one side or the other. Literary nominalism makes the outmoded account of nominalism versus realism its focal point: Their supposedly adversarial relationship is foregrounded by literary nominalism's assumption that medieval poets would assume partisanship either for nominalist or realist thought, and that this would find direct expression in their works not only through plot or character, but also through genre, narrative structure, writing techniques, and so forth. Chapters seven and eight of this study argue that literary nominalism is in need of thorough revision not only because of the outdated philosophical views that inform it[22], but especially also because the way it treats the interaction between philosophical / theological and literary works unintentionally reduces literary works to passive reflections of extant thought, rather than active contributions to it. Furthermore, literary nominalism's focus on the direct representation of nominalist or realist thought neglects the way literary and theological works tend to pursue different epistemological strategies. Finally, the complex and rapidly shifting social, political, and historical circumstances of the 14th century often fall by the wayside.

The effects of subscribing to either a realist or nominalist epistemology are seen as apparent not only in themes, narrative, and character, but also to extend to preference of genre and textual form. The medieval poet's nominalism is typically seen as expressed in their dismissal of 'traditional' narrative modes like allegory[23], and is often connected to heteroglossia, irony, multi-valency, a disconnection of signifier and signified, open-endedness, and game-playing. Realism, on the other hand, is associated with a preference for monologic or closed narratives, a preference for allegory, stressing a natural relationship between sign and signifier, and so on. In terms of critical practice, literary nominalism heavily favours analogical readings, seeing expressed in characters or plot elements the representation of specific elements of either nominalist or realist philosophy. While an increased interest in strategies like heteroglossia, play, and mixing of different genres can certainly be noted in literary works from the second half of the 14th century, the attribution of such developments to *nominalism* is highly problematic: most developments in 14th century literature are absorbed under the banner of

[22] As well as an overextension of these views.

[23] Literary nominalism sees allegory as a thoroughly monologic genre that seeks to render the world intelligible in clear, absolute terms, through the unambiguous portrayal of the unshakable moral order that governs it. It sees moral absolutism and a preference for closed texts as a feature of realism. Chapters seven and eight of this study argue that the attribution of allegory as belonging to a 'realist mindset' is not only inaccurate, but also highly reductive.

nominalism, and not only does poetry seem not to be capable of generating original thought, even developments in *literary genre* and *aesthetics* are reduced to by-products of a nominalist mindset.

In Chaucer criticism, there have been distinct critical tendencies to interpret Chaucer either as a nominalist who sought to establish polyphonic spaces of play whose heteroglossic openness would counter rigid and monologic conservatism, or else as a conservative sought to *criticize* the chaotic worlds of his poems. Only in a few exceptions is Chaucer seen as a mediator or deliberate non-partisan[24]. The ascription of either nominalist or realist tendencies to Chaucer seems largely based on preconceptions of whether Chaucer himself was progressive or conservative. This binary thinking unacceptably limits interpretation: if one sees Chaucer as a nominalist author, representations of the world as stable will be interpreted as ironic. If one considers him a realist, then the representation of an *un*stable world is interpreted as a critique of this instability. This rigid division into camps further denies literary works autonomy in philosophical discussion: the notion that an author should have to declare support of either realism or nominalism to discuss philosophical issues limits the role of literary works in philosophical discussion to the selective endorsement of pre-existing theories, and denies it any capacity for creating or reconfiguring meaning on its own terms. Literary nominalism's emphasis on allegorical interpretation and comparison to contemporary theologians has had the effect of placing literary works in a dependant hierarchical relationship to theological texts. Furthermore, the notion that attitudes taken by characters should unreservedly be equated to attitudes of their biographical author also seems rather adventurous, to say the least.

Keiper proposed a number of methodological changes to literary nominalism, particularly in its treatment of the interaction between literature and philosophical texts. He proposed to shift the focus from a dichotomy between nominalism and realism to a more general literary debate over universals, and stressed that critical examinations of literary works should always be *qua* literature, which he sought to highlight through the development of a literary nominalist and realist *aesthetics*. Keiper's development of the paradigm (partly) alleviated the tendency of literary nominalism to discuss the *translation* of philosophical theories into literature, rather than their *transformation* through fictional discourse. However, the degree to which these developments achieved the creation of a truly *independent* set of nominalist and realist aesthetics for literary works is doubtful, as his conception of these *aesthetics* remains firmly rooted in *philosophical* theories on nominalism and realism. It also does not alleviate literary nominalism's dependence on the now outdated conception of the 14th century intellectual climate, and the attribution of developments in literary production to nominalism.

This study establishes that concepts like heteroglossia, multivocality, and play are essential characteristics of the *literary text*, rather than of *nominalism*, and that what Keiper or Utz de-

[24] The most prominent critical voice being that of Peggy Knapp, who wrote on the subject of nominalism in Chaucer before the formalisation of literary nominalism as a research paradigm.

scribe as a 'nominalist turn' in the 14th century is better understood as a 'literary turn'. The ways in which literary texts generate (philosophical) meaning is explored in the eighth chapter of the study. It posits that the three-way interaction between text, author, and reader is a vital component to any explanation of how literature 'does' philosophy, further concluding that textual play and patterns of gaming also take crucial roles in this interaction. Furthermore, it considers the way in which epistemological strategies like heteroglossia, polyphony, irony and humour, open-endedness, and the suspension of moral judgement fit into this system. This 'literary turn' is subsequently placed in a loose historiographical context based on earlier conclusions drawn from Kurt Flasch: Here, too, a symbiosis of different methodologies and willingness to experiment, as well as an increased suspicion and criticism towards established epistemic modes can be observed.

The importance of the issue of *language* can also scarcely be overstated, and represents an area almost entirely neglected by literary nominalism, which assumed an unproblematic relationship between Latin scholastic texts and literary works in the vernacular. However, this is by no means so, as has been powerfully and influentially argued in recent decades by Nicholas Watson and Fiona Somerset. Barbara Newman's theory on crossover between the sacred and the secular provides an important analysis of the interplay between different types of texts. By integrating the issues of language and crossover into their approaches, future studies could also consider the ways secular texts reflected back on and influenced texts written by the clergy.

The ninth chapter of this study presents a close reading of Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* that illustrates a number of the methodological suggestions made in the previous chapters. The leading thread of discussion is a series of Pauline citations[25], which are applied to open an implicit debate on whether fictions can generate genuine knowledge. The chapter examines a number of passages from several tales, as well as the General Prologue and the retraction. Emphasis is also placed on the role of play in establishing a state of social suspension in which the pilgrims can engage each other freely, without the usual social constraints: The game of tale-telling is used as a social equalizer, and through playing, the diverse group of pilgrims creates and maintains a sense of social cohesion. While a number of tales occupy themselves at length with similar subjects to those encountered in my discussion of Thomas Bradwardine, they do so in a different fashion: often obliquely, rather than directly, through brief allusions rather than lengthy demonstration, and deliberately withholding any final resolution. This chapter also considers the issue of authorial authority, suggesting that texts like the *Canterbury Tales* often invoke philosophical debates for purposes other than philosophical discussion: Through the invocation of debates previously reserved for the clergy, these texts not only *share* in their authority, by simultaneously *subvert* it by reducing the authoritative scholastic texts to 'just another text', giving them an unprivileged position within a referential field consisting of many (types) of texts.

[25] „All that is said is said for our doctrine".

The tenth and final chapter of this study serves as a brief summary of this study's conclusions, and features some closing remarks as well as some considerations for future scholarship. These considerations focus particularly on the potential for interdisciplinary approaches, and the hitherto underappreciated roles of historical development in the study of representations of philosophy in the 14th century, as well as the role of language and the significance of doing philosophy in the vernacular.

Chapter II

Free Will Debates in 20th and 21st Century Philosophy

Before turning to the free will debates of the 14th century, it is helpful to outline some key concepts and categories in *current* philosophic inquiries on similar issues. Discussions on free will, determinism, and moral responsibility have in recent decades become thoroughly and thoughtfully systematized, and offer a useful point of comparison for analyses of Bradwardine, Ockham, and their contemporaries, where systematic categorisation and technical terminology are often ambiguous or incomplete. The questions asked and solutions given in the free will debate have been remarkably stable over the centuries. As such, the contemporary categorisation of different structural approaches to the free will debate can be applied to draw broad comparisons between similar sets of argumentations from the 14th century[1]. Observations from current philosophical research contributes to a clearer understanding of the stances of 'nominalists' like Ockham and 'realists' like Bradwardine on issues like predestination, free will, and divine foreknowledge.

What solution to the problem of free will one arrives at is in large part dependant on the specific way one approaches a handful of fundamental issues[2]. From these basic propositions, highly different theories on the nature and existence of free will emerge. The first issue is whether one considers the future to be contingent, determined, or if one wishes to account for both possibilities. Most philosophers, seeing themselves supported by modern physics, assume the future is most likely contingent in some fashion, while only a very small number of thinkers nowadays argue in favour of a deterministically ordered universe. Given lack of any definitive answer in regards to whether the future is entirely indetermined or not, a considerable number of scholars favour an approach that takes into account a hypothetical scenario in which determinism is true. The second and third issues are whether one believes determinism to be compatible with *free will*, and whether one sees determinism as compatible with *moral responsibility*. The fourth and final question is whether we actually have free will or not, the answer to which is informed by the other three issues. Though many additional factors are relevant to the free will debate, these core issues penetrate almost every layer of

[1] It is emphatically not the aim of this work, however, to establish some form of universalist or transhistorical free will theory. Its aim is merely to highlight structural similarities and at times to borrow certain technical terms or categories from contemporary philosophical discussions in order to disambiguate unclear distinctions in Medieval free will debates.

[2] These questions are based on the ones used in Fischer et al., 2007, which uses four issues to categorize different stances in the free will debate. The question 'whether common-sense thinking about free will and moral responsibility is basically correct' has been altered here, as it is mostly relevant in light of Manuel Vargas' theories, which he labels 'Revisionism', and which are not discussed in this introduction. Instead, the question "Is Determinism true?" is used, as the truth or falsity of determinism is a major issue in the theories presented here, and in the works discussed in later chapters of this work, particularly those concerned with Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei*.

discussion. In this introduction, four major theories (as well as a number of subgroups) with different approaches to these basic issues will be presented. In order of discussion, these are libertarianism, compatibilism, hard determinism, and soft determinism. Placed into a grid structure, their approaches to these four basic determinants (and two of their subsets) in the free will debate are as follows:

Libertarian approaches to the free will problem are aptly summarized by Robert Kane[3] as a group of divergent theories that share the belief that "a free will that is incompatible with determinism is required for us to be truly morally responsible for our actions, so that genuine moral responsibility, as well as free will, is incompatible with determinism. Genuine free will […] could not exist in a world that was *completely* determined by Fate or God"[4]. To this, it should be added that libertarians believe that the future is in fact indetermined, and that we thus have free will. This separates them from hard determinists, who also take an incompatibilist approach to free will and determinism, but argue that, as the universe is ordered deterministically, there is no free will. Incompatibilist theories on free will stand in contrast to compatibilist accounts, which do not consider free will and determinism[5] to be mutually exclusive. The concept of a libertarian free will is typically founded on the assumption that the future must be, in Jorge Luis Borges' elegant turn of phrase, a 'garden of forking paths': human agents must have access to genuine alternate possibilities when deciding to perform or not perform a given action. This is generally referred to as the 'Principle of Alternate Possibilities', or PAP, and proposes that (given the exact same past) an agent should have been free to act other than they did, in order for their action to qualify as an act of free will. If we cannot act other than we do, libertarians claim, we cannot logically be said to perform these acts of our own free will. Similarly, if our actions are not *free*, it stands to reason that we also cannot be morally *responsible* for our actions, as we were incapable of doing otherwise, even if we had wanted to. Thus, aside from requiring indeterminism, a libertarian free will also assumes that, in some way, shape, or form, our decision-making process is 'up to us'[6]. Several objections have been raised to this conception of free will.

[3] Kane himself is an eminent libertarian theorist. Other well-known libertarians are Peter van Inwagen and Robert M. Chisholme. Further significant contributions are made by (amongst many others) Timothy O'Connor, Randolph Clarke, Hugh McCann, Laura Waddell Ekstrom, Stewart Goetz, Thomas Pink, and David Hodgson. Campbell 2011 also classifies Carl Ginet's theories as libertarian, though this (as Campbell admits) is somewhat shaky, as Ginet on several occasions claims agnosticism about the truth or falsity of determinism. It should be noted that while these authors share a number of core assumptions, their individual theories are highly divergent: The use of 'libertarian' (as well as compatibilist, hard determinist, etcetera) as a technical term in this study thus only refers to these broad similarities, without meaning to imply a monolithic theoretical framework.

[4] See Kane 2007, p. 7.

[5] Whether real or hypothetical.

[6] See also Ginet 2002. Campbell 2011, p. 2 also takes up the notion of an 'up-to-usness' to define free will.

One such argument by (semi-) compatibilists concerns the issue of the attractiveness of libertarian views in comparison to compatibilist theories. They argue that it is not (yet) a settled matter whether the future is determined or indetermined, and that accordingly we should attempt to provide a theory that covers both possibilities. According to John Martin Fischer, libertarians play a dangerous game: should determinism prove correct through some future scientific discovery, libertarians would then have to completely discard the notion that human beings have free will. Compatibilists and semi-compatibilists on the other hand, have secured access to free will whether the universe proves to be deterministically ordered or not, and in this case would not be affected in any way. Compatibilists consider their approach to be risk-free and thus more desirable, and see no reason to adopt the more precarious libertarian perspective[7].

If one is willing to grant that the question of whether the universe is determined or indetermined is an unsettled affair, this argument seems worth considering: Many believe free will to be an essential attribute of humanity, so surely a system that allows it to be possible whether or not determinism holds true must have greater attraction than one that is reliant on 'true' indeterminism. However, this critique of libertarianism is unfair in that it would require libertarians to accept a premise they reject on principle: Libertarians not only hold free will and determinism to be incompatible, they also hold that the future actually *is* indetermined. Therefore, this argument is incoherent to libertarians. Hillary Bok has commented extensively on such dialectical stalemates[8], which appear on all levels of the free will debate. These are situations "in which proponents of opposing views can explain our intuitions about various examples using different principles, and in which any example that seems to support one principle over the other can be legitimately rejected on the grounds that it presupposes the view it is meant to support"[9]. Furthermore, in "dealing with dialectical stalemates, it is in general unhelpful to try to establish one view over the other by arguing that […] our intuitions [force] us to accept it", as opponents will "reject any examples which their view cannot explain; they will not share the intuitions to which we appeal"[10]. Thus, while this theory may hold appeal for those already inclined toward compatibilist ideas, it is not helpful as a direct counterargument to libertarians, who are likely to dismiss it as incoherent. A second argument, however, has proved a greater obstacle for libertarian theories to overcome.

This objection, referred to by Peter van Inwagen as the MIND[11] argument, claims that the very *concept* of a libertarian free will is unintelligible. The principle of alternate possibilities

[7] See also Kane in Fischer et al., p. 8, and Fischer in Fischer et al., pp. 45-48 for further commentary on the desirability argument for compatibilism.

[8] See also Fischer 1994, pp. 83-85 and Campbell, p. 62.

[9] See Bok 2003, p. 135.

[10] *Idem*. In recent years, some have taken these stalemates as proof that our definitions of these concepts themselves are flawed and in need of revision, which is the central claim of Manuel Vargas' theory of revisionism.

[11] Referring to the philosophic journal "MIND", in which versions of this argument have been offered.

requires that an agent must have been able to do other than they did, *given the exact same past*. And here lies the problem: When several courses of action present themselves, and circumstances and deliberations prior to a decision are identical, the assumption that different actions can be taken given the same decision-making process makes them appear to be the result of caprice, luck, or random chance, rather than rational act. It seems logical to assume, say proponents of the MIND argument, that if one's character and deliberative processes are identical, rational deliberation would surely result in the same action being taken every time, and that having a different outcome arise from the same deliberations would be the result of mere chance. This would suggest that a libertarian free will is incompatible with both determinism *as well as* indeterminism, if one understands an act of free will as the result of a rational process of deliberation[12]. This argument has proven a formidable objection to the libertarian concept of free will, so much so that attempts to meet its challenge have led to the creation of further subdivisions within libertarian thought where theories of action are concerned. Here, a distinction is typically drawn between agent-causal theories of action, event-causal theories, and non-causal theories[13], though there is a great degree of variety within each subgroup.

Agent-causal theories of action can be reasonably described as 'extra factor strategies', which appeal to some kind of extraordinary mode of causation, by virtue of which actions are neither random, nor merely the result of a previous event. Many such extra factors have been posited, including "immaterial causes, noumenal selves, transempirical power centres, non-event agent causes, prime movers unmoved, and so on"[14]. Kane once again gives a helpful definition of their common goals, which is to provide an account of "a special or unique kind of causal *relation* between an agent and an action that is not reducible to, and cannot be fully explained in terms of, the usual kinds of causation by events, occurrences, and states of affair, either physical *or* mental"[15], in so doing providing a workaround to the intelligibility problem. Agent-causal theories have, however, encountered frequent criticism, not only from those that pursue other approaches, but from fellow libertarians as well, with charges of mysterianism appearing with especial frequency. Additionally, these 'extra factors' are only coherent if one presupposes the veracity of their conclusions, which many philosophers are unwilling to do,

[12] This argument is also put forward by Pereboom in Fischer et al., pp. 101-103. Campbell offers a cursory description in Campbell 2011, pp. 74-75. O'Connor offers an apt definition of the MIND problem in O'Connor 1996, p. 146: "If a simple mental action of mine is uncaused, if it is in no sense determined to occur by anything at all, then it is not determined to occur by *me* in particular. But if I do not determine its occurrence, then it is not under my control". Libertarians Kane and Chisholme define and discuss the issue in Fischer et al., p. 23 and Chisholme, p. 23. Carl Ginet discusses and attempts to disprove the MIND argument in Ginet 1990, pp. 124-150.

[13] Amongst those counted as agent causal theorists are Chisholme, Clarke, Rowe, and O'Connor. Versions of event causalism are defended by Kane and Ekstrom. Ginet offers perhaps the most fully developed theory of a noncausalist free will, though Goetz also makes some interesting propositions. Theorists that cannot easily be fitted into any of these categories include Hodgson, Pink, and Felt.

[14] See Kane in Fischer et al., p. 25.

[15] See Kane 2005, p. 45.

prompting another stalemate. Yet another objection is that having actions be immanently caused by human agents would mean that humans have "a prerogative which some would attribute only to God: each of us, when we act, is a prime mover unmoved. In doing what we do, we cause certain events to happen, and nothing – or no one – causes us to cause those events to happen"[16]. The image of man being like a prime mover or an uncaused cause has proven a difficult sell to many philosophers, who reject it as a gross and immodest overestimation of man's capacity for free decision-making. However, not all agent-causal theories suppose that free decisions are entirely uncaused: O'Connor suggests that human agents are "not wholly moved movers"[17], whereas Clarke suggests that Chisholme and others have misstepped in supposing that agent causation is required for any action at all (rather than only for actions of free will), and that "an agent-causal account should not deny that free actions are caused by prior events"[18]. Recent accounts like those of Clarke and O'Connor have done much to nuance agent-causal theories of action, and have revitalized interest in such accounts, which for a time had been largely abandoned.

A second subgroup are the so-called event-causal theories of action[19], which share the common claim that *events* (rather than *agents*) determine if and how actions occur. When someone deliberates on whether or not to perform a given action, memories, thoughts, and feelings may come to them, and these may influence their decision. There is an element of indeterminism in such a moment, as agents do not necessarily control which images come to mind. At the same time however, there is also an element of rational deliberation, as the process involves the conscious selection of the most convincing or appealing image. There have been charges from agent-causalist theorists that event-causal accounts do nothing to solve the MIND argument. O'Connor, for example, feels that event-causal theories of action fail to clarify how exactly it is 'up to us' that some, rather than other, images appear to us. Dennett admits that an event-causal account does not "give us everything libertarians wanted from free will. For [one] does not have complete control over what chance images enter his mind or influence his deliberation"[20]. However, one does have agency in selecting from these chance thoughts the most convincing one, securing at least a significant measure of freedom. Kane also presents a highly developed event-causal account, which focuses on the notion of ultimate responsibility, which Kane sees as a necessary precondition for free will. He proposes that for an agent to be responsible for their actions, they must be "responsible for anything that is a sufficient reason (condition, cause, or motive) for the actions occurring"[21]. To have free will means to be in some way responsible for the shaping of one's character. Kane's ultimate responsibility does not require that one could have acted otherwise in every instance of

[16] See Chisholme, p. 34.

[17] See O'Connor 2003, p. 258.

[18] See Clarke 2003, p. 286.

[19] Variably also referred to as c*ausal indeterminism, indeterministic causation view,* or *event-causalism.*

[20] See Dennett in Kane 2005, p. 65.

[21] See Kane 2004, p. 73.

a free act of will[22], but that in order to have free will we need control only over *some* of the actions that shape our characters, which Kane terms self-forming actions (SFA's)[23]. They occur at moments of doubt, those "difficult times of life when we are torn between competing visions of what we should do or become"[24]. Self-forming actions include moral dilemmas, conflicting desires, ambitions versus conscience, etcetera. At these junctures, we are faced with several options, all of which have their attractive qualities, and we find ourselves torn with doubt. This doubt opens "a window of opportunity that temporarily screens off complete determination by influences of the past"[25]. Our actions in such a moment, virtuous or villainous, heroic or cowardly, pragmatic or sentimental, help shape our character and inform future decisions[26]. Kane's account has proved highly influential, and was further developed by philosophers like Belaguer[27], though it met similar criticism as other event-causal theories: Critics like O'Connor contest that Kane neither manages to provide an account of true libertarian free will[28], nor to entirely resolve the luck problem. There also remains the issue of what separates self-forming actions from the decisions that result from them. Where do we draw the line between formative and informed actions?

Non-causal theories of action take yet another approach, and hold that (similar to event-causal theories) factors like beliefs, reasoning, preferences, likes and dislikes, etcetera, can be used to explain actions. However, unlike event-causalists, non-causalists posit that such factors are not *causes of* actions, but *reasons for them*. Ginet, though not in the strict sense a libertarian, offers a thoughtful non-causal theory of action, in which agents perform, but do not cause actions[29]. What makes them actions rather than spontaneous occurrences is that they begin "with a simple mental act, a *volition* or act of will that initiates the action", which possesses "a

[22] This is frequently illustrated with the following example about Martin Luther: His statement "I stand here, I can do no other", uttered when defending his theories at Worms, should not be taken to mean that Luther did not do so of his own volition, but that his past free actions moulded his character in such a way that in this instance he found himself compelled to act in this specific way.

[23] To return to the Luther example: Luther can only act in one way due to the way his character was shaped. As he was responsible for performing the self-forming actions that helped build this character, it follows that he is later also responsible for actions resulting *from* that character. He thus *freely* chose to go to Worms and defend his actions, despite feeling compelled to act in this way.

[24] See Kane 2002, p. 228.

[25] *Idem*.

[26] Rounding off the Luther example, one might suppose Luther's decision to nail his 95 theses to the door of Wittenberg's All-Saints Church (if indeed the historical Martin Luther actually did so, of course, a contested matter) to be such a self-forming action. Had he chosen to stay silent about his misgivings on this and other occasions, it might have never come to a point where he stood at Worms and "could do no other".

[27] See Belaguer pp. 69-78. He adds to Kane's theory the notion of *torn decisions* and posits that some of these torn decisions are wholly indetermined right up to the moment of choice.

[28] Which, as we have seen, is stated to require absolute freedom of choice when making a decision.

[29] See Ginet 1997, p. 208.

certain "actish phenomenal quality"- that is, the volition and the action are directly experienced by [the agent] as something [they] are doing rather than something that happens to [them]"[30]. While this would allow for spontaneous and indetermined action that the agent still exerts control over, many have been hesitant to accept the proposition that beliefs and reasoning are not causes: They see, for instance, a man's decision to have a drink of water as a sufficient cause for his picking up a glass, raising it to his mouth, and quenching his thirst. Thus, though there is something to be said for each of type of theory of action, each is in turn also subject to an equal amount of critique, leaving a number of tantalizing options on the table without settling the issue. In any event, these highly divergent takes on the same issue showcase the plurality of thought even within a single category of free will theories. Through this cursory examination of libertarianism, some of the typical elements for an incompatibilist approach to the problem of free will have been outlined. It is now time to consider another set of arguments that have the shared assumption that free will and determinism *are* compatible with each other, which are referred to under the umbrella term of compatibilism.

There are some compatibilist theories that are agnostic to the truth value of determinism[31] and others that affirm it. The latter category is usually referred to as soft determinism to disambiguate the two types. Compatibilist thought of both varieties has a long lineage, originating in Greek philosophy and finding more recent proponents in Hobbes, Locke and Hume[32]. Two influential figures from the late 19th to early 20th century are George Edward Moore and William James. Their brand of compatibilism concedes that in the libertarian sense of 'being able to do otherwise', determinism and free will are incompatible. However, they claim that libertarians are "guilty of the fallacy of equivocation"[33], as 'being able' can have two different meanings, and libertarians have focused on the wrong one: They demand a *categorical* ability to do otherwise (that one was *actually* able to do otherwise), while it is a *hypothetical* ability (that one would have acted differently *if one had desired to do so*) that is relevant for the issue of free will. Compatibilists like Moore and James argue that to have free will means to have "the power or ability to do what we want or desired to do, which in turn entails […] an absence of constraints or impediments […] preventing us from doing what we want"[34]. While making an earnest attempt at harmonizing free will with a deterministic system, this kind of compatibilism has encountered strong counterarguments, which shed doubt on the *relevance* of a hypothetical ability to do otherwise. An example posited by Keith Lehrer has a man with an intense dislike of sweets being offered some red candies, which he declines. According to classical compatibilism, had he been otherwise inclined, the man might have accepted the

[30] See Kane 2005, p. 54.

[31] Some protagonists of compatibilist theories are Moore, James, Frankfurt, Stump, Wolf, and Watson. Semi-compatibilist Fischer has also made major contributions to advance and nuance compatibilist theories.

[32] It should be noted that their theories fall in the purview of soft determinism as Hobbes, Locke, and Hume support a deterministic worldview.

[33] See Campbell 2011, p. 88.

[34] See Kane 2005, p. 13.

candy. However, argues Lehrer, his "pathological aversion being what it is, [he] could not possibly bring [himself] so to choose. [He] could do it only if [he] chose to"[35], which he cannot. Though the circumstances fulfil the compatibilist criterion for free will (he can make a choice without external constraint or impediment), he would never be able to bring himself to accept the candy (even if he wanted to), due to his own inhibitions. Thus, Lehrer argues, this choice is not free at all, as a hypothetical ability to do otherwise would not suffice for the man in this example. Similar arguments are made about various addictions, paralyzing fears and phobias, strong dislikes, etcetera. These arguments present a multitude of scenarios in which a hypothetical ability to do otherwise could not possibly have led to a different action being taken or a different outcome to occur, despite an absence of external constraints. Such arguments proved difficult to answer, and interest in compatibilist theories waned for a time, until it was thoroughly and forcefully revitalized in the 1960's, in no small part due to arguments put forward by Harry Frankfurt, whose contribution to the discussion is twofold: Firstly, he introduces the notion of first- and second-order desires to the debate. Secondly, his 'Frankfurt examples' foreground a distinction between free will and moral responsibility hitherto gone unacknowledged.

What sets responsible agents apart from non-responsible agents and other creatures, argues Frankfurt, is a distinction between two levels of desire. Though humans are "not alone in having desires or motives, or in making choices", what seems to be "particularly characteristic of [them is] that they are able to form […] 'second order desires' or 'desires of the second order'"[36]. These are, simply put, desires to have other desires. A first order desire might be my wanting to smoke a cigarette, whereas a desire of the second order would be wanting to *refrain* from doing so for the sake of my health. Frankfurt regards this regulative and reflective power of second over first order desires to be the thing that sets responsible humans apart from other species, as well as children and 'wantons'. Frankfurt describes a wanton as someone who has first order desires, but possesses no second order desires to regulate them: They are moved by instincts, needs, and desires without the ability for (or an interest in) reflecting on *why* they have these desires, or if some other desire might supersede them. The difference between a responsible agent and a wanton could be described with following example: Man A is a responsible agent capable of forming second order desires. Man A has smoked all his life. He might want to quit, but his addiction would not allow him too. Each time he has a first order desire to smoke, his addiction assures he will do just that. Man B has also smoked all his life, and is equally addicted. He, however, is a wanton who simply smokes each time he has a first order desire to do so. He does not reflect on his behaviour, why he smokes continually, and quitting has never once crossed his mind. Both men are equally unfree[37] when it comes to the decision whether to smoke or not to smoke: Man A

[35] See Lehrer 1968, pp. 31-32.

[36] See Frankfurt 2003-B, p. 323.

[37] Frankfurt defines free will as "having the will you want to have and [being able to] act in accordance with your higher order desires without internal or external constraints". See Kane 2005, p. 96. See also Campbell 2011, p. 90.

could never follow through on a wish not to smoke or quit smoking, due to the crippling internal constraint of his addiction. Man B cannot act on higher order desires because, being a wanton, he does not have any. Man B just smokes. Man A however, though not free, can still be *responsible* for his choice to smoke a cigarette, if that is something he gives assent to by a second order desire: He wants to smoke, and decides to follow this impulse because he already wanted to take a break and a cigarette provides him with a suitable excuse. Though he would have had the cigarette whether he wanted to or not, Man A in this case makes the choice to consciously assent to his impulse through a higher order desire and is thus responsible for doing so. This in contrast to Man B, who will smoke as an automated response to the impulse to do so, without further reflection. Informed assent, so Frankfurt, differentiates the two. In this fashion, Frankfurt nuances decision-making from the simple 'if I had willed differently, I would have done differently' of classic compatibilism to a more complex hierarchically ordered system of first- and second-order desires, and makes an attempt at challenging some of the objections (such as Lehrer's addiction argument) raised against it. In Frankfurt's interpretation, Lehrer's candy-hating man is not *free* when it comes to the subject of sweets, but he can still be *responsible* for refusing them in much the same manner as Man A can still be responsible for smoking despite his addiction[38].

Discussion until now has focused on the effects of internal constraints on decision-making processes. A further contribution by Frankfurt to this debate are the so-called 'Frankfurt-style examples', which attempt to show that an agent can also be morally responsible for their actions in the face of *external* constraints[39]. These examples attempt to create a situation in which a person (unbeknownst to themselves) is controlled by an outside agent or counterfactual intervener, who has the ability of forcing their subject to do as they desire. However, this agent will only intervene if their subject is about to act contrary to their designs. Frankfurt offers an example where Jones is under control of counterfactual intervener Black, who, through hypnotic suggestion, neurological intervention, or some other mind-controlling device, is able to have Jones act as he wills him. On Election Day, Black wishes Jones to vote Democrat, rather than Republican. If Jones is about to cast his ballot for the Republican candidate, Black will interfere and force Jones to vote for the Democrat candidate instead. If, however, Jones is about to vote Democrat, Black will not interfere with Jones' decision in any way whatsoever. It so happens that this election, Jones is feeling particularly democratic, makes up his mind to vote Democrat, and then does so. Black neither intervenes in Jones' decision-making process, nor upon his actions in the voting booth. This results in a situation

[38] If, for example, the man refuses the candy out of a second order desire not to get cavities, he is responsible for his decision, though it cannot be said to be free due to lack of other courses of action.

[39] The origins of Frankfurt-style examples can be traced back to John Locke, who posits a situation in which a man is taken captive while asleep and placed inside a locked room. Upon waking, the prisoner rather enjoys his new surroundings and decides to stay in the room. In so doing, he makes a free decision to stay, despite having no alternative option. What sets Frankfurt's examples apart from Locke's is that Frankfurt makes use of an active and human control agent, whereas Locke's constraining factor is passive.

in which Jones seems to have made a decision for which he is entirely responsible, despite the presence of external constraints and a lack of ability to do other than he did. While this choice was not a *free* act according to Frankfurt's definition of the term[40], this has no bearing on whether Jones is *morally responsible* for his decision: Despite the presence of counterfactual intervener Black, Jones was unaware of these constraints, and chose to vote Democrat willingly. Thus, Frankfurt claims, while this action was not free, Jones should still be considered morally responsible. This distinction between free will and moral responsibility has done much to reinvigorate the compatibility debate, as it provides an account where, even if free will in the libertarian sense might not be possible in a deterministically ordered world, we could still be held accountable for our actions in much the same way as we are now. This theory has prompted a veritable flood of counter-examples, counter-counter-examples, addendums, and amendments to the original theory[41].

Perhaps the most significant counter-theory to compatibilist views after Frankfurt has been offered by Peter van Inwagen through his consequence argument, which describes a hypothetical scenario in which determinism is true. As van Inwagen phrases it, if determinism is true, then "our acts are the consequences of the laws of nature and events in the remote past. But it is not up to us what went on before we were born, and neither is it up to us what the laws of nature are. Therefore, the consequences of these things (including our present acts) are not up to us"[42]. In a scenario in which the world is governed by causal determinism, each event and action is either caused by a previous event, or is the result of natural laws. Neither the past events that cause these actions, nor the rules of nature that govern reality can be changed by human agents. As such, any agent's actions in the present result necessarily from actions performed in the past and from the rules of nature. In order for an agent to act other than they do, they would have to be able to change either past events or the rules of nature, which they cannot, meaning they cannot do other than they did. According to what van Inwagen labels

[40] Free will for Frankfurt requires the absence of internal and external constraints, which is obviously not the case here.

[41] One counterargument to Frankfurt cases is what Fischer calls 'flicker of freedom strategies', which claim that in the example discussed, Jones does have a certain measure of alternate possibility in the form of a prior sign or volition to vote Republican, to which Black then reacts by exerting his influence over Jones and making him vote Democrat. Jones may not be able to vote Republican, but he can have a flicker of a volition to do so. Because there is such a flicker, Jones has alternate possibilities, and thus Frankfurt-style examples do not constitute a *true* instance of moral responsibility without alternate possibilities. Fischer, however, believes that this "mere flicker of freedom [is] insufficiently robust to ground attributions of moral responsibility" (See Fischer 2002, p. 98). Widerkerker argues that Frankfurt's claim that there may be "circumstances in which a person performs some action which although they make it impossible for him to avoid performing that action, they in no way bring it about that he performs it" (See Frankfurt 2003-A, p. 168) is unwarranted, as "it does not hold for the decisions, forming of intentions, etcetera" (See Widerkerker, p. 188). Mele and Stubb, as well as Stump offer modified versions of Frankfurt examples in response to criticism (See Fischer 2002, pp. 102-104).

[42] See van Inwagen 1983, p. 16.

the 'transfer of powerlessness principle', we are powerless to act other than we do, because we ultimately are powerless over the factors that make the acts we do come about. In a causally determined system, claims van Inwagen, every action, decision, thought, and feeling, would be the necessary consequence of some prior state that is beyond our control. In such a scenario, argues van Inwagen, human agents cannot be said to have free will. This theory has proven to be a great obstacle to compatibilist theories, due to its strong intuitive appeal. Van Inwagen admits that, while he argues in favour of an incompatibilist account of free will and believes it to be true, Frankfurt's argument carries "a great deal of force and has never been shown conclusively to be mistaken"[43]. He goes on to say that he also does not believe that, as some incompatibilist critics have claimed, the Frankfurt examples themselves fail or are deficient in some way. They are excellent counterexamples against the principle of alternative possibilities. However, van Inwagen also believes that free will is required for moral responsibility, something the Frankfurt examples do not account for[44], and which the consequence argument shows would not be possible in a causally determined system. While Frankfurt provides excellent arguments against PAP, van Inwagen argues this does *not* establish that moral responsibility and determinism are compatible: Van Inwagen, as many others, sees free will as a necessary component of moral responsibility, and Frankfurt himself admits that that is lacking in this case. Thus, for those who believe free will to be a prerequisite for moral responsibility, Frankfurt's theories are not helpful, as they operate on principles they explicitly reject: Another stalemate.

Many compatibilist theorists have sought to disprove the consequence argument[45], and criticism has tended to focus on the transfer of powerless principle, which van Inwagen himself admits is the part of his theory that is the hardest to prove or accept. While many compatibilists have opted to outright reject the consequence argument, there are also those who have seen it as sufficiently powerful or likely that they are inclined to accept it, and reworked their compatibilist accounts to accommodate it. John Martin Fischer counts amongst the latter, and formulated a theory of *semi*-compatibilism as a response to van Inwagen. Fischer distinguishes between two modes of control: Regulative control and guidance control. The former is the kind that is required for true alternative possibilities, whereas for the latter it is sufficient that an agent's behaviour issue from a "moderately reasons-responsive mechanism that is the agent's own"[46]. Fischer illuminates this principle with the following example: Suppose there are two cars, one with a faulty steering mechanism, and another that is mechanically sound. In the car that functions correctly, the driver has both guidance *and* regulative

[43] See van Inwagen 2004, p. 219.

[44] Frankfurt sees free will and moral responsibility as separate issues (one can be morally responsible without having free will). While free will requires moral responsibility, so Frankfurt, moral responsibility does not necessarily require free will. This is something van Inwagen is not willing to accept.

[45] See for example the modified Frankfurt examples provided by Mele and Stubb, as well as Stump's amended version. Both are discussed in some length in Fischer 2002, pp. 102-104.

[46] See Fischer in Fischer et al., p. 57.

control, as he can form the intention of turning either right or left, and is able to perform both actions. In the car with the faulty steering mechanism, unbeknownst to the driver, some crossed wires have led to the car only being able to turn right. The driver, though he may want to turn left, is unable to do so. As such, he does not have regulative control over his steering, as he cannot affect all theoretical options to come about. He does, however, have *guidance* control: He can create an intention of turning either right or left, and attempt to bring it about by turning the steering wheel. If he tries to turn right, he will succeed. If he attempts to turn left, he will fail. What is relevant to guidance control, is that the driver is free to make up his mind to try and perform one action or the other. If he is then able to perform it, that means he is also morally responsible. Thus, only guidance control is required for moral responsibility. Fischer surmises that while the consequence argument successfully demonstrates that regulative control over actions would not be possible in a deterministic setting, this does not mean that there is no guidance control, as an agent can still perform the one course of action open to them by their own volition, or try to act in another way and fail. In this fashion, he provides a compatibilist theory that takes into account the possibility that the consequence argument is true. However, as has been stated previously, critics like van Inwagen believe that free will is a necessary prerequisite for moral responsibility. So, for van Inwagen and other libertarians, Fischer's argument is still incoherent, as libertarian free will requires the kind of alternative possibilities only offered by *regulative* control, which are missing in this scenario. While Fischer's argument adds yet another dimension to the debate, it does not bring it any closer to conclusion.

Having described in a cursory manner some strands in the rich variety of compatibilist and libertarian thought, we will now briefly turn our attention to two smaller subsets, hard determinism and soft determinism, the distinction between which will prove of particular use when analysing medieval works on free will and their reception. Soft determinism is a compatibilist theory that affirms a deterministic worldview, whereas hard determinism takes an incompatibilist approach, while also affirming the truth of determinism. Thus, conclusions drawn by hard determinists about free will are the inverse of libertarian beliefs: As determinism and free will are incompatible, and because determinism is true, humans have neither free will, nor can they be held morally responsible for their actions. Hard determinist theories have been prevalent throughout history, and gained particular popularity in the enlightenment period up to the beginning of the 20th century. An influential proponent was Baruch Spinoza, who stated that someone or something can only be called free if "its own nature – with no input from anything else – makes it necessary for it to exist and causes it to act as it does. We say that a thing is 'compelled' if something other than itself makes it exist and causes it to act in this or that specific way"[47]. In addition, Spinoza adopted a necessitarian approach to events, as he theorized that "every event that happens and every true proposition necessarily follows given the nature of God, who necessarily exists […] and whose attributes are equally necessary"[48]. In this scheme, the only free being in the universe with freedom or free will is God, uncon-

[47] See Spinoza, p. 1.

[48] See Campbell 2011, p. 83.

strained as He is by anything other than his own necessity. Human beings, however, are not free, as they are the original sources neither of themselves nor of their actions. While hard determinist thought has been quite common in the past, it has always had the stigma of being a rather "cold view, according to most people, since it requires us to live without free will", and it is thus "not surprising" that many find this position hard to accept, as it seems "to require major changes in the way we think about human relations and attitudes, since it requires us to live without free will"[49]. Intuitively, it certainly seems to be the case that having neither free will in making decisions, nor having moral responsibility for their consequences would severely impact how societies treat concepts of blame and praise, and the way we value achievements or punish criminals.

Such hard determinist theories have, however, become rather thin on the ground after the first two decades of the 20th century[50], though Paul Edwards did defend a version of it in the 1950's[51]. Rather, what has become increasingly common are incompatibilist theories that are agnostic to the truth of determinism, but which concern themselves with exploring *hypothetical* scenarios in which determinism is true. Derk Pereboom, himself a proponent of such a theory, has termed this 'hard incompatibilism'. Ted Honderich also formulated a version of it. While hard incompatibilist theories also are not very common among contemporary scholarship, they have been very helpful in establishing what a hypothetical world without free will might look like. One important conclusion drawn by both Pereboom and Honderich is that, though we would have to give up some basic assumptions about guilt, praise, and blameworthiness, a determinist world without free will need not be a fatalistic and pointless affair. Pereboom makes the helpful comparison of having a good moral character, something that "people often come to believe they have […] largely because they were raised with love and skill. But those who come to believe this about themselves seldom experience dismay because of it. […] By contrast, they often come to feel more fortunate and thankful"[52]. This, Pereboom claims, demonstrates how not being the cause of one's own personality and moral character need not automatically lead to despair or fatalism, as is often claimed. Honderich expresses a similar sentiment when speaking of 'life hopes' like love, friendship, good health, or a good career. These pursuits that "give meaning to life would not be undermined by the belief that we are not the "originating" causes of our own characters". They only require that, given "the appropriate voluntary efforts", there is a "good chance that nothing will prevent

[49] See Kane 2005, p. 70.

[50] It was due in large part due to rapid developments in the field of quantum physics, which demonstrated the existence of indeterminacy (at least on the quantum level), that interest in hard determinist theories was greatly diminished.

[51] See Edwards. He makes the interesting suggestion that hard determinist theories are frequently misunderstood by philosophers, that they are used as "bogey men […] set up in order to score an easy victory" (See Edwards, p. 60), and argues that the truth of hard determinism would not impact our lives to the degree that is often assumed.

[52] See Pereboom in Fischer et al., p. 118.

us from realizing our cherished goals[53]. Thus, both Pereboom and Honderich seek to show how determinism does not necessarily lead to fatalism. That is not say that nothing would change, should determinism prove true at some future date. It might, for instance, require us to give up the notion of retributive punishment of criminals: As they had neither choice in their actions nor a choice in the creation of the moral character that led them *to* these actions, Honderich and Pereboom argue, they cannot be held personally responsible for their crimes in the same way as we now hold sane criminals responsible. It would not be fair to inflict retributive punishment upon them, as punishing someone who is not responsible for something is unjust. This, however, does not mean that crime must simply go unpunished. Penalties should still be meted out, only for different purposes. Punishment ought to be used as a deterrent for crime, or to reform and rehabilitate criminals. This is Honderich's solution to the problem of blame. Pereboom takes a slightly different approach, and proposes a quarantine solution for criminals: Individuals harmful to society should be isolated from that society, so they cannot do any further damage. The nature and length of that isolation must depend on the gravity of the offence, and the danger that the criminal poses if left to roam freely. Pereboom states that, as we also "have the right to quarantine carriers of severe communicable diseases to protect people, then for the same reason we also have the right to isolate the criminally dangerous"[54]. Honderich's approach to punishment focuses on changing the criminal's behaviour through deterrence or rehabilitation, whereas Pereboom's prioritizes the protection of society as a whole. These are two ways in which one can deal with the issue of crime and punishment in a deterministic universe. Regardless of what one thinks about the likeliness of a deterministic universe, these hard incompatibilist theories offer an interesting perspective of a world without free will that nevertheless does not lead to fatalism.

Soft determinist theories argue that determinism is not only true, but also compatible with free will, and thus fall under the general scope of compatibilist theories. Science up to the 20th century was mostly deterministic in nature, and as such soft determinist theories were quite popular, as it allowed for a determinist world where there was nevertheless room for free will. A dominant strain in soft determinist thought is what Edwards calls the 'Hume-Mill-Schlick Tradition'. Such theories, Edwards states, claim that when "we call an action "free", we never in any ordinary situation mean that it was uncaused", and that an action is free when "the agent was not compelled or constrained to perform it"[55]. Thus, like modern compatibilist theories, soft determinist thought locates free will not in indetermined action, but in *lack of constraint*. In this way, it sees free will and determinism as compatible. As with modern compatibilism, the appeal of soft determinism is that it safeguards the common conception of free will even in a deterministic world. It goes without saying that the same counter arguments against other compatibilist theories can be brought to bear against soft determinism, as it operates on very similar premises. One additional charge levied against soft determinism warrants mentioning, which is stated most strongly and (in)famously by William James, who derides it as being

[53] See Kane 2005, p. 74.

[54] See Pereboom in Fischer et al., p. 116.

[55] See Edwards, p. 60.

nothing more than a "quagmire of evasion"[56], the philosophical equivalent of wanting to have your cake and eat it too: Believing determinism to be true yet being too afraid to face the hard consequences[57] that this proposition naturally entails. Those 'hard consequences', of course, are the result of an incompatibilist understanding of free will, a stance obviously not shared by compatibilists. One last stalemate.

This chapter has introduced various approaches to and views on the free will problem from a variety of philosophical perspectives. Though there are broad umbrella terms under which most theories fall, this by no means signifies that they are part of a monolithic whole, but merely denotes that they share some fundamental propositions. This intricate network also provides an excellent structural support for the examination carried out in this study: Though centred on medieval debates, the *types* of arguments used in the free will debate have changed relatively little over the centuries, and at least some broad structural analogues between theories can be drawn, if only to disambiguate certain ambiguous or obfuscating technical terms[58]. However, as debates in the 14th century were carried out in a theological context that has hitherto gone undiscussed, it would be prudent to first briefly outline some of the major developments within the free will debate from a theological perspective.

[56] See James in Edwards, p. 60.

[57] Namely that there is no free will, we are not morally responsible, etcetera.

[58] That such disambiguation is helpful at times is underlined by Hübener's conclusions that, when it comes to categorisation, the "amount of false-labelling is enormous". Translated from Hübener, p. 94. Original: "Die Zahl der Fehletikettierungen […] ist Legion".

Chapter III

Some Notes on Free Will and the Nominalist Controversy from Antiquity to the 14th Century

Whereas the previous chapter described major contemporary approaches to the issue of free will, this chapter seeks to describe some of the core concepts that informed theories on free will in the Middle Ages from a historical perspective, and delineates some developments in the nominalist controversy on which this study centres. This chapter does not intend to present a complete overview of the development of free will thought in the (pre-) Christian world, but rather seeks to introduce a loosely connected chain of theories and concepts that are important to understanding late-medieval philosophical debates connected to the issues of divine foreknowledge, predetermination, free will, and the debate between nominalists and realists that has been understood to have dominated 14th century thought. Particularly highlighted are those theories and strands of thought that are of relevance to the critical examination of the works of Thomas Bradwardine and Geoffrey Chaucer.

Accounts of the development of free will in philosophy typically start with Plato and Aristotle, though it has been posited by philosophers like Michael Frede that neither actually developed an account of free will as it is currently understood[1]. What Plato and Aristotle *do* subscribe to, states Frede, is a "closely related notion […] of somebody's willing or wanting something, in particular, somebody's willing or wanting to do something, the notion of *boulesthai* or of a *boulêsis*"[2]. This mode of willing shows similarities to free will in that it is essentially a rational form of desire, with which one can recognize that which is good and desire it. What we do not find, however, is the portrayal of this desire as a full-fledged *faculty*, nor is this desire portrayed as free from external influence. Some notes on motion, causation, and causal regression that are developed by Aristotle are important to the purposes of this study, however, as they are an important component of Thomas Bradwardine's conception of free will, which relies on an Aristotelian understanding of causal regression.

Aristotle posited that every object in motion must have been set in motion by another object: A rock flying through the air does so because it is thrown by a hand, that throw is caused by a movement of the arm, etcetera. Each instance of movement is thus part of a causal chain of other movements. From this, he derives "from the premise that everything in motion must be moved by something else the conclusion that there must be a first mover"[3].

[1] Namely as a rational faculty capable of making certain choices or decisions, for which one can be held accountable.

[2] See Frede, p. 20.

[3] See Kenny, p. 234. Thomas Aquinas summarizes Aristoteles' reasoning in the following manner: "In all ordered efficient causes, the first is the cause of the intermediate and the intermediate the cause of the last, whether there be one or many intermediates. The cause being removed, that of which it is the cause is removed. But if in efficient causes there is an infinite regress, none of the causes will be first.

In order to prevent an infinite regression of causes, Aristotle posited a first mover, who / which acts as a point of origin from which all other motion is generated. This first mover can also be labelled as an unmoved mover or uncaused cause, and is the only entity capable of spontaneous generation. Unsurprisingly, this prime mover has often been interpreted as a creating God giving the 'first push' in the generation of the universe and the various creatures that inhabit it. Indeed, this is how Bradwardine applies the theory. Chaucer, too, makes reference to a first mover in "The Knight's Tale". However, Aristotle himself did not see this first mover as a creator figure like Plato did, but rather portrayed it as an eternal and unchanging first mover: "Whereas for the Christian all finite things are existentially dependant on God, for Aristotle the world is independent on God as far as existence is concerned"[4]. This also explains a feature of Aristotelian thought that appears paradoxical at first glance: While arguing that there cannot be an infinite regress of causation, Aristotle also argued that the world had existed eternally. He posited that causation should not only be conceived of *temporally*, but also *hierarchically*. Centuries later, Thomas Aquinas demonstrated this point using the example of a father and his son: While the father is necessary for the son to have come about, he is *not* necessary for the actions the son takes later in life, such as using his hand to throw a rock. The son "is not dependant here and now on his father. But he is dependant here on other factors. Without the activity of the air, for instance, he could not himself act, and the life-preserving activity of the air is itself dependant here and now on other factors, and they in turn on other factors"[5]. So, for Aristotle, the eternity of the world need not necessarily contradict the finite regression of efficient causes, ending at a divine entity, as causal regression is not interpreted

---

Therefore, all others are removed, since they are intermediates. But this is manifestly false. Thus, we must recognize that there is a first efficient cause that is God". See Aquinas, p. 255. Note that the mode of causation under discussion here is the efficient cause. Aristotle distinguishes a total of four types of causation: Efficient (origin of a thing; a son is begot by his father), Material (material composition of a thing; The marble of a statue gives it certain characteristics), Formal (form and pattern of a thing; the length of a string determines the tone it produces when plucked), and final (the objective of a thing; a man throws a stone to hit a target). Ultimately, "Aristotle himself tells us that [these four modes of causation] are four types of answer to the question 'why?'". See Kenny, p. 152. Bradwardine, as is discussed in chapter four of this study, sees God as efficient, formal, and final cause of every action, while the material cause (which Bradwardine understands metaphorically, as the *intent* with which an action is carried out) belongs solely to man. He uses this to sidestep the potential complicity of God in Sin, or in actively wishing particular sins to come about.

[4] See Copleston, p. 65. For later Christian commentators this portrayal of God posed an obvious problem, as it "appeared to some [that] God was little more than a physical hypothesis to explain 'motion' or change". See Copleston, p. 65. Aristotle's teachings about an eternal world also posed obvious problems, making him at once a revered but simultaneously problematic source, whose application required careful negotiation.

[5] See Copleston, p. 122. It might also be noted that this line of reasoning might be applied to formulate a counterargument to van Inwagen's consequence argument: While there are causal links that stretch to before our lifetimes (and are thus beyond our control), it need not necessarily follow from this that what we do now is not under our control.

on solely temporal lines. If this God[6] is not a creator figure similar to the Christian God, it is worthwhile to briefly consider what Aristotle considered to be the nature of this divine being. He believed that "its life must be like the very best life: and the best thing in our life is intellectual thought. The delight which we reach in moments of sublime contemplation is a perpetual state in the unmoved mover"[7]. It begs the question, then, what exactly an unchanging unmoved mover would contemplate. For Aristotle, the answer is clear: it perpetually contemplates itself. He believed that "the value of a thought is dictated by the value of what is thought of; so if God were thinking of anything other than himself, he would be degraded to the level of what he is thinking of. So he must be thinking of himself, the Supreme Being, and his thinking is a thinking of thinking"[8]. Many aspects of Aristotle's theories on motion, causation, and causal regression caused considerable controversy over the centuries, particularly among Christian theologians, positing as they did an infinite world, and a God that is a mover rather than a creator. Beyond this, arguments have been brought to bear against the validity of Aristotle's reasoning and conclusions: Anthony Kenny, for example, succinctly describes the logical fallacies undermining central suppositions of Aristotle's theory of motion, concluding that "whichever series we start from, we fail to reach any unchanging, wholly simple, cosmic mover such as Aristotle holds out"[9]. The idea of God's self-contemplation has also met with many challenges, some even dismissing it as a nonsensical absurdity: If God only thinks about thinking, then that itself constitutes a thought and is thus a thought about thinking about thought, which then constitutes in turn a thought about thinking about a thought about a thought, rapidly regressing into an infinite spiral. Controversies and dismissals aside, Aristotle's postulations about causation, causal regression, and motion nevertheless exerted tremendous influence on medieval theories of motion, as well providing the basis for numerous proofs of the existence of God.

While Aristotle and Plato already produced highly developed accounts of choice and action, the specific concept of a free *will* emerges later, particularly in stoic philosophy. The stoic free will can be described as "the ability of a person to do what needs to be done of his own initiative, rather than being made to do it or ordered to do it; it refers to the freedom of the person to act as they see fit in pursuit of the good"[10]. Stoic free will centres on an 'up-to-usness' when it comes to willing and acting, requires an absence of constraint, and hinges on a voluntary choice to do good instead of evil. At the same time, however, it also supposes all humans to be "corrupted in their beliefs and attitudes, to be foolish"[11], perpetually tending towards bad or immoral decisions. Stoic free will is a perpetual uphill battle with one's own foolish nature, a struggle that only a select few have the capacity to surmount. However,

[6] Variously referred to by Aristotle as a singular entity, multiple divine beings, or simply as a divine force.

[7] See Kenny, p. 237.

[8] See Kenny, p. 237.

[9] See Kenny, p. 235.

[10] See Frede, p. 75.

[11] See Frede, p. 66.

though it may be hard to achieve, free will is still firmly within mortal grasp, provided one is wise and persistent enough. Humanity is thus divided between the fools (living and acting according to their foolishness) and the wise (who, having *overcome* their foolishness, act perpetually in accordance with the will of God and nature). The stoics also envisioned a deterministically ordered universe presided over by an omnipotent and omniscient God. Though most of their early writings have been lost, a hymn to Zeus composed by Cleanthes allows insights into the harmonizing nature and function of the stoic prime divinity:

> "O King of Kings
> Through ceaseless ages, God, whose purpose brings
> To birth, whate'er on land or in the sea
> Is wrought, or in high heaven's immensity:
> Save what the sinner works infatuate.
> Nay, but thou knowest to make the crooked straight:
> Chaos to thee is order: in thine eyes
> The unloved is lovely, who didst harmonise
> Things evil with things good, that there should be
> One Word through all things everlastingly"[12].

The stoics supposed the world to be "guided by a presiding God, [to be] purposefully and rationally ordered, that the world-governing laws are without gaps, that this universal order seems to be only breached in one instance: Namely, where humans foolishly believe that they can place themselves outside of this order"[13]. The stoic conception of time is likewise firmly deterministic, as everything that will occur in the future is foreknown necessarily by the Godhead[14]. The compatibility of elements of stoic and Christian religious thought is highlighted in the sermon of St. Paul to the Athenians, in which he displays familiarity with, and approval of ideas expressed by the Zeus hymn[15]. Though these views on God presented in the Zeus hymn certainly seem as though they might also be appropriate for a Jew or Christian, this does not mean that their conceptions of the nature of this divine creator are necessarily identical. The stoic God is a type of 'designing fire', deeply invested and immediately residing in the material world and its elemental forces[16], rather than being an entity far

[12] See Adam in Kenny, p. 242.

[13] Translated from Wieland, p. 292. Original: "daβ die Welt vom herrschenden Gott gelenkt, zweckmäßig und vernünftig eingerichtet ist, daβ die die Welt beherrschenden Gesetzlichkeit lückenlos ist, daβ diese universale Ordnung nur an einer Stelle durchbrochen zu sein scheint: dort nämlich, wo Menschen törichterweise meinen, sich auβerhalb dieser Ordnung stellen zu können".

[14] See also Hirschberger, p. 271

[15] See also Kenny, p. 81.

[16] Cicero discusses the stoic concept of God at length. He describes the divine power as theorized by Chrysippus (perhaps the most influential of the early stoics) as something that "resides in reason, and in the soul and mind of the whole of nature. He calls the world itself god, and the all-pervasive World-Soul, or the dominant part of the soul that is located in mind and reason. He also calls god the universal,

removed from our perceptible and physical realm.

The combination of a concept of unforced free will on the one hand and the notion of determinism on the other, begs the question of how the two can co-exist. Stoicism takes a compatibilist approach, believing that determinism and free will are *not* mutually exclusive. It offers separate explanations of how this compatibilism is possible for fools and for the wise. In the case of fools, the matter is simple: They have no free will to begin with, so there is no paradox. A fool can act justly, but such an act will result only by chance from his foolish nature and consequently has no value. They are, for all intents and purposes, in their nature very similar to Harry Frankfurt's wanton, acting impulsively rather than rationally. The case of the wise man is more complex: It involves a voluntary recognition and acceptance of nature or God's will, and an acting according to that recognition. As such, God will not "have to do anything to bring about the wise person's compliance", as they "will do what, according to the divine plan, [they are] meant to do, namely, the best possible thing to do in this situation"[17]. It thus uses the following definition of freedom: Rather than freedom of choice and action in a libertarian sense, the stoic wise man sees freedom as "coinciding with necessity", and consequently believes that "only a fool would want something else as that which must be". Any other mode of willing would be nothing but "arbitrary will and as such mere effluence of passion and disorder"[18]. What separates the wise man from the fool is the same thing that makes determinism and free will compatible: A recognition of, and voluntary submission to, a divine plan. The wise man recognizes that which must be and acts in accordance with this[19].

Stoic theories on free will proved influential almost immediately, and spread like wildfire to other philosophic schools, and were quickly and eagerly appropriated by the nascent Christian religion. This is not to say that all propositions by the stoics found equal appeal to other philosophic doctrines and religious groups. Their views on an omnipotent and immediately present divinity, as well as their determinist worldview proved particularly unpalatable to Peripatetics as well as many Platonists[20]. To Christians however, these notions proved compatible with their own developing theology, which may account for the rapid integration of stoic concepts into Christian thought. While many subsequent Christian theologians certainly took up the notion of a compatible free will and predetermined world, the solution of voluntary acceptance did not take hold[21].

---

all embracing, common nature of things, and the power of fate and the necessity of future events". See Cicero in Kenny, pp. 242-243.

[17] See Frede, p. 79.

[18] Translated from Hirschberger, p. 273. Original: "Sie falle in Wirklichkeit mit der Notwendigkeit zusammen. Nur der Tor wolle etwas Anderes, als was sein muss. [...] Ein anderer Wille wäre Willkürwille und als solcher nur Ausfluss der Affekte der Leidenschaft und der Ordnungslosigkeit".

[19] This view, does, however, seem to limit the role of free will: rather than actions and decisions being 'up to us', stoic free will involves an informed assent to the inevitable as the best possible plan.

[20] See also Frede, p. 103.

[21] The notion that man could fully understand God's will and plans would be considered hubris of the

One of the earliest points of entry of a rigorously developed account of free will in Christian theology can be found in the work of Origen, who lived and wrote around the third century AD[22]. Origen's Christian philosophic system is characterized by its optimistic nature, which is most clearly expressed in his doctrine of *apokatastasis,* which posits that "if God is pure goodness, so that divine punishments are always therapeutic, not merely retributive, and if freedom is inalienable in all created rational beings, then ultimately even the most wicked will be purified by divine love and fit for salvation"[23]. A similar positivity is present in Origen's theories on free will, to which he grants considerable attention in his work *On First Principles,* which has only survived in a translation by Rufus that was most likely altered and expurgated. While Origen adapts the notion of a free will that is defined by an 'up-to-usness' of actions, he rejects stoic views on determinism and the foolish nature of mankind. According to Origen, "our life is not determined by God or by any other power or force which might set us up in a certain way nor by fate as, for instance, the determination of astral powers"[24]. This passage also describes two other important ways in which Origen deviates from stoic thought. Firstly, he holds that all rational created beings possess free will from birth and can never lose it: Even daemons and Satan are still rational creatures, are in possession of free will, which will eventually allow them to be redeemed in the eyes of God. Secondly, Origen's wise man is not infallible. Whereas the stoic wise man has recognized the natural way of action and will always act accordingly with every decision, Origen's sage can still make mistakes, as they are themselves responsible for each individual decision and thus remain fallible. However, these isolated mistakes do not damn them, as Origen's God is an entirely benevolent and thoroughly forgiving entity. In this fashion, Origen arrives at a free will theory somewhat like the libertarian view, locating free will in voluntary action combined with an indeterministic worldview. While Origen played a key part in integrating philosophical principles into Christianity, his specific views on free will did not catch hold[25].

---

highest calibre: It could be seen to require that man be able to penetrate the workings of the divine mind, and thus intellectually put man on equal footing with Him.

[22] The notion of free will had played a role in Christianity since the writings of Justin Martyr and Tatian in the 2nd century AD, but it was Origen that made perhaps the greatest efforts to incorporate these philosophical ideas into early Christian theology. See also Johnson, pp. 58-59 and Frede, pp. 102-104.

[23] See McManners, p. 61. Because of his radical notions (which included the proposition that even Satan would eventually reach a state of salvation), Origen was already a highly controversial figure in his own lifetime, and many of his theories were rejected as heretical after his death.

[24] See Frede, p. 119.

[25] Particularly the notion that even Satan would be eventually incorporated into the good met heavy resistance. In general, Christian theologians have taken great care to avoid portraying evil or sin as being part of the good. Chaucer's "The Pardoner's Tale" contains an interesting undercurrent that deals with this subject, as the Pardoner constructs an image of himself as a man wholly wicked who is yet able to inspire genuine piety in others. It is also a prominent issue in Bradwardine, who sees every act as essentially good, which leads to the dilemma of what is to be made of sinful or bad actions. Bradwardine turns to the Augustinian notion of evil as privation and the separation of act and intent to extricate himself from co-opting evil as part of the good, and to avoid making God complicit in sin.

Of all early theologians, it was Augustine's doctrines on free will, divine foreknowledge, and grace that would prove to be defining in (and dictating the terms of) the free will debate in the centuries to come. They also play a major role in the 'nominalist controversy' in the 14th century[26]. Born in 354 in northern Africa as the son of a Christian mother and a Roman father who converted shortly before his death, Augustine only found religion after a tumultuous youth. He became a Manichean, a sect founded in the third century by Mani, which supposed the world to be "ordered by a radical opposition of up and down, light and dark, spirit and flesh" and the "product of an evil demiurge"[27]. Only the predestined could be raised up from this realm of darkness into the realm of light, something made possible by the descent of an emissary of that realm. After spending almost a decade in this sect, Augustine converted to Christianity in 386, and renounced the Manichean dualistic conception of the world[28]. Over the course of his life, he dedicated many of his writings to subjects like free will, the nature of God, time, and predetermination, all of which have proven invaluable and eminently influential to the development of Christian theology as a whole. For the purposes of this work, several important propositions posited by Augustine must be considered in further detail. First is the pivotal notion that God exists outside of our temporal realm as a timeless entity that simultaneously inhabits past, present, and future, which Augustine phrases in the following manner in a direct address to God:

> "Furthermore, although you are before time, it is not in time that you precede it. If this were so, you would not be before all time. It is in eternity, which is supreme over time because it is a neverending present, that you are at once before all past time and after all future time. […] Your years are completely present to you all at once, because they are at a permanent standstill. […] Your today is eternity. […] You made all time; you are before all time; and the 'time', if such we may call it, when there was no time at all"[29].

This definition of God as an entity outside of time was to prove a key element in future discussions of the topic of divine foreknowledge, though, as William Hasker aptly notes, it is "never employed to this end by Augustine himself"[30]. On foreknowledge, Augustine remarks that it neither compels one to action nor impedes freedom, which is a second important con-

[26] They are, for example, a major influence on Bradwardine. 'Realists' in general (and Bradwardine in particular) have frequently been portrayed as radical Augustinians seeking to 'turn back the clock' to the 4th century.

[27] Translated from Flasch 2000, p. 40. Original: " […] herrscht ein radikaler Gegensatz von Oben und Unten, Licht und Finsternis, Geist und Fleisch. Die sichtbare Welt ist das Werk eines bösen Demiurgen".

[28] Augustine later came to see evil as a privation of good, rather than having actual substance of its own. Likewise, he retracted the belief in an evil cosmic power. See also Augustine in Peterson et al., pp. 292-296.

[29] See Augustine 1966, p. 263.

[30] See Hasker, p. 4.

tribution to the debate[31]. He states that the "foreknowledge that a man will sin does not of itself necessitate the sin […] As you, by your foreknowledge, know what someone is going to do of his own will, so God forces no one to sin; yet He foreknows those who will sin by their own will"[32]. To the effect of divine foreknowledge of future events[33], Augustine takes a compatibilist approach, seeing no contradiction between a single path into the future and the possibility for free will. This compatibilist outlook also becomes apparent in his response to concerns about predetermination raised by Cicero, which Augustine describes as follows:

> "If all future things have been foreknown […], there is a certain order of things foreknown by God; and if a certain order of things, then a certain order of causes, for nothing can happen which is not preceded by some efficient cause. But if there is a certain order of causes according to which everything happens which does happen, then by fate […] all things happen which do happen. But if this be so, then there is nothing in our own power, and there is no such thing as freedom of will; and if we grant that, says he, the whole economy of life is subverted"[34].

Cicero's issues with the stoic doctrine of fate closely resemble van Inwagen's Consequence Argument, and the Transfer of Powerlessness Principle: If, through God, fate, or causal determinism, all future events are foreknown or predetermined, this seems to leave no room for free will: Each action or event has only a single possible outcome, leaving no room for alternate possibilities or up-to-usness, which Cicero[35] clearly sees as a necessary pre-condition for free will. Having previously affirmed that the entirety of the future is known to God through His divine foreknowledge, this leaves Augustine two ways to deal with this problem: The first is to affirm an incompatibilist approach, and accept that free will is impossible. The second is to adopt a compatibilist approach. Choosing the latter option, Augustine argues that Cicero's arguments are incoherent as he feels it "does not follow that, though there is for God a certain order of all causes, there must therefore be nothing depending on the free exercise of our own wills, for our wills themselves are included in that order of causes which is certain to God, and is embraced by His foreknowledge, for human wills are also causes of human actions"[36], bringing us back to the notion that foreknowledge does not necessitate, a statement Cicero would likely have disagreed with.

---

[31] Bradwardine followed Augustine in this suggestion (though he deviated from him in significant ways), though many have not interpreted his works in this fashion. The tension between foreknowledge and free will is also frequently thematised by Chaucer, particularly in *Troilus and Criseyde* and "The Nun's Priest's Tale".

[32] See Augustine 1964, p. 94.

[33] Which, to all intents and purposes, fulfils a function very similar to causal determinism in secular philosophy, positing a single, predetermined future.

[34] See Augustine 1950, p. 153.

[35] Evidently taking up an incompatibilist stance.

[36] See Augustine 1950, p. 154.

A further theory that has had tremendous influence on future discussions is Augustine's doctrine of grace, which takes on an especially pivotal role in his later writings. It proposes that mankind lives with the perpetual and unbearable burden of original sin, and is utterly unable to uplift themselves from this state without divine grace, on the bestowing of which they have no influence whatsoever: grace is meted out at the sole discretion of God, and it is impossible for man to prepare themselves for grace "through contemplation and moral desires"[37]. Only those who are predetermined to be saved will be saved, and no action anyone undertakes can do anything to alter this. Thus, those not predetermined for salvation from the start will never be redeemed. Adam's original sin is portrayed as "equally inheritable as determining", and which "weakened the human nature until physical and spiritual death resulted from it[38]. The necessity of […] Christ's grace lies in the fact that the human *natura* has been *vitiata et damnata* (perverted and spoiled) since the fall"[39]. Augustine's ever greater concern for issues related to grace and original sin signalled a move away from his more optimistic early writings, which focused on the autonomy of the free will of man, even in the face of a determined world with a creator that has full foreknowledge of all future events. Simultaneously, it also represented a movement towards Stoicism: His later work "relies very extensively on the stoic notion of a free will, and correspondingly of an enslaved will, and on how in the stoic universe God makes use of the enslaved will to direct the course of events providentially, except that in Augustine this turns into a doctrine of grace for those who benefit from God's predetermination"[40]. This, however, should not been taken to mean that Augustine in his later works simply abandons his earlier conception of free will: In his *Retractions,* written around 427, Augustine insisted he still stands behind the concept of free will as he outlined it in his early work *On Free Will.* He stated that this work was written in defence against the Manicheans who, Augustine claimed, "wish to assert the existence of a certain principle of evil, immutable and co-eternal with God"[41]. As *On Free Will* only sought to argue against "those who deny that free choice of will is the cause of evil"[42], Augustine did not deem it necessary to treat extensively of divine grace, which he considered an unrelated topic. For Augustine, then, there is no incongruity between his earlier and later works despite their shift of focus from human autonomy to man's dependence on God.

[37] Translated from Flasch 2000, p. 46. Original: " […] sich durch Nachdenken und sittliches Wollen auf die Gnade vorzubereiten".

[38] It is on this issue that Bradwardine most radically departs from Augustine, as he largely sidesteps the issue of original sin. He does, however, insist on the necessity of grace, though he exhorts his audience not to succumb to fatalism because of this.

[39] Translated from van Geest in Augustine 2004. Original: "De zonde was voor hem dus even overerfbaar als bepalend en verzwakte de menselijke natuur tot de fysieke en geestelijke dood erop volgde. De noodzaak voor deze genade van Christus ligt in het feit dat de menselijke *natura* sinds de val *vitiata et damnata* (verdorven en veroordeeld) is".

[40] See Frede, p. 174.

[41] See Augustine 1964, p. 152.

[42] See Augustine 1964, p. 152.

Much of Augustine's output was polemic in nature. While his earlier works aimed their arrows mostly at the Manichean sect or the Donatist[43] Christian community, Augustine spent the last decades of his life arguing against the so-called Pelagians. These polemics are especially relevant in discussion of Bradwardine, as he wrote his *De Causa Dei* in a polemic style directed against '*pelagii moderni*'. The Pelagian controversy of Augustine's time is thus a vital component of what Bradwardine reacted against in the 14th century. Perhaps the most important thing to keep in mind when it comes to discussions on the ideas of the British monk Pelagian and his purported followers[44], is that current views of these 'Pelagians' largely depend on what has been written *about them* rather than what they actually wrote, as most of their writings have been lost. And, seeing as many Pelagian claims were later condemned as heretical, these reactions to Pelagian writings were not exactly kind, nor inclined to show any measure of sympathy or support. As Augustine spent so much of his efforts discussing the Pelagians, his *critique* of Pelagianism became the standard account of what Pelagian and his followers supposedly actually argued. And herein lies the problem, as Augustine, "like most late ancient authors, was not particularly eager to do justice to his opponents"[45]. Even the notion of a unified Pelagian system of beliefs is a construct proposed by Augustine rather than something with which these purported Pelagians identified themselves. We shall first consider how Augustine portrayed the Pelagians, and then consider how it deviates from the way his opponents have presented themselves, limiting discussion to the consideration of three core issues: child baptism, grace, and original sin. It is also in this arena that Augustine's greatest grudges against the Pelagians are situated, as he claimed that Pelagian beliefs about these three topics demonstrate that they held human autonomy in such high regard that God becomes virtually obsolete in the process.

Original sin and child baptism became central issues in many of Augustine's later works, particularly those aimed at the Pelagians[46]. Augustine's views on original sin operate on the assumption that its burden "has cost us our freedom altogether. We are now enslaved by our libido, by our inappropriate attachments. And, as in Stoicism, if we are not virtuous, wise, and free, nothing we can do is right. Even if we do the right thing, it will be done partly with the wrong motivation. It is only if we are liberated that we shall recover this freedom to act rightly and do the right thing with the right motivation"[47]. Divine grace is the sole thing that can redeem man. This grace, claimed Augustine, is freely given by God, and cannot be earned: One either has it or not, and those who do not have it can never reach salvation. He also sees bap-

[43] The Donatists demanded that for a priest's work to be effective, he must be unblemished and free of sin. The "Pardoner's Tale" and the "Parson's Tale" by Chaucer also thematise this issue of whether a '*shiten sheparde*' can have '*clene sheep*'.

[44] In Augustine's time, the most notorious 'Pelagians' (apart from Pelagian himself) were Caelestius and Julian of Aeclanum, against whose theories Augustine also directed withering critiques.

[45] See Frede, p. 160.

[46] Augustine 2004, for example, contains four such writings, all of which are polemics against the Pelagians.

[47] See Frede, pp. 166-167.

tism as a prerequisite for grace and the remission of original sin: After all, what use is the sacrament, if salvation is also possible without it? These beliefs in turn led him to adopt an approach to the subject of child baptism that has been frequently criticized as harsh: If a child dies before it is baptized, it cannot have received grace, and thus is incapable of reaching salvation. While it *is* the logical consequence of his theories on grace and original sin, the concept that innocent children, who have not even had the opportunity or capacity to commit sinful acts, can still be damned proved a highly disputed issue, and lies at the core of many of Augustine's altercations with theologians like Pelagian, Caelestius, and Julian of Aeclanum[48]. As many of the works of the 'Pelagians' were subsequently denounced as heretical and thus have not survived, a great deal of our knowledge of their theories have only survived through Augustine's refutations of them, and he was not inclined to look upon them favourably, or, indeed, objectively. From Augustine's writing arises the image of Pelagianism as an organized and theologically consistent movement, which holds in common a number of core assumptions that Augustine deems unacceptable.

Augustine claims that a core tenet of Pelagian thought is a wholesale denial of the hereditary nature original sin, stating that Pelagians believe that sin "has been passed on from the first man to other people not through inheritance, but by following [Adam's example]". Subsequently, they also "do not wish to believe that with the little children, too, original sin is lifted through baptism, as they claim it is not present at all in new-borns"[49]. In this matter, then, Augustine sees the Pelagians as taking an Origenist approach to the problem of original sin. This is unsurprising, as his attention to Pelagian "was first drawn […] by Jerome, who was still engaged in stamping out Origen's belief in the perfectibility of the soul, and who instantly recognized in Pelagian a modern Origenist"[50]. Though this purported stance on original sin and child baptism would already have been sufficient to draw Augustine's ire, it was on the topic of grace that Augustine saw an even greater threat to acceptable Church doctrine. He reports that the Pelagians claim that "God's grace is awarded in accordance to our merits",

[48] While Augustine's conclusions about child baptism might seem harsh at first, they appear less so when viewed in light of his theory that we are predestined to be doomed or saved: As our fate is decided in advance of even our birth, Augustine argues, it would be illogical to be believe that predetermination only applies to adults and not children, or that predestination is fairer in one case than in another. It would be more sensible to contest the justness of predetermination in its entirety, then to only question it in this instance. It also should be noted that Augustine does try to 'soften the blow' of his conclusion, as he states that "it can be correctly claimed that little children that die unbaptized will receive only the lightest condemnation". Translated from Augustine 2004, p. 65. Original: "Verder kan terecht gezegd worden dat kleine kinderen, die sterven zonder gedoopt te zijn, de lichste veroordeling zullen krijgen".

[49] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 54. Original: "En die zonde zou vanuit de eerste mens niet door overerving, maar door navolging zijn overgegaan op andere mensen. Daarom willen ze niet geloven dat ook bij kleine kinderen door de doop de erfzonde wordt weggenomen, omdat ze beweren dat die in het geheel niet aanwezig is in pasgeborenen".

[50] See Johnson, p. 119.

that this constitutes "most certainly a denial of grace", and that it "testifies to an irreverence against God"[51]. Augustine also claims that the Pelagians "argue that we have ourselves to thank for taking up our faith, and that we also owe to ourselves our perseverance in this faith"[52]. Augustine fears that such an extravagant focus on human willpower diminishes or even nullifies the power of God: If humans are capable of rearing themselves up from dust to the most exalted state possible, this could be taken as a relegation of God to the function of a mere gatekeeper[53]. This, ultimately, is the notion his polemics against the Pelagians sought to combat: Augustine believes that they emphasize human autonomy to such a degree as to make God irrelevant. This concern prompts a virulent response, which proved influential in the ultimate condemnation of Pelagian and Caelestius, and the banishment of their followers from Rome by edict of Emperor Honorius in 418. This represented a landmark decision that served to "systematize the teachings of the 'Pelagians' into a condemnable whole that denounces that man needs divine grace in every moment and for every action"[54]. This group condemnation cemented the status of Pelagians as a consolidated movement, rather than a series of (heretical) claims by individual scholars. The question remains, however, whether the 'Pelagians' actually saw *themselves* as part of such a movement, and whether they did indeed hold all the opinions that Augustine and others accused them of.

Traditionally, the Pelagians have been received by later generations of theologians and scholars in exactly the manner described by Augustine and in their condemnation by Honorius: They are understood to have been an organized movement that rejected the necessity for divine grace, contested the transferability of original sin, and denounced the practice of child baptism[55]. Recent publications have demonstrated that this reputation was imposed upon the 'Pelagians' by their opponents: They "presented the pluralism of 'Pelagianism' as if

[51] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, 390. Original: "Het was de bewering van de pelagianen, dat Gods genade geschonken wordt overeenkomstig onze verdiensten! En dat laatste is toch zonder meer een volkomen ontkenning van de genade! Die opvatting getuigt van ondankbaarheid jegens God".

[52] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, 391. Original: "Zij argumenteren dat we van dat begin van het geloof eens te meer van ons zelf hebben, als we ook de volharding tot het einde hebben van ons zelf".

[53] Not to mention that it would also require God to be changing His mind constantly: If it is up to man alone whether they will be saved, that means whether they will be saved or not depends on the sum of their actions in life up until that point: A man may enter this world an unblemished infant, fall from grace during a sinful adolescence, only to regain it by repenting in his later years. Augustine, who sees God as a singular, immutable entity, naturally finds this image of a divinity that constantly flip-flops between different opinions thoroughly absurd and impossible.

[54] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 22. Original: "Kortom, het systematiseert het denken van de 'pelagianen' tot een veroordelingswaardig geheel dat […] ontkent dat de mens op elk ogenblik en bij iedere handeling de genade God's nodig heeft".

[55] Bradwardine also understood Pelagianism in this fashion and, seeing nascent elements of it in contemporary scholarship, wrote his great polemic against these *pelagii moderni.*

it were a coherent system". However, it has "become apparent through rigorous analysis of the writings of the 'Pelagians', that this systemisation is incorrect", and that it has become "more and more apparent that firstly the 'Pelagians' did not espouse the theses of which they were accused and secondly that the theses they did endorse cannot simply be considered heterodox"[56]. A brief look at the differing stances of Pelagian, Julian of Aeclanum, and Caelestius on issues related to grace, original sin, and child baptism highlights the divergence of thought within this supposedly consistent movement, and shows that several of the charges levied against them are inaccurate.

One of the objections posed by Augustine to Pelagian is that the latter supposedly posited that it is possible for a man to live completely without sin on his own strength. Augustine's objections to this are twofold: Firstly, this sinless man would be like unto Christ. Secondly, if one could live sinlessly on their own strength, there would be no need for grace or other divine aid in reaching salvation. While Pelagian does develop an account which posits that "it is possible for an individual to uphold God's commandments", and makes remarks upon "the possibility of a just and sinless life"[57], he "never believed that it is actually possible for man to be without sin in their earthly existence"[58]. Augustine thus twists a purely theoretical exploration about a potential capacity for sinlessness to signify something real and practicable, an idea that Pelagian himself explicitly does not endorse or pursue. The need for grace is actually a central concern in Pelagian theology, as the "imitation of Christ's example according to Pelagian is a process of interiorization, wherewith God's aid is indispensable. In short, Pelagian never denies the continuous human need for God's grace, as he himself constantly reiterates"[59]. His theories are in close alignment to Augustine's earlier free will theory as outlined in *On Free Will*, of which Pelagian seems to have been aware: He cited Augustine approvingly on several occasions, to the latter's great chagrin[60]. On the issue of a transferable original sin,

[56] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 12. Original: "[Zij] stelden de pluraliteit van het 'pelagianisme' voor als een coherent system […]. De laatste decennia is door een doorgedreven studie van de geschriften van de 'pelagianen' gebleken dat deze systematizering niet correct is. […] Op deze wijze werd meer en meer duidelijk dat ten eerste de 'pelagianen' eigenlijk niet de stellingen huldigden waarvan ze beschuldigt warden en dat ten tweede de stellingen die ze wel aanhielden niet zomaar als heterodox kunnen worden beschouwd".

[57] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 24. Original: "Pelagian stelt aldus dat het voor het individu mogelijk is om Gods verordeningen te onderhouden. Dit roept de mogelijkheid van een rechtvaardig en zondeloos leven op".

[58] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 25. Original: "Ten derde heeft Pelagian nooit geloofd dat het voor de mens feitelijk mogelijk is om in het aardse leven zonder zonde te zijn".

[59] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 25. Original: "Het navolgen van Christus' voorbeeld is volgens Pelagian een process van interiorisering, waarbij Gods hulp onontbeerlijk is. Kortom, Pelagian ontkent de voortdurende menselijke nood aan God's genade niet, zoals hij trouwens zelf voortdurend herhaalde".

[60] See also Augustine 2004, pp. 263-264. While Augustine does not refer to Pelagian by name, it can be

Pelagian remained silent, expressing no strong opinion one way or the other and limiting himself to the statement that sin came into this world with Adam's original sin. He did support the practice of child baptism, just not necessarily for the same reason as Augustine: Pelagian sees it as the introduction into the Christian community, rather than as a sacrament required for the remission of original sin. On the issue of whether unbaptized children are destined for damnation, Pelagian also made no comment. It should be noted here that Augustine's theories about original sin and its relation to child baptism were themselves controversial in his own time and not necessarily commonly accepted doctrine. Alternative views on child baptism should not automatically be brushed off as heterodox because they do not align with Augustine's theories on the subject. The nature and import of baptism were not yet a dogmatic fixture in Augustine's time, nor was its relation to the remission of sin. Though Pelagian does not provide many comments on original sin and its transferability, and certainly does not seem to suggest any obviously heterodox claims about the subject, his contemporary Caelestius does argue against the Augustinian doctrines on these concepts, and indeed makes them a focal point of his theology.

Caelestius is indeed staunchly opposed to Augustine's notion of a transferable original sin, something that sets him apart from Pelagian. The latter particularly stressed the need to distinguish his own theories from those of Caelestius during the synod of Diospolis in 415. Among the ideas attributed to him that Pelagian rejected during this synod were the theory that only Adam was harmed through original sin (Pelagian believed Adam's original sin brought sin into the world, thus effecting all humans born after the fall), and Caelestius' denial that grace constituted Christian goodness, on the grounds that if a Christian has failed to do good, this would mean grace has failed (Pelagian did believe this to be so). Caelestius also seems to have fundamentally opposed the transferrable nature of original sin, something on which Pelagian remains nebulous. Caelestius was apparently in concordance with Pelagian in believing child baptism to be a necessary step for introduction into the Christian life. Though Pelagian was acquitted during this synod[61], this represents a clear instance in which the opinions of Caelestius and Pelagian were conflated, despite repeated insistence by Pelagian on the demonstrable differences in their theologies: Pelagian focused on the interplay between grace and free will, whereas Caelestius is directly concerned with providing counterarguments against the Augustinian conception of original sin and the fate of unbaptized children. After an outrage of Carthaginian and other bishops following Pelagian's acquittal, Innocentius "refuses to ratify the synodal decisions from Diospolis and condemns Pelagian and Caelestius. He based this decision on the accusation that they portrayed human freedom as equal to God's grace, and see divine assistance as superfluous"[62], a statement *neither* of the two endorsed. Though Innocentius' successor, Zosimus, overturned this condemnation later that same year,

inferred from the context that it is Pelagian that is being referred to.

[61] Possibly due in part to the fact that none of the attending Greek bishops were able to thoroughly evaluate Pelagian's Latin writings.

[62] Translated from Dupont and Lamberigts in Augustine 2004, p. 19. Original: "Hij weigert de synodebesluiten van Diospolis te ratificeren en veroordeelt Pelagian en Caelestius. Dit laatste doet hij

Emperor Honorius eventually condemned both men anew in 418 through imperial edict, without prior consultation with either the pope or other Church authorities. Thus, the condemnation of Pelagian and Caelestius occurred under rather vague premises, and was not the result of a synodal decision, or any other form of extensive inquest or thorough evaluation of their writings.

A third important figure, Julian of Aeclanum, entered the Pelagian controversy when he, along with several other bishops, refused to sign Honorius' edict, leading to their immediate expulsion from Rome on the grounds of supporting a heretical movement. Inserted into the Pelagian movement through his refusal to ratify their condemnation, Julian's issues with Augustine were founded on his stance on the relationship between sexuality and original sin[63]. Aeclanum distinguished between two types of desires: The *concupiscentia nuptiarum*, or desire for marriage, and *concupiscentia carnis*, desire for the flesh. After the fall, Augustine claimed, only the former is proper, whereas the latter is sinful. Julian took issue with this, writing in his *Ad Turbanium* that Augustine's outlook on original sin and sexuality is Manichean, focusing on a dualist conception of the body (torn between opposing forms of good and evil sexual desire) while forgetting that it was made by a divinity that is all-good, and that the body (and thus both the *concupiscentia nuptiarum* as well as the *concupiscentia carnis*) therefore must also be good. He did not seem to have held particularly aberrant or heterodox beliefs about original sin or its transferrable nature. His focus on sexuality, and the accusation that Augustine had a Manichean conception of the human body further sets Julian apart from Caelestius and Pelagian.

Following the edict of Honorius, Pelagianism was solidified into a consistent body of theories in Carthage on the 1st of May 418, where it was defined as a movement that included "anyone who holds that Adam was created as a mortal, that child baptism is not necessary, and that celebrates a reduced and minimalistic conception of grace". As has been demonstrated, neither Pelagian, Caelestius, nor Julian ever explicitly endorsed any of these theses. Despite this fact, and the substantial differences in the individual theologies of these men, it was in this way that they have come to be known and defined to successive generations of scholars and theologians. That they came to be associated with these opinions, is in large part due to deductions drawn by Augustine from one opinion these three men *did* hold in common, namely that child baptism does not necessarily entail the remission of original sin but represents an entry into the Christian community. From this opinion, Augustine argued, stem all the others for which the imperial edict condemned them. His reasoning is as follows: If one rejects the notion that the function of child baptism is the remission of original sin, one must also reject the notion of transferrable original sin: If unbaptized children are un-

op basis van de heel algemene beschuldiging dat ze de menselijke vrijheid als gelijkwaardig aan Gods genade beschouwen en de goddelijke assistentie als overbodig achten".

[63] Augustine describes this relationship in *On Marriage and Concupiscence,* another polemic against the Pelagians.

blemished, one rejects the transferability of original sin[64]. This rejection has two further consequences: The first is that its rejection is also a denial of the notion that we are mortal because of original sin, resulting (according to Augustine) in a belief that Adam would have been mortal even if he had not sinned. The second is that if we are not burdened by original sin, we have no need for grace: Augustine holds grace to be necessary exactly *because* of a transferred original sin, which not only degraded Adam but every one of his offspring, no matter how remote. Not believing in transferred original sin thus for Augustine constitutes a lack of belief in grace, which in turn leads to an overestimation of man at the expense of God. Caelestius, Julian, and Pelagian did not, in fact, draw these same conclusions from the original premise. This, however, leads back to the problem of dialectical stalemates discussed in the previous chapter: This line of argumentation is coherent only if one presupposes the correctness of the Augustinian view of the relationship between grace and original sin. As Pelagian, Caelestius, and Julian held different views on that relationship, however, it is not a fair analysis to make. They were not judged according to their own theses, but by Augustine's interpretation of their claims filtered through the lens of his own opinions.

There remains one additional figure from the ancient world whose views cannot be overlooked in any discussion of free will and predetermination in the Middle Ages, namely Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius. Though his contributions to the field of philosophy are manifold, two of them are especially relevant to the discussion at hand. One is Boethius' expansion of the Augustinian notion of divine eternity, the other his corresponding definition of divine foreknowledge. The Boethian conception of divine eternity, which afterwards found widespread acceptance, defines it as "that which grasps and possesses simultaneously the entire fullness of an unending life, a life which lacks nothing of the future and has lost nothing of the fleeting past. Such a being must necessarily always be its whole self, unchangingly present to itself, and the infinity of changing time must be as one present before him"[65]. This view of God as infinite and unchanging also informs Bradwardine's conception of Him. Boethius uses this to develop a compatibilist worldview wherein free will and an omniscient divinity can coexist without contradiction. He makes a distinction between two types of necessity, stating that "one is simple: for instance, it is necessary that all men are mortal. The other is conditional: for instance, if you really know that a man is walking, he must be walking. For what a man really knows cannot be otherwise than it is known to be. But the conditional kind of necessity by no means implies the simple kind"[66]. Boethius then admits that divine foreknowledge in the sense that God knows that something will occur before it actually occurs would constitute simple necessity, and preclude free will, as God's knowledge of the future would make it necessary: "'If God know that I will sin, 'I will sin' is a necessary truth", which "is enough to destroy our free will" if it is true. If it is, on the other hand, still "possible for

[64] While Caelestius does reject the notion of a directly transferable original sin, this is not so in the case of Pelagian and Julian.

[65] See Boethius, p. 63.

[66] See Boethius, p. 65.

me not to sin […] than he [God] is in error – a blasphemous suggestion"[67]. Boethius offers his definition of divine eternity as solution to this dilemma. Though foreknowledge would preclude free will, given divine timelessness, *fore*knowledge is not actually what occurs: As God is an entity that exists in every point in time simultaneously; what to us appears to be the future is perceived and known by God in the same fashion as the present. With God acting as a present witness to our future deed, his knowledge takes the form of *conditional*, rather than *simple*, necessity, and in this fashion divine omniscience and foreknowledge do not contradict human autonomy or free will. Boethius' application of divine eternity as a cornerstone for the compatibilism of free will and determinism would prove hugely influential in future theological debates about free will. It is also this conception of divine time that Bradwardine uses to avoid lapsing into fatalistic determinism[68]. Chaucer frequently engaged with Boethius' work. His *Troilus and Criseyde* dramatizes a number of abstract themes concerning time, free will, fate, and fortune discussed in Boethius' works, and direct cites him numerous times. "The Nun's Priest's Tale" also makes direct reference to Boethius, and contains an aside on the difference between simple and conditional necessity. Chaucer also translated Boethius' most famous work, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, into Middle English. It is also from this work that the *Troilus* seems to take most inspiration, though the lack of an appearance by a Lady Philosophy to set the confused cast of characters straight and provide a resolution to the questions posed by the text is conspicuously lacking[69]. A final major contribution of Boethius' lies in his (re)raising of the problem of the universals, something that was to become a central concern of logicians in coming centuries and formed the core of the nominalist controversy. It is concerned with whether common categories, like 'man' or 'dog' or 'justice' have a basis in reality, or represent abstract concepts. Though this debate had a long heritage in Greek philosophy[70], it is primarily through Boethius that it was transferred to Christian philosophy. The phase where these debates become most relevant to the purposes of this work starts in

[67] See Kenny, p. 473.

[68] I argue that a misunderstanding of the application of divine time in Bradwardine's work played a significant role in misinterpretation of *De Causa Dei*. Bradwardine explicitly separates between human time and divine time, stating that as humans have only access to the former, the latter does not at all concern them, and therefore there is no contradiction between God's foreknowledge and free action. Critics, particularly Gordon Leff have, however, interpreted God's foreknowledge in Bradwardine's predestinarian system from a human (linear) perception of time, resulting in conclusions about free will that Bradwardine not only did not posit, but actively sought to avoid.

[69] One might argue that it is the very lack of such a final determinant that is the point of the Troilus' philosophical content: To present and dramatizes an abstract philosophical concept and probe it from various angles, deliberately withholding any final resolution or judgement in order to allow (and force) the reader to reach their own conclusions.

[70] Platonic Idealism, for instance, is a good example of a realistic approach that posits a real existence for universal categories, so that for the category "chair" there exists a prototypical chair from which all other chairs in our material reality are deviated. Aristotle, on the other, presented a theory which understood these universals not as real, extramental objects, but as mental constructs which are necessary for us to render the world and the objects in it intelligible.

the late 11th to the early 12th century, around the time of Anselm of Canterbury and his late contemporary, Peter Abelard.

Of the extensive corpus left by Anselm, who lived from 1033 to 1109, the writings most relevant to this study are those on his logical proof for the existence of God. Commonly referred to as the *ontological*[71] argument, it conceives of God as an entity "than which nothing greater can be thought"[72]. Even a fool can understand, Anselm holds, the meaning of the phrase 'that than which nothing greater can be thought', even if he does not believe that something like that exists in reality. However, this statement is proven true by the very meaning it expresses: As something that exists is undeniably superior to something that does not, the phrase 'than which nothing greater can be thought' must by definition refer to a *real* entity. The ontological proof, though influential, also encountered much criticism, even in Anselm's own time. Gaunilo of Marmoutiers formulated a counterargument which sought to demonstrate that one "cannot reason from the existence of something in our understanding the fact that it exists in extramental reality", claiming that Anselm did not demonstrate "how the concept of "a being than which nothing greater can be conceived" differs from concepts of unreal objects"[73]. Gaunilo attempted to prove that Anselm's argument is incoherent by positing an example about an island nothing greater than which can be. No such island actually exists, but, Gaunilo claims, Anselm's logic can be used to makes it appear *as if there were* such an island: As an island nothing greater than which can exist is undeniably superior to any other island there can be, such an island must exist in reality. His argument, however, is not particularly convincing. For one, Gaunilo's response misinterprets Anselm: whereas Gaunilo speaks of the greatest island there *can be,* Anselm refers to the greatest being that *can be conceived.* Furthermore, Gaunilo's island is logically and physically impossible, whereas Anselm's conception of God is logically consistent: If one were to rank an island in the hierarchy of all islands by its qualities (such as the number of sandy beaches, clear waters, coral reefs, etcetera), the greatest island that can be conceived would have to have an infinite number of all these qualities, otherwise a still greater island could be thought. Yet this is impossible, as no island that exists in reality can have an *infinite* number of material objects on it, as everything in material reality is by nature *finite*. Anselm's conception of God as the greatest entity that can be conceived does not suffer from such incoherence, as the qualities he attributes to God (omnipotence, omniscience, all-benevolence) are entirely in line with established doctrine about the nature of God. Whereas Gaunilo speaks of physical objects, Anselm is concerned with mental faculties, which is why Gaunilo's argument is unsatisfactory. While other counterarguments have been raised to the ontological argument, it has proved to be an enduring argument for the existence of God, that is still used – albeit in modified versions[74] – up to the present date. First, though, there is another contemporary of Anselm's that requires some consideration.

[71] In contrast to Thomas Aquinas' *cosmological* argument, which is discussed below.

[72] See Anselm in Peterson et al, p. 176.

[73] See Peterson et al, p. 178.

[74] An excellent example is Alvin Plantinga's modal ontological argument.

Peter Abelard, apart from being known for his tragic love affair with Heloise, is often credited for starting the controversy of the universals. While this is somewhat of an exaggeration[75], the influence he had on the later *direction* of this controversy can hardly be overstated. On the issue of whether universal concepts are real, conventional, or wholly imaginary, a line is typically drawn between two divergent positions: nominalism and realism[76]. Nominalism denies the extramental existence of universals, whereas realism affirms it[77]. Abelard studied under two men who stood on opposing sides in the debates: He first studied under the nominalist Roscelin, and later under the realist William of Champeaux. It is useful to briefly turn to their respective theories, to gain a better understanding of the different positions in the debate. William of Champeaux endorsed a theory of realism, and thus supported the notion that categories like "man" or "soul" have at least some basis in reality. His form of realism, however, should not be understood as a medieval variety of Plato's theory of forms: Medieval realist theories "moved the universal into the existing things", but expressed "the belief that all individual things cannot say anything new about the universal, but that this is already given in the universal"[78]. Thus, rather than positing an external universal, it locates them in the form of shared common characteristics. Differences are accidental, not essential. In this fashion, Plato and Aristotle are alike because they are both endowed with the essential substance of 'man'. Likewise, Socrates and an ass also share the essential substance of 'animal'. And here lies Abelard's objection to Champeaux's theory: Such a simplistic take on realism, he argues, would lead to "the same substance [having] mutually inconsistent qualities: For since *animal* is present in Socrates and also in an ass, the substance animal will be simultaneously rational and irrational", as Socrates is an animal that is also rational, whereas the ass is not[79]. William of Champeaux did not take this critique lightly, as Abelard describes that his teacher was "eaten up with jealousy and consumed with anger to an extent it is difficult to convey and being unable to control the violence of his resentment for long, he made another artful attempt to banish me"[80]. Vitriolic reaction notwithstanding, Champeaux did modify his views, claiming that different members of the same species were

[75] As the foundation for the debate had already been laid by Boethius and many others, and was well underway in the context of Christian theology by the time by the time Abelard entered the stage.

[76] Note that my use of realism and nominalism in this passage applies solely to a specific stance on the subject of the (un)reality of the universals and is unrelated to the later conventional use of the terms, which sees them as opposing epistemologies with firm stances on a great variety of subjects. My use of realism and nominalism in these passages is strictly in the narrow sense.

[77] Albeit not necessarily in a platonic fashion.

[78] Translated from Hirschberger, p. 411. Original: " […] sondern verlegten das Allgemeine in die existierenden Dinge, […] sind aber des Glaubens, daβ alles Individuelle der Art gegenüber nichts Neues besage, sondern mit dem Allgemeinen selbst schon gegeben sei".

[79] See also Weinberg, p. 80. It is worthwhile to note that such a view might be applied to render the concept of original sin more intuitively intelligible. If one understands original sin to be an essential component of the categories of "man" and "woman", it would make sense if it were present in every individual.

[80] See Abelard 2013, p. 11.

"the same not in essence but through non-difference"[81], resulting in a more moderate approach.

Abelard's other teacher, Roscelin, denied the reality of universal categories altogether, and labelled them mere '*flatus vocis*', or puffs of breath[82]. While Abelard, as we have seen, certainly did not support the notion of universal categories having an existence in reality, he also could not accept this derisive definition, which he considered too extreme and based on "an inadequate analysis of what it is for a word to signify"[83]. While words denoting groups or species do not refer to a collective entity with a basis in reality, it does not mean that these words are wholly arbitrary or valueless: Rather, they are something "distinct from images […] that enable us to talk about things". Thus, while nominalism is correct in claiming that "there is no universal *man* distinct from the universal noun 'man', […] the noun 'man' is not a mere puff of breath- it is turned into a universal noun by our understanding"[84]. The latter point is where Abelard believes the realist position to be in the right, as he does grant universal categories some measure of existence, albeit as a mental construct used to shape and render intelligible the reality around us. In this fashion, Abelard created an account of the universals that takes cues from both realist and nominalist thought, while simultaneously rejecting other elements of each theory. As he denies the existence in reality of universal concepts, he could technically be classified as a nominalist, though given his sharp critique of elements of nominalist thought, his work has been given the label of conceptualism to disambiguate the two[85]. We see here even at this early stage many elements that would continue to dominate the debate on the universals until the 14th century and beyond. William of Champeaux offers two realist accounts, Roscelin a nominalist one, and Abelard seeks to find a middle way that combines elements from the two.

The last figure to be described in this introduction, Saint Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), bears relevance to the analysis of Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei* due to his fivefold proof of the existence of God as presented in the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*. Furthermore, his complicated relationship with Aristotle is worth considering, in the form of his arguments against the eternity of the world and infinite regression. In formulating his *Gottesbeweis*[86], Aquinas pre-empts his own proof with the dismissal of various other attempts at proving God's existence, including Anselm's ontological argument, which he sees as incoherent and warranting little attention: Anselm seeks to fully describe the nature of God by delineating the various attributes He possesses, and by portraying Him as the greatest being that can be conceived. Aquinas, however, subscribes to a *negative* theology, which sees God as

[81] See Abelard 2013, p. 9.

[82] We shall briefly return to Roscelin in the seventh chapter of this work in the context of author Alfred Andersch' self-professed nominalism.

[83] See Kenny, p. 351.

[84] See Kenny, p. 352.

[85] For more information on conceptualism, refer also to Flasch 2000, p. 242.

[86] 'Proof of God's existence'.

elevated so far above humanity that we cannot positively know or describe Him[87]. Instead, God can only be described by delineating what he is not: God is *not* mortal, his powers are *not* limited, his knowledge is *not* lacking, etcetera. Anselm's argument seeks to positively describe certain features of God and must therefore be dismissed by Aquinas solely by its premise: To grant any value to Anselm's conclusions, Aquinas would first have to abandon his own position. As both men appeal to different fundamental intuitions about how God can be understood, another dialectic stalemate occurs: Aquinas subscribes to a negative theology, and must thus on principle reject Anselm's positive description of the various divine attributes, whereas the latter must do the opposite.

Aquinas' own fivefold proof of the existence of God is typically referred to as the *cosmological* argument, and depends heavily Aristotelian theories of motion and causality described earlier in this chapter. Anthony Kenny summarizes it as follows: "(1) motion in the world is only explicable if there is a first motionless mover; (2) the series of efficient causes in the world must lead to an uncaused cause; (3) contingent and corruptible things must depend on an independent and incorruptible being; (4) the varying degrees of reality and goodness in the world must be approximations to a subsistent maximum of reality and goodness; (5) the ordinary theology of non-conscious agents in the universe entails the existence of an intelligent universal orderer"[88]. The first two proofs[89] obviously draw on Aristotle, and his postulation that an uncaused first mover must exist in order to avoid an infinite regression of causes. As such, they have same strengths and weaknesses of Aristotle's original theories. Aquinas provides three counterarguments against infinite regression, all based on Aristotle. Firstly, that "if in movers and moved things we should proceed to infinity, it would be necessary that all such bodies be infinity, because whatever is moved is divisible body, as is proved in Physics 6". Secondly, because "it is impossible for these infinities to be moved in a finite time", and thirdly because "that which moves instrumentally cannot move unless there be something that principally moves. But if there is an infinite regress in movers and moved things, all will be like instrumental movers, because they would be posited as moved mover, and nothing would be the principal mover"[90]. Hence, the need for an unmoved mover to stop this potentially infinite chain. He does, however, need to contradict Aristotle on a different point, namely the eternity of the world. He addresses this issue in the 46th question of the first part of the *Summa Theologiae*, offering arguments and refutations for both sides of the debate. He concludes that "while the world does have a beginning, that is not something that can be scientifically known, but is purely an article of faith"[91]. Late in life, in 1271, he also wrote a short tractate on the subject entitled *De Aeternitate Mundi contra Murmurantes; On the Eternity of*

[87] See also Copleston, pp. 48-49.

[88] See Kenny, p. 352.

[89] It is also specifically these two proofs that Bradwardine uses as foundation for his theory of causation. He also uses a similar methodology to Aquinas, formulating his argument for the existence of God on the basis on primarily philosophical argumentation.

[90] See Aquinas, p. 251.

[91] See Kenny, p. 396.

the World against Murmurers. He also adopts the long-held maxim that an infinite world would be incoherent, on the grounds that this would mean that an infinite number of days had to have passed to reach the present. But given the very nature of infinity this is impossible, as one can never actually traverse an infinite number of days, as it has no end one can reach. The third proof also poses some difficulties. It opens on the uncontroversial remark that there are some things in this world that are corruptible: Plants wither, animals and humans grow older and eventually die. However, as Kenny remarks, it does not follow from this premise that if some things are corruptible that there must also exist an incorruptible being[92]: This is an argumentative leap from the original premise, not something drawn by inference. Copleston also takes issue with the solidity of the fourth proof, as he finds that "the proposition that there are different grades of perfection in things stands in need of a much more thorough analysis than Aquinas accords it in his brief outline of the fourth way"[93]. However, despite this apparent lack of philosophical rigour, the point Aquinas makes is clear, as, "we are all accustomed to make statements which imply different grades of perfection. And though these statements stand in need of close analysis, they refer to something which falls within ordinary experience and finds expression in ordinary language"[94], and could thus be conceived as a reasonable appeal to intuition or common sense. The fifth proof, likewise, is fundamentally an appeal to a common observation, somewhat deficient in rigour: It claims that humans, as well flora, fauna and natural phenomena, act in co-operation according to a plan: Like a closed ecosystem, in which each individual element plays a vital role in conserving the whole system, whether they are aware of this or not. This co-operation is seen as evidence of a divine plan. Aquinas' fivefold proof, while certainly attracting criticism, is also an admirable attempt at establishing the existence of God through philosophical means.

Based on the brief descriptions and introductions in this chapter about a variety of theories and belief systems connected in some way either to the subject of free will or the debate over universals, a number of conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, that the notion of a free will is not a natural concept common to all cultures and time periods, but as a specific concept is firmly rooted in Greek, particularly stoic, philosophy, which quickly spread to the nascent Christian theology. Arguments about free will, in theological context or otherwise, find their roots in ancient philosophy. Of further note is the tremendous influence that Augustine had on any subsequent writing on free will within a Christian context. The variety of thought and doctrines within Christian theology is also noteworthy, as the Medieval Christian church is in the public eye still treated far too often as a monolithic structure adhering to a singular set of dogmatic stances. While this chapter could not hope to provide a detailed summary of all developments in the free will debate across the centuries, it did attempt to introduce some of the theories necessary to grasp the issues present in the works of Bradwardine and Chaucer, and to describe the origin of the debates that take centre stage in this work: the fine balancing of freedom versus determinism, the Pelagian controversies, debates of nominalists versus realists,

[92] See also Kenny, p. 487.

[93] See Copleston, pp. 115-116.

[94] See Copleston, p. 116.

and different conceptions of the nature of God and proofs of His existence. It has left out discussion of other relevant 14th century thinkers like William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, and Thomas Buckingham, whose thought will be introduced in due course in the sixth chapter of this study. Some other influences, particularly on Thomas Bradwardine's works, have also not been included as their hand is felt either in other issues than those discussed in this study, or manifested themselves in subtler ways or to prove specific, smaller points. To name just a few, these figures include Robert Grosseteste, Duns Scotus, Peter Lombard, Averroes, Avicenna, and Plato. The 1277 condemnations of Stephen Tempier, bishop of Paris, are also frequently evoked either to confirm Bradwardine's own orthodoxy or to show the heterodoxy of other opinions. Ralph Strode seems important in the context of Chaucer, though their relationship is unclear, and scholarship on Strode is still in its early stages. The next chapters turn to discussion of Thomas Bradwardine, and describe how certain critical traditions about his works and their historic relevance have been appropriated to perpetuate a historiographical narrative that juxtaposes a medieval conservative realism and a forward-thinking humanist nominalism. It is this narrative, originating in the *Wegestreit* theory of cultural history, that is the main concern of this study, and the main factor that links discussion of philosophical elements in Bradwardine and Chaucer.

Chapter IV

God and Divine Foreknowledge in Thomas Bradwardine's De Causa Dei

After having explored at some length a number of common approaches to the problem of free will in the context of contemporary philosophy, and having outlined some historical developments in debates on freedom and necessity within the confines of ancient philosophy and medieval Christian theology, we will now turn our attention to the 14th century and the works of Thomas Bradwardine. One thing that should be kept firmly in mind when dealing with philosophical issues in texts – both theological and literary – is that current classification schemas of different sets of beliefs and schools of thought are often incomplete or inaccurate, and frequently tend to be more harmful than helpful. Robert Pasnau argues that one must "break free from the usual classifying schemas, which obscure as much as they illuminate"[1]. He refers here particularly to the analysis of the 14th century as an epoch characterized as an entrenched battle between a *via antiqua* and a *via moderna*, of orthodox and conservative realists versus forward-thinking nominalists[2], which has typically been viewed as a representational battle between the values of medieval scholasticism versus an onrushing tide of Renaissance humanism. The latter ultimately proved victorious, enacting a symbolic victory of the Renaissance over the Middle Ages. Nominalism and realism in this context are also perceived to have much further implications than the ontological argument over the (ir)reality of universal categories described in the previous chapter. Rather, it posits separate realist and nominalist *epistemologies*, which are hostile to (and incompatible with) each other. Thomas Bradwardine, whose compatibilist narrative of free will and divine foreknowledge in his main work *De Causa Dei* is the subject of this chapter and the following, has typically been treated as a highly conservative realist, and most prominent member of the *via antiqua* in the 14th century. This interpretation gained particular prominence due to Gordon Leff's 1957 study on *De Causa Dei,* though Heiko Augustinus Obermann's study from the same year also contributed to it. The association of Bradwardine with such a supposedly staunchly conservative movement, as well as an association with John Wycliff and (pre-) reformation figures have had great negative impact on critical analysis of Thomas Bradwardine. The notion of diametrically opposed schools of realism and nominalism are, however, in the words of Robert Pasnau, "simply the creations of a later time, [which is] most obviously the case for the so-called realists, since the differences between the authors who appear on the list are well known"[3]. He goes on to state that "none of the canonical authors described as nominalists explicitly patterns his work on any of the others, or even conceives of himself as part of a movement"[4]. The troubling part however – and this is the central concern of this work – is that while "these cautionary remarks are largely familiar to specialists", their implications "have not yet quite dawned on the broader community of scholars, who con-

[1] See Pasnau, p.84.

[2] See also Pasnau, pp. 83-88.

[3] See Pasnau, p. 85.

[4] *Idem*.

tinue to think of nominalism as a central organizing concept for later scholasticism"[5]. Research on Bradwardine has been impacted by this[6], as he has often been interpreted as the most influential 14th century representative of the via *antiqua*, which has warped critical interpretations of his works and theories. Recent scholarly efforts have gone to considerable lengths to countermand this, and this chapter and the following seek to make a contribution to this ongoing process. These issues also manifest themselves in the field of literary studies, where the research paradigm of literary nominalism remains highly influential[7].

Though a good deal of evidence is available about the academic and clerical career of Thomas Bradwardine, less is known about his personal life and circumstances. It is estimated that he was born in 1290, though it has also been claimed that it was more likely somewhere between 1290 and 1300.[8] His birthplace is likewise the cause of minor controversy, with various sources claiming either Chichester, Hertfield, or the village of Bradwardine[9] to be the most likely site. More facts about Bradwardine's life emerge after he commences his studies at Oxford, where his name first appears in the entries of Balliol College in 1321, before reappearing as a Master of Theology at Merton College two years later[10]. From there he became Proctor of the University from 1325 to 1327[11], and "to the best of our knowledge he remained there until 1335 [though he must] have visited Avignon at least once during this time, for in *De Causa Dei* he mentions hearing a dispute there in which a famous philosopher from Toulouse, almost certainly Pierre Aureole, was involved"[12]. Around this time, Bradwardine left

[5] See Pasnau, p. 87.

[6] This negative impact will be demonstrated at greater length in the sixth chapter of this work, where Bradwardine's role in later accounts of the intellectual climate of the 14th century is critically examined. These effects also manifested in the paradigm of literary nominalism, which takes an irreconcilable antagonism between nominalism and realism as a core organizing concept.

[7] Literary nominalism takes the controversy between nominalists and realist to have constituted the main philosophical debate of the time, and posits nominalism as an organizing Zeitgeist for the 14th Century. Discussion of philosophical issues in literary works tends to focus on sorting different works as subscribing to either a nominalist or realist epistemology. Given its problematic methodological programme, it seems Pasnau's critical remark about the 'broader community of scholars' certainly applies here. Chapters seven and eight of this study concern themselves directly with the paradigm of literary nominalism.

[8] The former date is given by Henry Saville in the introduction of the 1618 edition of *De Causa Dei*. The latter estimate is given by Berganza. See also Berganza, p. 26.

[9] See also Obermann 1957, p. 11 and Leff 1957, 21. The first claim is based on a line from *De Causa Dei* (See p. 559) that suggests that Bradwardine's father lived in Chichester. Obermann contests that this only means that Bradwardine's *father* lived there in the 1330's, having likely moved there from Bradwardine, which would explain Thomas's surname. Leff, following Saville, states that Bradwardine was most likely from Hertfield.

[10] See also Highfield.

[11] See also Berganza, p. 14.

[12] See Leff 1957, p. 21.

Merton College, in order to become "part of the circle of men of letters and theologians centred around the great bibliophile Richard of Bury, bishop of Durham"[13]. Following this, Bradwardine became chaplain and confessor to King Edward III, and in this capacity "accompanied the king on his journeys and campaigns abroad"[14], during which he observed the battle and subsequent victory of the English forces over the French at Crécy in 1346. In 1348, Bradwardine was elected to succeed the recently deceased John Stratford as Archbishop of Canterbury. King Edward, however, intervened and appointed John Ufford instead[15]. When Ufford died before he could be consecrated, Bradwardine was again elected. This time Edward conceded, and Bradwardine was consecrated into the office of Archbishop of Canterbury. Upon his return from France, however, he quickly fell victim to the Black Plague, which at the time ravaged both the mainland and the British Isles. He died on the 26th of August 1349 in Canterbury, having been archbishop for only 38 days. He was subsequently interred in Canterbury Cathedral.

Bradwardine's scholarly interests were not limited to theology, as he has left an enduring legacy as a skilled mathematician, physicist, and logician. In his theological works, philosophy also played an important role. While many of his commentators, such as Obermann and Leff, have focused primarily on his theology[16], recent scholars like Berganza, Dolnikowski, and others have pointed out that even his theological works cannot be properly understood without taking Bradwardine's other interests into account. His works not only cross the boundaries of different disciplines, but actively seek to harmonize numerous epistemological stratagems. He was specifically concerned with integrating higher mathematics into the study of natural philosophy, an important move away from Aristotelian physical models, which purposefully sought to keep the different disciplines separated. Bradwardine's main work, *De Causa Dei*, cannot be fully understood either without reference to his interest in the study of mathematics, physics, and logic. For this reason, we will briefly turn our attention to several other of Bradwardine's works.

[13] Translated from Berganza, p. 26. Original: "[…] y entro a formar parte del círculo de letrados y teólogos que rodeaban al grandísimo bibliófilo Ricardo de Bury, obispo de Durham". It is also possible that during this period he might have been in contact with contemporary theologian Robert Holcot, who was also part of De Bury's circle during this time. Whether and to what degree the two men knew each other personally, however, is uncertain. See also Slotemaker and Witt, pp. 2-3.

[14] See Leff 1957, p. 3.

[15] See also Obermann 1957, p. 21 and Leff 1957, p. 2. Obermann states that the King thought Bradwardine too valuable to let him go, while Leff contends that the Edward III was offended that he had not been consulted prior to the election. Commenting on a similar suggestion by Hook, Obermann states that these two opinions are not mutually exclusive.

[16] Leff, for instance, states that „in his mode of argument, Bradwardine eschewed philosophy and metaphysics". See Leff 1957, p. 15. He later concludes that Bradwardine believes philosophy to be a hopeless instrument in attaining knowledge of God. See also Leff 1957, p. 119.

Aside from his reputation as one of the pre-eminent theologians of his time, Thomas Bradwardine is renowned for his work on mathematics at Merton College, where he was the main figure in a group of academics now commonly referred to as the *Mertonians* or the *Oxford Calculators*. One of his earliest texts, *Geometria Speculativa*, covered "all major topics of elementary geometry, including the definitions of points, lines and angles; Euclidean theorems regarding these definitions; an analysis of polygons and circles; an examination of ratios; and a study of regular solids and spheres"[17]. Owing to its lucid writing style and concise argumentation, the *Geometria Speculativa* became an enduring success with university students, as is evidenced by its "wide circulation […] among students at Oxford and other European universities"[18]. Apart from this, it also defended the notion that mathematics and geometry are of paramount importance in the study of physical phenomena. In Aristotelian natural philosophy, this was highly unusual, as "although it was accepted that the stars moved according to predictable geometrical patterns, the use of formulae to produce physical theorems had been frowned upon by Aristotle. He did not believe that it was possible to make deductions in one subject, say mathematics, and use them to prove something in another subject, say physics"[19]. Bradwardine went against the grain, arguing instead that mathematics "is the revealer of every genuine truth, for it knows every hidden secret and bears the key to every subtlety of letters. Whoever, then, has the effrontery to pursue physics while neglecting mathematics should know from the start that he will never make his entry through the portals of wisdom"[20].

In the field of physics, Bradwardine chiefly occupied himself with developing new theories on velocity and the movement of falling bodies within a (theoretical) void, which he attempted to describe in mathematical terms in his *De Proportionibus*. However, despite the "formulation and adoption of many non-Aristotelian positions, Bradwardine is essentially an Aristotelian on the fundamental principles of physics"[21], positions which would in later centuries be falsified. While Bradwardine may have "accurately modelled how things worked in Aristotle's universe, […] this was not how things worked in the real world"[22]. Thus, rather than making an actual contribution in form of developing a lasting new theory on motion or velocity, Bradwardine's contribution was systemic in nature, and his "reputation as an innovator rests […] on his application of proportional theory to a mechanical problem which had previously defied mathematical analysis"[23]. His claim that mathematics is an indispensable part of any serious study of physics, and his "recognition that elementary geometry and algebra are inadequate for describing such concepts as force, velocity and resistance"[24] had a profound effect on following generations of scholars. It is thus through the *recognition* that contemporary

[17] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 83.

[18] *Idem.*

[19] See Hannam, p. 176.

[20] See Molland, p. 110.

[21] See Grant, p. 357.

[22] See Hannam, p. 177.

[23] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 87.

[24] *Idem.*

modes of studying physical phenomena were insufficient for reaching valid conclusions about the physical workings of the world that Bradwardine exerted his influence on future generations. While the integration of mathematics with physics may seem an obvious development, one must take into account that 1500 years of previous developments in natural philosophy were based around the idea that physics and mathematics were separate fields with no overlap, and thus had not developed to allow for such crossover. That Bradwardine failed to formulate a correct theory of motion or velocity is due to no fault of his own: Firstly, the field of mathematics was simply not sufficiently developed to be able to provide the tools necessary to reach a correct equation. Secondly, as the entire basis of the contemporary study of natural philosophy was firmly rooted in Aristotelian thought – and thus in many respects deeply flawed – there was essentially no chance that Bradwardine *could* have reached a correct answer: While he recognized the insufficiency of Aristotelian physical theories, the only epistemological tools he had at his disposal were firmly rooted in that very system. However, the sheer recognition that the ways in which scientific inquiries were carried out were insufficient, was enough to secure his position as one of the most important mathematicians and physicists of his time.

Bradwardine also showed great interest in the field of logic, and dedicated one of his earlier tractates to the study of the *Insolubilia*, another term for "an antimony or paradox of the Liar type [such as] 'This sentence is false' or 'This sentence is not true'"[25]. In this area, too, Bradwardine was to achieve enduring influence, as evidenced by a comment by Ralph Strode[26] stating that "the above opinions were of old writers, who correctly understood little or nothing about insolubles. After them arose the first among the modern philosophers of nature, master Thomas Bradwardine, who was the first to come upon something worthwhile concerning insolubles"[27]. While outlining Bradwardine's complete theory on the liar's paradox would go beyond the scope of this introduction[28], some notes concerning his methodology will prove useful in foreshadowing some of the conceptual principles that underlie the *De Causa Dei*. The solution offered by Bradwardine is not directly concerned with the paradox itself, but rather with the question of what *constitutes a true sentence*. Bradwardine arrives at a definition that states that, although "a sentence may signify many things to be so", in order for the sentence to be true, "all those things must indeed be so. If any one of them fails, that spoils the whole thing: the sentence is in that case false"[29]. This definition is then applied to

[25] See Spade, p. 115. Discussion typically revolves around whether sentences like these should be considered true or false.

[26] We will encounter 'philosophical Strode' again in discussion of the role of philosophy in Geoffrey Chaucer's works. Strode and Bradwardine are the only two contemporary philosophers explicitly named by Chaucer in his works, though Chaucer's relationship with (and knowledge of) either is unclear.

[27] See Strode in Spade, p. 116.

[28] Those interested may refer to Paul Vincent Spade's excellent article "Insolubilia and Bradwardine's Theory of Signification", which describes Bradwardine's solution in great detail.

[29] See Spade, p. 118.

the liar's paradox itself, the result of which is roughly that the paradox "this sentence is false" can only be true by violating the definition of a true sentence: The paradox states that "this sentence is false". But if this is so, the sentence is also true. Thus, it simultaneously states "this sentence is true" as well as "this sentence is false". The Bradwardinian definition of a true sentence is that *all individual assertions* in a sentence must be true. As something that is true cannot also be false (and vice versa), then by the very definition of "truth", at least one of these assertions must be false, 'spoiling' the whole sentence. *Which* of the two assertions is true and which is false is wholly irrelevant, as the sentence is untrue regardless. Thus, rather than responding to the surface structure of the paradox, Bradwardine dismantles it by picking apart its operating principles. This is a vital strategy that also informs many of his arguments in *De Causa Dei*.

Lastly, Bradwardine's worldly role in his function as chaplain and confessor to the King warrants mentioning. The most poignant example of his role as a public and political figure is exemplified in his *Sermo Epinicius*, a Latin translation of a sermon he originally held in English for Edward III and his officers after the sweeping victories of the English over the French at the battles of Crécy and Neville's Cross. It is a fascinating practical application of many of the theories outlined in *De Causa Dei*, and it displays how "Bradwardine's theological views and the academic debates which shaped them had an enormous impact on his interpretation of the battles that provided the occasion for the sermon"[30]. This blending of abstract theological theories about predestination and divine foreknowledge with the practical purpose of a victory sermon would provide ample material for a separate study, and is yet another instance that showcases Bradwardine's interest in merging different fields, in this case theology, national politics, and the practice of sermonising. The basic tenor of the sermon is that the great victory at Crécy should not be attributed to fate or astrology, as "neither the regular movement of the stars nor the randomness of fate could influence human destiny"[31]. Fatalistic and astrological determinism are two opinions which Bradwardine also combats with great vigour in *De Causa Dei*[32]. Instead, he posits that the surprising outcome of the battle was due to God willing the victory of the more virtuous English over the French. The message in this is twofold: On the one hand he impels his fellow-Englishmen to modesty by showing that God, not man, is the ultimate architect of this victory. On the other hand, he shows the English cause to be just, as the ever-righteous God is on their side, directly co-acting with the English to secure their victory and bring them glory: As God was on their side, the English won the battle, which is proof the English cause is just. The *Sermo Epinicius* thus presents an excellent showcase of the practical ramifications of many of Bradwardine's theorems in *De Causa Dei*[33].

[30] See Dolnikowski 1998, p. 360.

[31] See Dolnikowski 1998, p. 364.

[32] Bradwardine's polemic reaction against astral determinists, fatalists, and stoics is also discussed towards the end of the following chapter. Previous studies have focused mainly on *De Causa Dei*'s anti-pelagian polemic content, which has contributed to a lopsided approach which sees Bradwardine's essentially compatibilist model as being dismissive of human free will.

[33] See also Obermann and Weishepl's edition of the *Sermo Epinicius*. Edith Wilks Dolnikowski's article

Bradwardine's other academic interests were not only broad in scope but also had lasting and far-reaching influence on later generations of scholars. His *Magnum Opus* remains, however, the *De Causa Dei*, which Bradwardine presumably started writing around 1335 and completed in London in 1344. It was written after he left Merton College, during the period when he was part of de Bury's circle and his occupation as confessor and chaplain to Edward III. Its full title reads *De Causa Dei contra Pelagium, et de virtute causarum, ad suos Mertonenses, Libri Tres,* which gives a good indication of its content and purpose. Like his scientific works, its content is explicitly polemic. It is divided into three books that seek to disprove certain 'Pelagian theses'[34], and to defend a conception of divine sovereignty and human freedom similar - but by no means identical - to Augustine's. *De Causa Dei* takes an essentially soft determinist approach, as it considers free will and a predetermined future to be compatible. However, Bradwardine's theories have not always been interpreted this way, as many have seen in him either a pre-reformist figure[35] (a thoroughgoing hard determinist who sacrifices human free will and autonomy in order to establish God's omnipotence) or a conservative reactionary directing fierce polemics at contemporary nominalists like William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, or Thomas Buckingham. Both critical traditions also depict Bradwardine as a leading figure of a 14th- century *via antiqua*, and he is frequently associated with a realist philosophical school.

Bradwardine's response to Pelagianism is similar to Augustine's, as he, too, deems it to exalt free will to such an extent as to render God powerless or even unnecessary. Though not reflected in the title, *De Causa Dei* also takes a stand against those who would *disregard or deny* free will, like fatalists, stoics, and natural or astral determinists[36]. Bradwardine states in the preface that he wrote this treatise at the behest and to the benefit of his fellow Mertonians, after he "was solicited by great and manifold petitions and incessantly abounding repetitions"[37] to do so. He was spurred by an acute personal need to refute and correct prevalent 'Pelagian' opinions, as he confesses that he found himself captivated in his youth by tempting pelagianist conclusions about the boundless freedom of man: Bradwardine describes how he "was tempted away by an unorthodox error […] and the way of Pelagian seemed to me nearer to the truth. […] The whole day I would hear that we were masters of our own free acts and

"Thomas Bradwardine's *Sermo Epinicius*" also provides an excellent introduction to the text.

[34] Bradwardine here follows Augustine's definition of Pelagianism outlined in the third chapter of this study.

[35] See also Berganza, pp. 227-230, who makes an excellent summary of this pre-reformist interpretation, and lists its chief proponents, whose ranks include Gordon Leff.

[36] It also addresses 'fringe' groups like the Manicheans, though discussions typically limit themselves to a few paragraphs, and are not particularly relevant to the purposes of this work.

[37] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, Praefatio p. 1. See also Lukács, p. 51. Original: "Magnorum et multorum petitionibus atque repetitionibus cumulates incessanter solicitor". A note on citations from *De Causa Dei* in this study: Where possible, the corresponding pages in Lukács' 2012 partial translation of *De Causa Dei* are listed alongside their location in the 1618 Saville edition. If only the page number from the Saville edition is listed, then that citation does not appear in Lukács' translation.

that it is in our power to do good or evil, to be virtuous of sinful, and many things like that"[38]. Thus, young Bradwardine forgot the value of grace and thought only of the power of human beings. His 'conversion' came by way of Romans 9, which he describes as having come upon him "as a beam of grace"[39].

From then on, Romans 9 becomes a central pillar in Bradwardine's theories on grace and freedom. He dramatically stylizes his battle against the Pelagians as that of a "lone prophet of God standing against the 850 prophets of Baal"[40]. Expressions such as these, as well as the polemical nature of the work, have invited later generations of commentators and scholars to examine Bradwardine's theories through contrasting readings with his possible opponents[41]. Typical adversaries are those figures traditionally associated with Ockhamism, nominalism and the *via moderna*, particularly William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, and Thomas Buckingham, while Bradwardine is associated with the *via antiqua* and typically placed "near the realists"[42].

[38] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 308. See also Lukács, pp. 156-157. Original: "[…] errore contrario suducebar [et] pars Pelagii mihi verior videbatur. […] Tota die audiui, quòd nos sumus Domini nostrorum actuum liberorum, et quòd in nostra potestate est, operari benè vel malè, habere virtutes vel vitia, cum similibus suis multis". Bradwardine's autobiographical passages structurally mirror Augustine's self-portrayal in his *Confessions*, where he describes his own sinful youth and subsequent conversion to true faith.

[39] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 308. See also Lukács, p. 156. Original: "[…] velut quodam gratiae radio visitatus". Rhetorical and stylistic flourishes are employed throughout *De Causa Dei*. A noteworthy instance is the dream vision of a physical altercation between Bradwardine and his enemy Pelagian far above the earth, which ends in Pelagian being cast down with a "snapped neck", smitten by the grace and might of God (See also *De Causa Dei*, Praefatio pp. 2-3: "[…] fracta cervice corruit super terram"). Book II closes with eloquently phrased remarks in prayer form (See also *De Causa Dei*, pp. 626-636). The process of philosophical inquiry is likened to a Hydra, with each issue that is resolved being seemingly replaced with two new ones (See also *De Causa Dei*, Praefatio, p. 7). Bradwardine's frequent invocation of classical authors as authorities (e.g., to Virgil in *De Causa Dei*, Praefatio p. 5, p. 154, p. 157, or to Lucan on p. 157) gives further evidence to an interest in literary tradition.

[40] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, Praefatio p. 1. See also Lukács, p. 51. Original: "Sicut elim contra unicum Dei Prophetam octigenti et quinquaginta Prophetae Baal".

[41] This tradition gained a strong foothold with the near simultaneous publication of the first two monographs on Bradwardine by Leff and Obermann in 1957. Leff contrasts Bradwardine to Ockham and St. Pourcain, Obermann to Buckingham, as does Genest in his more recent publication. The latter comparison stems from a note by Thomas of Cracow that was traditionally treated as evidence that there was a debate in Paris between Buckingham and Bradwardine. Kaluza however, having examined the matter in detail, comes to the conclusion that there is "no indication of any debate between Thomas Bradwardine and Thomas Buckingham; it proves solely that its author had a good knowledge of the texts of Buckingham and Bradwardine". Translated from Kaluza, p. 236. Original: "La question […] n'indique aucune discussion entre Thomas Bradwardine et Thomas de Buckingham; elle prouve uniquement que son auteur a eu une bonne connaissance des textes de Buckingham et de Bradwardine".

[42] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 84. While Bradwardine "enjoys" a firm reputation as key representative of

This opposition is then used either to portray Bradwardine as a pre-reformist figure whose free-will denial foreshadows Lutheran and Calvinist thought[43], or to cast him as a deeply conservative Augustinian concerned about contemporary theological developments whose main contribution is the elegant restatement of Augustinian thought[44]. The former is represented by Gordon Leff, the latter by Heiko Augustinus Obermann. While the latter comes closer to doing justice to Bradwardine's stated intentions, both accounts suffer from severe conceptual problems. The continued popularity of these accounts, despite recent findings in specialist scholarship, and the way they are used to perpetuate the historiographical narrative of the 'nominalist controversy' in the 14th century is highly problematic and must be addressed.

Bradwardine's historical role is typically conceived as that of conservative antagonist[45] in an epochal clash of reactionary scholastics and a nascent pre-Renaissance humanism who espoused empiric and sceptic attitudes. In recent years, these approaches have, however, encountered ever-increasing criticism[46], as has the approach of interpreting *De Causa Dei* from a purely theological point of view, disregarding the roles philosophy and other scientific disciplines play in his work[47]. Bradwardine's interests were manifold, and a survey of the argumentative structure of *De Causa Dei* quickly shows that it is not only interested in other fields (particularly philosophy, logic, and mathematics), but that the integration of these fields into the overall theological pursuits of *De Causa Dei* is in fact a vital part of its methodological strategy, and that anything other than a multidisciplinary approach cannot fully do justice to the range and scope of ideas and theories developed in this work. This fluid combination of different areas of study highlights the originality of *De Causa Dei*[48].

---

the *via antiqua* in the 14th century, his status as a realist is less universal across different disciplines, with some literary critics like Richard J. Utz even (somewhat puzzlingly) labelling him a 'conservative nominalist'.

[43] The association of Bradwardine with Luther and Calvin is typically drawn form a chain of influence from Bradwardine to Wyclif and Hus, and from there to Luther and Calvin.

[44] Elements from both traditions also occur in combination.

[45] See also Leff 1957, p. 135, which sets up a radically divided binary between Bradwardine and his Ockhamist opponents.

[46] See also Flasch 2000, pp. 516-524, Berganza, p. 65, or Pasnau, pp. 85-87. The criticism of a nominalist versus realist epistemology as hallmarks of 14th century intellectual history is the chief concern of the sixth chapter of this study. Conclusions on this are, in turn, instrumental in establishing a need for revision of discussions of 14th century philosophy in literary scholarship in the seventh and eighth chapters.

[47] See for instance Sbrozi, p. 150, which describes the negative effects of fracturing Bradwardine into "a Bradwardine 'the philosopher', author of logical and physical-mathematic tractates, and Bradwardine 'the theologian'", which disallows proper study of *De Causa Dei's* cultural horizon and "activity in the field of logic and, above all, physical-mathematics". Translated. Original: "[…] un Bradwardine "filosofo", autore dei trattati logici e fisico-matematici, e un Bradwardine "teologo"". "[…] con le sue attività in campo logico e, soprattutto, fisico-matematico".

[48] See also Dolnikowski 1995, pp. 9-13.

De Causa Dei is split into three books. The first describes the aspects and nature of God, and his interaction with man. The second establishes man's free will, freedom of action, and delineates their boundaries. The final book seeks to harmonize conclusions from the first two through a compatibilist account of free will and predestination, and turns its attention to contemporary developments in the areas of future contingents, predestination, free will, and necessity, particularly in regard to a supposed resurgence of Pelagian theories. Its methodological approach incorporates epistemological stratagems from mathematics, physics, logic, and philosophy. The mathematical approach taken in *De Causa Dei* is based on a conviction that inductive reasoning is the only proper way of discussing God and the nature of His Being: It seems that here, too, mathematical structures act as 'revealer of truth'[49]. Logical conclusions can be induced from common principles, but not empirically demonstrated. Sbrozi and Dolnikowski refer to this approach as the '*More Geometrica'*, stressing its reliance on an essentially *mathematical* structure of inductive reasoning: "Like a true mathematician, Bradwardine builds his arguments on two axioms, which serve as the basis from which every pronouncement about God is checked and proved again and again"[50]. These axioms come in the form of two suppositions. The first supposition is that "God is the most perfect and good, to the extent that nothing can be better or more perfect"[51]. This calls to mind Anselm's ontological proof for the existence of God, though it is slightly but significantly altered[52]. Whereas Anselm speaks of God as the highest being *conceivable*, Bradwardine speaks of Him as the highest being that *can be,* something that seems closer to Gaunilo's definition than Anselm's[53].

Whereas the first supposition seeks to "put in place a *description* [of God]", the second "instead primarily has an epistemological and methodological signification, since it lays the

[49] See also Molland, p. 110.

[50] See Obermann 1957, p. 50.

[51] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 1. See also Lukács 2012, p. 63. Original: "Deus est summè perfectus et bonus, in tantum quod nihil perfectius, vel melius esse posset".

[52] Leff asserts that the first supposition is nothing more than a reproduction of the ontological argument. See Leff 1957, p. 25: "The first [supposition] comes from Anselm's ontological proof, the simple assertion that the highest perfection and good, than which nothing greater can be envisaged, is God". Obermann (See also Obermann 1957, p. 50) does acknowledge a difference between Anselm and Bradwardine, though he does not elaborate further. See also the section on Anselm in the third chapter of this study, which focuses on Anselm's ontological argument, and Gaunilo's response to it.

[53] See also Sbrozi, p. 171 (translated), who notes that the "first supposition does not reproduce the ontological argument of Anselm, but rather corresponds to the proposition of Gaunilo. Bradwardine just wants to state that God *is* the most perfect and the greatest, and not that it is not possible to think of something greater". *De Causa Dei* thus locates its definition of God in the more immediate and practical sphere of *being,* whereas Anselm's ontological argument remains firmly in the conceptual realm. Leff's claim, then, that the first supposition merely replicates the ontological argument is inaccurate. Original: "La prima *suppositio* non riproduce l'argomento ontologico di Anselmo, ma corrisponde piuttosto alla proposizione di Gaunilone; Bradwardine vuole appunto dire che Dio *è* il più perfetto e il migliore, e non ciò di cui non si può *pensare* qualcosa di maggiore".

foundation of the way the human mode of knowing relates to the concept of God"[54]. This second supposition is that "there is no infinite progression of beings, but there is in any kind a first"[55]. The second supposition is based on Thomas Aquinas' application of Aristotelian theories in formulating his fivefold proof of God[56]. In contrast to Aquinas, however, Bradwardine does not seek to use this as "formulation of an *a posteriori* proof of God's existence", but he "limits himself to observe, in an epistemological fashion, that there is *in each kind* only one *first*"[57]. That God is in fact the first cause that precedes all others, is a conclusion Bradwardine draws by inference from the first supposition. He begins by stating that "nothing whatsoever can bring themselves from not-being into being: every creator precedes its creation in some way; but nothing precedes itself"[58]. He continues by stating that something that proceeds from something else is inferior to that "which is in itself sufficient, uncaused by anything and independent from everything, and the highest and first cause of other things that depend on it"[59]. In this fashion, the "truthful second supposition follows from the first: From [the supposition that] God is the first and highest of all beings, follows the known coassumption, that the first and highest being is more perfect and better than others that are later and inferior, or another equal being"[60]. To those that doubt these assumptions, Bradwardine suggests that they should refer either to *On the Heavens* or *On the World* by Aristotle, or for scriptural proofs turn to Revelations 22:13, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last"[61]. Bradwardine repurposes Aquinas' proof of the existence of God in a way that diverges from its original application: He uses it not to demonstrate philosophically that God exists, but is strictly interested in the idea of an unmoved mover that is God, in order to make claims about the natures of being and action. His actual *Gottesbeweis* is closer to Anselmian thought. Bradwardine *combines* the ontological and

[54] Translated from Sbrozi, p. 172. Original: "Il primo [*suppositio*] pone in atto una *descrizione,* […] il secondo invece ha un significato primariamente epistemologico e metodologico, dal momento che fornisce il fondamento, entro e attraverso cui il modo di conoscere umano si rapporta al concetto di Dio".

[55] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 2. Original: "Nullus est processus infinitus in entibus, sed est in quodlibet genere unum primum".

[56] See also chapter three of this study.

[57] Translated from Sbrozi, p. 171. Original: "[Non sembra corretto interpretare la seconda *suppositio* come] formulazzione della prova *a posteriori,* […] l'enunciato di Bradwardine si limita a constatare, in chiave epistemological, che *in quodlibet genere* vi è un solo *primum*".

[58] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 3. See also Lukács, p. 66. Original: "nam omne faciens aliquo modo praecedit, saltem naturaliter, suum factum: sed nihil seipse praecedit".

[59] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 3. See also Lukács, p. 66. Original: "Perfectius enim est esse per se sufficienter, omnino incausabiliter et independenter ab alio, et summam et primam causam aliorum".

[60] *Idem*. Original: "Secunda vero supposition sequitur ex hac prima: Sequitur enim ex ipsa Deum esse primum et summum omnium entium; hoc vero notorio coassumpto, quod esse primum et summum est perfectius et melius, quam esse poterius et inferius alio, aut alteri coaequale".

[61] English Biblical citations in this study are from the King James Bible. Bradwardine in *De Causa Dei* cites from the Latin *Vulgata*.

cosmological arguments, another departure from Aquinas: He dismissed Anselm's ontological argument on the grounds that it seeks to positively describe divine attributes, which Aquinas does not believe is possible. His negative theology only describes what God *is not*, not what He *is*. Bradwardine's harmonisation of cosmological and ontological argument shows also that he does not subscribe to a negative theology: We can give, perhaps not with complete certainty, but at the very least with a sufficient degree of *likeliness*, a positive account of God's attributes and actions. Bradwardine then explores the ramifications of the combination of ontological and cosmological arguments through the *More Geometrica*, his mathematical / inductive approach to reasoning: Starting with basic suppositions (the ontological and cosmological arguments), he then derives from common principles further conclusions, which in turn are used to positively describe the divine nature and attributes. Here Bradwardine shows innovative spirit, harmonizing different theological doctrines through the application of other scientific methodologies.

These suppositions shape the basis of "not only the attributes of God described in Book I, but serve throughout all three books as the first principles of its arguments"[62], and have been the site of critical debates due their reference to the "controversial role of philosophy, theology, metaphysics, logic, and mathematics in *De Causa Dei*". In these, the "mathematical interpretation of these suppositions dominates [as it] is supported by the analogically conceptualized overarching structure, its division in chapters and corollaries, and the strictly logically conceived argumentation"[63]. Bradwardine's strategy has the advantage of providing an established base against which later arguments and positions can be checked and cross-referenced. However, a similar danger lurks here as with what Martin Fischer and Hilary Bok labelled 'dialectical stalemates' in present-day debates on free will, where discussion cannot do otherwise but break down when two parties base their claims on different intuitive appeals, as each potential counterargument by necessity is incoherent or unacceptable to the other party. In the case of *De Causa Dei*, if one rejects the veracity of either of the initial two suppositions, further developments drawn by inference *from* these suppositions will be equally unconvincing to that reader[64]. Bradwardine seeks to countermand this by presenting 40 corollaries over more than 140 pages, in which he develops counterarguments to his own positions and disproves them, to buttress the initial suppositions as much as possible[65]. These 40 corollaries are then

[62] Translated from Lukács, p. 15. Original: "Diese zwei Suppositionen begründen nicht nur jede in Buch I beschriebenen Eigenschaften Gottes, sondern dienen die drei Bücher hindurch als allerersten Prämissen zur Argumentation".

[63] Translated from Lukács, p. 16. Original: " […] weil sie auf die umstrittene Rolle der Philosophie, Theologie, Metaphysik, Logik und Mathematik in *De Causa Dei* hinweisen. Die Mathematische Deutung dieser Suppositionen herrscht vor [und] wird durch die analog konzipierte Gesamtstruktur, den Aufbau in Kapitel und Korollare und die streng logisch geleitete Argumentation unterstutzt".

[64] Aquinas, for instance, would likely have dismissed Bradwardine's project out of hand, as it seeks to positively describe various aspects of God, which Aquinas believes is not possible, or at least not fruitful.

[65] Bradwardine also frequently refers to the 1277 condemnations of Paris, where over 200 heterodox

applied in later chapters in much the same manner as the two suppositions, namely as proofs against which later claims can be tested and verified. While Bradwardine goes to great lengths to verify his own theses, this does not mean that they can be shown *empirically* to be correct: He can at best prove that they are *logically consistent*. Bradwardine thus does not seek to make definite pronouncements, but rather presents the answers he finds most *credible* after subjecting them to a rigorous process of logical analysis. If either of the suppositions were to be proven wrong, the entire argumentative structure of *De Causa Dei* would collapse. The strength of his approach is also its Achilles' heel, something that Bradwardine himself acknowledges at the end of the third book, stating that "one thing I do know: That if I err, I likely err greatly, and not alone, but alongside many great and recognized authorities, [that argue] with great and many probable arguments, that are not easily gainsaid"[66].

Having thus established through the *More Geometrica* a basis consisting of two suppositions and forty corollaries, against which later arguments can be checked, Bradwardine turns to providing a detailed account of the nature and attributes of God, starting with the second chapter of Book I[67]. It is useful at this point to heed Obermann's preliminary statement that the doctrine of God laid out in the first book serves "as a sally port and we should not look here for the heart of *De Causa Dei.* The sovereignty of God, it is true, is the leading thought from the first to the last page, [though the *Doctor Profundus*] does not content himself with putting forward this sovereignty by itself: but his main interest is directed at the question, what does this mean for free will, predestination, sin and grace?"[68]. It is likewise useful to briefly introduce two main strands of critical interpretation of *De Causa Dei* which have been dominant through most of Bradwardine scholarship, but which have in recent times come under an ever-increasing degree of scrutiny. The two interpretations are in large part informed by two monographs on *De Causa Dei* by Gordon Leff and Heiko Obermann respectively, both of which were released in 1957. While both operate on the assumption that Bradwardine was a reactionary conservative[69], who in the larger context of 14th century intellectual debates is to

---

statements were condemned by Bishop Tempier, in other to either establish the orthodoxy of his own theories, or to point out where others stray. The role of the condemnations in *De Causa Dei* is discussed in greater detail in the fifth chapter of this study.

[66] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 872. See also Lukács, p. 287. Original: "Unum scio, quod si erro, probabiliter multum erro, quia non solus, sed cum multis et magnis Autoribus approbatis, cum multis quoque et magnis rationibus probabilibus, nec facile reprobandis".

[67] The first chapter of *De Causa Dei* is by the longest of the work's 150 chapters, taking up almost one-sixth of the entire volume. The length of this first chapter and its corollaries shows the extraordinary amount of care Bradwardine places on the preparation of his argument.

[68] See Obermann 1957, p. 49.

[69] In itself a notion that has very much come under scrutiny, particularly the opposition of 'conservative' Bradwardine and 'modern' Ockham. These concerns also inform the sixth chapter of this study, which analyses the conception of the 14th-century intellectual landscape from a broader perspective, whereas this chapter and the next are concerned with Bradwardine's reception as an individual thinker.

be placed firmly in the camp of the *via antiqua*, their treatment of *De Causa Dei's* individual significance differs greatly. Leff sees *De Causa Dei* as a work of radical determinism, and portrays Bradwardine as an "inhumane genius"[70], whose thoroughgoing hard determinist[71] stance gladly sacrifices all human autonomy in order to establish God's primacy[72]. He also portrays Bradwardine as a figure so orthodox, that through a process of hypercorrection he becomes a radical in his own right, an *ultra*-realist whose theories deny that human actions have any worth whatsoever. In the denial of free will, Leff sees a foreshadowing of reformist thought, and theorizes an ideological chain from Wyclif and Hus to Luther and Calvin[73]. Leff bases his theories in large part on a series on articles written in the 1930's by Justus Friedrich Laun, who in turn draws on reformist interpretations of Bradwardine from the 16th and 17th century. These interpretations focused heavily on Bradwardine's theories on predestination and absolute divine foreknowledge, in an attempt to establish a genealogy for reformist doctrines. Bradwardine's simultaneous focus on human autonomy fell by the wayside, resulting in a skewed interpretation of the *Doctor Profundus*. Obermann, on the other hand, is more moderate in his approach. He portrays Bradwardine as a conservative seeking to 'turn back the clock' on some contemporary theological developments which he sees as constituting a resurgence of Pelagianism, and as an advocate of returning to a 'pure' Augustinianism. While this by and large reflects Bradwardine's actual pursuits, Obermann does not manage to do justice to Bradwardine's originality, particularly where the integration of several neighbouring scientific disciplines is involved[74]. Where Bradwardine departs from Augustine[75], this is interpreted as a fundamental misunderstanding of the old master's theories, rather than a deliberate deviation. With these two influential critical approaches to Bradwardine's work in mind, we now return to *De Causa Dei*.

[70] See Leff 1957, p. 18.

[71] Leff's interpretation of Bradwardine's stance as hard determinist stems, as I will argue later in this chapter, from a fundamental misunderstanding of Bradwardine's separation of the experience of time for God and man.

[72] See also Leff 1957, p. 15. Leff states that Bradwardine's system had the result that "men were left with no autonomy".

[73] Wyclif does, on a number of occasions, cite Bradwardine approvingly. However, their opinions differ in key respects. Hus, in turn, did approve of a number of Wyclif's theories. Leff sees Bradwardine's insistence on God's primacy as so extreme, that they are only a 'small step' away from the positions of Martin Luther. See also Leff 1957, p. 85.

[74] Obermann, by his own admission, focuses largely on *De Causa Dei's* theological content, and as such largely ignores the integral role played by other disciplines, such as philosophy, mathematics, physics, and logic.

[75] Particularly in his conception of (original) sin and grace, as is discussed towards the end of this chapter. Contrary to Obermann's claims, I believe this departure to be deliberate, as Augustine's stance would have been incompatible in several ways with Bradwardine's theories.

After the first chapter and forty corollaries, the subsequent 30-odd chapters are dedicated to outlining Bradwardine's doctrine of divinity, with the final chapters of the first book being dedicated to discussing some issues that arise from it, with the doctrine of grace and problem of Sin being of particular importance and interest to its free will theory and a departure from Augustinian thought. Bradwardine's doctrine of God can be roughly divided into three areas[76]: Being, Will, and Knowledge. While these three aspects are intimately related to each other, with conclusions about one often being applicable in changed terms to one of the others, there are also distinct features to each one that are necessary for Bradwardine's doctrine of God, and to evade Pelagianism and fatalistic determinism.

Bradwardine discusses God's Being by first defining His essential features, as well delineating His role in the creation and sustaining of the various subjects, objects, and entities within the universe. Bradwardine constantly checks and cross-references his claims with the conclusions drawn from the suppositions and the forty corollaries. One of Bradwardine's first observations concerning God is that He must be something "undivided, in whom there is no variation, in whom is no commingling"[77]. Obermann rightly states that this is a sound conclusion based on Bradwardine's premise, as the two suppositions "automatically lead to the thought that the "ens perfectissimum" is also "actus purus"", and that "essence and existence are undivided in God, and in this unity God's immutability is founded"[78]. If God were capable of change or division, or were mutable in any way, this would imply that His knowledge, goodness, or power might also increase, decrease, or change. This would disqualify Him from being God, whose power, knowledge, and goodness are *infinite* as per His nature. If God is taken to be the most perfect being, infinite in power and knowledge, as well as perfectly simple and indivisible, it follows that God "necessarily is everywhere [as] that which can be simultaneously present is more perfect […] than that which cannot"[79]. Concerning God's relationship with his creation, Bradwardine holds (following the second supposition) that there is no infinite regression of causes, as "something is by itself one and the first of everything, which is God, by which whatever other things are"[80]. Everything thus necessarily proceeds from God and by that same necessity is constantly maintained by Him: "Neither the soul, nor angels, nor Heaven could manage by themselves without divine conservation or support"[81]. Assuredly, the same goes for humans and the lesser creatures that populate the earth:

[76] See also Lukács, p. 21.

[77] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, pp. 149-150. Original: "[ex quo] est non partitione, per quem est non variatio, in quo est non commixtione".

[78] See Obermann 1957, p. 51. The publication of Obermann contains a minor typographical error ("founded if" instead of "founded in"). I have taken the liberty of correcting this error in my citation.

[79] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 163. Original: "Deus per se […] est ubique [sicut] magnae perfectionis est posse esse in multis locis praesentialiter totum simul […], quae non possunt".

[80] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 147. Original: "Aliquid est per seipsum unum et primum omnium, quod est Deus, per quod caetera sunt quaecunque".

[81] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 149. Original: "Nec animus, nec Angelus, nec coelum potest manere per se, sine conservatione et sustentatione divina".

The world is a "receptacle for all sensible forms, qualities, and bodies, which without God cannot be invigorated"[82]. Thus, God is not just a remote first cause of the world, but is immediately responsible for (and involved with) the coming into being of each individual entity. Not only that, but it is also "necessary that God immediately watch over any creature and created cause"[83], meaning that His involvement extends beyond creation to encompass a constant and unceasing watching over and maintaining. This is also proven by the second supposition: As every instance of existence of every being must have an origin (which is always God), He must necessarily be involved in every instance of existence of any creature you please. While these conclusions about God's role in the coming into being and sustaining of his creations are logically coherent with the premise of the suppositions, it does require to "reconcile logically a conception of God as changeless and eternal with a belief that God participates directly in every aspect of creation"[84], something that seems to require God to be simultaneously inside and outside time.

Bradwardine's solution is to adopt an essentially Boethian concept of time[85], which dictates that God does not experience time in the same fashion that humans do, but exists outside its limitations. This, in effect, separates God's perception of time from man's: Whereas humans perceive time as moving along linearly from point A to point B, God perceives time from all points all at once, effectively experiencing every moment of time as humans do the present. Divine 'fore'knowledge is thus only foreknowledge from a human perspective: We perceive God's knowledge as *foreknowledge*, because from our perspective the events foreknown by God have not transpired yet. From God's perspective, on the other hand, there is no foreknowledge, only the simple knowledge of seeing an event or action unfold in the present. God's 'fore'knowledge, so claim Boethius and Bradwardine, thus no more forces an action than a man who watches an event unfold in front of him has forced it to come about. By separating between divine time and human time, Bradwardine seeks to sidestep the potentially free-will negating effects of an absolute foreknowledge of future actions by God, using Boethian theories on time to establish compatibility between absolute predetermination of future events on the one hand, and human autonomy and free will on the other. Gordon Leff, however, fails to appreciate the distinction, arguing instead that in positing an absolute predetermination of future events, Bradwardine effectively negates any possible freedom of the human will: As what is foreknown to happen, must happen, there is no space left for the human will to act autonomously, and it can at best acquiesce to the inevitable[86]. Leff's observations only take

[82] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 149. Original: "Mundus receptaculum est omnium sensibilium specierum, qualitatum, vel corporum, quae omnia sine Deo vegetari non possunt".

[83] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 165. Original: "Quod necesse est Deum servare quamlibet creaturam immediatiùs quacunque causa create".

[84] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 181.

[85] Refer also to the section on Boethius in the third chapter of this study for a more detailed description of the Boethian conception of time and corresponding theory of divine foreknowledge.

[86] See also Leff 1957, p. 105. Leff states that it is because of this foreknowledge that mankind loses its last scraps of autonomy. See also Leff 1957, p. 109.

into account a linear perspective of time, and fail to appreciate God's extemporaneous position. As will be discussed in further detail in the next chapter of this study[87], the fatalistic stance of which Leff accuses Bradwardine, is exactly what the *Doctor Profundus* himself sought to avoid.

God's ceaseless action in sustaining his creations is one of the first of many instances in which Bradwardine strikes out not only against Pelagian theses, but with equal vigour argues against fatalists and natural determinists. The latter, claims Bradwardine, would "assert that God's only action is the putting into motion of heaven; hence human actions would be influenced astrally"[88]. To Bradwardine, such positions are untenable for two main reasons: First, a remote God with no direct influence on reality would be less powerful than one that does have that kind of influence. Secondly, Bradwardine does not accept that the fate or actions of man (or other rational beings like angels) can be determined by secondary causes like planets, the moon, or stars, as he sees rational creatures as superseded only by God, and most assuredly not by non-rational agents like the celestial bodies. A good part of *De Causa Dei*'s polemic content is not aimed at the Pelagians, but at those who (like fatalists and astral determinists) would downplay or eliminate free will. The following chapter of this study describes how a lopsided focus on the anti-Pelagian content of *De Causa Dei* further contributed to the slanted reading of Bradwardine as a free will denier, as Leff and Laun propose him to be.

Most of Bradwardine's conclusions about existence carry over to his discussion of God's role in human *actions*. Bradwardine contends that "God necessarily is the efficient cause of any created thing"[89], which includes actions. He comes to this conclusion by inference from his previous statements about God's role in existence, stating that "it seems to be something simpler for a thing to exist by itself, or to conserve another thing, than to do something by itself, which does not occur. No creature can do this lesser thing, as the previous chapter has taught, therefore it also cannot do this greater thing: God therefore necessarily has a hand in every action. The stated arguments about the conservation of things can also be applied to actions, under changed terminology"[90]. This passage argues that existence is more general than action, as something needs to exist before it can act. If something is dependent on God for every moment of existence, it follows that this dependence carries over into the specific actions taken *during* this existence[91]. In this fashion, there seems to be an inseparable connec-

[87] Particularly, in the context of fatalistic, stoic, natural, and astral determinism.

[88] See Obermann 1957, p. 57.

[89] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 165. See also Lukács, p. 93. Original: "Quod Deus est necessaria causa efficiens cuiuslibet rei factae".

[90] *Idem*. Original: "Minus enim videtur rem per se existere, vel aliam conservare, quàm per se facere aliquid cùm non esset. Sed nulla creatura potest in hoc minus, sicut capitulum proximum docuit; quare nec in hoc maius: Deus ergo necessario apponet manum ad quamlibet factionem. Rationes quoque factae de conservatione possunt fieri de factione, terminis permutatis".

[91] The argument proposed by Bradwardine here follows essentially the same logic as van Inwagen's

tion between being and acting in *De Causa Dei's* doctrine of God.

In parallel to his conclusions about God's role in human existence, Bradwardine thus holds that "nothing can do anything without God"[92]. If created beings were able to act autonomously, this would mean in turn that it would also be possible to exist without being sustained by God. However, God *is* actively involved with all of his creations and all actions performed by them, leading to the second conclusion that one can only do something if "God per se and immediately does the same thing"[93]. From this follows a third assumption: If humans cannot perform actions unless God is closely and immediately involved, Bradwardine claims, this means that "nothing can do anything unless God immediately does the same as a co-actor"[94]. These three corollaries "represent the increase of God's participation: In these three theses God becomes the most immediate co-actor in every action. The priority of the efficient cause over other causes and effects establishes the preeminent role of the first divine cause"[95]. Thus, in Bradwardine's theology, the divine will functions as the efficient cause of every action by every agent. It comes as no surprise that God's immediate presence and participation in every act has a severe impact on Bradwardine's free will theory, as it posits an omnipotent external controller that is not only continuously present but *immediately involved* in every act performed. Many questions are raised by the notion of immediate participation by God. A vital concern to the issue of free will is whether God can force humans to do something through divine participations, and whether he actually does. Bradwardine takes the position that while God, being omnipotent, certainly *could* do so, chooses not to[96]. Another major issue that arises from this is related to Sin: If one performs a sinful act, and if God is efficient cause of and co-actor in every act, does this mean that God participates in Sin or even wants it to come about? This is generally recognized as a stumbling block in *De Causa Dei's* doctrine of God, and is discussed in greater detail towards the end of this chapter.

---

transfer of powerlessness principle, only here it involves a transfer of *dependence* rather than *powerlessness*. If the core process of being is dependent on God, it follows that subordinate processes like actions undertaken by these beings are subject to that same dependency: A transfer of divine dependency from being to action.

[92] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 171. See also Lukács, p. 93. Original: "Quòd nulla res potest aliquid facere sine Deo".

[93] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 171. See also Lukács, p. 93. Original: "Quòd nulla res potest aliquid facere, nisi Deus per se et immediate faciat illud idem".

[94] *Idem*. Original: "Quòd nulla res potest aliquid facere, nisi Deus faciat illud idem immediatius quolibet alio faciente".

[95] Translated from Lukács, pp. 19-20. Original: "Die Korollare des Kapitels 3, stellen die Steigerung der Mitwirkung Gottes dar: Gott wird in diesen drei Thesen zum unmittelbarsten Mittäter in jeder Handlung. Die Priorität der Wirkungsursache gegenüber den anderen Ursachen und Wirkungen begründet die hervorragende Rolle der ersten göttlichen Ursache".

[96] Bradwardine's conception of God can be likened to Harry Frankfurt's counterfactual intervener Black encountered in the second chapter of this study, with the difference that God will not intervene regardless of whether controlled subject Jones decides to vote Democrat or Republican.

A theory of total divine control might easily lead to humanity's agency being stripped away completely, leaving them mere puppets of an infinitely powerful divine entity who controls their every actions. Leff certainly suggests that it does, calling *De Causa Dei's* theology a "system built to disprove human worth", with which Bradwardine "so succeeds in depressing man that one is tempted to ask why so perfect a creator should have willed such creatures. […] In his intentness to vindicate God's cause Bradwardine forgot the obligation to His creatures; by his doctrines the sufferings of Christ Himself lost any meaning: for man had no justifications"[97]. Contrary to Leff's claims, however, achieving just such an equilibrium is what *De Causa Dei* is determined to accomplish: Rather than proposing a hard determinist position in which the universe is determined in such a fashion that free will is excluded, Bradwardine seeks out a *compatibilist* solution in which free will and divine control can co-exist. Amongst other factors, Bradwardine's use of a Boethian conception of time is used to establish compatibility between God's 'fore'knowledge and human free will. Leff, misunderstanding the distinction between divine and human time that Bradwardine proposes, sees God's co-acting coupled with foreknowledge as forcing man into pre-ordained action. It is Leff misunderstanding of the role of time in *De Causa Dei* that lies at the root of a number of his problematic conclusions. While Bradwardine's conceptualist approach most comes to the fore in the second and third books, his theories on the interplay between divine knowledge and will are also essential for understanding of *De Causa Dei*'s complex synthesis of divine omnipotence and human autonomy. To determine how God's co-action and co-efficiency operate, Bradwardine must first determine from what *faculty* these operations derive. To do so, he first seeks to establish what falls under the purview of the divine *will*, before delineating the exact nature of this will, which is defined by its relationship to divine *knowledge*.

Bradwardine establishes that God is "the efficient cause of any created thing" and "the mover or moving force of any movement", as well as the "most loving father, nurturer, and conserver of life"[98], and that the divine will is concerned with God's external activity and interaction with His subjects. Beyond this, several other things are established about God's will. It is "universally efficacious, causally insurmountable and necessary, and cannot be impeded or hindered in any way"[99]. That God's will cannot be hindered or impeded follows logically from the first premise, as a God whose will could be ignored or frustrated must be considered less powerful than one whose commands cannot be gainsaid: "If God does not do something, and he wants to do that thing, that means he cannot do it. Therefore, he is not omnipotent, but impotent in this respect"[100]. However, He *is* omnipotent and thus "it is al-

[97] See Leff 1957, p. 19.

[98] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 190. Original: "Quod Deus est causa efficiens cuiuslibet rei factae, movens seu motix cuiuslibet motionis, ac universaliter omnium amantissima genitrix, nutrix, et vivifica conservatrix".

[99] *Idem*. Original: "Quòd voluntas divina est universaliter efficax, insuperabilis et necessaria in causando, non impedibilia nec frustrabilis ullo modo".

[100] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 190. Original: "Deus non facit hoc, et vult facere hoc, ergo non potest hoc facere. Non est ergo omnipotens, sed impotens in hac parte".

ways easy for God, to do what he wants; and it is as easy that if he does *not* wish it to be, it will not be[101]". While a logical continuation of earlier premises, this claim does further push Bradwardine's theology in a direction in which divine control is absolute and free will is nothing, as it opens up the possibility that God not just participates in, but directly controls the actions of his agents. While some would argue that in cases in which the external controller only gives their unfelt assent to an action the subject is still responsible, in cases where the controller directly intervenes and forces them to perform a certain action, not many would argue this to constitute a free or voluntary act.

This raises the question of whether God *does* actively force his subjects to perform actions that run counter to their own intentions. Leff feels that this indeed what occurs, stating that Bradwardine's "principle of divine participation was founded on the direct movement of God's will as the cause of all that concerned His creatures. This made God's determinism into an active and immediate control extending as much to future actions as to the present"[102]. Indeed, if this were so, it would seem to rule out the possibility of free will's existence. On the other hand, if God does *not* intervene at any point, this makes it appear as if God does not want to prevent bad deeds or sinful actions: He does nothing to prevent sin or bad actions from coming about despite having the means to do so[103]. Bradwardine discusses this issue at great length towards the end of the first Book. For now, however, Bradwardine continues to outline the divine will by determining that God's will is always and equally efficacious in past, present, and future, and will thus also always be the efficient cause for everything that occurs, stating that "the divine will is the cause of anything in the future as well as the past"[104], which follows from the earlier conclusion that God exists outside of time, so if His will is all-powerful in the present this is also the case for past and future. After describing the manner in which the divine will acts upon created beings, discussion moves to the description of the divine knowledge that informs this will. Bradwardine proposes a distinction between three different types of knowledge[105]:

Scientia incomplexa
Scientia complexa
Discursus

---

[101] *Idem*. Italics mine. Original: "Deum semper quam facile est, quod vult, facere; tam facere est, quod non vult esse, non sinere".

[102] See Leff 1958, p. 298.

[103] In addition, this raises the issue of whether God, allowing sin to come about might actually be complicit in sin, as he a co-actor is every act. Bradwardine, as is shown later in this chapter, uses the concept of evil as privation, as well as the concept of intent, as a defence against this accusation.

[104] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 208. Original: "Quid divina Voluntas est causa cuiuslibet futuri atque praeteriti".

[105] See also *De Causa Dei,* p. 220, which focuses on the "distinction between knowledge that is in a certain way incomplex, and one that is complex". Translated. Original: "Distinguit divinam scientiam incomplexam quodammodo et complexam".

The latter of these modes of knowing is temporal, and involves the obtaining of *new* knowledge, which is obviously not applicable to an eternal and omniscient being[106]. Thus, only the first two pertain to God. Through simple or incomplex knowing, God is able "to know things by their essence. […] Before things have become reality, they rest in God by their essence and so are intuitively known by Him"[107]. These essences do not exist outside of God, but rather are *contained within His being* so that God can know them in a simple, internal, and absolute fashion. In this manner, Bradwardine "gives the impression that in contrast with his opponents he goes further than their conception of a merely significative existence of the universalia" and that the "universalia thus are manifold in type and in nature"[108]. Limiting the issue of nominalism and realism strictly to the problem of the universals, Bradwardine could thus be "placed near the realists"[109]. However, this holds *only* inasmuch as it pertains to God: About the reality and relevance of universals for human beings, Bradwardine remains entirely silent[110]. It would be inaccurate to label Bradwardine a realist in either the broader or the narrower application of the term, as this type of theory is largely concerned with theories about human knowledge, and *the way universal categories are perceived by human agents*. God's simple knowledge through universal concepts constitutes an "apprehension or intuition of the divine essence, without carrying out divisions, compositions, or distinctions about it"[111]. It is the way *God* understands his own essence, and the essential nature of the world, all through "his own lear essence" and not "by a posterior mode of knowing"[112]. It is therefore not applicable to any *human* epistemological processes.

God's simple knowing is passed down hierarchically from his essence to his knowledge. Complex knowledge in *De Causa Dei* corresponds essentially to a *judging* knowledge, and is in turn separated into two distinct forms. The first "has as its object that which is true before the act of the will, and is then called "cogito complexa *superior*""[113], or superior complex thought. Bradwardine justifies this by stating that "it proceeds naturally from this that God is, God is eternally, God is omnipotent and the like: Truly it is not that because God wills something to be, it therefore is, but rather the other way around"[114], meaning that God wills some-

[106] See also Berganza, p. 186 and *De Causa Dei*, p. 220.

[107] See Obermann 1957, p. 56. See also Berganza, p. 186.

[108] *Idem*. Translation. Original: "Universalia ergo illa sunt multa convenienta in natura et nomine".

[109] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 84.

[110] *Discursus* is the mode of knowing attributed to man. There is no mention of universal categories.

[111] Translated from Berganza, p. 187. Original: "[…] conocimiento simple consistiría en una aprehensión o intuición de la esencia divina, sin llevar a cabo divisiones, composiciones o distinciones en la misma".

[112] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 221. Original: "[Deus scit] Scientia incomplexa non per scita posterior sed per suam claram essentiam".

[113] See Obermann 1957, p. 56.

[114] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 221. Original: "Praecedit eam naturaliter Deum esse, Deum esse aeternum, Deum esse omnipotem et similia: Non enim quia Deus vult sic esse, ideo sic est, sed potus e contrario".

thing because of the nature of his being, and that there is a fixed core on which his acts of will are founded. The counterpart to this superior thought is the "cogito complexa *inferior*", and concerns everything that comes after an act of will has taken place: "Following from this are that the world exists, any kind of creature exists, and that embraces any universal truths that are complex"[115].

Bradwardine's model for describing God's mode(s) of knowing, judging, and acting, seeks to establish that while God is omnipotent and he can do whatever he pleases, His actions are neither random nor arbitrary, but are informed by His simple knowledge of His own internal and universal values. As Obermann rightly expounds, the "significance of these distinctions, which at first sight have only theoretical value, becomes evident when we realise how the line of God's being runs via his omniscience and all-embracing activity to his acting in the world. God's mere knowing is impartial, makes no division, and offers all possible and impossible things to the choice of the will. Everything that is related to God's opera ad extra is defined by the will, which in the last analysis decides what is going to be realized"[116]. This process serves the purpose of "preserving at the same time both the rationality and the absolute freedom of God"[117]. That God must necessarily be free follows from the first supposition for Bradwardine, as an entity that is free must be considered more perfect than one that is restricted in any way. Moreover, if "the first cause did not act freely this would mean the destruction of all liberty and contingency among His creatures, which, Bradwardine holds, is not the case"[118]. Thus, in Bradwardine's system, God must be completely free. This, however, leads to another conundrum: If God is completely free in his actions, this seems to include the possibility that God might act irrationally, or choose not to do good. A *completely* free God faces a similar issue as the libertarians do with their view on free action, in that it appears to reduce action to a roll of the dice or random chance, rather than a rational decision. The reason why Bradwardine has chosen to separate different types of knowing and acting in God is to answer

[115] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 221. Original: "Sequuntur autem eam mundum esse, quamlibet creaturam esse, et universaliter omnia illa vera complexa quorum veritas causatur et pendet ab ipsa". See also Sbrozi, p. 184.

[116] See Obermann 1957, p. 57.

[117] Translated from Berganza, p. 191. Original: "Es el intento mantener a un mismo tiempo la racionalidad y la libertad absoluta de Dios". See also Obermann 1957, p. 58. Note that when Obermann speaks about 'middle knowledge' in this passage, this should not be understood in Molinist terms, which proposes a middle knowledge through which God knows all possible scenarios and outcomes of a free act of will by a creature, of which one will actually be chosen. Molinism represents an attempt to establish a theory of divine knowledge in which God is omniscient, yet has a future which is contingent. God knows the possible outcomes of future events through middle knowledge, which then becomes fixed in human perception after one of these possibilities has been realized. In *De Causa Dei*, however, God knows present, past, and future eternally and in the same fashion.

[118] See Leff 1957, p. 41. Leff further adds that a lack of freedom in God would not only endanger God's omnipotence, but also his goodness, as according to Bradwardine an irrational act can only be good by accident, not by intent.

how God can act according to certain principles without reducing His freedom. It is God's will (and only his *will*) that is completely free in how he acts[119]. However, this freedom is not irrational or random, as it informed by God's knowledge of His own internal nature. As God's nature is unchanging and undivided, this safeguards that He will always act rationally and in accordance with His own nature: "The will of God is thus never irrational: Reason moves the divine will, and makes it so"[120]. God is free to do as he pleases, but due to the simple knowledge of universal truths about Himself and his nature, He will always act in a manner that is rational, good, and just.

Up to this point, then, the following conclusions have been drawn about God: He is omnipotent, all-good, omniscient, perfectly simple and ubiquitous. He exists outside of time, and knows past, present, and future in the same manner. He is the cause of every creation and works ceaselessly in them to maintain them. In all actions by created beings He is triple cause and co-actor. Nothing outside of God can exist or do anything by themselves. His will is all-powerful and irresistible, universally and eternally efficacious. His acts of will are completely free but not random, as they are informed by a simple (self)knowledge of His own essence and eternal truths about Himself. Freedom is necessary to establish His omnipotence, the informed nature of His decisions to establish the just nature of His rule, and its judging quality. On the subject of divine judgement, the concept of predestination comes to the fore, which, depending on one's viewpoint, is a potential counterargument to freedom in God's creatures: A rigidly determined future seems to threaten free will, at least in the libertarian sense with its focus on true alternate possibilities.

The actual discussion of predestination in *De Causa Dei* is, perhaps surprisingly, rather succinct, leading some to scholars to conclude that predestination is not as central a concern as one might believe[121]. Bradwardine's parsimony on the topic of predestination might come as a surprise, as "this doctrine offers ample opportunity to defend God's sovereignty against the overstatement of human autonomy and thus fits in excellently with the purpose of *De Causa Dei*"[122], not to mention that when it comes to the subject of free will, a deterministically ordered universe (whether pre-ordained by God, second causes, or causal chains of events), and its compatibility or incompatibility with free will is one of the greatest challenges. Yet, discussion of the subject of predestination in *De Causa Dei* is limited to only 20 pages, spanning chapters 44 through 47 at the end of the first book. Even in these pages, Bradwardine is

[119] See also *De Causa Dei*, p. 197, which states that "Freedom is thus given only in the will". Translated. Original: "Libertas ergo est in sola voluntate ponenda".

[120] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 230. Original: "Voluntas namque Dei numquam est irrationalis: ergo ratio movet voluntatem divinam, et efficit eius velle".

[121] See for instance Aers, p. 80. Aers does not take into account that, while Bradwardine does not spend a significant amount of time proving the existence of predetermination, it is nevertheless a cornerstone of *De Causa Dei*, as the entire object of the work is harmonizing an absolutely predetermined world with free will and human autonomy. The brevity of discussion does not devalue its import.

[122] See Obermann 1957, p. 106.

not overly concerned with outlining an encompassing theory of predestination, but is content with stating only that it exists as a logical consequence of previous arguments both in *De Causa Dei* and in other treatises. He then proceeds to spend most pages dedicated to the problem of predestination with rebuffing either those who grant the existence of some measure of predestination but do not embrace it fully, or deny it all together, like the Pelagians[123]. Obermann posits that "the explanation for this striking situation should without doubt be looked for in the existence, mentioned already by the oldest chroniclers, of a treatise specially devoted to the problem of predestination"[124].

We will take a short excursion away from *De Causa Dei* to consider what Bradwardine wrote about the subject of predestination elsewhere, so as to better understand its role in his theological system, and its effects on the free will theory outlined in Books II and III. In 1935, Xiberta edited incomplete fragments of a *questio* that was most likely written by Bradwardine dealing with the subject of "the divine prescience of the future [contingents]"[125]. In addition, Friedrich Justus Laun uncovered another treatise on the subject that can be attributed to Bradwardine, titled *De Predestinatione*. It argues that "foreknowledge of merits can never be the cause of God's decree to admit certain people to eternal glory, as in that case God would be moved by a cause outside himself"[126]. While it is not entirely certain whether this tractate was indeed written by Bradwardine, it has been verified that it was written at Oxford in the middle of the 14th century, and that it fits well with the ideas presented in the *De Causa Dei*. It is also possible that it is related to a lost work of Bradwardine's, whose title has been handed down as *De Prescientia et de Predestinatione*. Finally, the treatise *De Futuris Contingentibus,* a study of the mutability of future events, also concerns itself with predestination. Not available in full to many earlier scholars like Laun, Leff, or Obermann, this text was first edited by Jean Francois Genest in 1979. As Genest notes, only Obermann previously showed awareness of this tractate at all, and even then, only had access to fragments totalling to roughly 15 percent of the entire text. It is an early work by Bradwardine, likely written around 1332 or 1333. There are "many indications that the *De Futuris Contingentibus* was part of a collection of questions, and that it traces back to a period when Bradwardine was no more than a bachelor of theology at Oxford"[127]. Though it was written early in his career, the *De futuris contingentibus* contains the germination of many ideas that reached full maturity in later works like *De Causa Dei*. Bradwardine takes it upon himself to safeguard God's omnipotence and omniscience while simultaneously seeking to preserve free will and avoid a fatalistic determinism. It is in present-

[123] See also *De Causa Dei,* Book I, Chapter 46 and 47, respectively.

[124] See Obermann 1957, p. 106.

[125] Translated from Xiberta, p. 1168. Original: "[…] el tema candent de la divina presciència dels futurs". This incomplete tractate was likely written by Bradwardine, due to concluding remark 'explicit Beaduard', an alternative spelling of Bradwardine's name. See Xiberta, p. 1179.

[126] See Obermann 1957, p. 107.

[127] Translated from Genest 1979, p. 253. Original: "Autant d'indices que le *De futuris contingentibus* faisait partie d'une collection de questions et qu'il remonte à une époque où Bradwardine n'était encore que bachelier en théologie à Oxford".

ing this compatibilist narrative that Leff's theories on how Bradwardine willingly sacrifices free will and human autonomy to establish God's primacy reveal themselves to be flawed. Bradwardine develops a compatibilist argument about future actions, portraying them as known in advance by God yet not precluding man's free will in making them come about. It is organized "through a classic outline, as the questio begins by a brief statement of the arguments for the dissenting side and the opposite. Nine opinions are exposed and refuted this fashion, one after the other. […] Then comes the proper response, which by itself forms almost half of the text"[128], a marked difference from the treatment of predestination in *De Causa Dei*, where its existence is merely affirmed in reference to previous conclusions and other texts. It also differs from *De Causa Dei* in that it is not as explicitly polemical in nature, and relies on a *sic-et-non* structure. Many of the arguments brought to bear against other opinions in the nine questions should at this point be familiar, as they operate on similar principles as many of the conclusions about the divine knowledge and will in *De Causa Dei*. This is particularly clear in Bradwardine's refutation of the eighth opinion, in which many have seen reflected the views on predestination by Bradwardine's contemporaries like Ockham, Holcot, Buckingham, and Woodham which "in effect postulates that the event to come is exempt, even for God, to the necessity attached to the present or the past as such. Therefore, as long as a future has not been realized, God knows it and wills it in a contingent fashion: But as soon as it comes into being, God knows it and wills it necessarily"[129]. Bradwardine vehemently disagrees with this, as it might not only imply that God is not omniscient, but also because this passing from knowing and wanting something contingently to knowing and wanting it by necessity results in change taking place in God, contradicting scripture: "For I am the Lord, I change not"[130]. Although this eighth opinion seeks to preserve free will by treating the future as contingent and thus leaving a 'garden of forking paths' with many possibilities for alternate actions, it does so at the cost of diminishing God's power to an unacceptable degree (that is, unacceptable for Bradwardine). Instead, Bradwardine argues, as God is omniscient and does not change, he must also necessarily know the entire future in the same manner as present and past, which must therefore be predestined. This also demonstrates why the subject of predestination is not addressed in detail in *De Causa Dei*, as it is less a force in and of itself than an *effect* of divine properties like omniscience, omnipotence, and immutability. Though Aers was right to point out that the topic of predestination does not have a significant *overt* presence, this should not be taken to mean that it is of little significance: The subject of predestination, while not always immediately drawn to the fore, nevertheless heavily influences discussion in

[128] Translated from Genest 1979, p. 261. Original: "Construite selon un plan classique, la question commence par un bref énoncé des arguments *pro parte negativa* et *ad oppositum*. Neuf opinions sont alors tour á tour exposées et réfutées. […] Vient alors la *responsio propria,* qui représente à elle seule près de la moitié du texte".

[129] Translated from Genest 1979, p. 263. Original: "La théorie en question postule en effet que l'événement à venir est exempt, pour Dieu même, de la nécessité qui s'attache au présent et au passé comme tels. Ainsi, tant qu'on futur n'est pas réalisé, Dieu le connaît et le veut de manière contingente: mais sitôt pose dans l'être, Dieu le connaît et le veut nécessairement".

[130] See Malachi 3:6.

Books II and III.

This discussion is also foregrounded in *De Futuris Contingentibus*, as Bradwardine's theory of predestination brings with it a number of potential problems that, in elevating God, threaten to devalue man. Genest summarizes these objections, stating that they might lead "people to despair for their salvation, that it ruins freedom, and, with that, merits and demerits […], it leads to fatalism […], denies contingency […] and makes God the author of Sin"[131]. These objections also form the basis for discussion about the interaction between God and man in all three books of *De Causa Dei*, once more underpinning the import that a future fixed in advance has on any theory of human freedom. Unlike Leff's claims to the contrary, devaluing free will is what Bradwardine seeks to avoid. He argues that though freedom precludes constraint, it is not disinclined to every type kind of necessity, meaning that he sees necessity and freedom as fundamentally compatible. A major flaw in Leff's argument is that he discusses Bradwardine as if he conceived of predestination along incompatibilist lines and therefore, in affirming the determined nature of the future, by consequence negates free will. Thus, Leff in essence makes an analysis on libertarian terms of a compatibilist theory, something that cannot but result in a lopsided analysis, as it engages the text on an epistemological basis *De Causa Dei* explicitly does not endorse. Moreover, Leff fails to recognize the separate conceptions of time for God and man applied in *De Causa Dei*, which further skews his perspective on how divine foreknowledge impacts human free will. *De Futuris Contingentibus* is a useful text to take into account when analysing *De Causa Dei* for a number of reasons. Firstly, because it provides a more in-depth view of Bradwardine's views on predestination, and secondly, because it shows that predestination (despite its rather brief appearance in *De Causa Dei*) is an unseen presence and driving force behind many arguments about the interaction between God and man, and the compatibility of freedom and necessity. Several potential counterarguments against Bradwardine's predestination theory are also discussed. While most of these concern man or his interaction with God and are thus dealt with in the second and third book of *De Causa Dei*, one particular (and potentially very serious) counterargument is solely concerned with God, and is therefore treated in Book I, namely that by making God co-effector and efficient cause of every act, this also threatens to make him the author or at least co-author of *Sin*.

In describing God's judgement, Bradwardine has carefully emphasized God's infinite love for His creations, which is manifested through His supreme goodness. Indeed, this benevolence is not "an accidental mode, [but] the goodness of God is essential to his own being. God is necessarily and essentially good"[132]. Given that God is supremely good and thus wants only good to come about, everything that "proceeds from Him, or is made by Him, will be

[131] Translated from Genest 1979, p. 266. Original: "[Cette doctrine] conduit les hommes à désespérer de leur salut […], elle ruine la liberté et, partant, le mérite et le démérité […], elle aboutit au fatalisme pratique […], nie la contingence […], et fait de Dieu l'auteur du péché".

[132] Translated from Berganza, p. 193. Original: "Tampoco lo es de un modo accidental, la bondad de dios es esencial a su proprio ser. Dios es necesaria y esencialmente bueno".

good"[133]. Because, as Bradwardine previously demonstrated, "everything comes from God, all things are good and nothing is bad per se"[134]. However, problems arise as soon as one considers the issues of sin and evil, as they seem inconsistent with the doctrine of God presented here. In 1955, John Leslie Mackie formulated the logical problem of evil, a series of arguments that sought to prove the inconsistency of an omnipotent and wholly benevolent God with the existence of evil and sin in this world. He stated that "in its simplest form the problem is this: God is omnipotent; God is wholly good; and yet evil exists. There seem to be some contradictions between these three propositions [yet] the theologian, it seems, at once must adhere and cannot consistently adhere to all three"[135]. He also stated that this is an eminently "logical problem, the problem of reconciling a number of beliefs; it is not a scientific problem that might be solved by further observations, or a practical problem that might be solved by a decision or an action"[136]. Though formulated centuries after Bradwardine's death and not in response to any of his works, Mackie here strikes at the heart of one of the main problems of Bradwardine's theology: Harmonizing God's omnipotence and goodness with the existence of evil. Additionally, as Bradwardine sees God as co-actor and cause of every action, the *Doctor Profundus* must also account for God's role in bringing about sin, lest he should make God guilty of having sin come about, an obvious conflict with His good nature. To solve this conundrum, Bradwardine relies heavily on Augustine, though he also departs from him on key issues. While Bradwardine affirms, in order to maintain a conception of God as co-actor in every action, that God is "the efficient, formal, and final cause of bad actions", he is adamant that He is not "the material cause"[137]. Of central import in proving this claim is the Augustinian concept of evil as *privatio boni*, or privation of good. Augustine, much like Bradwardine, holds that all that proceeds from God is good: "Every actual entity is good. Nothing evil exists in itself, but only as an aspect of some actual entity. Therefore, there can be nothing evil, except something good. Absurd as this sounds, nevertheless the logical connections of the argument compel us to it as inevitable"[138]. From this, Augustine concludes that something (for example a man) is not evil by essence, but rather that a man, who is created by God and thus good by essence, is evil because he is (partly) deprived of goodness: "We find that the bad man is not bad because he is a man, nor is he good because he is wicked. […] Every entity, even if it is a defective one, in so far as it is an entity, is good. In so far as it is defective, it is evil"[139]. This defect that constitutes evil is not an actual substance, but rather a part of the whole where the good is lacking. Bradwardine carries over this idea of evil as

[133] Translated from Berganza, p. 194. Original: "[…] y que todo lo provenga de Él, o sea hecho por Él, será bueno".

[134] Translated from Berganza, p. 195. Original: "Puesto que, como ha sido indicado, todo ser proviene de Dios, todas las cosas son buenas y ninguna es mala por sí".

[135] See Mackie in Peterson et al, p. 304.

[136] *Idem*.

[137] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 554. Original: "Quod Deus est causa efficiens, formalis, et finalis malae actionis, sed non materialis".

[138] See Augustine in Peterson et al, p. 295.

[139] *Idem*.

privation to his theory of action: Every act is co-created by God and thus essentially good, because it proceeds from Him. What makes an act evil is not the act itself, but the *intent* with which it is carried out. Bradwardine expounds on this with the following example: If a man copulates with a woman, this act is in itself good, particularly so if it is performed for a good reason, such as begetting children. If a man commits adultery, this act is sinful. It is not sinful *per se*, as the act of copulation in itself is part of the good. Rather, it is due to the bad intent (in this case having sex solely out of lust or with an extramarital partner) that makes the act sinful. God is in this case the efficient, formal, and final cause of the act. What makes an essentially good act sinful is the adulterous *intent*, which belongs to the material cause, in which God is not involved and which lies solely with man[140].

Leff interprets this to mean that Bradwardine sees freedom in man limited to choosing to do ill, stating that Bradwardine has "arrived at a negative interpretation of free will; it exists in so far as it can act of its own wrongly; but even so, this is still caused by [God's] non-acting, and, in this sense, must be regarded as the result of His will. God, then, as the positive cause of everything, existent or non-existent, is also the cause of free will's omissions and commissions. There is no way of escaping His ordinances"[141]. He also states that Bradwardine has left free will "with no resources of its own: he regards it, at best, as but a feeble attempt by reason to control impulse, and, even in this, without God's aid, it cannot prevail"[142]. Leff concludes that "Bradwardine is at odds with the demands of his argument and the demands of Christian humanism"[143], and further claims that the *Doctor Profundus* is incapable of resolving this paradox. However, this analysis of the role of free will in Bradwardine's is inaccurate in several respects. Firstly, Leff's argumentation is derived from the premise that divine participation means that God directly controls and directs each individual action, and that this action is therefore no longer under human control. This chapter previously demonstrated that Bradwardine proposes the opposite: God does not force human beings into action, but *enables* and *co-moves*. Indeed, Bradwardine holds that one can "distinguish between two types of necessity: one which is repugnant to freedom and is characterized by being "natural, fatalistic, and

[140] Bradwardine also has an interesting take on ignorance, as he sees it as a valid excuse for an act that would otherwise be sinful. Expanding the adultery example, Bradwardine posits a situation in which a woman seduces a man. The woman, however, looks so much alike to the man's wife that he cannot tell the difference and, believing that she is *in fact* his wife, lies with her. While the man has technically committed adultery, he was ignorant of this, which for Bradwardine excuses the man from sin. As Obermann rightly notes, this is a rather profound departure from Augustine when he "speaks of the "horrenda profunditas ignorantiae" as a direct consequence of original sin. For ignorance […] is, according to Augustine, the realisation of Adam's rebellion against God, the basically wrong direction of the will, in which all creatures participate" (See Obermann 1957, p. 126). We shall see later in this chapter that this change is due to Bradwardine's significant departure from Augustine regarding the effects of original sin and the Fall.

[141] See Leff 1957, p. 96.

[142] See Leff 1957, pp. 96-97.

[143] See Leff 1957, p. 97.

violent"; and another that is "spontaneous, consenting, free", which is compatible with freedom"[144]. Leff claims Bradwardine argues the former definition, whereas he actually seeks to establish the latter, through which humans still have full control over their actions. Leff also states that even non-action on God's part means that the result of this non-action should be regarded as the result of his will. God allows humans to fail, achieving the intended result of failure through deliberate non-action: His non-action should, according to Leff, be considered a mode of acting of its own. Leff's argument, apart from failing to distinguish between the different types of necessity proposed by Bradwardine, has the rather unfortunate effect of making God *directly responsible for sinful acts*: Leff contends that 'free will' consists in choosing to do bad, during which God abstains from intervening. Ergo, free will is the freedom to sin without interference from God. He also suggests that non-action on God's part is deliberate, and that the actions resulting from God non-interference are therefore still the result of his will. Thus, following Leff, individual sins belong to God's will: He allows individual sins to occur through an act of non-action, making him the ultimate author of sin. This, however, is not what Bradwardine seeks to establish: Man can not only act with evil intent, but also with good intent. God's help is needed, as is described in more detail later in this chapter, as far as *persistence in good acts* is concerned, but man is not impotent in making free decisions. In this fashion, Bradwardine seeks to answer the first conundrum, and partly answers the second: All things that proceed from God are good. Evil is not real substance, but privation. Therefore, while God co-produces the act itself, created beings are responsible for the sinful intent that separate good acts from bad acts. If bad acts and sins occur, this is not due to the act itself but evil intent, which is in itself the result of an act of free will with which God has nothing to do.

However, this explanation in turn prompts further objections, posited by Mackie in stating that "there is a fundamental difficulty in the notion of an omnipotent God creating men with free will, for if men's wills are really free this must mean that even God cannot control them, that is, that God is no longer omnipotent. It may be objected that God's gift of freedom to men does not mean that he cannot control their wills, but that he always refrains from controlling their wills"[145]. But if that is the case, Mackie asks, "why [should God] refrain from controlling evil wills? Why should he not leave men free to will rightly, but intervene when he sees them begin to will wrongly"[146]? He adds that if God cannot do this, he is not all-powerful, and not all-good if he can do it but does not. Bradwardine needs to answer such charges if he is to provide a viable solution not only to the problem of sin, but also to the question of why an all-benevolent God would allow free will if it meant that evil and sin would occur. His argumentation against this challenge is a free will defence[147], which holds that good deeds are

[144] Translated from Berganza, p. 209. See also *De Causa Dei*, p. 637. Original: "podrán distinguirse dos tipos de necesidad: una que repugna a la libertad y se caracteriza por ser "natural, fatal y violenta"; y otra "espontánea, consentida, libre", que es compatible con la libertad".

[145] See Mackie in Peterson et al, p. 312.

[146] See Mackie in Peterson et al, p. 312.

[147] Alvin Plantinga wrote an extensive rebuttal of Mackie's logical problem of evil, which shows great

only good if there is also an option to do bad: To do good requires one to *consciously reject evil* and assent to following the good, which can be reached only with divine aid. While it is not true that God wants or wills *individual* sins or bad events to come about, He "wants sin to be and this in the same way in which He wants catastrophes in nature": He does not will sin "per se, but that sin *should be*, hence it becomes the means of the will and not the aim of the will"[148]. Bradwardine thus sees sin and evil as a means to the good. Not all agree, however, as Leff sees this as a total negation of human autonomy, stating that "Bradwardine thus gives the death knell to works as of any value at all. This is yet another blow at the worth of human activity. He excludes the need for visible and natural deeds. Belief is being removed from the world of tangible activity and symbols and transferred to the realm of personal and supernatural experience"[149]. A hasty conclusion, perhaps, as the entirety of the final chapter of Book II of *De Causa Dei* is dedicated to rebuffing just such a conclusion, and exhorting the faithful to continue to perform tangible acts of faith and not to fall prey to fatalism or despair[150].

Bradwardine sees this capacity to act with good or ill intent as a vital element of freedom. To just such an approach, Mackie objects that this proposes a view of "God as limited by causal laws", which "also conflicts with the view that causal laws are themselves made by God"[151], as this situation in which the power of a supposedly omnipotent God is limited by laws he himself created, which in turn would limit and thereby annul his omnipotence. If God is bound not to interfere when sins and evil occur, this means his power is limited by an outside force, which would go against the view of God as omnipotent. Mackie concedes, however, that "this conflict would indeed be resolved if it were possible for an omnipotent being to bind himself", a "possibility [that] has still to be considered"[152]. And this is exactly what Bradwardine has tried to accomplish through his distinction between divine essence, knowledge, and will: Mackie sees causal laws as creations of God that are *external* to Himself, but Bradwardine sees them as something *interior* in the essential nature of God. God is thus completely free of outside constraints, because the eternal truths that govern His nature and behavioural patterns exist within Himself as core constituents of His being, which in turn affects how He interacts with the outside world. God is not bound by any laws of his own creation, but His will is informed by His own essential nature, fulfilling Mackie's condition of

likeness to the ideas presented by Bradwardine more than 600 years previously. Like Thomas, Plantinga posits that the value of a free will that has the capacity to choose between right and wrong (more precisely in Bradwardine's case, to choose to perform actions with right or wrong intent) is more valuable than a total absence of evil, and counters Mackie's claim that a free will that would always freely choose to do the right thing, with God only interfering when someone is about to do something evil. Plantinga response to this is that it would not be desirable at all, but rather would strip away any meaningful aspect of choice. See also Plantinga in Peterson et al, pp. 315-340.

148 See Obermann 1957, p. 130.

149 See Leff 1957, p. 83.

150 This remarkable passage in *De Causa Dei* is discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

151 See Mackie in Peterson et al., p. 309.

152 *Idem*.

a God bound only by Himself.

The topic of original sin, discussed in the later chapters of the first book, also warrants further investigation, as it is here that we find a significant departure from Augustine. It also provides a powerful counterproof to claims[153] that Bradwardine's work is mainly an elegant restatement of Augustinian thought adapted for a 14th-century audience. It also testifies to a remarkable metaphysical optimism about the role of human free will, an optimism that is thoroughly at odds with a portrayal of Bradwardine as a misanthrope or free-will denier. The subject of original sin is interesting not because it is discussed at length, but rather because of how *little* of a role it is accorded, as it is such an important cornerstone of late-Augustinian thought[154]. In the few instances it *is* mentioned, Bradwardine seems to favour a Scotic approach: "If original sin is ever in question, he always speaks in a Scotistic-nominalistic way of poena, without taking culpa peccati originalis into account"[155]. On speaking of original sin, Bradwardine initially describes it as the *origin point* of sin, after which sin attaches itself to man like a parasite, who thereafter needs divine grace to avoid being led astray. In this version of original sin, we "miss Augustine's view of the irretrievable depravity of the human race. […] The ruinous effects of original sin seem to trace back to God's decision to punish the sin, rather than Adam's guilty deed. […] For Bradwardine, the seriousness of sin is to be found in the unwillingness of the rational creature to be an instrument of God"[156]. This significantly departs from Augustinian doctrine about the nature of man, and also changes the dynamic between man and God: In late-Augustinian thought, humanity is fundamentally debased and, without the aid of God, will always gravitate towards sinful behaviour on account of its sinful nature. While Bradwardine also affirms the need for divine aid in the form of grace in order to be righteous and do good, his image of man is quite different. Man is portrayed as being essentially good, on account of humankind being a creation of God, who produces only good things. Sin arises not from an essentially sinful nature that automatically tends towards bad actions, but is the result of a free choice to perform an essentially good act with evil intent: It changes the dynamic of human evil from essence to intent, while simultaneously also presenting human nature in a much more positive light. This is further explored in short order in the context of Bradwardine's argument that humans are essentially good and tend towards goodness, but requiring special divine aid to actually *persist* in goodness. This also shows a crucial difference between Bradwardine and the reformist figures Leff and Laun inaccurately associated him with, as a core issue in Lutheran and Calvinist dogma is the depravity of the nature of man. In his discussion of sin, then, Bradwardine shows himself to be far more optimistic about human nature than has been previously assumed.

However, this positivism does come at a price, in that it threatens to soften the mortal peril presented by sin: Obermann states that "by extenuating sin as a constituent of harmony, so

[153] These claims are pursued with particular vigour by Obermann.

[154] See also the discussion of original sin in Augustine in the previous chapter of this study.

[155] See Obermann 1957, p. 126.

[156] *Idem*.

that it is made into a final good", Bradwardine "makes his interpretation acceptable by weakening sin in an un-Biblical way" as he does not present "a view of sin as a profound debt and a turning away from God"[157]. If one assumes the latter view on the nature of sin to be dogmatically necessary to constitute a correct theory of sin, Bradwardine's theory indeed seems to lessen the severity of sin, as he apparently focuses more on the prevention of sinful acts through the investment of grace in the elected, rather than seeing sinfulness as a natural state. However, while he does not endorse an explicit theory of original sin in *De Causa Dei*, Bradwardine likewise does not posit that to live well without the aid of God is possible, nor that grace is any less than an absolutely necessary prerequisite for salvation: Man *qua* man exists in this world for a finite amount of time, and his good nature and rational judgement are likewise finite, and so even the wisest or most just are seized by moments of irrational and sinful desire. It is this limitation in goodness and rational power that prevents mankind from ever living sinlessly on their own powers; even the most righteous and good-natured man will not be able to live sinlessly. Thus, while humans are by nature good, they are fallible in their finiteness, and this fallibility will eventually cause them to stumble[158]. The miraculous nature and goodness of God's grace lies in the fact that it can reverse this inevitable slip into irrationality and sin and cause humans, whose nature is essentially good, not to act justly in individual instances, but to *persist* in righteousness. It is also in this that Leff's view that man 'can only choose to do wrong' is shown to be misguided, as Bradwardine clearly suggests that human agents *are* capable of performing good actions, just incapable of indefinitely persisting in them due to their own finite nature. Bradwardine's view of sin, as Obermann rightly notes, does indeed appear problematic, if one understands sin as a debt dating back to original sin or a deliberate turning away from God: At times, sinful acts seem in Bradwardine to constitute little more than slip-ups or mistakes rather than deliberate and malicious rebellion, and original sin certainly plays a diminished part in his theology: The Fall is barely mentioned, and postulations on the inheritability of original sin are conspicuously absent. This leads Obermann to claim that "Bradwardine shows himself here very remote from him [Augustine], as he does not understand one of his profoundest ideas", and that Bradwardine's theories lead to "a levelling of the concept of sin" by not attributing "a positive or concrete meaning"[159] to original sin. I argue, however, that this is not a misunderstanding of Augustine, but rather a *deliberate deviation*, shedding further doubt on the thesis that Bradwardine's theological influence lies mainly in representing an elegant restatement of Augustinian theology in 14th-century terms.

Obermann's account of the role of sin in *De Causa Dei* is problematic in several ways. Firstly, Bradwardine in fact *does* attribute concrete meaning to original sin: It is not only the origin point of sinful acts, but also an inevitable pitfall to which man is fated to trip owing to the finite nature of his will and goodness. Granted, this is still milder than Augustine's conception of "*horrenda profunditas ignorantiae* as a direct consequence of original sin", but it

[157] See Obermann 1957, p. 134.

[158] Bradwardine's theories of original sin and fallibility are further expounded upon in the following chapter.

[159] See Obermann 1957, p. 134.

certainly extends its scope beyond Obermann's claim that it constitutes "no more than the *carentia iustitiae originalis* and [that] its effect originates in punishment by God"[160]. Obermann also fails to provide any corroborative evidence for his claim that this constitutes a failure by Bradwardine to *understand* Augustine's theory. This seems to stem from a conviction of Obermann's either that Augustine's theories on the matter constitute an objective standard to which Bradwardine's theories must adhere, or that Bradwardine actively seeks to conform completely to Augustinian thought and in this instance has failed to do so. Both seem rather doubtful, for two reasons: Firstly, because the role accorded to original sin by Bradwardine is entirely in line with Bradwardine's own doctrine of metaphysical optimism as well as his concern to create a compatibilist model for divine foreknowledge and human free will. Secondly, following Augustine's premise of man's nature being fundamentally debased would run counter to Bradwardine's programme: It is incompatible with his theory that human nature is fundamentally good, which follows from his statement that *all* acts and creations of God are good by their nature, which in turn is derived from descriptions of the nature of God's being and essence. This, ultimately, can be inferred from the first supposition, which states that God is the most perfect and most good. If Bradwardine were to adhere to Augustinian thought on man's debased nature, it would collapse or at the very least thoroughly complicate most of his theology. Based on this, it is more likely that this departure from Augustine is not incidental or the result of misinterpretation or misunderstanding (as Obermann argues), but that it is *deliberate* and the result of the application of inferential logic all the way from the basic suppositions to these finer points on the nature of original sin[161]. Bradwardine's thorough departure from Augustine on this subject shows the degree to which he is dedicated to applying the *More Geometrica:* He pursues the inferences drawn from his suppositions to their conclusion, and is willing to contradict theories of even the most revered authorities if they do not hold up under this strict process of logical scrutiny. It reveals the workings of an inquisitive mind not content with elegant but ultimately conservative restatements of Augustinian thought, but which seeks to re-evaluate these theories using new and innovative modes of inquiry, in this case ones inspired by the field of mathematics. It also testifies to exactly the kind of metaphysical optimism which critics like Laun and Leff have seen wholly missing in Bradwardine. Finally, Bradwardine's view on human nature as essentially good, and a decreased emphasis on the fall, also casts further doubt on the common interpretation of a link between Bradwardine and figures from the Reformation, who held rather different views on these matters.

Now that Bradwardine has given a detailed description of the nature of God, and provided a thorough (if not unproblematic) account of sin, one major issue remains to be discussed in the first book, namely the divine grace which is the sole instrument of man's

[160] See Obermann 1957, p. 126 and p. 134.

[161] Besides this, it also appears rather unlikely that such a penetrating mind as Bradwardine's would so completely misunderstand the core tenant of late-Augustinian thought, and the central battleground of his quarrels with the Pelagians. It seems more likely, therefore, that Bradwardine's deviation is deliberate.

salvation. For the most part, Bradwardine's conception of grace mirrors Augustine's, as he argues "against Pelagian, that grace is given freely by God, and is not bought with preceding merits"[162]. This is justified in the following manner: Firstly, Bradwardine argues by way of the third and fifth corollary that "God gives all his rewards freely", as to do so is "more magnificent and more free, better and more perfect, than another way of giving, or rather selling it, as some favour expected from the giver"[163]. Also, according to corollary three, such gifts from God, "which can rightly be termed as God's grace", are conferred immediately "to all created beings, the rational and irrational, the grateful as well as the ungrateful"[164]. The fact that God bestows grace freely, without being 'bought off' by previous merits, is proof of God's magnanimous nature. This holds true in Augustine as much as it does in Bradwardine. While the operating principle of grace is similar in the works of both theologians, the *effect* it has on created beings differs due to the reduced role of original sin in *De Causa Dei* in comparison to Augustine's later works. As shown in the preceding chapter, grace in late-Augustinian thought is the miraculous way by which God redeems man, who by nature is utterly depraved as a result of original sin. Obermann states that in *De Causa Dei*, on the other hand, "the Fall hardly plays any part […]: For Bradwardine it is not the reason for the fact that man is left to grace alone. Sin is not the unfathomable disobedience and perversion of man, but impotence to do good"[165]. Due to this flattening of original sin, Obermann argues, the value of grace is diminished, as he sees it as no longer redeeming the irredeemable, but relegated to an enabler of goodness[166]. As already stated in the previous paragraph, however, this critique is not entirely fair. While Bradwardine portrays grace in *De Causa Dei* as that which enables man to do good and to persist in it, it is due to the Fall that sin has come about and man, having only finite knowledge and goodness, is bound at some point to falter. In this fashion, original sin still has an inexorable pull that man cannot overcome himself: He needs divine grace to do so. While Bradwardine displays great metaphysical optimism, he remains insistent upon the *absolute* necessity of grace for the salvation of mankind. Bradwardine's stance on the issues of grace, original sin, and his theories of the inherent goodness of human nature casts further doubts on a proto-reformist interpretation of his ideas, as such an interpretation would require a view of human nature as fundamentally depraved. On the subject of child baptism, such a central concern to Augustine, Bradwardine remains entirely silent.

---

[162] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 307. See also Lukács, p. 154. Original: "Contra Pelagium, quòd gratia gratis datur à Deo, non praecedentibus meritis comparator".

[163] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 307. See also Lukács, p. 155. Original: "Quòd Deus dat omnia munera sua gratis […]: Sic etiam dare est magnificentius et liberalius, melius et perfectius, quam alio modo dare, seu potiùs vendere, pro aliquo commodo proventuro ex munere donatori".

[164] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 307. See also Lukács 2012, p. 154. Original: "Quapropter et quodlibet donum Dei potest non incongruè, gratia Dei dici, gratia scilicet gratis data: Haec autem gratia communis est omnibus creaturis irrationalibus et rationalibus, gratis pariter et ingratis".

[165] See Obermann 1957, p. 184.

[166] See also Obermann 1957, p. 134, where he states that his "conception of sin […] does not fail to affect the issue of Bradwardine's struggle, namely, the defence of the fullness of grace".

From this examination of *De Causa Dei's* conception of God and the ways He interacts with His creation, we can draw the following conclusions: Following a mathematical structure and using theological and philosophical modes of inquiry in equal measure, Bradwardine outlines a conception of God that underscores His omnipotence and omniscience without compromising either His freedom or that of His subjects. While heavily influenced by Augustinian thought, Bradwardine also diverges from it on several key issues, particularly those of (original) sin and grace, showcasing that *De Causa Dei* is not just an elegant repackaging of Augustinian theories for the 14th century. A longstanding critical tradition has sought to associate Bradwardine with reformist theology, and to portray him as a free will denier. While Bradwardine, like reformist theologians, sought to argue against the overestimation of human autonomy by his contemporaries, his theology differs in many key areas. The following positions about Bradwardine's description of God show clear departures from the 'proto-reformist' theories commonly attributed to him by Laun, Leff, and others:

1) Bradwardine does not subscribe to a belief that freedom and necessity are mutually exclusive: He is not a hard determinist. Thus, while his account of God does hinge on the absolute necessity of His being and knowledge, this necessity does not preclude free will in humans. Bradwardine's *compatibilist* approach to free will is the focus of the following chapter.

2) Bradwardine does not subscribe to the belief that man is fundamentally depraved or deficient by nature. Humans are created by God, all that is created by God is good, and therefore human beings are by nature good. This puts him at a remove from Reformist figures like Luther, with whom this critical tradition has commonly associated Bradwardine.

3) Sin constitutes the evil *intent* with which an act is carried out, not the act itself. All acts ultimately stem from God; therefore, all acts must be good. Evil is understood, in an Augustinian fashion, to be a privation of good, not as something imbued with real substance. The choice to act with evil intent lies with man, exculpating God from becoming implicit in sin. Man is not impotent in accomplishing good acts, as he can freely and rationally choose to act rightly. Free will is *not* limited to freely choosing to do evil.

A number of dogmatic positions commonly attributed to Bradwardine are the result of preconceived ideas rather than sensitive readings, as these positions are never postulated or endorsed in *De Causa Dei* itself. While this process did not start with Laun or Leff, their interpretations contributed greatly to its popularity. This chapter has attempted to rectify some methodological errors, and to present Bradwardine mostly in his own words. A second critical tradition, principally advocated by Obermann, while rightly seeking to disprove a pre-reformist interpretation of Bradwardine's works, has overstated the conservative nature of *De Causa Dei*: While the *Doctor Profundus* does indeed seek to give precedence to God's omnipotence over human autonomy, he does not do in slavish adherence to Augustinian doctrine,

but attempts to accomplish this through an innovative use of different philosophical and mathematical methodologies. Nor does Bradwardine shy away from departing from Augustinian thought where the rigorous process of the *More Geometrica* demands it, as is seen in his theories on sin.

Obermann's view may stem from an overzealous focus on the theological content of the *De Causa Dei*: Obermann consciously de-emphasized the philosophical and mathematical components of the work, as he felt that the theological opinions expressed in *De Causa Dei* should take precedence: "As every page […] testifies to his being first and foremost a theologian, for whom philosophy served as a necessary means for the expression of theological thoughts, we will here confine ourselves to theological problems"[167]. As most of Bradwardine's innovations lie in the adaptation of methodological stratagems from different fields of study, it is no surprise that from Obermann's strategy there emerges an image of Bradwardine as a conservative reactionary Augustinian. Leff, too, feels that *De Causa Dei* should solely be analysed based on its theology, stating that although Bradwardine "used reason, it was to establish his theological standpoint that he did so", and that furthermore, as he "made everything follow from the premises of God's existence, not from those of reason", Bradwardine "consequently was full of scorn for reason's attempt to reach God"[168]. That Bradwardine's *More Geometrica* presents just such an attempt to reach God through reason seems to pass by Leff. Kurt Flasch also rebuffs Leff's interpretation of Bradwardine as being anti-reason or anti-philosophy: Bradwardine "clearly expressed that he had a philosophical conception"[169] for his work. Flasch continues, stating that the reason "that Leff could even posit this analysis, which is already gainsaid by the first lines – and even more so by the axiomatic structure of the work – showcases the distorting effects that the search for precursors of the reformation in research into the late Middle Ages has had"[170]. Flasch concludes by stating that Bradwardine "did not have the [intellectual] horizon of some parlour scholar, but was a principal participant in politics, a mathematician, and a friend of poetry", and that only once "we start to surmount interpretations from solely the perspective of theological history […] may we discover *De Causa Dei* anew – as one of the greatest works of medieval philosophy"[171].

---

[167] See Obermann 1957, p. 1.

[168] See Leff 1958, p. 299.

[169] Translated from Flasch 2000, p. 519. Original: "Er sprach damit deutlich aus, dass er eine philosophische Konzeption hatte".

[170] *Idem*. Original: "Dass Leff diese Ansicht vortragen konnte, die schon durch die ersten Zeilen – erst recht durch den axiomatischen Aufbau des Gesamtwerkes – widerlegt wird, zeigt die verfälschende Wirkung, die das Suchen nach Vorläufern der Reformation bei der Erforschung des späten Mittelalters hat".

[171] Translated from Flasch, p. 520. "Bradwardines Horizont ist nicht der eines Stubengelehrten, sondern der eines Akteurs der großen Politik, eines Mathematikers und eines Freundes der Poesie. Wenn man einmal anfängt, die bloß theologiegeschichtliche Betrachtung zu überwinden, [...] dann wird man *De Causa Dei* neu entdecken – als eines der größten Werke der mittelalterlichen Philosophie".

This interpretative tendency to strictly separate between theological / philosophical and scientific works written by a single author, as if they were produced by different personas, is also present in the interpretation of other theologians from the period[172]. Past discussion of Bradwardine's role in history strictly separated Bradwardine the Scientist from Bradwardine the Theologian, allowing no commixture[173]. That it is exactly in the adaptation of mathematical principles for the purposes of theological inquiry that Bradwardine shows himself at his most innovative demonstrates how such a strict separation of disciplines may negatively impact analyses of works whose authors attach importance to the harmonisation of different disciplines: One will inevitably miss the whole picture, and misunderstandings may certainly arise. Only recently has such treatment begun to be challenged, with an insistence that Bradwardine can only be properly understood by, at the very least, taking into account his work and theories in fields outside the direct purview of theology[174]. This chapter also provided an overview of Bradwardine's non-theological output on the basis of a firm belief that Bradwardine's work is best understood holistically, not by fragmenting discussion into different disciplines.

Bradwardine, in his reaffirmation of God's omnipotence, by no means sought to prostrate man, nor to deny or destroy free will. In doing so, it has pointed out and elucidated on problematic issues with two common interpretive approaches, which respectively see Bradwardine's predestinarian system as either a conservative restatement of Augustinian thought, or as a proto-reformism that carries anti-Pelagian sentiments to such a degree that Bradwardine would efface free will in favour of the establishment an extremely rigid and total determinism. This chapter has suggested that while the first approach lies closer to the actual doctrine outlined in Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei*, it remains problematic in numerous ways, most prominently in its neglect of the non-theological content of the work, and its analysis of the ways and degree to which Bradwardine diverges from Augustine. Specifically, the notion of Bradwardine as a conservative Augustinian has, as the sixth chapter of this study will demonstrate, been used to buttress the historiographical narrative of the 14th century as marked by a conflict between progressive nominalists and conservative realists. Though much has been done already to challenge widely held assumptions about Bradwardine's theories and their historical relevance, the critical approaches championed by Leff and Obermann continue to hold sway, making further contributions necessary.

---

[172] See also Slotemaker and Witt, p. 13, who discuss the problematic treatment of Robert Holcot's works as if they were written by different entities: 'the three Holcots', as it were. They summarize that these "*Three Holcots* are, after all, the accidental result of the division of labour among historians of philosophy, theology, late medieval preaching, and various other fields. This accidental division of labour among specialists is unfortunate. There is, in the end, only one Holcot, and this book focuses on understanding the breadth and diversity of his literary work within its intellectual and historical context".

[173] See also Sbrozi, p. 150.

[174] Sbrozi is concerned with the tendency to divide Bradwardine's works into scientific and theological works, Dolnikowski also raises the issue.

This chapter has been mostly concerned with Bradwardine's doctrine of God, and the ways He acts on (and interacts with) His creations. The following chapter explores the impact of this system on Bradwardine's conception of free will and human autonomy. Particular emphasis is placed throughout on the compatibilist approach adopted by Bradwardine in *De Causa Dei*, whose humanistic focus provides a stark contrast to the hard determinist or even fatalist stance he has often been associated with. It also considers *De Causa Dei's* polemic form, focusing specifically on opponents *other* than the Pelagians, something that has gone under-appreciated in Bradwardine scholarship. It also contains some notes on how Bradwardine checks and verifies the orthodoxy of his own opinions as he challenges those of others. The sixth chapter of this work considers the larger historical role attached to Bradwardine's works, particularly through his contrasted reading with William of Ockham. This contrast, as well as the association with a realist epistemology that stems from it, is largely due to Bradwardine's undeserved reputation as a conservative hard determinist. Bradwardine's anti-Pelagian polemics in *De Causa Dei* guide the discussion here, as it is through this lens that *De Causa Dei* has typically been analysed. The role and increasingly apparent out-datedness of contrasted nominalist and realist epistemologies as shaping the core of 14th century intellectual life forms the central issue with which this study concerns itself, and it is in the role of realist protagonist attributed to Bradwardine in this conflict that the relevance of the individual work *De Causa Dei* to the larger purposes of this study is located. Re-evaluation of works by men like Bradwardine and Ockham are integral to reconceptualising approaches to late-Medieval philosophy. The chapters that follow seek to describe critical approaches to similar issues related to critical approaches to nominalism and realism from a literary studies perspective, which are also centrally concerned with the continued influence of outdated models of opposing nominalist and realist epistemologies.

Chapter V

Free Will in a Determined World

The previous chapter of this study demonstrated that the image of Bradwardine[1] as a hard determinist that is willing to sacrifice free will to establish God's primacy is undeserved. Likewise, Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei* should not be treated simply as an elegant restatement of Augustinian thought in the 14th century, as it departs significantly from late-Augustinian theories on (original) sin, arriving at much more positive conclusions about human nature than has typically been assumed. The preceding chapter has laid bare some of the problematic assumptions that have plagued Bradwardine scholarship through an in-depth discussion of the doctrine of God developed in Book I of *De Causa Dei*. This chapter builds on these conclusions by examining the nature of man and delineating the role of free will in *De Causa Dei*, and the way Bradwardine conceptualizes their compatibility with an omniscient and omnipotent God. Discussion in this chapter, the previous, and the following seek also to contribute to the ongoing re-evaluation of Bradwardine's works and their historic import, a process that started in the 1990's with Genest's excellent monograph on *De Causa Dei*, and was carried forward in the 2000's in particular by Dolnikowski, Berganza, and Lukács.

While there is a strong critical tradition that posits that Bradwardine thoroughly diminishes or even outright dismisses human autonomy, the *Doctor Profundus* actually proposes a *compatibilist* solution that seeks to establish the co-existence of free will and determinism[2]. This chapter presents an overview of the nature of man and free will as it is developed in Book II of *De Causa Dei*, followed by the way the compatibility of a free man and an all-powerful God is established in Book III. Bradwardine's polemic response to his opponents is also considered. Bradwardine not only emphatically critiques Pelagianism, but also astral determinism and fatalism[3]. This study will not seek to draw direct contrasts of Bradwardine's work to that of his contemporaries like William of Ockham, Thomas Buckingham, or Robert Holcot for the following reason: *De Causa Dei* itself, while following a polemic structure, makes no attempt to assault *specific* theories of Bradwardine's contemporaries, but rather seeks to disprove *generic sets* of arguments by dismantling the suppositions that underlie them, a reversal of the inductive method used in his own work. When Bradwardine attacks the Pelagians, this is best understood not as an attack on specific contemporary scholars, but as an attempt to disprove

[1] This view was supported in particular by Gordon Leff.

[2] More precisely, Bradwardine propagates a soft deterministic worldview, as he affirms both the existence of a deterministically ordered universe as well as the compatibility of free will and predetermination.

[3] A detailed consideration of what Bradwardine considers 'Pelagian', and how other critics have interpreted *De Causa Dei*'s anti-Pelagianism in the past is one of the primary concerns of the next chapter. To avoid redundancies between chapters, the descriptions of Pelagianism in this chapter remain deliberately limited, and focus instead is placed on Bradwardine's reaction against other stances like astral or natural determinism, as well as fatalism and stoicism, which have attracted undeservedly little attention in past Bradwardine scholarship.

the generic assumptions made by those who would elevate free will to such a degree that it diminishes God[4]. The next chapter focuses in part on the dangers of overt focus on identifying Bradwardine's enemies and creating a binary opposition between them, as this has been used in past scholarship to prop up the narrative of a conservative *via antiqua* versus a forward-thinking *via moderna*, despite the absence of positive proof for such theories.

For the present discussion, the following conclusions made in the preceding chapter are most pertinent: That all claims made in *De Causa Dei* are ultimately derived by inference from two suppositions, the first being that God is the greatest and most perfect of all beings, and the second that there cannot be an infinite regression of causes. Bradwardine assumes that all things originate from the first cause God and that, as all that comes from God must be good, all things must be by nature good. He sees evil as a *privation* of goodness, not as something that has substance of its own. Just like every material thing, every action, too, is by nature good: All actions originate from God, and are therefore good. When an action is considered evil, this is not because it is *inherently* evil, but because it is an essentially good act that is carried out with evil *intent*. If someone sins, it is because they have made the choice of performing a good act with evil intent. As this choice is man's own, God's involvement in every action does not mean He is involved with or complicit in sin, as the acts themselves are good by nature. God allows man to choose to act with good or evil intent because he wants man to choose the good *freely*, rather than being forced to do so. This intent belongs wholly to man, and is the only mode of causation that does not at all pertain to God, whose freely given grace is needed for man to be able to recognize and persist in the good. The nature of God's special aid and the gift of persistence are two of the main concerns of the second book of *De Causa Dei*.

Bradwardine opens the discussion of free will in mankind in the first chapter of Book II of *De Causa Dei* by stating that he will first establish that "there must be a free will, as is concluded unanimously by all theologians, all logicians, all moralist philosophers, and [about which] almost all natural philosophers are in agreement"[5]. Bradwardine argues that this must be the case on the grounds of conclusions drawn in the previous book, where he demonstrated that God "maintains, performs, and moves everything outside of Himself, and does so not out of the necessity of his nature, […] but from rational judgement […] and also through his free will"[6]. Through these conclusions, developed in chapters two through nine of Book I, Bradwardine demonstrated the existence of a free will in God. That God must necessarily be *free* also follows from the first supposition, Bradwardine argues, as a divine entity that is wholly free must be considered as greater than one that is constrained in some way. That man

[4] Which does not, of course, exclude that his contemporaries may have actually held the opinions which Bradwardine criticizes.

[5] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 443. See also Lukács, p. 160. Original: "Et liberum arbitrium sit ponendum, omnes Theologi, omnes Logici, omnes Morales Philosophi, et ferè omnes Philosophi Naturales unanimiter contestantur".

[6] *Idem*. Original: "Deum omnia extra se servare, facere, et movere, et hoc non ex necessitate naturae, […] sed ex rationali iudicio [et] cum libera voluntate".

must *also* possess free will is founded on Bernard of Clairvaux's argument that "the free will belongs not only to God, but also to the rational creation"[7]. This is understood to be "no absolute freedom, only the so-called "libertas contradictionis"; i.e. not the freedom to choose between an infinite number of possibilities, but the freedom to accept or refuse a definite possibility offered to it"[8]. This might entail resisting temptation or giving into it, voting democrat or republican, acting with good or ill intent, etcetera. Free will should be defined as a choice between definite possibilities, something that Bradwardine expounds upon by stating that "however strong the freedom to the eye may be, one cannot see sound or the invisible"[9]. Everything has its proper role to fulfil: The eye to see, the ear to hear, the will to choose. This freedom to choose is not without boundaries, as human action is not only free but also necessary, due to divine foreknowledge of all human actions. Co-existence of necessity and freedom is justified by referring to Aristotle, stating that "necessity and contingency or freedom exist naturally in opposition in a created being: And as one of those is naturally [present], namely necessity, therefore the other is too"[10]. If there is freedom, so too must there be necessity. However, the presence of the one does *not* devalue or negate the other; they are complementary aspects. Furthermore, not only do necessity and freedom co-exist, they are present and limited in *equal measure*. Once more relying on Aristotle, Bradwardine expounds that "when one of two opposites is limited, the other will be limited as well"[11], and that these two "are equal in their opposition: that is to say that neither of them is stronger than the other in their opposition"[12]. In other words, not only are both freedom and necessity present in man, they are present in exactly the same degree. From this, it "is apparent, that there is not only freedom and contingency in created beings, but also just as much necessity is in it"[13]. Man is equally as free as he is determined, an early indicator that Bradwardine seeks to adopt a compatibilist stance towards the issue of compatibility of freedom and necessity. This compatibilist approach is important in the reconception of both Bradwardine's own thought system, as well as the re-evaluation of his role in intellectual history, and in highlighting some of the issues with the common historiographic conception of a diametrically opposed realist and nominalist epistemology. It is important to note that, as God according to Bradwardine necessarily foreknows everything before it ever occurs, this determination occurs "not only

[7] *Idem*. Original: "Liberum quoque arbitrium, non tantùm Deo, sed et rationali competit creaturae".

[8] See Obermann 1957, p. 67. See also Berganza, pp. 203-204.

[9] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 448. Original: "Sicut si visus esset potentia libera, non ideo tamen posset videre sonum et invisibilia".

[10] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 443. See also Lukács, p. 161. Original: "Nam necessitas et contingentia seu libertas, circa creaturam, naturaliter contrarie opponuntur; et unum illorum est natural, scilicet necessitas, ergo et reliquum".

[11] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 444. See also Lukács, p. 161. Original: "Contrariorum si alterum determinatum est, et reliquum determinatum erit".

[12] *Idem*. Original: "Necesse est ut sint aequaliter in contrarietate: scilicet, ut neutru sit forties reliquo et manifestum est per se ut sint in eodem gradu contrarietatis".

[13] *Idem*. Original: "Ex quo patet quod nedum est contingentia et libertas in creatura, sed et tanta, quanta necessitas est in ipsa".

with consequent necessity, but also with antecedent necessity"[14]. It is on this point that Bradwardine differs in opinion with many of his peers, and is something that, if not addressed carefully, could lead into fatalistic determinism, which some would claim is indeed what Bradwardine accomplishes. The introductory chapters of the second book lay the groundwork and general tenor for the roughly 400 pages to come: To establish, firstly, *that* man is free despite predestination and co-efficience of God, and subsequently to demonstrate *how* such a compatibilist model can function. The final book in particular also addresses what Bradwardine considers one of the gravest threats in contemporary theology, namely a resurgence of Pelagian thought. Having briefly stated why he believes *that* there is such a thing as free will, Bradwardine's next task is to delineate how this will operates.

According to Bradwardine, "nature and experience teach, that [the will's] action consists of wanting and not wanting, loving and hating, the object of which apparently is good and evil"[15]. The *Doctor Profundus* thus recognizes free will primarily as a *moralising* faculty, the object of which is the intent with which we perform certain actions, which in turn determines whether these actions are for good or ill. God's aid is needed to continuously act with good intent, whereas evil intent is wholly the result of man's own choice. This has led some to claim that what Bradwardine proffers a cynical and misanthropic account of free will, where the only available freedom is in electing to do bad. However, as was demonstrated previously, this is the opposite of what Bradwardine proposes: His doctrine of God states that God 'wants' sin as a generic category to exist because having the *option* between acting wrongly and rightly makes man freer than not having an ability to choose at all. Bradwardine is careful to avoid the conclusion that God wants *individual* sins to occur. This, however leaves open the question of how exactly this intent functions, and in which way it relates to human nature. Bradwardine is particularly interested in the question of whether it possible for human nature to love the bad or to abhor the good.

The *Doctor Profundus* posits that all that comes from God must be good: As man comes from God, man and his nature must likewise be good. Therefore, Bradwardine states, man's will is *attracted* to the good: It "wants the good, and therefore does not want the bad, even hates the bad, and flees from it"[16]. Bradwardine then poses the question whether the will "can consciously want the bad, or something neutral, that is to say something that appears neither good nor bad"[17]. He believes this "to be so, although [the bad] is desired not for its own sake but in

[14] Translated from Genest 1992, p. 73. Original: "[Tout ce qui] arrive et arrivera nécessairement; non seulement de nécessité conséquente, mais encore de nécessité précédente". See also Berganza, pp. 213-215.

[15] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 444. See also Lukács, p. 163. Original: "Docet siquidem experientia et natura, quod Actus eius est velle, et nolle; diligere et odire; Obiectum vero ipsius, bonum, et malum apparens".

[16] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 444. See also Lukács, p. 163. Original: "[…] quia vult bonum, ideo non vult malum, ideo odit malum, ideo fugit malum".

[17] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 444. See also Lukács, p. 164. Original: "An possit scienter velle

conjunction with some greater good"[18]. In other words, Bradwardine proposes that it *is* possible to rationally desire something bad, provided that this will ultimately result in some greater good being achieved. *Conditional* evil is thus the subject of rational free will. This leaves the question whether or not it is possible to rationally desire something that is purely and only bad: Can man want "something that appears to be in every way bad? That is not in any conjunction with some precedent or subsequent good? And that the desire of which appears to him not good but bad in every way?"[19] Bradwardine's answer to this is negative: "[The following] is therefore concluded from the aforementioned: That if the good is the first and proper object of the will, and to want the good is its first and proper act, it cannot want otherwise than by virtue of and to the end of the good. The human nature therefore shudders before the bad and flees from it"[20]. Human nature is thus fundamentally attracted to the good, and disgusted and repelled by pure evil. This is yet another instance where Bradwardine significantly departs from Augustine, and yet again their difference ultimately derives from the role attached by Augustine to original sin: It is through the latter event Augustine believes man's nature to have become fundamentally corrupt, perpetually tending towards the bad. Bradwardine, treating original sin as the *origin point* of sin (as well as an inevitable point of relapse), rather than a permanent tainting of man's fundamental nature, does not reach the same conclusion. Likewise, this portrayal of human nature as essentially good is at odds with Leff's misanthropic interpretation of Bradwardine. While these claims give testament to Bradwardine's metaphysical optimism, they bring a new set of problems: Firstly, if the will is repulsed by evil, it bears explaining where evil comes from, as a rational choice to act with ill intent seems at odds with man's fundamentally good nature. Another question is if the will can voluntarily deny the good that is offered to it. A related question is whether it is possible to hate the good. Finally, the role of God in the process of wanting the good needs to be further explained: If human nature is fundamentally good and repulsed by evil, why and how is divine aid necessary in reaching salvation?

Bradwardine admits that he has reached an impasse: If the will is naturally attracted by the good and repelled from evil, it seems that it would not be able to deny the good if it is offered to it. Yet, if man cannot do this, because "it is not in his power, [to decide] what and when something appears to him to be purely good, then it is also not in his power what and when he wills, and therefore not what he does"[21]. Despite the rational will being repelled by evil and

malum, et neutrum aliquid, scilicet, quod nec apparet sibi bonum nec malum".

[18] *Idem*. Original: "Ego puto quod sic; etsi non per se, cum magno tamen bono coniuncto".

[19] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 445. See also Lukács, p. 164. Original: "Quod scilicet appareat ei omnibus modis malum? Nec habens aliquod bonum aliquot modo coniunctum subsequens vel praecedens? Nec etiam ipsa volutio appareat sibi bona, sed etiam omnibus mala?"

[20] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 445. See also Lukács, pp. 164-165. Original: "Si namque bonum sit obiectum primum et proprium voluntatis, et velle bonum primus et proprius actus eius; non potest quicquam velle nisi virtute istorum, et finaliter propter bonum, Item natura humana proposito sibi malo horret et refugit".

[21] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 447. See also Lukács, p. 166. Original: "Si enim non possit, cùm non

inexorably attracted to the good, there must be some way to *resist* the good, otherwise any meaningful choice to do good or do bad is rendered impossible, and free will is destroyed. At the same time, Bradwardine is not willing to admit that the rational will could be attracted to the bad, as this would clash with his proposition it is by nature good. Bradwardine also cannot take recourse to positing evil as an external entity luring man into sinful behaviour: Firstly, because he previously concluded that evil has no substance and is only a privation of good, and secondly because positing such a duality between and evil and good would be straying dangerously close to Manichean dualism[22]. Bradwardine's proposed solution is derived from Aristotle's division of the soul into a rational and an irrational part, and also has some similarities to stoic theories about foolishness. Unlike animals, whose souls are governed wholly by irrationality, humans (along with angels) have possession of a rational faculty. Owing to this, the "movements of the will are in a certain sense in the power of man, that is to say because he possesses superior rational power, through which he can resist them, restrain them, and often refrain from them. The beasts do not have [rational will], and cannot do this"[23]. Thus, the intent to do bad actions stems from irrational desires, and the role of rational free will is to restrain and regulate them[24]. Bradwardine adds that this will is not equally strong in everyone, as the irrational element is "probably to even a larger extent suppressed in a subject that is sober and brave"[25]. It is possible that "the free will, for example, can be confused, confined, yes even temporary lost, when desire sends a man into a rage. Thus it may happen, that a man is psychologically compelled to perform a definite act at a certain moment; but man can never be forced to perform a rational, free act"[26]. Blind desire can temporarily confuse someone's judgement, but it cannot force a *rational* decision. In this way, the *Doctor Profundus*

---

sit in potestate ipsius quid et quando sibi appareat purum bonum, non est in potestate sua quid aut quando velit, quare nec quid faciat".

[22] Manichean thought was encountered earlier, in the third chapter of this study, in the context of discussion on Augustine, who was a member of the Manichean sect for some time. Bradwardine also critiques Manichean thought on several occasions in *De Causa Dei*.

[23] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 447. See also Lukács, p. 167. Original: "Sunt tamen hi motus quodammodo in hominis potestate, quatenus scilicet habet virtutem rationale superiorem, qua potest eis resistere, eos reprimere et plurimimum refraenare, quam quia non habent bestiae, non sic possunt". We also find here some echoes of stoic thought, where even the foolish may sometimes act rightly, but do so only by chance. The wise, however, act rightly by rational decision. While Bradwardine does not draw as sharp a line as this, he does recognize that different human beings act with different degrees of (ir)rationality.

[24] This regulatory function of the rational will also calls to mind Harry Frankfurt's theory on first and second order desires, by which first order desires (which are often impulsive) are controlled by desires of the second order. Frankfurt's 'wanton', who acts only through the impulses and urges prompted by their first order desire is similar to Bradwardine's irrational creatures, who are unable to regulate their will.

[25] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, pp. 447-448. See also Lukács, p. 168. Original: "Amplius autem forsitan subiectus est quod sobrij et fortis".

[26] See Obermann 1957, p. 68.

applies Aristotelian philosophy in order to give an account of free will where the temptation to do evil is not caused by the all-damning effects of original sin, instead constructing in it in a far more metaphysically optimistic vision, in which free will is located in the strength to resist the bad, and to persist in this with the aid of God.

According to Bradwardine, actions are by nature good; no action is bad in and of itself. It is only when an action is carried out with ill intent that it becomes evil or sinful. The question that remains is to delineate the role of God in this particular interplay of character, intent, and action, and to explain *why* His aid is necessary for salvation, and what this aid consists of. Giving man free reign over the intent of their actions (and thus the moral culpability resulting from it), if taken too far, might lead into an overestimation of free will just as surely as Pelagianism: Might not, even in theory, a person have sufficient moral and rational control over themselves, that they never act with bad intent at all, but remain sinless all their lives[27]? Unlike Augustine, Bradwardine does not have recourse to the consequences of original sin to escape this dilemma and must come up with another solution to avoid the possibility of man living sinless solely on their strength, something which Bradwardine himself argues would render the gift of grace obsolete, or at least severely diminish its miraculous nature[28]. The *Doctor Profundus* formulates his response in chapters four through seventeen of the second book, in which he contests that "free will cannot by its own strength overcome temptation without God's aid and his grace"[29] and that this freely given grace is accompanied by "another special aid by of God [with which] temptation can be overcome"[30]. Bradwardine dismisses the possibility of living entirely free from sin without divine grace or special aid, condemning it as Pelagian[31]. This follows from his earlier conclusion that God is present in every action, and that all actions have God as their ultimate source. Good action without the presence and help of God is thus unthinkable. Grace is a freely given divine gift which allows man to do good consistently, not a reward for virtuous action. The possibility of a sinless man is also dismissed out of hand by referring to human knowledge, which is by its very nature *fallible* and *finite*. To live completely free of sin would require *infinite* knowledge (as Christ possessed), something that is *quod terminis* unreachable for normal human beings. No matter how wise,

[27] Thus essentially becoming like Christ or the stoic wise man, who has recognized the divine plan and henceforth acts by their own volition according to this plan.

[28] And, by diminishing grace, lead him into the very type of argumentation that *De Causa Dei* set out to combat: The overvaluation of human free will and agency at the expense of the effect of God's divine grace.

[29] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 472. Original: "Quod liberum arbitrium tentatum non potest propriis viribus sine dei auxilio sine dei auxilio et eius gratia tentationem aliquam superare".

[30] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 489. Original: "[…] vel cum gratia quantacunque absque alio Dei auxilio speciali posse tentationem aliquam superare".

[31] See also *De Causa Dei*, p. 472, where Bradwardine states that "the contrary [to the claim that no man can do without grace] was stated by Pelagian: He said that man solely through the power of his free will could complete God's mandate". Translated. Original: "Oppositum enim huius superbus Pelagian astruebat: Dixit enim quod homo solius liberi arbitrii viribus potest perficere Dei mandata".

mortal wisdom is always finite and so "not even the most gracious traveller could in this fashion avoid mortal sin"[32]. Here we see the second role for original sin in Bradwardine's doctrine of sin: Aside from the origin point of sin, it is also an inevitable point of (re)lapse into irrational sinful behaviour owing to imperfect knowledge. While mankind is not tainted from birth with original sin, humans are bound to fall into sinful behaviour unless additional divine aid is received to counteract their own imperfect nature. The perfect grace of God is the only thing that can help overcome this imperfection: In overcoming the inevitable the miraculous nature of grace manifests itself, as it allows human beings to overcome their own natural limitations.

Aside from grace, Bradwardine also posits a second type of 'special divine aid', namely the gift of perseverance. This is defined as the strength to persist in righteous behaviour and persevere against the irrational temptations to do ill or commit sins. Bradwardine leads discussion by dismissing the Pelagian claim that "perseverance [arises] ultimately from oneself"[33], as this might entail living sinlessly without grace or the aid of God. The *Doctor Profundus* further clarifies his understanding of perseverance using a definition from Tully, which holds that "perseverance is the steady and continuous habit of reason"[34]. When it comes to God's participation in good actions and bringing about man's salvation, His role is twofold: He bestows grace to *allow* man to do good, and bestows perseverance to allow man to *persist* in the good. Though Bradwardine stresses that "perseverance is not some gift of God created from charity, and that grace is in reality different and distinct"[35] from it, it operates on similar premises, as it is also "freely given by God, not bought by merits"[36], and is essential for an individual's salvation despite the existence of a free will. What is left, then, is to determine who receives access to this double gift of grace and perseverance. Here, Bradwardine is adamant, and bases his argument on the premise concerning God's eternal and immutable knowledge he carefully developed in the first book: Only the elected that are *predestined* for salvation are granted grace and perseverance, whereas those that are not predestined do not receive them, and are thereby doomed to fall to prey to those irrational desires that ultimately lead to damning sin.

With this, Bradwardine has given a more or less complete account of the nature of free will, its purpose, and its limitations, and has further expounded upon God's role in this process, which emphasizes the need for grace and perseverance to reach salvation, and states that only those who are predestined to do so will receive grace. The second half of Book II is spent

[32] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 491. Original: "[…] nullus viator quantumlibet gratiosus potest sic vitare peccatum mortale".

[33] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 491. Original: "[…] et perseverate finaliter ex seipso".

[34] *Idem*. Original: "Perseverantia est in rationis bene considerata stabilis et perpetua mansio".

[35] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 505. Original: "Quod perseverantia non est aliquod donum Dei creatum a charitate et gratia realiter differens est et distinctum".

[36] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 511. Original: "Quod perseverantia, gratis detur à Deo, non meritis comparetur".

discussing various counterarguments from opposing lines of thought, which, according to Bradwardine, place either too much or too little value on free will. These sections taken up again towards the end of this chapter, when the various positions against which Bradwardine reacts are considered. For now, though, we turn our attention to the third book of the *De Causa Dei*. This has as its main subjects the problem of reconciling Bradwardine's theories on predestination and free will, detailing the interrelationship between man and God, and elaborating on further issues concerning the compatibility of freedom and necessity. Though the first book rigorously develops a doctrine of God, and the second presents a detailed description of free will and its limitations, there are still a number of issues that need addressing in order to provide a satisfactory compatibilist model of free will and necessity.

Bradwardine seems acutely aware that many of his readers may hold doubts and apprehensions about the compatibility of free will and predestination despite his thorough argumentation, and may feel that his theories might spiral into fatalism. This concern is intimately and sincerely addressed in the final chapter of Book II, which seeks to "entice men to awe and love, to confidence, to patience and humility, to prayer, and to gratitude"[37] through repetition of and insistence on the most salient points made thus far. Written as an elegant and personal sermon, it functions well as a summary of conclusions drawn in the first two books, and is an emphatic plea that readers should not react to the omniscience and omnipotence of God with despair or dread of losing independence, but that they should be in awe of and love the divine entity that enables them to act freely and be saved through his gifts of grace and perseverance. It is also a notable switch in register, being written in a direct address and structured as an *emotional* appeal, rather than a strictly rational argument. Due to its concise argumentations, attractive and moving style, and the theories on predestination and freedom it contains, this section of *De Causa Dei* was frequently published separately from the main work, particularly in the late 16th and 17th century. Its rhetoric style is markedly different from the rest of the work, containing a great deal more emotive language, and is a direct address to both God and his audience, tactics the *Doctor Profundus* only employs sparingly in other parts of *De Causa Dei*[38]. Bradwardine exhorts his fellow man that, predestination notwithstanding, it is *always* a good thing to do good, even if such meritorious acts do not serve to earn or guarantee God's grace and subsequent salvation. Bradwardine stresses not only God's justice but also His love for His creation, and asks his readers to love God in return. These exhortations to do good

[37] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 626. Original: "Per praemissa allicit homines ad timorem et amorem, ad confidentiam, ad patientiam et humilitatem, ad orationem, et ad gratias referendas".

[38] One such instance was noted in the previous chapter of this book, when Bradwardine gives a poetic description of a dream vision in which he found himself engaged in a physical altercation with Pelagian while soaring high towards the heavens, and where Pelagian is ultimately cast down and smitten with the help of God. Autobiographical passages, too, contain a number of rhetorical flourishes untypical of Bradwardine's usual matter-of-factly and clear writing style, and a number of times he engages in alliterations like "Pelagiani [...] pelluntur in pelagus et plectuntur" on page 308. The numerous references to classical poets and orators like Ovid, Virgil, Lucan and Cicero also testify to an interest in the literary that has hitherto received insufficient critical attention.

and love God are buttressed by the logical conclusions drawn from his own theories. It is worthwhile to note, however, that this chapter shows Bradwardine's writing from a different perspective, one that seems far removed from an undeserved reputation of 'inhumane genius': While remaining true to its rational foundation, the sincere emotional component of this sermon expresses a concern and love not just for God, but especially for his fellow man.

Bradwardine's challenge for the third book is to harmonize his conclusions about God, man, and the nature of time and the universal order made in the first two books, so that the potential fears and misgivings expressed in the final chapter of Book II can allayed. The major point of contention remains how predestination for salvation or damnation can be made compatible with the notions of free will and responsibility for one's actions. The exact role of God in human action also needs to be further defined. Bradwardine also continues to defend his own theories against those positions brought forward by his opponents. It is also important to note that, while the first two books provided a primarily historicizing account of the "beginnings of the Pelagian heresy and the philosophical errors", this "last book presents contemporary concerns about the freedom of future human actions"[39], and outlines Bradwardine's misgivings with contemporary thought about the nature of future events. Bradwardine reacts with particular intensity against the view where "the past appears to be absolutely necessary, whereas the future, the foundation of human freedom, appears wholly contingent. At the same time, the future is accredited with a certain truth valency, which can vary between true, false, and -where applicable- neutral. The contingency of the present, on the other hand, is equated per se with its mutability"[40]. It is characterized by "the different modalities it recognizes during three moments of time. It unties the future [events] of all necessity and affirms their plain and simple contingency", something that "Bradwardine combats"[41]. The *Doctor Profundus* instead argues that the proper domain of freedom is the present[42]. He provides two reasons: For man, the future is an as-of-yet unreal thing. It is in the present that

[39] Translated from Lukács, p. 33. Original: "[Während die erste zwei Bücher] mehr historisierend den Anfängen der pelagianischen Häresie und den philosophischen Irrtümern gewidmet wurde, stellt das letzte Buch die zeitgenössischen Bedenken über die Freiheit der zukünftigen menschlichen Handlungen dar".

[40] Translated from Lukács, p. 33. Original: "Der in *De Causa Dei* bekämpften opinior communior entsprechend ist die Vergangenheit absolut notwendig, während die Zukunft, Grund der menschlichen Freiheit, völlig kontingent erscheint. Zugleich wird der Zukunft ein bestimmter Wahrheitswert zuerkannt, der zwischen wahr, falsch und ggf. neutral variieren kann. Die der Gegenwart innewohnende Kontingenz ist dagegen slechthin mit ihrer Veränderlichkeit gleichzusetzen".

[41] Translated from Genest 1992, 119. Original: "L*'opinion communior*, que combat Bradwardine [...], se caractérise [...] par les modalités différentes qu'elle reconnaît aux trois moments du temps [...]. Elle délie les futurs de toute nécessité et affirme leur contingence pure et simple".

[42] See also *De Causa Dei*, p. 637 and Lukács, p. 200. Here it is stated that "contingency is properly spoken of with regards to the present" and that also "freedom is best spoken of in regard of the present". Original: "Quod contingentia dicitur propriè respectu praesentis [et] quod libertas dicitur propriè respectu praesentis".

either one course of action or another is chosen with their free will, and so it follows logically that it is in this moment that man's freedom is most poignantly expressed: Not in the future (where moment of free choice has not yet arrived), nor in the past (where it has already been made), but in the *present*, at the moment of decision. For God, of course, past, present, and future are all the same, as he perceives time from a single moment of *eternal* present. Bradwardine argues that as for God past and future are synonymous with the present, it would be folly to claim that freedom and contingency fall in the domain of the future, as this to God is the same as the present.

For these reasons, Bradwardine argues, the greatest degree of freedom for man lies in the moment a decision is made. In this, the *Doctor Profundus* diverges from contemporary theology. It is in the views of his peers about the relationship of past, present, and future, that Bradwardine sees the dangers of a modern Pelagianism. The carefully constructed models of divine and human nature developed in the first two books are the preface to a spirited defence of grace and divine omnipotence against the (perceived) threat of a renascent Pelagianism. After delineating man's freedom over the course of the previous book, Bradwardine once again returns to the issue of divine control over man's actions and its consequences. The first chapter of Book III is dedicated to delineating the extent of God's control over free will, and explaining how it is possible that God can necessarily bring about free actions. The following chapters outline the different types of necessity and contingency in God and man, and clarify which types are compatible with free will and which are not. Book III also deals with various complications to Bradwardine's compatibilist account, particularly the role of divine revelation and the nature and knowledge of Christ. While these distinctions are important to creating an internally coherent theology that corresponds with scriptural wisdom, the role and definition assigned to the different types of necessity and contingency form the core of Bradwardine's account of the compatibility of free will and predetermination.

The *Doctor Profundus* states that "God can necessitate any created will and its free action, specifically a free ceasing of and abstainment from action"[43]. With this declaration, he "introduces the spirited struggle against the 'modern' Pelagians" by demonstrating that "necessity and freedom are not contradictory, that they can be united in man" , and present "a necessity that corresponds to human freedom, [and] a definition of freedom, that is in accordance with the universal efficacy of the necessity of the first cause"[44]. Having postulated that God can

[43] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 637. See also Lukács, p. 185. Original: "Quod Deus potest necessitare quodammodo omnem voluntatem creatam ac liberum actum suum, et ab liberam cessationem et vacationem ab actu".

[44] Translated from Lukács, p. 36. Original: "[Buch III] leitet den engagierten Kampf gegen die ‚modernen' Pelagianer ein. Bradwardine möchte zeigen, dass Notwendigkeit und Freiheit sich nicht widersprechen, dass sie im Menschen vereinbar sind. Bradwardine stellt den Pelagianern einerseits eine Notwendigkeit entgegen, die mit der menschlichen Freiheit übereinstimmt, anderseits einen Freiheitsbegriff, der mit der universellen Wirksamkeit der Notwendigkeit der ersten Ursache übereinstimmt".

control or cause to cease *any* free action undertaken by man, Bradwardine adds that it is also in God's power "to want for the free will to produce its free acting, and [to want this] antecedently and prior in its nature to the created being"[45]. God can not only *controls* actions, he can also wish free actions to come about prior to the actual act of willing of His subject. Bradwardine reminds his readers that this must be true, because "anything that God wants, cannot not be"[46]. Without further quantification, the claim that God can control any actions directly and prior to any act of will by a created being threatens to lead back into a determinist model where all actions and events occur as dictated by God[47]. To avoid this, Bradwardine applies Anselm's assertion that if that which God wills must be, this means that if He wills "that the will of man is forced or hindered by no necessity to will or not to will, and if He wills for the will to be efficacious, then it is necessary that the will be free, and that which He wants to happen, happens"[48]. Bradwardine seeks to establish this assertion more thoroughly by delineating *how* exactly God's will and man's co-operate and interact, in order to show that "there is no more doubt, that the acts of the free will are the most worthy of all, and that if some acts fall under God's omnipotence, this does not make them any less worthy"[49].

Freedom, contingency, and necessity take different forms and functions in man and in God. If one wishes to understand Bradwardine's compatibilist solution to the problem of free will, it is necessary to consider the different types of freedom, contingency, and necessity, and to discuss why one should apply to man whereas another applies only to God. Based on his earlier assertions that a God that is free in His acting must be considered superior to one that is not, Bradwardine states that God must enjoy absolute freedom. However, this freedom relates to God's *will*, not to His *knowledge* or His *being*. Bradwardine's reasoning is consistent with his earlier position: If God enjoyed *complete* freedom, it would not only render his essence mutable, it would also mean that he could wish to no longer will essential aspects of himself. This would be absurd, states Bradwardine, as "He cannot *not* love himself, nor can He not want something essential to Himself, as this would mean he could not be God. Therefore [His freedom] relates to his external action"[50]. God is thus completely free in regards to his actions

[45] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 637. See also Lukács, p. 186. Original: "Deus enim potest velle voluntatem creatam producere liberum actum suum, et hoc antecedenter, et prius naturaliter voluntate creata".

[46] *Idem*. Original: "Quoniam enim quod Deus vult, non potest non esse".

[47] Leff feels that direct involvement of God in human actions is something that indeed occurs, and he claims free will is eliminated as a result. See also Leff 1957, pp. 46-47.

[48] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 637. See also Lukács, pp. 186 - 187. Original: "[...] cum vult hominis voluntatem nulla cogi vel prohiberi necessitate ad volendum vel non volendum; et vult effectum sequi voluntatem, tunc necesse est voluntatem esse liberam, et esse quod vult".

[49] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 639. See also Lukács, p. 189. Original: "Nulli etiam dubium, quin actus liberi voluntatis sint nobilissimi omnium et aliqui actus sub Dei omnipotentia continentur, et non ignobiliores tantummodo".

[50] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 639. See also Lukács, p. 189. Original: "[...] et non ad intra, quia non potest deligere semetipsum, nec potest non velle essentiale quodlibet intra eum, quia tunc posset non

exterior to himself. Any less than absolute freedom when it comes to God's action would render Him less than omnipotent, which would mean he were no longer God. However, His essential qualities and knowledge of Himself are wholly *necessary*. This is not so much a restriction of His power as it is a safeguard of His immutability and nature of His being. If God were absolutely free with regards to his interior, He would no longer act according to his own nature and plan, but erratically and randomly, and freely change even the most essential aspects of himself like His benevolence, or His love for Himself and His creatures. While God cannot contradict himself, He is absolutely free: The divine being functions as a regulator of the divine will.

The situation for man is more complex, as both necessity *and* freedom of their will and actions are dependent on God. Bradwardine has already ruled out the possibility of consequent necessity, in which an action becomes necessary only after its performance[51]. In Book I, the *Doctor Profundus* developed the notion that God foreknows everything with antecedent necessity, differentiating between two variants. One type, consisting of fatalistic, astral, or natural determinism, excludes free will, whereas the other includes and facilitates it. Bradwardine defines necessity by delineating which types of freedom it allows, stating that "necessity is better described and delineated by affirmation than by negation"[52]. He distinguishes between the "freedom from the necessity of nature, from the necessity of fate, from violent necessity, and from antecedent and consequent necessity"[53]. Affirmation of the first three types of necessity would be tantamount to a denial of free will, as these "contradict the free action and merits of the rational being"[54]: Their affirmation would mean that man's will and actions can be determined by outside forces existing within the material realm, be it fate, nature, secondary causes, or force. Bradwardine argues the fourth type of necessity to be true: God necessarily foreknows with both antecedent and consequent necessity. When it comes to the issue of necessity, Bradwardine sees two options: The first affirms the existence of *all four types of necessity*, whereas the second denies the first three, and only affirms antecedent and consequent necessity. Bradwardine concludes that all sensible theologians and philosophers "dismiss the first type of necessity, which runs in contrast with freedom, stands in opposition to it, and

esse Deus".

[51] This type of necessity would be favoured by those inclined towards a view that sees the future as wholly free and contingent: An action or choice of will is entirely free until the moment it is performed, and in a certain fashion during its performance, as one still has the option of ceasing or acting differently. Only after an action has been completed and has moved from present to future to past does it become necessary, as the past is unalterable. Bradwardine objects to this view, as a wholly undetermined future goes against his understanding of divine foreknowledge.

[52] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 678 See also Lukács, p. 220. Original: "Describitur tamen et notificatur utcunque, et hoc meliùs per affirmantionem quàm negationem".

[53] *Idem*. Original: "[...] scilicet libertas à necessitate naturali, à necessitate fatali, à necessitate violentia, à necessitate praecedente, et à necessitate sequente".

[54] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 678. See also Lukács, p. 220-221. Original: "[Omnium tres praemissae] coactionis libertati rationalis creaturae meritoque repugnant".

limits it. They do not however dismiss the second type of necessity, which includes spontaneity, is in concord with freedom and includes it"[55]. The difference lies in that the first option posits that "everything that happens, happens by necessity, understanding this necessity to be absolute", whereas Bradwardine believes that "everything that happens, happens by necessity, to be sure, but according to an antecedent necessity relative to the first cause, the completely free and omnipotent will of God"[56]. Antecedent necessity exists, but is known *only by God*. It is not determined by the stars, fate, or other secondary causes, and cannot be known by any person or entity within the confines of our understanding of time. Only because God exists *outside* of our temporal frame and due to his omniscient nature can he understand and know the future necessarily, in much the same manner as a human being would know something by seeing it unfold in front of them. This necessity, states Bradwardine, is not something to fear or despair of, as it includes the ability to act freely: As "men are moved by God, their responsibility is based on the fact that they are not conscious of this and thus act freely. The contingency need not be denied except insofar as everything has been laid down, willed, and previously known by God. But the contingency has now been shifted to the will of God and every movement of the will is only decreed at the moment that it is produced"[57]. It is also important to note that man's necessity differs from God's in another vital respect: Whereas necessity in God is *interior* and only applies to his own self-knowledge and essential being, necessity in man is *external*, as it is stems from their choices and actions being foreknown by God. However, God does "not bring this about by forcing the free will or by opposing it, but by granting to it its own power; but as much as the will uses its own power, it does nothing that God did not do, in goodness through his grace, and in evil not through his fault, but through that of the will"[58].

We have seen how Bradwardine defines the different ways in which freedom and necessity co-exist in man and in God. He also further expounds on the contingency of future events, and on man and God's relationship with (and power over) them. As Bradwardine sees the future as foreknown necessarily by God, contingency in an absolute sense is not something he endorses. However, he also is reluctant to outright deny the existence of some measure of contingency, for similar reasons to his response against absolute determinism: He believes

[55] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 678. See also Lukács, p. 221. Original: "[Omnes igitur autoritates] negant tantum hanc primam quae scilicet est adversaria et contraria libertati, et adimit libertatem; non autem secundam, sponteam scilicet, consentaneam libertati, et quae compatitur libertatem".

[56] Translated from Berganza, p. 207. Original: "[...] según qual todo lo que ocurre, ocurre necesariamente, entendido este necesariamente de un modo absoluto. Todo cuanto ocurre, ocurre necesariamente, cierto, pero por una necesidad antecedente relativa a la primera causa, la libérrima y omnipotente voluntad divina".

[57] See Obermann 1957, p. 113.

[58] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, pp. 685-686. See also Lukács, pp. 224-225. Original: "Non enim ea Deus [...] facit voluntatem cogendo, aut voluntati resistendo, sed insua illam potestate dimittendo; quamuis tamen sua voluntas utatur potestate, nihil tamen facit quod Deus non faciat in bonis sua gratia, in malis non sua, sed eiusdem voluntatis culpa".

eliminating contingency altogether would irreparably damage man's ability to will and act freely. Denial of all forms of contingency would also limit the power of God to an unacceptable degree: If no form of contingency exists, then God himself would only be able to act necessarily, and lose his freedom. Bradwardine again provides a compatibilist solution, claiming that "contingency to do otherwise and necessity are not in opposition"[59]. The previous paragraphs have shown that God is completely free in regard to his external actions. This would include a (theoretical) capacity for acting other than he does, meaning there is at the very least a certain measure of contingency in regard to God's acts of will. To deny contingency outright would mean to strip God of this ability, thus limiting his power of action in such a way that He can only do that which He does: This would hinder if not outright destroy God's freedom of action. Bradwardine thus needs to mediate. He begins by affirming that contingency does indeed exist, and that God's external actions are contingent, meaning that if God so chose, he *could* alter his will or his actions upon all things outside of himself[60]. Bradwardine calls this mode of contingency *contingens aequaliter,* which is translated by Edit Anna Lukács as 'reversible contingency' (*umkehrbare Kontingenz*). This reversible contingency operates on similar premises as the libertarian conception of a free act, in that "only that act with freedom to act otherwise is reversibly contingent"[61], showcasing that for Bradwardine to be reversibly contingent there must be an up-to-usness (or, in this case, an up-to-Godness), and an access to genuine alternate courses of actions in the libertarian sense. Bradwardine's views on contingency, however, sidestep the libertarian problem of a totally free yet also totally arbitrary will, as God's will is informed by His unchanging (self-)knowledge and essential qualities. Likewise, the only action that is simply and completely free is the one that is subject to reversible contingency. In other words, God's will and actions concerning things external to himself are reversibly contingent, but His knowledge and essence are not. Furthermore, it should be noted that only God has access to this type of contingency, and is thus the only entity that enjoys complete freedom.

[59] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 654. See also Lukács, p. 200. Original: "Quod contingentia ad utrumlibet et necessitas non repugnant".

[60] However, as God's will and actions are informed by His immutable knowledge and essential being, it is unlikely that God actually would will or act differently than he does, as the faculties that inform his decisions are constant and immutable. Bradwardine's theory of God's contingency and freedom of action thus does not seek to prove that God does occasionally alter His external acts of will, but rather that He has the power to do so, should he wish it. In like fashion, Bradwardine believes that God could have made the world differently than he did, or made several worlds, or could change any aspect of this world, no matter if it is in the past, present or future. These are all actions external to Himself, and thus something that He needs the capacity to change in order to fulfil Bradwardine's criteria for omnipotence. It is thoroughly unlikely that God *would* wish to reshape the world or alter his will as regards to things external to himself, but a theoretical ability to do so is required, or otherwise God's power would be limited, and his sovereign freedom with regards to the lower causes threatened.

[61] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p.653. See also Lukács, p. 200. Original: "Quod omnis et solus actus liber libertate contradictionis est contingens aequaliter".

Contingency for man, as their freedom, is relative. There is "no action by the created beings that is simply reversibly contingent, but only in a certain manner, and in regard to the lower causes. [Likewise], no action of the created beings has the freedom to act opposingly, but only after a fashion, specifically where the secondary causes are concerned"[62]. Man is free regarding decisions about their own actions, but only in such a way as is caused, sustained, and allowed by God. While man is free in their decision to will or not will something, this does not include the ability to will against God's will, or to act in any other fashion than the way He foreknows he will. Man's freedom is relative, not absolute, but this freedom is *only* subjected to the will of God, which cannot be denied. With regards to the ability to will freely, a lack of constraint from fate, nature, secondary causes, or other violent outside influences, ensures that man still enjoys a considerable amount of liberty. Despite claims to the contrary, Bradwardine does not disagree with the concept of contingency *per se*, only that of contingency taken too far. The concept of a future so contingent that even God does not know it is hard to harmonize logically with the concept of an omniscient and immutable divinity: If God only knows the future after it has passed from future to present and past, He would constantly gain new information and in this fashion be both mutable and have a changing stock of knowledge, calling into question His omniscience. To Bradwardine, God must have total freedom regarding His external acts of will, as otherwise His power would be constrained, and He would no longer be omnipotent. As this total freedom of action requires genuine contingency, and the ability to act differently or abstain from action, it follows that God must have access to just such a contingency. It does *not* follow, however, that man should have access to this same type of contingency, as this would require a future that is unknown even to God, and the freedom to act differently would have to include the possibility of acting in a fashion that goes against God's will. Therefore, it follows that man has a certain *measure* of freedom and contingency, but only with regards to the lower causes. God's will cannot be denied, but in all other respects man is free to will freely. This free will is only constrained by the fact that its free actions are 'fore'known by God, that He would be free to control man's will should he so choose (but will not), and that God is necessary not only as the first cause but as co-mover in each individual act of free will.

From this definition of free will arise two potential problems which Bradwardine still needs to address. These problems are specific to Christian doctrine, rather than representing more general philosophical issues, and concern the value and role of divine revelation in scripture, and the nature and (fore)knowledge of Christ. It is worthwhile to consider how Bradwardine broaches these subjects, as they could be used to formulate powerful counterarguments to his compatibilist narrative, and if not treated carefully lead to heterodox doctrines about Christ and scriptural revelation. Bradwardine's key argument to explain how all actions are free despite being necessarily foreknown by God is firstly because God wills for man to will freely, and

[62] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p.654. See also Lukács, p. 200. Original: "Quod nullus actus creaturae est simpliciter contingens aequaliter, sed tantum in determinato genere, puta respectu causarum inferiorum. [Quod] Nullus actus creaturae est liber simpliciter libertate contradictionis, sed secundum quid tantum, scilicet respectu causarum omnium secundarum".

secondly because this foreknowledge lies solely with God. His foreknowledge does not force the act to come about: Seeing a bird in flight does not cause it to do so. This conclusion, however, puts Bradwardine in a bind where divine revelation is concerned, as these are instances where God or one of His emissaries descends to directly communicate future occurrences. If divine revelation makes the predicted event necessary, it would appear that the action is no longer free: The person receiving the revelation would have no free choice in the matter. Denial of necessity would threaten to lead Bradwardine to the heterodox claim that divine revelation is not binding or that humans could ignore God's will.

Discussion of divine revelation is opened when Bradwardine "charges those who would deny revelation in the Word"[63]. Denial of this, he claims, could be founded on either "the impotence of God, the impotence of the future thing, or impotence in the created being"[64]. All these three possible explanations are equally impossible: God cannot be impotent because He is omnipotent. The fault also cannot lie with the future event itself, as the omniscient God is perfectly capable of perceiving and revealing future events. Finally, divine revelation also cannot falter owing to any impotence in the created being: As Bradwardine has established God's capacity for assuming direct control of human actions, it is easily within His power to elevate man to a degree that they might understand or carry out any revelation by God or his emissaries. Thus, Bradwardine sees no reason to reject the truth of divine revelation, and furthermore sees its efficacy confirmed everywhere: Both in scripture, as well as in the works of theologians and philosophers. He also holds that that which is revealed through divine revelation must necessarily come about, as otherwise it would mean that an act of will from God could prove to be untrue or be hindered. On the compatibility of this necessary predication of the future with free action, Bradwardine states that divine revelation is compatible with freedom in the way that revelation is a way for man to become closer to God through increased understanding of His actions: Those who share in a divine revelation will see the wisdom in the predicted course of events and go along with it willingly, understanding it freely and rationally to be the best course of action possible. They see the supreme good in this action, and their fundamentally good will is drawn inexorably towards it. Revelation is thus not something that stands in opposition to freedom, but enables its recipients to reach new levels of insight. In this fashion, Bradwardine seeks to sidestep the potential difficulty that revelation might either impede freedom and lead to fatalism, or else be not binding or untrue altogether.

He makes similar pronouncements on to the nature of predictions made by Christ, citing Hugh of St. Victor that these were all true with antecedent necessity, as "Christ has seen in his divinity, and therefore also in his humanity, but from his divinity"[65]. Though Christ's

[63] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 770. See also Lukács, p. 260. Original: "Corripit negantes revelationem in verbo".

[64] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 770. See also Lukács, p. 261. Original: "[...] vel hoc est propter impotentiam in Deo, vel propter impotentiam in futuro, vel proter impotentiam in creatura".

[65] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 774. See also Lukács, p. 267. Original: "[...] vidit Christus in

nature is not the same as God's, "God's entire wisdom is in the soul of Christ, and that the soul is wise out of the entire wisdom of God"[66]. As Christ's wisdom was informed by the entirety of God's wisdom, Christ's knowledge would have been complete, and any prediction about the future would be true with antecedent necessity, as his knowing results from the omniscient extra-temporal knowledge of God. Likewise, it would be impossible for Christ to be mistaken, and it would be impossible to cause Christ to believe falsehoods or confuse his faith. As both prophecies *from* Christ and *about* Christ are necessarily true, the believers from the Old Testament who lived in anticipation of the coming messiah were always in a state of grace and sanctification, and could likewise not have been led astray. Bradwardine thus attempts to sidestep the issue of divine revelation as a threat to freedom by treating it not as God enforcing his will on his subjects, but as a gift that elevates the chosen so they are able to perceive small glimpses of the divine plan and, understanding this plan to be the greatest possible good, go along with the revealed course of events of their own volition[67].

In addition to examining what theories are advanced by Bradwardine himself, it is also worthwhile to see with what arguments he seeks to disprove his opponents, particularly why he finds other free will theories to be deficient or heterodox. From the title of his work (*De Causa Dei Contra Pelagiam)*, it is no surprise that Pelagians (in old and new guises) are the primary antagonists of this work. In has certainly been treated as such by critics and commentators, and much of contemporary Bradwardine scholarship scholarship has been devoted to the issue of identifying among his contemporaries those against whom Bradwardine reacted. This approach, however, has had the unfortunate effect of giving *De Causa Dei* the reputation of a work aimed squarely and exclusively at modern and ancient Pelagians, which is not the case: While Bradwardine does see Pelagianism as the most immediately threatening doctrine about God and man's free will and action, there are other groups against which he reacts with equal vigour. To counter this lopsided approach to *De Causa Dei's* polemic content, it is worthwhile to discuss these other 'opponents' in some detail. By and large, Bradwardine strikes out at theories that for various reasons hold too little regard for human freedom or would eliminate it altogether[68]. Bradwardine is not concerned with discussing specific opinions, but rather strikes at the suppositions that underlie them, a mirror-image of his *More Geometrica*. By disproving the suppositions behind other sets of ideas, any conclusions from them will likewise be proven false, as they are based on untrue assumptions. Apart from

---

divinitate, vidit et in humanitate, tamen ex divinitate".

[66] *Idem*. Original: "[...] sed dicamus tota sapientia Dei in anima Christi, et ex tota sapientia Dei anima Christi sapiens est".

[67] A similar understanding of free will was previously encountered with stoic philosophers, where the truly wise recognize the divine plan and go along with it willingly. Though Bradwardine does not deem this a suitable definition of free will on the whole (on the grounds that it stays too close to fatalism on the one hand, and because the stoics would deny this free will to the majority of people), he finds a use for it in this specific instance.

[68] Bradwardine's vigorous repudiations of opinions that would limit or eliminate free provide yet more evidence against Leff's interpretation of the Bradwardinian system as free-will denying or misanthropic.

the Pelagians, the groups with whom Bradwardine most frequently takes issue in *De Causa Dei* are the Stoics and other fatalists, as well as Astral and natural determinists.

It was noted in the previous chapter of this study that the actual polemic structure in *De Causa Dei* come to the fore remarkably late in the work: Only in Chapter 35 of Book I does Bradwardine first present direct arguments against the Pelagians, and most polemic content is found in the latter halves of books II and III. Bradwardine strikes out against those he believes would deny or limit human free will and autonomy most immediately in chapters 18 through 21 of the second book. The danger of holding free will in too little regard is that if "the action of the free will is nothing, then the action of any other form or power is also nothing: Because the free will is the most perfect power, or created form, and therefore its proper action is not more imperfect than the proper act of anything else"[69]. Bradwardine sees free action and free will as the highest forms of willing and acting. If these highest forms of willing and acting are nothing, he sees no reason to assume that lower forms of willing and acting could be something[70]. Having no real access to action or will is obviously untenable, as "according to this misleading view every action and every change, all acting and changing, every movement or instance of being moved, changing or being changed is nothing"[71]. This would not only mean that action or change were impossible, it would also completely invalidate science: "all scientists easily understand how this goes against the sciences: All the sciences which cannot be separated from motion and action would be destroyed by this, meaning every science, even Arithmetic and Geometry [which apply theories of motion] in their definitions and theorems"[72]. This is a threat that Bradwardine obviously cannot leave unanswered, and prompts a response that in its vigour is only second to his reaction against

[69] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 529. See also Lukács, pp. 176 -177. Original: "[clerus est], quod si actus liberi arbitrij nihil sit, nec actus alicuius alterius potentiae sive formae est aliquid: Nam liberu arbitrium est perfectissima potentia, seu forma creata; quare et proprius actus eius non erit imperfectior actu proprio quiuscunque alterius".

[70] This passage, too, operates on similar premises as van Inwagen's transfer of powerlessness principle, which states that something that is derived from something powerless will inherit this powerlessness. Unfree or random acting and willing are seen as lesser derivatives of free action and free will. If the superior forms have no real existence, neither would these lesser forms, as claiming otherwise would make these lesser forms of willing and acting superior, resulting in a contradiction of terms.

[71] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 529. See also Lukács, p. 177. Original: "[...] quod haec caeca positio habet ponere consequenter omnem actionem et passionem, omne agere et pati, omnem motum et mutationem, omne movere seu moveri, mutare seu mutari universaliter nihil esse".

[72] *Idem.* Original: "[...] quod quantum adversetur omnibus pene scientijs, scientes faciliter deprehendent; omnes scientias molitur extinguere, quae se non abstrahunt ab actione et motu, et hae sunt omnes scientiae, vix Arithmetica et Geometria [...] utuntur in definitionibus et theorematibus suis motu". We again see here that Bradwardine is not just conscious of the theological impact of these theories, but is also immediately concerned with their real-world implications. The previous chapter showed how his *Sermo Epinicius* followed a similar approach, applying abstract theological theorems to give context to the real-world events of the battles of Crecy and at Neville's cross.

Pelagianism. Bradwardine states that as this depreciation of free will and free action "unjustly seeks to destroy the sciences, it is in turn justly destroyed by all of them"[73]. Before addressing specific types of free will deniers, Bradwardine first seeks to disprove the result of denying free will and action, namely the negation of lower varieties of motion, change, and action. He seeks to accomplish this by inverting his previous argumentation: If the nonexistence of superior forms of will and action means their inferior variants also do not exist, then the following should likewise hold: If the inferior forms of will and action *are* something, their superior versions must also be something. Bradwardine seeks to first establish the existence of lower varieties of will and action, change and motion. He claims that all the sciences show these to be something, and uses as proof the quadrivial discipline of music:

> "If both sound and voice are something, [...] then the making of sound and vocalisation are also something. [...] After all, nothing is generated from nothing. It might then be denied that sound or voice are something: But the aforementioned sciences show this answer to be unknowledgeable and ignorant, as they all teach that sound and voice are true things, as is proven with certainty by the experience of the sense of hearing. Sound is the typical object of this experience, but a nothing is not the object of this sense. How could nothing move the medium and the senses? [...] If sound and voice are nothing, [...] how are they generated? Furthermore, if sound is nothing, how can a sound that is too strong weaken hearing and ruin it?"[74]

In further testament to the multidisciplinary nature of his work, Bradwardine applies musical theory to establish the existence of lower forms of action, which he in turn uses to demonstrate the existence of more complex actions and free will. He first examines the logical consequences of the denial or severe reduction of free will and action, positing a *reductio ad absurdum* where no movement, change, or action whatsoever is possible. To demonstrate the absurdity of the original claim, he disproves this reduction: It is evident that movement, change, and action *are* possible, using the example of sounds and other vocalisations, as well as their production. It would be absurd to claim that sounds and voice themselves are nothing, as they are tangible things: They can be heard, and can even damage hearing if they are too loud. Nothing that does not really exist could have such an effect on the senses, as the senses do not respond to nothing. If the voice and sounds are real, as is demonstrated by our immediate sense perception of them, then their generation must also be real: Nothing can arise from

[73] *Idem.* Original: "Quia igitur omnes scientias iniustè conatur destruere, iustè ab omnibus destruetur".

[74] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 529. See also Lukács, p. 177. Original: "Si enim tam sonus quam vox sit aliquid, [...] sonatio et vocatio est aliquid. [...] Nihil enim ex nihilo generatur. Respondebit forsitan consequenter, negando sonum aut vocem esse aliquid: Sed istam responsionem praedictae scientiae conuincunt ut insciam et ignaram, docentes concorditer sonum et vocem veram rem esse, quod et sensus auditus experientia certa docet. Sonus enim est proprium eius obiectum, sed nihil nullius sensus est obiectum; quomodo namque potest nil movere medium et sensum? [...] Si etiam sonus et vox sit nihil, [...] atque formatur? Si insuper sonus sit nihil, quomodo sonus excellens sensum auditus debilitat et corrumpit?"

nothingness. The generation of sounds or vocalisations involve action, motion, and change: Air is expelled from the lungs, the vocal cords vibrate, creating sounds where before there was silence. The generation of these sounds are the result of a *will* to do so. Therefore, the existence of will and action are confirmed through the generation of sound and its subsequent perception. Even the seemingly mindless lowing of a cow as she grazes in the pasture is the result of lower forms of will and action. If such lower forms of willing and acting have a real existence, argues Bradwardine, so must their higher forms. A beast acts and wills randomly with no particular direction, whereas man and angels are able to act and will rationally. This capacity for rational action arises from God's act of willing for man and angel to be able to will freely. It would be absurd to claim that free rational actions from a man or an angel are nothing, but to claim that the actions of a cow *are* something. Either both types of willing and acting are something, or neither of them are. It is impossible to provide empirical proof that a higher form of free will exists, given that this willing is intra-mental and thus cannot be observed or demonstrated through experiment. However, Bradwardine sees empirical evidence of lower forms of willing and acting everywhere, through our sensory perception of external reality. By transitive property, if the lower form of action can be empirically demonstrated, so too do they provide evidence for the existence of higher-level actions. This, then, is Bradwardine's immediate response to the denial of free will: That either both free will and actions and other forms of willing and acting are something, or that neither of them are anything. As it can be easily proven by the sciences that lower forms of willing and acting exist, free will and free action must therefore likewise be real. Apart from this general argument, Bradwardine also responds to more specific theories, particularly stoics, fatalists, and astral or natural determinists.

With the stoic philosophers, Bradwardine's main concern is that their doctrine of fate coupled with their understanding of freedom limits the freedom of the rational beings to an unacceptable degree[75]. Bradwardine's doctrine of free will shows a number of broad parallels with stoic thought, but differs on key issues. He too believes in a pre-ordained world, but only for God: For the created beings, the world and the future appear contingent in every way[76]. Bradwardine takes issue with stoic views on the interaction between man and God, and on their definition of freedom. The stoic distinctions between the wise and the foolish are unacceptable to Bradwardine, as they stray too close to fatalism: Most people act randomly and without rational thought, good acts only resulting by chance from their behaviour. Even the freedom of the wise lies only in accepting the inevitable. There is no trace here of

[75] Stoics understood the world to be ordered deterministically according to a divine plan. Mankind is split between the foolish and the wise. The wise have recognized the divine plan, and act in accordance with it and with nature. The stoic understanding of free will is broadly constituted of a rational recognition of (and voluntary submission to) the rules of nature and the divine plan. Those who are not wise are foolish, and, not recognizing the divine plan that moves the world, they act impulsively and without rationality. Though they may at times perform good deeds, these are not meritorious, as they arise by mere happenstance rather than being rationally directed.

[76] The exception to this rule being instances of divine revelation of future events.

Bradwardine's understanding of free will, which is to freely be able to choose to do something with good or evil intentions, and to be immediately aided by God to persist in this goodness. Free will is primarily a moral faculty, the responsibility of which lies with man alone, and is empowered by God's willing for man to be able to will freely. To limit free will to submission to natural necessity and the divine will is not acceptable for Bradwardine, as this type of "natural necessity as well as fatalism repugns merit, [as there would be] no more freedom in man than in a beast"[77]. This rings even more true in the case of the foolish: If they act in a fashion that is so random that even their good deeds are result of mere chance, what is there to separate them from the other lower created beings, who also act irrationally and randomly? Having already concluded man and angels to be set apart from the other creatures by their freedom and rational power, this conclusion is highly unpalatable to Bradwardine. Worse yet, this randomness of action would also mean that "man would not be able to sin"[78]: If random action means that one is not responsible for meritorious acts, there is no reason to assume one should be held accountable for evil ones, as these are likewise the result of mere happenstance, not borne of a volition to act with ill intent. It would, in turn, not be just for God to condemn one for such actions, as someone who has no control over the intent of their actions cannot be held responsible, only those who act deliberately. Finally, Bradwardine takes issue with the concept of submission to the laws of nature, as this kind of natural necessity would imply that forces other than God have control over human will and action, something that Bradwardine is vehemently opposed to. He discusses natural necessity mainly in combination with astrological determinism.

Bradwardine discusses astrological determinism in his reaction against Graeco-Arabic determinism, with which his main issue is that it makes God "too impersonal, too far removed from his own creation"[79]. The portrayal of God by these philosophers, states Bradwardine, envisions Him as a remote creator that does not directly involve Himself with His creations, but is content with being a prime mover or creator. Actual determinism of will and action are affected by celestial spheres and other second causes. To refute this, the "Doctor Profundus invokes [...] the authority of Stephan Tempier to refute those who consider God to be the remotest cause"[80]. This is the first time that Bradwardine invokes the authority of the Parisian Bishop Stephan Tempier, which afterwards becomes a regular habit, as he frequently checks statements of his opponents against those opinions that were condemned by Tempier at Paris in 1277, when he created a list of 219 heterodox theories. These condemnations are aimed at certain unnamed scholars from the faculty of Arts at Paris, research suggests that Siger of

[77] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 726. Original: "Item necesitas naturalis atque fatalis repugnat merito, [...] item tunc non esset maior libertas in homine quam in bruto".

[78] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 726. Original: "Item tunc homo non posset peccare".

[79] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 190. Note that the notion of a *Deus Abscondus* is one that has also frequently, if inaccurately, been attributed to Ockham, Holcot, Buckingham, Wodeham, and other supposed nominalists.

[80] Translated from Berganza, p. 162. Original: "El Doctor Profundus utiliza [en este caso] la autoridad de Esteban Tempier para refutar a quienes consideraban a Dios como la causa más remota".

Brabant and Boethius of Dacia were likely targets. These condemnations also came about as part of a reaction against the growing influence of the translated works of Aristotle and his Arab commentators, particularly postulations about a removed nature of God (i.e., a *Deus Abscondus*) and an active role of secondary causes in deterministic models. Bradwardine also frequently employs the 1277 condemnations as a means of verifying or confirming the orthodoxy of his own claims: Through contrast with condemned statements, Bradwardine confirms his own orthodoxy. Tempier is one of the most frequently cited authorities in *De Causa Dei* after Augustine and Aristotle. On the notion of a *Deus Abscondus*, Bradwardine states that it is condemned "very clearly by master Stephan, Bishop of Paris [that] the first cause is the remotest cause of being"[81]. He refers here to condemnation 190, which states that: "the first cause is the most remote. It is in error, if it were to signify that it is not the closest of all"[82]. The problematic aspects of a remote creator figure are twofold. The first is obvious: A God that does not work immediately and ceaselessly in every aspect and action of his creation, but looks on from afar is fundamentally incompatible with Bradwardine's model, and must therefore be rejected lest it dismantle the foundation of his entire theology. A second issue lies in the role attributed to secondary causes, which in Graeco-Arabic Determinism take over God's role as the determining agent: Man's actions and fate are determined astrally, rather than by God. However, this would greatly diminish God's power in the world: At best he becomes an inceptor, setting into motion those heavenly bodies which then in turn dictate the actions of the created beings.

Bradwardine considers this and similar modes of determinism to constitute 'natural determinism', which he understands as foreknowledge of future actions by any entity other than God, and which exists in the natural world (such as the heavenly bodies). This also includes more abstract forces like fate or fortune. There is an additional feature of this line of thought that Bradwardine finds almost as unpalatable as the diminishing of God's power and active role in human actions: It would mean that, rather than being aided in their free actions by a loving and just God, astral determinism would see man moved by the cold and impersonal forces of celestial bodies. Far from being "an affirmation of the freedom of the created beings, it ends up delivering them to the dominion of the second causes"[83]. Not only is God's power threatened and limited, but so too is man's freedom. Determinism of action by agents other than God is also a conclusion Bradwardine seeks to avoid, as his model of the compatibility of free will and predetermination hinges on the notion that prescience lies with God alone, who exists outside of time. Unlike Bradwardine's mode of foreknowledge in God, the secondary causes do not view predetermined acts from outside our linear perception of time, but from *within* it. Astral determinism would change the mode of predetermination

[81] Translated from *De Causa Dei*, p. 165. Original: "Quod et patet clarissime per Dominum Stephanum Parisiensem Episcopum condemnantem [quod] prima causa est causa entium remotissima".

[82] Translated from Denifle and Chatelain, art. 190. Original: "Quod prima causa est causa omnium remotissima. Error, si intelligatur ita, quod non propinquissima".

[83] Translated from Berganza, p 163. Original: "Mas, lejos de suponer esto la reafirmación de la libertad de las voluntadas creadas, terminaba por someter a éstas al dominio de las causas segundas".

from co-temporal observation to that of active and binding *prediction*. These factors call into question whether a person subjected to such powerful forces of fate can still be responsible for their (mis)deeds, which in turn would call into question the fairness and righteousness of God in exalting or condemning humans based on these actions. It is the unique space of interaction between man and God that is the cornerstone of Bradwardine's compatibilist model, which seems wholly missing here. Introducing any further determining agents like fate, the sun, the moon, or the stars threatens to upset the equilibrium of the model, and must thus be dismissed by Bradwardine.

In outlining his compatibilist system, Bradwardine has already provided proofs of why he believes there is such a thing as free will, and how this free will is compatible with a prescient God (but not with determinism by other forces). Astral determinism in the Graeco-Arabic tradition presents determination in the form of fate enforced by the celestial bodies, with God standing on the side-lines as a remote creator. In establishing the heterodoxy of such claims, Bradwardine again takes recourse to Tempier's condemnations, especially condemnations 133 and 162. These condemn respectively the notions that "the will and intellect are not moved in action per se, but by a perpetual cause, that is to say celestial bodies" and that "our will is subjected to the power of heavenly bodies"[84]. Again, we see here how Bradwardine uses Tempier's condemnations to demarcate between acceptable and heterodox opinions. In mirrored fashion, he establishes his own *orthodoxy* by showing how his own theories contrast the condemned statements: In Bradwardine's model, the will is *not* moved by heavenly bodies, it *is* capable of willing, the first cause is *not* remote but the *closest*, acting as enabler and co-mover. Through his discussion, Bradwardine seeks to outline to show how stoics and astral or natural determinist theories *undermine* the freedom of man, something Bradwardine believes to be unacceptable, and incompatible with his conception of man's free will. Bradwardine's concern with the Pelagians is the opposite: Rather than unacceptable limitation of free will, he sees them as supposing free will to be so boundless as to make God obsolete. Here, too, the authority of Tempier is frequently evoked.

Following lengthy diatribes against his opponents and specifications about the nature of Christ and the truth of divine revelation, Bradwardine ends the *De Causa Dei* by recapitulating its most salient points, first in a long summary and then in a 36-point recapitulation of his positive conclusions about the nature of God and Christ. They can be summarized as follows: Firstly, that Bradwardine has sought to re-establish the pre-eminence of God, not by appealing to fideism or divine mystery, but through a rigorous process of inductive logic, derived from two premises: That God is the greatest and most powerful being, and that there must in all things be a first cause. His objective, however, is not to elevate God to such a degree that man would be crushed beneath the sheer weight of divine omnipotence. Much of *De Causa Dei* is dedicated to the construction of a conception of humans as beings that are imbued with free

[84] Translated from Denifle and Chatelain, articles 133 and 162. Original: "Quod voluntas et intellectus non moventur in actu per se, sed per causam sempiternitam, scilicet corpora coelestia" and "Quod voluntas nostra subiacet potestati corporum coelestium".

will and spontaneity, and to proving that freedom and necessity need not contradict each other, but can (and do) work in harmony. The doctrine of God outlined in Book I dictates that God knows all future events, and acts as not only a remote first cause of actions but is immediately present in each individual act as a co-mover. God's co-efficience predates that of man. Man's freedom lies in the fact that they can will either one or another concrete option that is offered to them. The result is known in advance by God, though this type of knowing does not impede free action: God sees the future as we do the present, and just as our seeing an action occur does not necessitate it, neither does God's 'fore'knowing. However, true reversible contingency or a freedom to act opposingly is denied man, and is the sole domain of God, at least in regard to those acts of will external to Himself: His being and essence are as necessary as they are immutable. Humanity's free will is the result of God's act of will for mankind to be able to will freely. No act undertaken by man is evil in and of itself: Everything that is created by God is good, and as all acts are created by God, every action must in turn be good. Whether an act is good or evil is determined not by the nature of the act, but by the intent with which it is performed. Bad intentions result in the action being sinful. This belongs solely to man, as God is all good and thus would not purposefully bring about bad things. He only helps in bringing about the act, not the intent, and is thus not culpable of sin. A significant degree of human freedom is thus found in the capacity of choosing to act (im)morally. While man cannot reach grace through meritorious action, this should not be seen as a cause to act immorally or become despondent: It is only up to God to know who is saved and who is not, and until judgement day all should be exhorted to act morally and do good deeds. In concrete terms of freedom, necessity, and contingency, Bradwardine develops distinguished varieties in man and in God. Man enjoys complete freedom from fate, second causes, and violent outside influence. His actions are only necessary with regards to the highest cause, God. Their actions are contingent in that they are free to either will to perform morally or immorally, but predetermined in the way that God has foreseen the choice they will ultimately make.

It can be concluded that while Bradwardine does not endorse views that a libertarian vision of free will would require[85], he does propose a view that has a strong likeness to compatibilist theories on free will, specifically soft determinist theories that propose the compatibility of predetermination on the one hand and free will on the other. Though he has often been regarded a hard determinist, this interpretation is unwarranted, and contrary to Bradwardine's stated goal: To navigate the theological issues when establishing compatibility between an omnipotent and omniscient God, and a freedom of will and spontaneity of action in His subjects. Bradwardine's reputation, then, of being an 'inhumane genius' or free will-denier is undeserved: He reacted with almost equal vigour to free will deniers as to those who would overvalue it[86]. While this chapter and the previous have concerned themselves mostly with the

[85] A Libertarian free will would require an undetermined future with a 'garden of forking paths' that offers access to genuine alternate possibilities and reversible contingency.

[86] This also draws into question the typical framing of Bradwardine as adversary of free-will affirming and supposedly nominalist contemporaries, considered in the following chapter Past criticism has

reception of the Thomas Bradwardine as an individual thinker, the following chapter thematises his role in the larger historiography of 14th century intellectual life, and shows how shifting perspectives on Bradwardine and his contemporaries contribute to an overall re-evaluation of 14th century thought, particularly where the 'nominalist controversy' and 'Wegestreit'-theory of cultural history are concerned. The chapters that follow make the case that these findings are cause for a thorough reconceptualization of the role of philosophy in the 14th century in other disciplines: The collapse of the narratives of a 'nominalist controversy' and 'Wegestreit' are of especial relevance in the context of literary studies, which has primarily focused on opposed nominalist and realist epistemologies and aesthetics in its discussions of representations of philosophy in 14th century literature.

tended to exclusively discuss the polemic content of *De Causa Dei* in terms of its reaction to Pelagianism, causing a rather lopsided focus on Bradwardine's criticism of those who overvalue free will, a factor that may have contributed to Bradwardine's reputation as being critical of free will and human autonomy.

Chapter VI

Nominalism, Realism, and the Wegestreit as Epistemological Models

The previous two chapters of this study provided an examination of Bradwardine's compatibilist model of the interaction between divine foreknowledge and human free will, and considered the various ways his works have been interpreted and (mis)represented in scholarship. Bradwardine has typically been portrayed as either a pre-reformist hard determinist, or a reactionary conservative Augustinian. Both interpretations see him as a conservative reacting against progressive contemporaries, whom he classifies as Pelagian. Great interest is also taken in the polemic structure of Bradwardine's works[1]. While Bradwardine certainly reacts with great vigour to those who would deny or unacceptably limit free will, he undeniably sees in a renascent Pelagianism[2] a more immediate threat. He feels its presence everywhere in university and clerical circles, and confesses to have been 'seduced' by Pelagian theories in his youth. Bradwardine's definition of Pelagianism closely follows Augustine's[3]. *De Causa Dei* is typically discussed in its polemical, anti-Pelagian context, and is frequently contrasted to one or more works by contemporary authors that supposedly represent the anonymous Pelagians that Bradwardine addresses. Gordon Leff, Heiko Augustinus Obermann, and Jean Francois Genest, for instance, all pursued this strategy. The reception of Bradwardine as a conservative, hard-line Augustinian, reacting sharply against what he considers to be a resurgence of Pelagianism has been used to buttress an inaccurate but enduring framework that sees "fourteenth-century intellectual life as a clear-cut debate between advocates of a radical scepticism and conservative Augustinianism"[4], who are represented by rival schools of nominalism and realism, alternatively described as a *via moderna* and *via antiqua*. This interpretation, which proposes diametrically opposed and irreconcilable nominalist and realist epistemologies, has been used to frame theological debates of the 14th century as acting out

[1] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 217. The previous chapter has briefly outlined the following about *De Causa Dei*'s polemic structure: Firstly, that Bradwardine argues against sets of opinions rather than individual thinkers, specifically seeking to erode the fundamental assumptions behind these opinions rather than seeking to counter individual positions one at a time. Secondly, that this strategy also impacts the way Bradwardine builds his own argument, as he spares no effort in buttressing the suppositions that support his own model. Thirdly, polemic efforts are not aimed solely at Pelagians, whom Bradwardine sees as placing too great an import of human freedom and independence from God, but also against stoics, fatalists, and natural as well as astral determinists, whose theories Bradwardine believes would completely destroy free will, or render man dependant on temporal entities other than God.

[2] Bradwardine considers 'Pelagians' those who would unduly stress free will to the point of marginalizing God, and who deny the absolute necessity of grace.

[3] Augustine claimed that Pelagianism denies the need for Baptism in the remission of sin, denies the necessity of grace to reach salvation, and claims that man can reach salvation solely through his own meritorious acts. See also Chapter III of this study. While Bradwardine's definition closely follows Augustine, it differs in an apparent disinterest on the subject of child baptism by Bradwardine.

[4] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 211.

an epochal struggle between a waning medieval scholasticism (represented by realism) versus a nascent Renaissance humanism (represented by nominalism). The 'old way' of the realists is presented as a clinging to scholastic methods dependant on authoritative thinking, whereas the 'new way' of the nominalists represented an *empirical* turn born from a sceptic attitude that was seen as instrumental in paving the way for the modern scientific method. The portrayal of Bradwardine as an ultraconservative realist, and his contrasted analysis with 'protagonists' of nominalism like William of Ockham, has been used to support and strengthen this interpretation. Shifting attitudes to not only Bradwardine, but also to Ockham and other contemporaries, necessitate a thorough re-evaluation of this totalising narrative of intellectual history: Recent research has increasingly come to abandon this interpretation, something that not only impacts philosophical studies, but neighbouring fields like literary studies as well. This is made readily apparent in chapters seven and eight of this study, which analyse the research paradigm of *literary nominalism*, focusing on how the recent abandonment of the concept of fundamentally opposed nominalist and realist epistemologies in specialist works of philosophical history is grounds for a thorough revision and reconceptualization of scholarly approaches to the representation of philosophical issues in literary works from the late Middle Ages.

In order to discuss the larger historiographical context of *De Causa Dei* through its polemic and anti-Pelagian context, and its relation to the nominalist controversy, it is first necessary to examine who were typically envisioned to have been Bradwardine's chief opponents. *De Causa Dei* itself is of scant help here, as the work, despite its polemic structure, does not seek to directly attack contemporary 'Pelagians' in the way that Augustine's polemics directly and explicitly reacted against the writings of Pelagian, Julian of Aeclanum, and Caelestine[5]. Nevertheless, a number of contemporaries have been frequently posited as likely antagonists, particularly William of Ockham, Thomas Buckingham, Robert Holcot, Adam Wodeham[6], John of Rodington, Durande of Saint-Pourcain, Peter Auriol, Gregory of Rimini, and John of Mirecourt[7]. Contrasts are most often drawn between the *Doctor Profundus* and the first four men of this list, especially William of Ockham[8]. That these men are frequently contrasted with Bradwardine is not only due to conflicting conceptions of issues like foreknowledge and free will, but also by virtue of their proximity in time and geography to the *Doctor Profundus*: Ockham, Buckingham, Holcot, and Wodeham were not only close contemporaries of Bradwardine's, but also spent a significant amount of time at Oxford and Merton college[9].

[5] Refer also to the third chapter of this study for further information on the conflict between Augustine and the 'Pelagians'.

[6] Sometimes also referred to as Adam *Wood*ham, such as in Obermann 1957.

[7] See also Genest 1992, p. 18. See also Leff 1957, pp. 314-315, and Obermann 1957, pp. 40-47.

[8] See also Leff 1957 p. 165 and p. 188, Genest 1992, pp. 34-38, Aers, p. 26, Obermann 1957, pp. 188-198, Dolnikowski 1995, p. 217, and Kaluza.

[9] For instance, Robert Holcot was part of the circle of the prominent intellectual and bibliophile Richard de Bury the same time as Thomas Bradwardine. It is unknown, however, if and to what degree the two men knew each other personally.

While this chapter is less interested on the specific theories of these scholars[10] and more on their relation to Bradwardine and his reception, a few remarks may be made on typical attitudes assumed towards them. Michalski is of the opinion that Robert Holcot opposes Bradwardine by denying the all-causality of God[11]. Obermann contests this, stating that "Bradwardine is not even mentioned […], nor are his opinions quoted in any recognisable form"[12]. However, he does see a difference in "Holcot's philosophical scepticism, which leads him to make pronouncements which have a Pelagian flavour", especially in the way the "potentia absoluta […] is used to undermine the potentia ordinata"[13]. The way Holcot frames the contingency of the future, so claims Obermann, threatens to undermine the truth of revelation by making it, too, subject to contingency, thus potentially opening a window for revelation to be false. Adam Wodeham was accused of Pelagianism in his own time by his contemporary Robert of Halifax. Obermann again describes how this is due to certain sceptical tendencies about monotheism: While it is "probable", there are, however, also "good arguments against it"[14]. Buckingham is contrasted with Bradwardine frequently after "in 1957, three historians [A.B. Emden, H. A. Obermann and G. Leff] presented as probable the thesis about an academic dispute between Thomas Bradwardine and Thomas Buckingham which would have occurred in Paris around 1345"[15], supposedly concerning the contingency of future events. However, Kaluza concludes, there is no mention anywhere of an actual debate between Bradwardine and Buckingham, only that there was a *disputatio in aula* comparing and contrasting the opinions of the two[16]. Buckingham also attacked the notion that "God could make it so that a past event had not been accomplished, and its corollary, the thesis of the antecedent necessity of the future"[17]. The contrasting of Bradwardine and his contemporaries is typically based on supposedly sceptic tendencies of the latter[18], as well as divergent theories on the contingency of the future. An issue with the comparison of Bradwardine with authors like Holcot, Wodeham, or Buckingham has been that a *proper* comparison has been

[10] Focus on the theories of Ockham's contemporaries would far exceed the scope of this work.

[11] See also Michalski in Obermann 1957, p. 44.

[12] See Obermann 1957, p. 45.

[13] *Idem*.

[14] See Obermann 1957, p. 47.

[15] Translated from Kaluza, p. 220. Original: "En 1957, trois historiens: A. B. Emden, H. A. Obermann et G. Leff, présentent comme probable la these d'une dispute universitaire entre Thomas Bradwardine et Thomas Buckingham". See also Leff 1957, p. 2, Obermann 1957, p. 189, and Emden in Kaluza, p. 220.

[16] See also Kaluza, p. 227.

[17] Translated from Genest 1979, pp. 267-268. Original: "Buckingham attaque vivement l'opinion selon laquelle Dieu peut faire qu'un événement passé n'ait pas été accompli, et son corollaire, la thèse de la nécessité antécédente des futurs".

[18] The degree to which Bradwardine's contemporaries actually favoured a sceptic approach is, however, highly contested. Particularly the association of William of Ockham with sceptic tendencies has come under withering critique, as will be demonstrated over the course of this chapter.

hard to make, due to the fact that "these authors are still poorly known"[19], as is the exact nature of their opinions, or the extent to which they clash with Bradwardine's: Any comparison beyond the superficial is thus spurious at best. What connects Bradwardine's supposed opponents is that they have typically been portrayed as loyal disciples and followers of William of Ockham, and their purported adherence to a particular school of thought of which Ockham is considered to be the inceptor: Nominalism. It is by critically examining the way nominalism has been portrayed in scholarship, as well as delineating the various ways in which Bradwardine has been propped up as a realist counterpoint to this movement, that both Bradwardine's historic import, as well as numerous problematic assumptions about 14th-century philosophy more generally, present themselves.

Nominalism was previously encountered in the third chapter of this study, in discussion of Peter Abelard. This concerned definitions of nominalism and realism in the *narrow* sense; that is, strictly in relation to the problem of the universals. The supposed resurgence of debates between nominalists and realists in the 14th century, however, is associated with a far *broader* range of issues. Particular emphasis is placed on supposed sceptic tendencies on the part of the nominalists, which is taken as an indication of nascent empiricism: Hannam, for instance, writes that "medieval nominalists, by rejecting generalisations, tended to be more empirical than their realist rivals were. Because nominalists dealt only in particular real instances, no amount of rationalisation from first principles would convince them that something was so if they could not see it with their own eyes"[20]. At first glance, the contrast here with Bradwardine's methodology seems apparent, as arguing from 'first principles' shapes the backbone of *De Causa Dei*'s argumentative structure. The question, however, is whether this conception of a 14th century nominalism is *accurate*.

The issues under discussion are not only broadened, their historiographical import and implications are deepened: The account of nominalism and realism in the 14th century is represented as an *epochal conflict* between two distinct *ways,* the *via antiqua* and *via moderna.* The designation of the old way is assigned to the realists, whereas the nominalists supposedly represent the new way, and the terms are used interchangeably. Hirschberger, for instance, states that "the circles around Ockham, in contrast to the Old (antiqui) and their realism of forms (reales), were called the moderns (moderni) and due to their rejection of the reality of the

[19] Translated from Genest 1992, p. 18. Original: "ces auteurs sont encore mal connus". Genest expounds that this is due in large part to poor availability of the original texts by these authors, which were either not edited at all (Fitzralph), only have fragments remaining (Holcot), or were edited only once (and sloppily at that) in the early sixteenth century (Wodeham and Buckingham). See also Genest 1992, pp. 18-19. Until more thorough examinations of their works become available, direct comparisons between them and Bradwardine would only invite further errors and inaccuracies. It should be noted that the most recent monographs on Bradwardine by Dolnikowski, Berganza, and Lukács have all refrained from adapting such an approach, choosing instead to engage *De Causa Dei* on its own terms.

[20] See Hannam, p. 171.

universals the "nominales""[21]. Due to their presumed scepticism and empiricism, these 'moderns' have been received by later generations of scholars as prefigurations of Renaissance humanism and modernity, giving birth to what Wolfgang Hübener has termed the 'Legend of Nominalism', which he defines as "the assumption of a […] revolutionary break tied to Ockham's name concerning the understanding of the world, God, and the self of people in the early fourteenth century, which in terms of world history has founded the epoch that, under the name of modern European subjectivism, bourgeois individualism, or modern natural sciences and technologies, determine our thought and actions even in the present"[22]. There have been several interpretations of the exact role of this supposed nominalist school, which all take nominalist thought as the prefiguration of modernity in the late Middle Ages. Their counterparts, the old-way realists, are presented as the rear guard of scholasticism, mounting a stubborn but futile defence of old thought and practices: a waning Middle Ages that, in its death throes, struggles to maintain its relevance in the face of progress. The reception of Bradwardine is also intimately related to this historiographical view because, as contemporary opponent of Ockham's, he is habitually placed in the camp of the *via antiqui*, despite having little to say about the universal categories themselves. Recent inquests, however, have begun to first critique and then discredit this totalising historiographical account of a modern nominalism clashing with an antiquated realism, and in this light the historical role and relevance of Bradwardine in his own time and beyond must be re-evaluated. Some attention must now be paid to the shifting reception of Ockham's thought and historical role in order to be able to properly discuss the validity of a diametrically opposed Ockhamist nominalism versus a dogmatic and conservative realism.

Against charges of Pelagianism, Ockham "affirms the traditional teaching on divine agency in the redemption of humanity and is certain that his theology is free from any Pelagianism"[23]. This is defended by the argumentation that "Pelagianism puts God under necessity to accept someone, whereas Ockham's pervasive dialectic of *potentia absoluta* and *potentia*

[21] Translated from Hirschberger, p. 566. Original: "Die Kreise um Ockham hießen im Gegensatz zu den Alten (antiqui) und ihrem Ideenrealismus (reales) die Neuzeitlichen (moderni) und wegen ihrer Ablehnung der Realität der Universalien die "nominales"". This equation of realism with a *via antiqua* and nominalism with a *via moderna* is a widespread view about the fourteenth century intellectual landscape. Hannam and Obermann, for instance, also affirm it (See also Hannam, p. 170, and Obermann 1957, p. 232). Robert Pasnau confirms the continued influence of this viewpoint as he scathingly critiques established views on the notion of an organized nominalist school of thought in the fourteenth century (See also Pasnau, pp. 84 -85).

[22] Translated from Hübener, p. 89. Original: "Ich verstehe im Folgenden unter der Nominalismus-Legende die Annahme eines […] revolutionären, an den Namen Ockhams geknüpften Umbruches im Welt-, Gottes-, und Selbstverständnis des Menschen im frühen 14. Jahrhundert, der welthistorisch diejenige Epoche begründet hat, die unter dem Namen des modernen europäischen Subjektivismus, des bürgerlichen Individualismus oder der neuzeitlichen Naturwissenschaft und Technik noch unser gegenwärtiges Denken und Handeln bestimmt".

[23] See Aers, p. 26.

ordinata maintains God's freedom and so, according to Ockham, keeps the theologian far removed from Pelagianism"[24]. It should also be noted, however, that while Ockham clearly distances himself from Pelagianism, it would be impossible for him to admit any approval for it in the first place: As it was a heretical movement, positive sentiments towards Pelagianism would immediately arouse suspicions of heterodoxy. Nor is there a critical consensus on the issue, with scholars like Riga Wood on the one hand affirming Ockham's own claims to orthodoxy, while others like Marilyn McCord Adams have sought to defend the thesis that Ockham's theories on salvation must be considered at least semi-Pelagian[25]. Then again, it should also be noted that Church authorities have never actually *condemned* any of Ockham's theorems as Pelagian[26]. While he *was* excommunicated, this was *not* due to the heterodoxy of his theories, but due to his flight to Bavaria after receiving summons to appear before church authorities. This study does not seek to further investigate the question of if and to what degree Ockham's theories could be labelled 'Pelagian', as a considerable part of the third chapter of this study was dedicated to *dissolving* the notion of a cohesive Pelagianist movement. 'Pelagianism' is best considered an artificial construct, based on Augustine's interpretation of several theologians who had some notions in common but also vast differences of opinion, and which was only solidified as a movement upon their condemnation. Therefore, on the subject of Ockham's Pelagianism, this study limits itself to the observation that, though current opinions are divided, there has been a strong precedence for critics to identify (or at least associate) Ockham's works with Pelagianism, and that this is due to an overt emphasis on human autonomy. It is (partly) due to his association with Pelagianism that Ockham has frequently been considered Bradwardine's chief opponent. It is also in his capacity as the supposed leader of an organized attack on scholastic values, that this studies' interest in Ockham is located. A long-held consensus on William of Ockham's historical significance was summarized eloquently and influentially[27] by Etienne Gilson in 1955:

"[The] practical effect of [William of Ockham's] theology was to nullify, in many minds, the effort of what might be called the classical scholasticism of the thirteenth century, including Henry of Ghent and Duns Scotus. Of the rational understanding of faith attempted by Bonaventure, Albert the Great, Thomas Aquinas and their contemporaries, very little, if anything, was left after Ockham. This is the reason why we described Ockhamism as marking the end of the golden age of scholasticism. Faith was intact, but to follow Ockham was to give

[24] *Idem*.

[25] See also Aers, pp. 15-52.

[26] Or, indeed, at all: No statement of Ockham's in general was ever officially condemned during his life or afterwards.

[27] Gilson and Leff were also highlz influential in shaping the philosophical methodology of the paradigm of literary nominalism in the investigation of a nominalist and realist epistemology or aesthetics in 14th century literary works. Specifically, the notion of nominalism as being defined by sceptic attitudes proved singularly influential amongst literary critics, who often connected sceptic attitudes with a split between signifier and signified. Aers also notes that Leff has proven to be singularly influential on literary critics. See also Aers, p. 39.

up any hope of achieving, in this life, a positive philosophical understanding of its intelligible meaning. […] It can be said that the doctrine of Ockham marked a turning point in the history of philosophy as well as of theology. In theology his doctrine was paving the way to the 'positive theology' of the moderns. In philosophy, it was paving the way to modern empiricism. In both cases it really was a *via moderna*: a modern way"[28].

Three central notions present themselves in Gilson's description: Firstly, that Ockham represents a total break with scholastic efforts of the previous century. Secondly, that the driving force behind this break is a radical scepticism that denies that logic and inductive reasoning are sufficient to attain certain knowledge of things that cannot be empirically demonstrated. And thirdly, that this metaphysical scepticism signals a movement towards empiricism, and secures a role for Ockham as a precursor to Renaissance attitudes towards theology and philosophy. Gordon Leff expands further on Gilson's claims, stating that Ockham's "positions [formed] a devastating unity which, for sheer destructive capacity, was unequalled during the thousand years we have been studying", that "as a logician, theologian, or scientist, [his work] combines a radical empiricism with an equally radical contingency", and that "there is in Ockham no exclusive affinity to any one category, least of all traditional doctrines"[29]. He adds to Gilson's analysis additional emphasis on the import of Ockham's theories on contingency, which Leff supposes to be very far reaching. If true, this would indeed seem to place Ockham close to Augustine's definition of Pelagianism. Leff further stresses that Ockham's theology is marked by a combination of scepticism and fideism: Affirming the truth of scripture on the one hand but denying that it can be known or demonstrated rationally on the other. Thus, anything that cannot be demonstrated empirically but is established in scripture, such as the existence of God, must be taken on faith. Leff sees this as "destructive [for] the entire attempt to synthesize faith and reason; in another, he gives a new consistency to natural knowledge"[30]. Similar to Gilson, Leff sees a thoroughgoing sceptic attitude at the heart of the matter: Ockham's critique of scholastic synthesis between faith and reason attests to a belief that nothing can be known for certain[31] except the physically demonstrable. He is portrayed as being "at odds generally with all thirteenth-century attempts to reconcile Christian faith with Aristotelian natural philosophy"[32]. This same sentiment is used to showcase how Ockham foreshadows empiricism: By removing theology from the sphere of the demonstrable, he divorces –even *frees*–the natural sciences from the yoke of theological speculation,

[28] See Gilson in Dolnikowski 1995, p. 214.

[29] See Leff 1958, pp. 279-280. It should be noted that Leff recanted many of his earlier in claims in his 1975 monograph on William of Ockham. His earlier writings, particularly his *Medieval Philosophy*, remained influential, however. See also Leff, 1975.

[30] Translated from Leff 1958, p. 280.

[31] Some (literary) critics, like Stephen Gardner, have even gone so far as to propose that according to Ockhamism, *nothing can be known or meaningfully communicated at all*. Gardner is discussed at some length in the following chapter in the context of literary nominalism, where this conception of nominalism is dismissed.

[32] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 215.

as a far-reaching scepticism essentially disentangles the demonstrable from the speculative.

In this fashion, Gilson and Leff support the thesis that "Ockham almost single-handedly changed the tone of late medieval philosophy: By divorcing faith and reason, says Gilson, Ockham jeopardized the delicate balance between theology and philosophy which his thirteenth-century predecessors had crafted and so brought about the disintegration of scholastic unity"[33]. Nor did they suppose Ockham to have been alone in this endeavour, as they claim that "Ockham quickly acquired a loyal group of followers" and encourage "the notion that there was a single debate between clearly defined parties and [that] Ockham led his adherents in a blatant attack on traditional views"[34]. The conception of nominalism and realism as organized schools of thought pursuing wholly incompatible epistemologies gave rise to a "new doctrinal alignment", in which "Thomists and Scotists[35] were lumped together and made up the class of the 'realists', or partisans of the 'ancient way' in philosophy and theology", who were vigorously opposed by the "nominalists or terminists [who] were also called the moderns"[36], whose school of thought centred around a deep metaphysical scepticism and a belief in the irreconcilable nature of faith and reason. This notion of an embattled nominalism and realism, framed as a conflict between modernity and Middle Ages represented by a new and old way, has long been the dominant view on theological debates in the 14th century, but has of late come under withering critique. To better understand this criticism, and to gain insight as to why this view gained such dominance in the first place, it is worthwhile to consider briefly how it came into existence.

A crucial detail pertaining to the supposed conflict between nominalists and realists, is that it is treated as a synonym of or a proxy for the conflict between two distinct 'ways': A *via moderna* and a *via antiqua*. The earliest mention of these distinct ways is supplied by a "1425 document from the University of Cologne, where a distinction was drawn between "the via of Saint Thomas, Albert the Great and such ancients," and the via of "the modern masters [John] Buridan and Marsilius [of Inghen]. This notion of a via antiqua and a via moderna became widespread in the later fifteenth century, and was associated with realism and nominalism"[37]. There seem to have been, in the later fifteenth and sixteenth century, differing groups of scholars that did identify themselves as members of either a *via antiqua* or *via moderna*, and these groups were alternatively called realists and nominalists. That these groups clashed vigorously, too, is a matter of record, as documents and university records show how "at some universities one or the other school was banned; at others, there were separate chairs for realists and nominalists; in Heidelberg, it was eventually forbidden to criticize the different

[33] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 214.

[34] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 215.

[35] The ranks of the realists were not confined to Thomists and Scotists, but also incorporated numerous others not easily fit into either category.

[36] See Gilson, p. 500.

[37] See Pasnau, p. 84.

viae; ultimately, in the sixteenth century, the debate simply dried up"[38]. Buridan and Ockham are alternately claimed as founding fathers of nominalism, though it were typically "the opponents of nominalism who stressed its association with Ockham", as he had been "under a cloud of suspicion during the scholastic era"[39]. These accounts of distinct schools of nominalism and realism and two distinct ways were eagerly seized upon in the late 19th and early 20th century by scholars like Zarncke, Hermelinck, or Prantl, who took the two-road theory a step further. Influenced by contemporary theories of cultural history, particularly the Burckhardtian understanding of modernity and the concept of a rupturous divide between the premodern Middle Ages and modernity, they framed this opposition of two distinct ways as a clash of historical periods, in which a premodern scholasticism comes under assault for the first time by radically new theories that foreshadow the coming modernity represented by humanism and scientific empiricism. It interprets the 'modern' in *via moderna* as meaning modern in Burckhardtian terms: The self-expression of progressive values, and an awareness and identification of the self as such. The *via antiqua*, in contrast, is associated with the old and antiquated: Conservative scholastic notions that were to be abolished before a modern society could come into being. This hardening of terms caused more extreme interpretations of the significance and severity of these debates, and became known as the 'Wegestreit' theory ('Battle of the Ways').

This theory of cultural history posited that the debates between the "*via antiqua* and the *via moderna* were not merely about the division into two schools of logic, which in the debates on the universals took the opposite views of realism and nominalism, but [stated] that the entirety of the sciences of that time and all its disciplines could only be learned and taught by choosing between one or the other road"[40]. The notion of the *Wegestreit* suggests the conflict between nominales / *moderni* and reales / *antiqui* was something far deeper than merely an academic dispute, but rather represented a conflict between two opposing and irreconcilable epistemologies, belonging to two equally irreconcilable historical eras: Middle Ages and Renaissance. This *Wegestreit* supposedly started with Ockham and his nominalists and ended with a victory of the new way over the old, a symbolic enactment of the modern triumphing over the premodern.

The designation of certain theologians as progenitors of one *via* or the other should, as Gerhard Ritter already argued in the first half of the 20th century, be considered an act of historical fashioning of later centuries. The greatest issue with the *Wegestreit* theory, and the principal reason it has been abandoned, is its equation of the 'modern' in the *via moderna* with

[38] See Pasnau, pp. 84-85.

[39] See Pasnau, p. 85.

[40] Translated from Gössmann, p. 110. Original: "[Es] wird deutlich, dass es sich bei der via antiqua und via moderna nicht nur um die Spaltung in zwei verschiedene logische Schulen handelt, die im Universalienstreit den entgegensetzten Standpunkt des Realismus und des Nominalismus einnahmen, sondern dass die gesamte damalige Wissenschaft mit allen ihren Disziplinen nur erlernt und gelehrt werden konnte, indem man sich für eine der beiden viae entschloss".

a Burckhardtian understanding of the term 'modernity', as this analysis is quickly revealed[41] to be an act of historical fashioning rather than fact if one considers actual positions taken up by professed members of the two ways in the fifteenth century: There were conservatives and progressives on both sides of the fence, and the designations of moderni and antiqui were largely arbitrary, and certainly not in any way connected to progressivism or conservatism. Indeed, it perhaps "astonishing, but also typical for the fixated meaning of *via antiqua* and *via moderna* that in many ways the former was considered more modern in the current sense than the latter"[42]. In Cologne, authorities from the prince "intervened in 1425, because they did not want the party of the antiqui, that tended to 'dangerous innovations', to have sole rule over the university" and in Heidelberg, the *via antiqua* was used as a "reformative movement against the rigid scientific praxis of the via moderna"[43]. The antiqui were so named because they used as their authorities mostly older scholastic works, whereas the moderni favoured more recent ones: These predicates have no genuine connection to conservatism or progressivism, but only refer to *the relative temporal distance between these groups and their main sources of inspiration*[44]. Gössmann concludes that "there is a mixing-up of past and present use of the term modern, if one discusses the *via moderna* as if its content led to its designation"[45] .

In light of this realization, the theory of the Wegestreit as propagated by Prantl, Zarncke, and Hermelinck has been largely abandoned: Since Gerhard Ritter's study on the Wegestreit, these "poorly founded hypotheses about the *via moderna*, posited since the middle of the 19th century from Zarncke to Hermelinck" have been dismissed as "failed attempts at "the creation of effective historical backdrops""[46]. However, some "interpretative aspects not considered by Ritter remained, which contain the seed of the common interpretations of the 'Legend of

[41] For the first time by Gerhard Ritter in the 1930's.

[42] Translated from Gössmann, p. 115. Original: "Es ist erstaunlich, aber zugleich kennzeichnend für die fixierte Bedeutung von via antiqua und via moderna, dass erstere gegenüber der letzteren in vieler Hinsicht als die im heutigen Sinn modernere Empfunden werden konnte".

[43] Idem. Original: "In Köln griff die politische Autorität des Kurfürsten im Jahr 1425 ein, weil sie nicht wollten, dass die zu „gefährlichen Neuerungen" geneigte Partei der antiqui an dieser Universität alleinherrschend sei. […] Die via antiqua fungierte in Heidelberg als Reformbewegung gegen den erstarrten Wissenschaftsbetrieb der via moderna".

[44] See also Gössmann, p. 111. Gössmann also states that the antiqui draw primarily on authors from the 13th century, whereas the moderni preferred authors from the 14th. However, both groups drew extensively on still older authorities like Augustine, Boethius, or Aristotle.

[45] *Idem*. Original: Es bedeutet also eine Vermischung von damaligem und heutigem Wortgebrauch von modern, wenn man so über die via moderna spricht, als habe ihr Inhalt diese Bezeichnung hervorgerufen.

[46] Translated from Hübener, p. 97. Original: „Wenn wir diejenigen schlecht fundierten Hypothesen über die via moderna, die seit der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts von Zarncke bis Hermelinck aufgestellt und in Gerhard Ritters Studie zum Wegestreit als missglückte Versuche eines „wirkungsvollen Aufbau(s) historischer Kulissen" behandelt worden sind, beiseitelassen".

Nominalism'"[47], particularly that the nominalists made scientific language conventional, and that they represented a sceptic opposition to a Medieval '*Autoritätssucht*' (dependence or addiction to authority)[48]. Thus, the *Wegestreit* lived on under a different guise as the 'nominalist controversy': Even the terms *via antiqua* and *via moderna* are still used in their Burckhardtian conception, and applied as synonyms for nominalism and realism. Kurt Flasch notes that it is remarkable how persistent the Burckhardtian model of a premodern Middle Ages versus a modern Renaissance has been[49]: Even those studies that have critiqued this rigid model of periodization have tended to focus on moving the boundaries between Middle Ages and Renaissance, rather than seeking to dissolve them.

Because the theory of the *Wegestreit* has come under such withering critique, this sheds doubt on whether the historiographical narrative of the 14th century nominalist controversy is still valid: After all, the latter sprang from the former, and both follow an identical structural pattern of contrasting a 'medieval' realism with a 'modern' nominalism. For a long time, this Burckhardtian interpretation of an embattled 'modern' nominalism versus 'medieval' realism, and its origins in the defunct *Wegestreit* theory has not been questioned. However, theological and philosophical inquests into the 14th century have, in recent decades, begun to ask such questions, and attitudes towards the traditional account of nominalism versus realism have shifted, to the point that the very validity of the concept of opposed realist and nominalist epistemologies in a broad sense has come under attack.

Ockham's cultural role has typically been defined as that of inceptor and leader of an Ockhamist school. Starting in the 1970's and 1980's, this conception of Ockham has come under increasing scrutiny, firstly through re-evaluation of his theories and their purported originality, and secondly through reconsiderations about his influence on his contemporaries. Research has demonstrated that Ockham's theories were neither as radical nor as new as had hitherto been supposed, and that his influence on contemporaries has been exaggerated. One cause of the uncertainty of Ockham's influence is doubtlessly the enduring poor accessibility of many texts by his contemporaries. Likewise, Ockham's popularity with scholars today may be partly attributed to the fact that his works (in Latin as well as translation) *are* widely available. Even to date, many other tractates from the period are either only available in Latin, or often have not been edited at all in centuries. This is, for instance, the case with *De Causa Dei,* which was last edited in its entirety in 1617[50]. Johannes Hirschberger lamented this state of affairs in 1948, commenting on the then-current view of the 14th to 15th century as a period of intellectual decline, by noting that "one must keep in mind that research into this epoch is only in its early stages, and there is not little to be said, that it will show results that allow us

[47] *Idem*. Original: „[Es blieben] einigen von Ritter nicht berücksichtigten Deutungsversuchen übrig, die den Keim zu den Hauptlesarten der entwickelten Nominalismus-Legende enthalten".

[48] See also Hübener, p. 97.

[49] See also Flasch 2000, pp. 627-628.

[50] The Saville edition was, however, reprinted by Minerva (Frankfurt) in 1964.

to evaluate these centuries more positively in the future than was the case until now"[51]. Philotheus Boehmer's likewise stated that there are "hardly any critical editions of the works of Ockham"[52], something he amended by translating parts of Ockham's philosophical writings. Boehmer's translations in particular helped stimulate the study of Ockham's work by a larger, non-Latinate audience, and it is no coincidence that it is still frequently used to this day[53]. However, the state of research on many 14th-century thinkers continues to be greatly hampered by poor accessibility of their texts. Hence, in the 1980's Wolfgang Hübener still had to draw the same conclusion that "to this day late scholasticism still consists largely of uncharted territories"[54].

Our broader conceptions about the history of medieval philosophy originate in the late 18th and early 19th century, and often still depend on a conception of (philosophical) history as a series of ruptures and sudden changes, a "causal chain of great moments in the history of philosophy", that only "sketches out what comes between them with the aid of broad hypotheses of progress and transformation"[55]. This process is often accompanied by a rigid and totalizing conception of periodization. It can be seen clearly at work in the standard account of the 14th century, which posits William of Ockham as the great thinker of the age, with the conflict between nominalists and realists providing a transitional narrative that parallels that of a radical break between Middle Ages and Renaissance. Hübener argues that while such thinking is sometimes useful as an abstraction, it is often taken too far and used as an absolute category. In so doing, historical complexity is reduced to an unacceptable degree for more detailed research[56]. Such conceptions of philosophical history, though "once the pinnacle of research", nowadays "can lay claim to nothing more than a historic interest"[57]. However, in the case of the 14th century, such concepts have "up to this day not been replaced by a different and more adequate depiction", despite "having become for the greater part in

[51] Translated from Hirschberger, p. 560. Original: " [Man muss bedenken], dass die Erforschung dieser Epoche erst anläuft und nicht wenig dafürspricht, dass sie Ergebnisse zeitigen wird, die uns berechtigen, diese beide Jahrhunderten in Zukunft positiver zu bewerten, als bisher der Fall war".

[52] See Boehmer in Ockham, preface.

[53] Boehmer's edition of Ockham's was also singularly popular with those engaged with the research paradigm of literary nominalism. His translations are often the only instances where statements about 14th century theologians are made by examining the source texts rather than interpretations of them.

[54] Translated from Hübener, p. 88. Original: "Auch heute noch ist die Spätscholastik weithin unvermessenes Land".

[55] Translated from Hübener, p. 87. Original: "[Sie] heben eine Gipfelkette der großen Augenblicke der Philosophiegeschichte heraus und schatten, was zwischen sie fällt, mit Hilfe großflächiger Verlaufs- und Transformationshypothesen ab".

[56] The following chapter will argue that Richard J. Utz's conception of literary nominalism constitutes just such an instance of the reductive totalization of historical complexity, particularly in his evaluation of nominalism as the manifestation of a greater 14th century *Zeitgeist* and 'intellectual superstrate'.

[57] Translated from Hübener, p. 87. Original: "[Sie waren] einst auf der Höhe der Forschung. [Diese Auskünfte] können heute ihrerseits nicht mehr als ein historisches Interesse beanspruchen".

need of thorough revision since fifty years, not only in detail, but also in accentuation"[58]. It was previously demonstrated that the notion of an entrenched battle between realists and nominalists in the 14th century is constructed as a spiritual successor to the abandoned *Wegestreit* theory. This notion is exactly what Hübener, and other recent commentators besides, have taken to examine critically.

Given his status as nominalist, Ockham might be expected to propose a view of the universals somewhere close to Roscelin, who discarded them as mere puffs of breath[59]. However, this would belief would be in error, as Ockham's actual position is closer to Abelard's *conceptualism*: While Ockham denies that universal categories exist extramentally, he does not dismiss them as useless. He maintains the belief that "all signs […] represent individual things, because there are no such things in the world as universals for them to represent", and he "offers a series of metaphysical arguments against the idea that a universal is a real common nature existing in individuals. If individuals contained universals, then no individual could be created out of nothing, for the universal part of it would already be in existence. On the other hand, if God annihilated an individual, he would simultaneously destroy all other individuals of the same species by wiping out the common nature"[60]. The universal, so Ockham, has no real existence save *in the mind*, where it exists by signification, a "single sign of many things"[61]. Ockham distinguishes between two types of signs: natural signs and conventional signs. The "natural universal is a thought in our mind", whereas the conventional signs are "universal by our voluntary decision, being words coined to express these thoughts and to signify many things"[62]. While universals for Ockham have no real extramental existence, he thus grants them the status of both intramental objects of thought *and* conventional spoken or written signs, which are used to express these intramental objects. These objects, like 'man' or 'animal', are certainly "not nothing: They are not mere 'names', but they are qualities of the soul; they are the act of knowing itself, which through them can be projected onto reality"[63]. Universals thus do not constitute real or tangible objects, but they signify (whether as intramental thoughts or extramental expression) objects that exist in the real word and are used as a way to know them, under the condition that these "common expressions (like 'man') […] stand for individual persons existing in reality"[64]. So, if one takes the narrower view of

[58] *Idem*. Original: "[Es ist] bis heute nicht durch eine adäquate andere Darstellung ersetzt, [obwohl es seit] rund fünfzig Jahren in breiten Partien nicht nur im Detail, sondern auch in der Akzentsetzung durch und durch revisionsbedürftig geworden [ist]".

[59] See also chapter three of this study.

[60] See Kenny, p. 366.

[61] *Idem*.

[62] *Idem*.

[63] Translated from Flasch 1982, p. 512. Original: "Die Art- und Gattungsbegriffe sind aber nicht nichts; sie sind kein bloßer „Name", sondern sie sind Qualitäten der Seele; sie sind der Erkenntnisakt selbst, der sich durch sie auf die Realität richten kann".

[64] Translated from Flasch 1982, p. 511. Original: "Denn nach ihm sollten allgemeine Ausdrücke […] für real existierende, individuelle Menschen stehen".

nominalism as "a philosophy, which sees the common expressions of human language as mere names, which have no recognizable relationship to reality, then Ockham was not a 'nominalist'"[65]. One could, however, call Ockham a nominalist, if one takes it to mean the "consistent denial of any kind of existing universal"[66]. It seems then that the appellation of conceptualist would be more accurate for Ockham than nominalist[67], as he too sees a value in the universals as organizing concepts through which one can gain better understanding of the world yet denies their extramental existence. Ockham's views, despite frequent claims to the contrary, seem to be neither radical, nor particularly *novel*, as they are variants of theories that have circulated for at least several hundred years. Nor would even a more radical explanation about the (ir)reality of the universals have been enough to justify nominalism as a wholly separate school of philosophy: Pasnau states that although the "canonical nominalists did believe that everything that exists is particular", "Aquinas and many other thirteenth-century authors believed this too, which makes it hard to see how that can serve to define the nominalist movement"[68], *especially* so since Aquinas is typically portrayed as a protagonist of the realist school.

As Ockhamism is typically equated with scepticism and empiricism, it might be that the core of a nominalist movement may be located there. Both his supposed scepticism and empiricism stem from a presumed extreme and novel nominalist stance: Leff portrays the two as the result of Ockham's belief in the "sovereignty of the individual thing; it alone was real, and therefore it alone corresponded to what could be known"[69]. Recent research has asked the question whether Ockham's sceptic and empiricist tendencies were truly as extreme as the previous critical consensus suggested. Leff summarizes this older consensus well, stating that Ockham's thought "operates at two different levels: at the natural he is an empiricist, refusing to stretch knowledge beyond the bounds of ascertainable experience; in things divine he is both fideist and sceptic, placing all theological certainty in the tenets of faith and none in reason's power to elicit them"[70]. We have seen before that Leff greatly favours the view of the

[65] *Idem*. Original: "Versteht man darunter eine Philosophie, die in den allgemeinen Ausdrücken der menschlichen Sprache bloß Namen sieht, die keinen Erkennbaren Bezug zur Realität haben, so war Ockham kein „Nominalist"".

[66] Translated from Flasch 1982, p. 511. Original: "Versteht man darunter die konsequente Bestreitung jeder Art von existierendem Allgemeinen, so war Ockham Nominalist".

[67] Kenny also says as much when he states that "it would be more apt to call him a conceptualist than a nominalist". See Kenny, p. 326. See also Weinberg, p. 245. Flasch also rightly adds that Ockham does go "beyond Abelard, by developing procedures to trace back metaphysical claims to empirical statements, and to denude their exuberant and transcendental character". Translated from Flasch 1982, p. 457. Original: "Ockham ging darin über Abelard hinaus, dass er Verfahren entwickelte, um metaphysische Aussagen auf empirische Aussagen zurückzuführen und ihres überschwänglichen, transzendierenden Charakters zu entkleiden".

[68] See Pasnau, p. 86.

[69] See Leff 1958, p. 281.

[70] See Leff 1958, p. 280.

14th century as an intellectual battleground between nominalists and realists in his discussion of Bradwardine, so it is no surprise that he takes a similar stance here. Ockham is the transgressive progressive who prompts Bradwardine's conservative reaction. But the question begs, how 'new' was Ockham's philosophy truly? On his supposed empiricism, Kurt Flasch concludes that Ockham's theories on the universals "did not directly lead to a promotion of empirical research: such a promotion resulted indirectly from Ockham's critique of metaphysics and rational cosmology"[71]. He adds in a later work that although "Ockham's thought shows a tendency towards empiricism, this does not make him an empirical scientist"[72], and concludes that "one says too much, when one credits him with liberating philosophy from a centuries long submission to theology and in place of that brought it into a fruitful connection with the natural sciences", something Flasch believes was "already done by the Averroists"[73]. He feels a categorization of these thinkers as 'metaphysical critics' would be more appropriate. Not how this predicate would also include thinkers like Bradwardine, and that Flasch does propose another binary structure. Nor should Ockham's metaphysical concerns about how we attain knowledge and which things we can know for certain be equated to full-blown scepticism, or a denial of scholastic methods.

The theory of Ockhamist scepticism was formulated influentially in 1921 by F. A. Lange, who claimed that nominalism exerted two types of influence over scientific practices in the following centuries. Firstly, its treatment of signs as arbitrary constructs led to making "the language of science conventional, meaning to free them through the arbitrary fixation of terms from the historicized types of expression", and secondly that the nominalism of the 14th century "was characterized by oppositional Franciscans", whose scepticism was a reaction against "the love of authority of the Middle Ages" [74]. Lange draws a link from Ockham to Hobbes and John Stuart Mill through an "appeal of common sense against Platonism"[75]. However, while Ockham did in fact critique "the overabundant use of abstract expression", he immediately adds that "abstract use of language, provided it is used with the right expert-

[71] Translated from Flasch 1982, p. 458. Original: "Dies führte allerdings nicht direkt zu einer Förderung der empirischen Forschung; eine solche Förderung ergab sich indirekt aus der Kritik Ockhams an der Metaphysik und an der rationalen Kosmologie".

[72] Translated from Flasch 2000, p. 539. Original: "Wenn Ockhams Denken einen Zug zum Empirismus aufweist, so war er noch kein Erfahrungswissenschaftler".

[73] Translated from Flasch 2000, pp. 539-540. Original: "Man sagt zu viel, wenn man ihm nachrühmt, er habe die Philosophie aus einer jahrhundertealten Unterordnung unter die Theologie befreit und sie stattdessen in eine fruchtbare Verbindung zur Naturforschung gebracht. Diesen Schritt hatten bereits die Averroisten getan".

[74] Translated from Lange in Hübener, p. 97. Original: "[Ockhamismus hat dazu geführt] die Sprache der Wissenschaft konventionell zu machen, d.h. sie durch willkürliche Fixierung der Begriffe von dem historisch gewordenen Typus der Ausdrücke zu befreien. [Nominalismus war] von den oppositionell gestimmten Franziskanern geprägt […] gegenüber der ganzen Autoritätssucht des Mittelalters".

[75] Translated from Hübener, p. 97. Original: "[…] und der Ansprüche des gesunden Menschenverstandes gegen den Platonismus gewesen.

ise, is more economical"[76], stating that "it is often useful for understanding, that for such coining of terms can often be expressed briefly"[77]. The use of formal language to represent larger groups of singular things is inevitable in scientific practice. Anything less would simply not be usable. Ockham's 'scepticism' is typically located in his theories on what constitutes certain knowledge. His scepticism is supposedly expressed in the firm belief that only that which is physically demonstrable can be known for certain, and anything else is mere speculation. Ockham does hold the belief that it is impossible to empirically demonstrate the nature and existence of God. However, he does not propose that these things are unknowable, only that while internally coherent inductive argumentation can make a compelling case for the existence and nature of God, it cannot do so with complete certainty, and thus the truth of God's existence and nature must ultimately be taken on faith. Ockham placed many "limitations [on] our natural knowledge of God, for example, that we cannot prove conclusively that God is the efficient cause of all things outside Himself. It is true that we can provide persuasive arguments for this proposition. But persuasions are dialectical, not demonstrative, arguments"[78]. While this does suggest a reduction in what can be known certainly and what can only be made convincing, this is also not something that started with Ockham as, particularly after the 1277 condemnations, probabilistic argumentation became more and more widespread.

Nor were 'nominalists' the only ones who availed themselves of probabilistic reasoning: Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei,* too, is explicitly structured on its principles. As has been discussed in greater detail in the fourth chapter of this study, it uses a mathematical argumentative structure, precisely *because* the issues under discussion cannot resolved empirically. The methodological difference between Ockham and Bradwardine here is that Ockham calls upon fideism when it comes to the truth of these unprovables, whereas Bradwardine believes that the most likely answer is the one that is supported by the best reasoning, and that in the absence of certainty, the most compelling and thoroughly considered argument should by rights prevail. This type of reasoning, it seems, was not unique to Ockham or to nominalism, but rather a more general concern of the period. Though true "scepticism is a view that no-one held", there certainly were "interesting issues in the neighbourhood", for instance in the "many interesting discussions of certainty and doubt, often occasioned by reflections on scepticism"[79] . Scepticism is thus also inadequate to define Ockham's philosophy or to set it apart from his peers or preceding generations: Not only is true scepticism *absent* from his work, the probabilistic argumentation he employs is not by any means the sole property of nominalists, but is applied with equal force by his 'opponents'.

[76] Translated from Hübener, pp. 97-98. Original: "Nun hat Ockham in der Tat die übermäßige Verwendung abstrakter Ausdrücke [kritisiert]. Er ist sich aber gleichzeitig bewusst, daß ein abstrakter Sprachgebrauch – den rechten Sachverstand vorausgesetzt, ökonomischer ist".

[77] See Ockham, p.782 in Hübener, p.98. Original: "tamen aliquando utilis potest esse intellegentibus, quia per tales fictiones frequenter brevius loqui possunt".

[78] See Weinberg, p. 264.

[79] See Pasnau, p. 84.

It seems, then, that those features that supposedly set Ockham apart from contemporaries and predecessors were neither particularly novel nor especially radical: Most of his ideas were in alignment with that which came before, and there is not much in his theories that suggest any radical break (conscious or unconscious) with scholastic tradition. Indeed, scholastic methods remained the dominant mode for several centuries after his death, suggesting that his influence was not nearly as great as has been previously assumed. Pasnau summarizes the issue by stating that "there is, in short, nothing like a coherent body of thought that one might refer to as nominalism- at least not in the fourteenth century. […] If there ever was a Nominalist movement, it came well after the figures who were supposed to constitute it"[80]. Flasch concludes that "terms like nominalism or scepticism have concealed more than they have revealed"[81]. If nominalism, as current research has demonstrated with ever increasing clarity, is the result of historiographical categorisation after the fact, rather than actual adherence to a certain type of philosophy, it also calls into question to what degree realism constituted an actual movement, and whether there even was a conflict between different philosophical schools to begin with. The answer to this question is also vital to the interpretation of Bradwardine, whose interpretation is highly dependent on his purported antagonistic relationship with Ockham and the nominalists as a member of the *via antiqua*. Pasnau states that, in light of the common narrative of a break with scholasticism as signalling the end of the Middle Ages and prefiguring the coming Renaissance and Modern scientific practice, it would be "quite convenient if later scholastic thought could be conceived along the lines of this conventional historiography, as a dispute between Ockham and his followers, and their Realist opponents"[82]. As the brief overview of the shifting critical consensus on nominalism has demonstrated, however, it has been demonstrated that the matter is decisively *not* as convenient as that. Rather, both the notion of fixed schools of nominalists and realists, as well as the notion of a cavernous divide between them constitutes little more than a "historical fiction, an early attempt to construct a narrative for scholastic thought that is not without some basis in reality, but that has to be approached with the same sort of caution as the seventeenth-century distinction between rationalists and empiricists"[83]. In this fashion, recent inquiries have shown with ever increasing clarity that "none of the canonical authors described as nominalists explicitly patterns his work on any of the others, or even conceives of himself as part of a movement"[84]. Research has demonstrated that the immediate influence of Ockham has been overstated: While his writing certainly sparked interest among his peers, Ockham's theories in no way dominated or dismantled 'traditional' scholastic methodologies.

Given that the common interpretation of the historiographical role of Thomas Bradwardine has been thoroughly defined by a supposedly conservative opposition to a

[80] See Pasnau, p. 87.

[81] Translated from Flasch 2000, p. 502. Original: "Schlagwörter wie „Nominalismus" oder „Skeptizismus" haben mehr verdeckt als erhellt".

[82] See Pasnau, p. 87.

[83] See Pasnau, pp. 87-88.

[84] See Pasnau, p. 85.

progressive nominalism, the *dissolution* of this notion must necessarily greatly impact the interpretation of Bradwardine's position in history and the 14th century. Hübener already remarked that "the questioning of the structural thematic unity of Ockhamist thought" likewise lead to a questioning of "the legitimacy of the interpretation of other works on the basis of those works which had lent the entire school of thought its name"[85]. Bradwardine has been cast as Ockham's direct opponent, which has coloured the interpretation of his works from the start as conservative reaction against progressive nominalist thought. The continuing re-evaluation of not only nominalism and realism or Ockham and Bradwardine, but also of many other 14th century figures[86], shows that outdated classifying schemes like nominalism, realism, the *via antiqua* and the *via moderna* have done more harm than good in providing a satisfactory account of intellectual life in the 14th century. They have had the unfortunate effect of creating a strong interpretative bias that has affected the analysis of many thinkers from this period, including in the first ranks the *Doctor Profundus*, Thomas Bradwardine. It is in light of these errors of classification that many of the more puzzling analyses of his works, particularly *De Causa Dei*, can be explained. In the wake of a collapse of the narrative of an embattled nominalism and realism, Bradwardine's role as reactionary representative of a *via antiqua* must likewise be reconsidered.

Nominalism has frequently (if inaccurately) been characterized as a movement or school that is defined by its progressiveness, empiricism, sceptical attitude, and disruptive capacity. Much less has been written on just what might define a realist school of thought or a *via antiqua*. While nominalism was at least conceived of as being united by scepticism and empiricism, there seems to be little that could serve to structurally define a school of realism, other than being a "list […] taken from the late, great champions of the thirteenth century – thus justifying the sobriquet *via antiqua*"[87]. These 'champions' included figure like Averroes, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Giles of Rome, John Duns Scotus, Bonaventure, as well as Bradwardine as the movement's protagonist in the 14th century. That notions that these diverse authors constituted a single philosophical movement are "simply the creations of a later time" is even more apparent than with nominalism, as "the differences between the authors who show up on that list are both significant and well know"[88]. Even realism in the *narrow* sense is

[85] Translated from Hübener, p. 108. Original: "Viel behandelt ist auch die Frage nach der strukturellen thematischen Einheit des Ockhamschen Denkens und damit nach der Legitimität der Deutung anderer Lehrstücke nach dem Muster diesjenigen Lehrstücks, das der ganzen Richtung den Namen gegeben hat".

[86] Like Thomas Buckingham, Robert Holcot, Adam Wodeham, and many others.

[87] See Pasnau, p. 85. This, of course, is entirely in line with the original definitions of the via antiqua as a movement that relies on the authority of 13th (rather than 14th) century commentators. It is, however, an unacceptable definition when it comes to the common narrative of the nominalist controversy in the 14th century, which sees the era as marked between opposing *epistemologies*. The list of commentators typically associated with the realist 'movement' are far too diverse to suggest any common epistemology shared between them.

[88] *Idem*.

not a position held by all 'realist' thinkers, as Aquinas and many other 13th century scholars held that everything that exists in the world is particular, much like the nominalists. Bradwardine stays largely silent on the issue, only positing that the universals have some reality in the sense that they are real entities within the essence of God that inform His divine knowledge[89]. Indeed, the only common thread between these authors is their 'antiquity', meaning that the ranks of the *via antiqua* consist primarily of thinkers from the 13th century and before. The few outliers, like Thomas Bradwardine, are interpreted as conservatives wanting to 'turn back the clock', and revert to those older masters from previous centuries, essentially becoming extemporized proponents of pre-14th century thought. This poignantly underlines that the supposed debate between *via antiqua* and *via moderna* is essentially staged as a conflict of periodization and epochal transition: While the former attempts to revert to the scholastic methods of the previous centuries, the latter wishes to push scientific and philosophical practice forward towards the methods of the modern ages to come. This account, beyond its historical inaccuracies, also has the curious effect of denying the 14th century any identity of its own: It is allowed to function only either as pre-figuration of later periods, or a final clinging to a past age of high scholasticism. In both interpretations it exists in a curious state of suspension, being neither wholly modern nor wholly premodern, not entirely medieval yet also not quite part of the Renaissance.

The ongoing efforts to re-evaluate 14th century thought are more than just contributions to a developing field, they constitute a *re-appreciation* of the 14th century as a whole. It also poses a challenge to still-dominant attitudes of a rigid divide between Middle Ages and Renaissance, where many efforts still tend towards *moving* the boundaries between two eras, rather than dissolving them. It is in this light of these drastic developments in the common historiography of the 14th century that Bradwardine's works should be re-evaluated. From the analysis of *De Causa Dei* in the previous two chapters, and the conclusions about changing attitudes to the *Wegestreit* theory and opposition of nominalism and realism in this one, erroneous findings from past critical efforts can be explained, and an amended account of Bradwardine's role and influence can be given. This, in turn, can be applied to (and combined with) some of the conclusions on 'nominalist' authors in this chapter to make some tentative remarks about the characteristics of 14th century thought, which can also be applied in other disciplines.

We have seen in the beginning of this chapter that Bradwardine has typically been read as either a conservative Augustinian or a pre-reformist figure. Both operate on the common assumption that Bradwardine is part of a conservative 'old way'. The former sees Bradwardine working in a familiar 13th-century mindset of intellectual synthesis. The latter sees the *Doctor Profundus* as *so* desiring for conservative orthodoxy that through hypercorrec-

[89] Bradwardine only posits a measure of narrow realism in relation to the intramental existence of universal categories within the divine mind. He does not, however, provide *any* comment on the status of universal categories when it comes to human perception or knowledge, which is seen as the central locus of difference between nominalists and realists.

tion he becomes a radical in his own right, paving the way for the reformation through an 'ultra-realist chain' that extends from Wyclif and Hus to Luther and Calvin[90]. These accounts focused largely on Bradwardine's role as a theologian, and by-and-large ignored the philosophical and interdisciplinary content of his work. Even now, "studies of Bradwardine's works have not been entirely freed from such concepts as "nominalism", "Ockhamism" and "Determinism", which have influenced the interpretation of fourteenth-century philosophy since the late nineteenth-Century"[91]. The ambivalent reception of Bradwardine has also made him a rather enigmatic figure, whose status as a great theologian is widely acknowledged, but whose exact impact and historic role remains nebulous. Critical efforts by Genest, Dolnikowski, Berganza, Lukács, Sbrozi, and others have done much to rectify the more problematic elements of Bradwardine's reception for a specialized audience, though the account given of Bradwardine by Leff continues to hold sway, particularly in more general works on Medieval philosophy. Aers, for example, while rightly noting that Bradwardine by no means slavishly replicates Augustinian thought, simultaneously clings to the notion that the *Doctor Profundus* aims to establish an entirely passive free will. Kenny sees Bradwardine as part of a conservative Augustinian reaction to nominalism. Hannam still interprets the 14th century as a battle between an old and a new way, which serve as proxies for realism and nominalism[92]. The continuing presence of such misconceptions even in recent publications underscores the need for continuing revision both of individual authors, and the historiographical conception of the 14th century intellectual landscape as a whole. Recent research into Ockham's thought have increasingly shown him to be not nearly as radical as was previously assumed, and though "the originality of Ockham's thought has never been doubted, he is being portrayed increasingly as a rather conservative Franciscan, who influenced, but certainly did not dominate […] younger scholars"[93]. Past criticism has in a certain manner fallen prey to the "fallacia non novi ut novum: the assumption of newness and originality of the ancient, which unceasingly leads to the production of false 'birth certificates'"[94].

In parallel, recent studies on Bradwardine show that "his role in the scholarly debates of the mid-fourteenth-century has been somewhat misconstrued: He has been labelled a conservative on account of his opposition to "Ockhamist" assertions"[95]. As a result of Leff's interpretation in particular, Bradwardine "has been called an "inhumane genius" in spite of his constant acknowledgement of human reason and his unfailing optimism about the goodness

[90] This association of Bradwardine with the reformation has a long critical history: He was derisively labelled 'Hero of the Calvinists' in 1730. It is likely his association with rigid determinism also stems from this association: He was derided as a determinist by Molinist thinkers. See also Genest 1990, pp. 165-167.

[91] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 7.

[92] See also Aers, Kenny, and Hannam.

[93] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 212.

[94] Translated from Hübener, p. 110. Original: "[…] die fallacia non novi ut novum: das Fürneu- und Originellhalten des Uralten, das unaufhörlich zum Ausstellen falscher Geburtsscheine führt".

[95] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 213.

of humanity's relationship with God"[96]. While Obermann's interpretation comes closer to the mark, his insistence that Bradwardine's chief contribution lies in an elegant *restatement* of Augustinian theories in the 14th century devalues Bradwardine's contemporary relevance, downplays the integration of mathematical structures and philosophical arguments into his work, and ignores the un-Augustinian elements in *De Causa Dei*. This is especially clear in Obermann's interpretation of Bradwardine's treatment of sin, which Obermann dismisses as a fundamental *misunderstanding* of Augustine's, but which actually is entirely in line with Bradwardine's other arguments and objectives, making it more likely that Bradwardine deliberately deviates from Augustinian thought. In general, both critical traditions downplay the role of philosophy and the natural sciences in Bradwardine's work, emphasizing only its theological components and its opposition to contemporary thought. This "decision to stress theology over natural philosophy", concludes Dolnikowski, "leads occasionally to misinterpretations not only of Bradwardine but of Ockham", and continues by stating that "recent studies of Ockham have shown that even his most innovative and controversial views about faith and reason depend on his acceptance both of Aristotelian physics and of a Franciscan theological perspective. Bradwardine's work also reveals influences from both natural philosophy and theology"[97]. Thus, misinterpretations of one author effect the reception of the other, which in turn again effects analysis of the first. That there was no rupturous divide between rival schools pursuing incompatible epistemologies is also evidenced by the mutual influence between authors on both side of the supposed divide, influences that only recently have been coming to light: Dolnikowski, in particular, aptly notes how Buckingham apparently altered some of his theories on motion as a direct result of critique by Bradwardine on his earlier publications[98].

14th century intellectual history, then, should no longer be conceived of along the lines of "well-organized intellectual alliances, pervasive scepticism, or the breakdown of thirteenth century synthesis"[99]. Rather, if the 13th century represented the "age of synthesis of Aristotelian natural philosophy and Christian doctrine, the fourteenth century represents an age of exploration of the implications of that synthesis"[100]. This leads on the one hand to an increasing synthesis of different epistemological modes: natural philosophy and mathematics, mathematics and theology, theology and natural philosophy, literature and philosophy, theology and literature, etcetera. Bradwardine is an author in which this synthesis of many different scientific disciplines is represented with great clarity: It is his "mastery of many types of learning and his productive interactions with colleagues and students" that "reflect the eagerness with which fourteenth-century scholars approached long-standing philosophical and theological problems in new ways"[101]. Indeed, the "multidisciplinary skills of many of the

[96] *Idem*.

[97] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 213.

[98] See Dolnikowski 1995, pp. 224-225.

[99] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 231.

[100] *Idem*

[101] See Dolnikowski 1995, p. 231.

Oxford fellows significantly enriched debates about both traditional and novel topics"[102]. Nor was this some unique quirk of Bradwardine's: Many other contemporary authors like Ockham, Buckingham, or Holcot, were similarly engaged with the synthesis of different types of knowledge to produce new answers to old questions, and raise new problems in turn. This synthesis, however, should not be mistaken for complacency or demure acceptance of existing bodies of theory: While the claim that the 14th century was marked by deep scepticism is unfounded, there is an undeniable current of increasing critique towards (and questioning of), contemporary epistemological systems, and "occasionally, studies culminated in expressions of uncertainty about the value of using traditional methods to solve complex cosmological and theological questions"[103]. This is expressed clearly in Ockham's work on metaphysics, which, while not outright dismissing contemporary theories on knowledge, does submit them to renewed and increased scrutiny. It is apparent in Bradwardine's works as well: He breaks with the Aristotelian notion that different scientific disciplines should be kept separate from each other, as he proposes a thoroughgoing synthesis between physics and mathematics, proposing that higher mathematics is needed to explain physical processes like motion. That his own theory of velocity is widely off the mark is due to the fact that, though he is critical of it, his theories are still thoroughly reliant on Aristotelian (meta)physics, as no other epistemological tools were available. With the caveat that these observations are of a contingent nature, a few final comments about commonalities we find in leading thinkers of the first half of the 14th century is in order. In making these notes, I have tried to abide by Aldo Scaglione's suggestion that any "legitimate notions of periods are not simply a posteriori mental superimpositions on the chain of past events, but, most importantly, recollections of collective self-images or collective mirror-images"[104]. In light of the findings presented in this chapter we can propose the following statements on the intellectual history of 14th century England: That it does *not* represent a break with the methods of scholasticism, but that it does explore its *implications* to a greater degree, especially those of the focus on synthesis from the previous century. The result is neither a radical break nor meek acceptance, but a self-conscious and critical approach to issues old and new, often marked by concern over the valency and applicability of traditional methods. These concerns are approached through a fluid and experimental integration, and through the synthesis of fields of study and epistemological strategies that were up to then typically considered in isolation.

It seems, then, that many of the common misconceptions held about the intellectual climate of the 14th century (or the late Middle Ages in general) are the result of periodization. Or, put more precisely, they stem from an *a posteriori* attribution of certain scholars as either exemplary of their own historical period (Bradwardine as a quintessentially 'medieval' realist) or as heralds of a period yet to come (Ockham as precursor of the Renaissance, Bradwardine as proto-reformist). Their actual theories and their historic significance have become distorted to fit a historiographical mould, and to stage a conflict between a budding Renaissance

[102] *Idem.*

[103] *Idem.*

[104] See Scaglione, p. 96.

humanism versus a stubbornly persistent medieval scholasticism. In light of such apparent capacity for distortion, it is no surprise that Lee Patterson makes the observation that "nowadays few people have a good word to say about periodization"[105]. Certainly, the situation described in this study provides good reason to "reject a conventional diachronic periodization scheme that diminishes and distorts their subject by inserting it within the traditional "master narrative" of Western historiography: Antiquity, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment / Modernity"[106]. A further problem with such diachronic periodization is that it is "hard to avoid the thought that our cherished periodic divisions are merely conventions observed for institutional convenience, often clashing with the chronological markers observed in the discipline next door. The boundaries of the Renaissance, for example, are remarkably unstable, depending whether one studies British Literature, French culture, Italian history, or the history of art and architecture"[107]. Alongside diachronic models of periodization, synchronic models are also common, focusing on a specific moment rather than development over time. However, cautions Frederick Jameson, synchronic thought "is not particularly vindicated by the deficiencies of the diachronic; indeed, it remains peculiarly contradictory and incoherent"[108]. He adds that "unlike the diachronic, the conceptual antimonies of the synchronic are at once obvious and unavoidable; synchronic "thought" is a contradiction in terms, it cannot even pass itself off as thinking, and with it the last traditional vocation of classical philosophy vanishes"[109]. Patterson chimes in, stating that a common criticism of a synchronic period concept is that it "suppresses difference, heterogeneity, and diversity in favour of a monolithic period concept; it sets up a viciously circular model of explanation so that, for example, the Prelude at once explains and is explained by something called Romanticism; it misrepresents the value of individual works because they fail to fit the prevailing generalization […] and it directs the cultural historian to search for an essence […] that animates every cultural product"[110]. The applicability of Patterson's summation of criticism on synchronic models to the issue with past scholarship on late-medieval figures like Bradwardine, Ockham, Holcot, and other contemporaries is readily apparent[111]. It appears, then, that concepts of periodization, whether synchronic or diachronic, are highly problematic and "must answer grave charges"[112]. However poignant criticism of common models of periodization may be, it seems we also cannot entirely do without it. As Jameson aptly puts it, "if there are no such things as periods, […] there is no such thing as 'history' either"[113]. Patterson likewise recognizes this dilemma, and sets out to defend the potentially heuristic

[105] See Patterson 1996, p. 51.

[106] See Besserman, p. xiii.

[107] See Patterson 1996, p. 51.

[108] See Jameson, p. 218.

[109] *Idem.*

[110] See Patterson 1996, p. 51.

[111] Patterson's statement, as the following two chapters seek to demonstrate, is equally applicable to the central research methodologies pursued by literary nominalism.

[112] See Patterson 1996, p. 52.

[113] See Jameson, p. 282.

value of periodization by showing "how the grandest of *grands récits*-the master narrative of modernization- can enable rather than preclude understanding, how it can function as an interpretive aid rather than a distorting presupposition"[114]. To propose some completely new interpretive scheme of classifying intellectual life in the 14th century, would not only be far beyond the reach of this studies' aims, but would likely result in the repetition of previous methodological errors. Research into 14th century thought has only scratched the surface, and to submit any sweeping definition that summarizes the entire period would be foolhardy and pointless. As such, it is my tentative suggestion that this period can be seen as marked by a growing interest in the exploration of the implications of 13th century synthetic approaches, a willingness to critique existing metaphysical and epistemological modes, and an increasing tendency towards the creative synthesis of differing genres and scientific disciplines. Before any definite pronouncements are sought or posited, however, Wolfgang Hübener's suggestion should be taken to heart: "I would wish, after agonising experiences with poorly founded literature on nominalism, that the interpreters of the historical role of nominalism for a while may muster some asceticism in their interpretations and, like any good psychologist, to only render diagnosis of the patient after they have let them report as much about themselves as possible"[115].

[114] See Patterson 1996, p. 52.

[115] Translated from Hübener, pp. 110-111. Original: "Ich würde mir nach quälenden Erfahrungen mit schlecht justierter Nominalismusliteratur wünschen, dass die Interpreten der geschichtlichen Wirkung des Nominalismus für eine Weile ein wenig Deutungsaskese aufbringen und dem Patienten, wie ein guter Seelenarzt, die abschließende Diagnose erst stellen, nachdem sie sich von ihm so viel wie möglich über ihn selbst haben berichten lassen".

Chapter VII

Literary Nominalism: Establishment of a Paradigm

Using the main theological work of Thomas Bradwardine, *De Causa Dei contra Pelagium*, as guide and case study, the previous chapters of this study analysed Bradwardine's magnum opus not only in its own right, but through it also discussed shifting critical attitudes to 14th century intellectual life. Conclusions, particularly in the chapter preceding this one, focused mainly on conceptual shifts from the perspective of historical philosophy. The interests of this study, however, extend beyond this, as it is also concerned with the ways 14th century *literature* takes up philosophical themes and issues, and seeks to delineate what sets apart such literary approaches. The previous chapter has critically reviewed past epistemological models for the interpretation of 14th century thought. This chapter and the next seek to do something similar from a literary studies perspective, defining problematic issues and proposing several changes based on the conclusions from the preceding chapters as well as developments within the field of literary studies. Chapter IX provides a practical application of this proposed altered methodology by way of an analysis of the role of philosophy and play structures in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The supposed controversy between rival schools of nominalism and realism, and the stark interpretative shift regarding its validity, is vital to understanding approaches to philosophical issues in the 14th century in literary criticism, and underlines why a thorough reconception of the methodological strategies it employs is imperative.

This chapter centres on how the notion of an embattled progressive nominalism versus a conservative realism not just influenced critical discourse in literary circles, but has dominated and defined it: It discusses the development in several stages of a 'literary nominalism' as *the* dominant research paradigm for a critical discussion of philosophical subject matter in 14th century literature, and problematic features in its methodology are highlighted. This showcases how literary nominalism effectively threatens to reduce 14th century literary works from an independent discursive mode to the by-product of a school of philosophical nominalism, capable of the passive reflection of pre-existing thought, but with little generative force of its own. The concept of 'literary nominalism' also overly emphasizes a direct equation between literary works and specific philosophical theories through analogical interpretations, and has a marked tendency to discuss philosophical themes only *qua* philosophy, ignoring the different epistemological strategies offered and pursued by literary works. The subsequent chapter focuses on later developments in literary nominalism[1], and proposes potential new avenues for the discussion of philosophical themes in late-medieval literature.

The origins of literary nominalism as a research paradigm can be traced back to Richard J. Utz, who provides a succinct and competent summary of the inception of the term itself, and the introduction of nominalism into literary studies. The appellation 'literary nominalism'

[1] Particularly the positive changes in its treatment of literature as an independent discursive mode, mainly achieved through an insistence on aesthetics.

first appeared in Josef Quack's article on German author Alfred Andersch entitled "Alfred Andersch, a literary nominalist"[2]. The connection between this author and nominalism is rather straightforward, as Andersch professed to "feel[ing] myself to be […] an extreme nominalist. 'Universalia sunt Nomina'. Down with Plato! I do not even consider the definition of a definition to be valid, the definition to me is nothing but a flatum vocis, a puff of breath. There exist only things, objects"[3]. The sentiments expressed here and the direct citation from Roscelin about universals[4] being but puffs of breath leave little doubt about Andersch's position[5]. While Andersch was not the first contemporary author to be discussed in connection with nominalism[6], he *was* the first to which the appellation of 'literary nominalist' was applied. In like fashion, while Richard J. Utz was not the first to discuss Chaucer in connection with nominalism, he *was* the first to propose a 'literary nominalism' as a full-fledged paradigm for the interpretation of literary manifestations of nominalist philosophical theories in late medieval poetry and prose. Literary nominalism was conceived as an "interdisciplinary working concept" focusing on "both correspondences between nominalist thought and societal and political developments of the 14th century, as well as the high likelihood of Chaucer's direct contact with this philosophical superstrate", with the ultimate goal of establishing what a "correspondence between nominalist thought and Chaucer's literary work"[7] would look like. Utz founded the need for revision of contemporary analyses of the role of nominalism (and philosophy in general) in late-medieval literature on the supposition that criticism until that point had largely been inconsistent or reductive. In his first study on literary nominalism, Utz

[2] See Quack, p. 1. Title translated. Original: "Alfred Andersch, ein literarischer Nominalist".

[3] Translated from Andersch, p. 43 in Utz 1990, p. 61. Original: "Im philosophischen Sinne fühle ich mich als extremer Nominalist. ‚Universalia sunt Nomina'. Down with Plato! Nicht einmal den Begriff eines Begriffs laβ ich gelten, der Begriff ist für mich nichts als flatum vocis, ein stimmlicher Hauch. Es gibt nur Dinge, Sachen".

[4] Refer also to the third chapter of this study for a more thorough discussion of Roscelin and his stance on the issue of universal categories.

[5] Utz comments that it is interesting to note how Andersch "does not orient his conception on more recent concepts of a coherent nominalist philosophy, but rather aligns himself with various historical versions of philosophic teachings". Translated from Utz 1990, p. 61. Original: "Das besondere an Alfred Andersch ist, daβ er sich mit seinen Vorstellungen nicht an den jüngeren Versuchen einer kohärenten nominalistischen Theorie orientiert, sondern an die verschiedenen historischen Spielarten der philosophischen Lehre anknüpft".

[6] See also Utz 1990, p. 74. Specifically, he cites (partly based on suggestions by Andersch) William Carlos Williams, Bernard Duffy, Ernest Hemingway, Ernst Jünger, Ernst Schnabel, Alexander Kluge, and Hans Magnus Enzensberger.

[7] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 60. Original: "Das interdisziplinäre Arbeitskonzept eines ‚literarischen Nominalismus' kann sich sowohl auf Korrespondenzen nominalistischen Denkens zu zentralen gesellschaftlichen und politischen Entwicklungen des 14. Jahrhunderts als auch auf die hohe Wahrscheinlichkeit von Chaucers direktem Kontakt mit diesem philosophischen Superstrat seiner Zeit stützen. [...] Wie hat man sich nun eine Korrespondenz zwischen nominalistischem Denken und Chaucers literarischer Arbeit vorzustellen?"

carefully traced the genealogy of Geoffrey Chaucer's connection to nominalism. In so doing, he identified a number of trends and features of early discussions of philosophical content in Chaucer criticism, particularly the equation of Chaucer's nominalism to a nominalism of the reader, and a reductive or limited understanding of the philosophical issues under discussion.

One example of such early scholarly efforts is an influential article by Stephen Knight, who, "armed solely with expositions of Gordon Leff[8] from his book 'Medieval Thought'", attempted to "explain Chaucer's frequently-posited modernity in the characterisation of the Canterbury pilgrims through affinities with late-medieval nominalist thought"[9]. In this essay, Knight stated that "apart from Christian theologians, we are all nominalists nowadays"[10]. It is through an association with *nominalism* that Chaucer achieves his status as a (proto-) modern author. Likewise, so Knight, it is also Chaucer's nominalism that makes him so attractive to modern audiences: Unlike realist contemporaries, whose attitudes and general outlook seems alien and antiquated to us[11], Chaucer's nominalism represents attitudes to which we can relate and respond more easily. This relation of nominalism to modernity (and often of Chaucer to nominalism) proved of enduring influence in discussions of Chaucer and philosophy. Nominalism was, unsurprisingly, also treated as a *via moderna* in the Burckhardtian understanding of the term[12]. Other articles connecting Chaucer to nominalism were sporadically published, and also tended to focus on linking aspects of Chaucer's work to nominalism[13]. A single monograph connecting Chaucer to nominalism was published by John Gardner, entitled *The Poetry of Chaucer*.

[8] In general, the works of Gordon Leff (particularly his postulations in his 1958 work *Medieval Thought*, many of which he himself later recanted in his 1975 study on William of Ockham) have proven themselves very influential amongst literary critics, especially those working in the paradigm of literary nominalism, and from whose influence stem a number of its problematic assumptions about nominalism. The views taken by Leff (as well as his study on Thomas Bradwardine) were criticised extensively in chapters IV, V, and VI of this study.

[9] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 43. Original "[Knight versuchte], ausgerüstet ausschlieβlich mit den Ausführungen Gordon Leffs in dessen Buch *Medieval Thought,* Chaucers oft diagnostizierte Modernität bei der Charakterisierung der Canterbury-Pilger durch die Affinitäten spätmittelalterlich-nominalistischen Denkens zu erklären".

[10] See Knight, p. 37.

[11] 'Us' being the supposedly modern and nominalist 20th and 21st century readers.

[12] As described in the previous chapter, this interpretation has come under withering critique, and in specialist works on historical philosophy has been largely abandoned. It remains, however, popular in more general works, as well as in studies from neighbouring disciplines.

[13] See also Utz 1990, p. 48. The following authors and elements are mentioned: "Language: for example, Boucher; Characterisation: for example, Knight; Structure: for example Delaney; Free Will: for example McNamara". Translated from Utz, p. 48. Original: "Sprache: z. B. Boucher; Charakterisierung; z. B. Delaney; Willensfreit; z. B. McNamara".

Utz rightly critiques this study for its shallow understanding of nominalism, and the slew of smaller and greater factual errors strewn throughout its pages[14].

Like many of his contemporaries, Gardner supposed the 14th century to have been wholly defined by conflict between realists and nominalists, which he distilled down to the "clash between Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham"[15]. Gardner understood nominalism to be defined as a belief that denies that knowledge (*any* knowledge) can ever be achieved: Ockham, he claimed, believed that there are "no universals, only particulars; in other words, the world contains cows, elephants, anteaters, and gorillas- particular animals- but the universal "animal" is merely a concept, an abstraction; and, more important, while there are particular men, women, and children, there is no universal "nature of man""[16]. While this statement represents a fairly typical reading of Ockhamist scepticism, Gardner took his interpretation several leaps further, taking it to imply that "all ideas […] are abstractions from the concrete; and since this is so, I can neither know that my idea is "right" nor – since you too abstract from concrete particulars (and your experience and mine are not identical) – meaningfully communicate my idea to you"[17]. Nominalism, in this interpretation, seems to result in a complete breakdown of communication, as no one can meaningfully form or communicate ideas, rendering the very basis of knowing and communicating thoroughly unstable, if not completely unintelligible[18]. Gardner's understanding of nominalism boils it down to nihilistic levels of scepticism. This association of nominalism and scepticism[19], though not as extreme as with Gardner, is a recurrent trend within the paradigm of literary nominalism, and is the root cause of a number of problematic assumptions. The account of Ockham as a sceptic is particularly informed by Etienne Gilson, as well as Gordon Leff. Utz concludes that the vast majority of early discussions on the role of nominalism in late-medieval literary works operated on a thin basis of

[14] These range from the misspelling of names and mislabelling pronouns of cited scholars, to claiming that Ockham received powerful support at Oxford from Roger Bacon, despite the latter having died while Ockham was still a child. These inaccuracies, as well as Gardner's simplistic understanding of nominalism led Utz to dismiss Gardner's work as "serving certainly both content-wise as well as methodically as a warning example for further discussions of these issues in literary studies. […] Only a thorough occupation with late-medieval nominalism may assure the avoidance of simplifying reductions". Translated from Utz 1990, p. 48. Original: [Es] kann inhaltlich wie methodisch mit Sicherheit nur als warnendes Beispiel für die weitere literaturwissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung zum Thema dienen. [...] Nur eine gründliche Beschäftigung mit dem spätmittelalterlichen Nominalismus bietet die Gewähr der Vermeidung vereinfachenden Reduzierens".

[15] See Knight, p. xvi.

[16] See Gardner, p. xvii.

[17] *Idem*.

[18] It is also precisely in order to avoid this that Ockham posits his theory on conventional (spoken and written) signs, which have the explicit purpose of making the universals that 'exist' in our minds expressable.

[19] This same association between nominalism and scepticism was criticised extensively by the previous chapter.

evidence, and with a limited or reductive understanding of the complexity of the philosophical issues involved[20].

Utz professes to hold by Thomas S. Kuhn's theories on paradigms, paraphrasing that "as a community of specialists, we are both enabled and constrained by our paradigms, by the currently existing theoretical and terminological framework which can lend support to our theses but which by necessity also narrows down the range of possibilities for our scholarly and critical enterprises"[21]. However, he continues, citing David Richter, these "paradigms are never permanent. For a variety of reasons they break down, and when they do, the field of scholarship moves into a condition in which assumptions and methodologies come under debate and continue in doubt until a new paradigm is established"[22]. Utz sought to re-open the debate on the role of nominalism in late-medieval poetry, and in so doing became a protagonist in establishing a new paradigm, which he proposed to term 'literary nominalism'. As his beliefs about the role of nominalism in 14th century philosophy and theology greatly influenced the understanding of nominalism of scholars working in the paradigm, it is worthwhile to consider Utz's interpretation of the nominalist controversy, William of Ockham, and the realists.

He follows the common suggestion that 14th century philosophy is dominated by a fierce polemic between nominalist and realist schools, which he sees as two "extreme and diametrically opposed epistemological stances"[23]. He understands 'realism' to denote a platonic realism, as he states that, "from antiquity up until the 11th century, philosophical epistemology is dominated more or less entirely by a platonic theory of forms, which supposes only universals to be real", and feels that this position was only challenged "in the 'battle of the universals' of early scholasticism"[24]. Nominalism is defined as the denial of universals and realism as their affirmation. Naturally, this is seen as the locus of conflict between the two: The "fundamental dividing line between the two was that the proponents of an epistemological 'realism' defined the universals as *res,* meaning real things, while the proponents of nominalism defined them as *voces*, pure vocal sounds, or *nomina*, as mere names or definitions"[25]. This description and opposition extends to the 14th century, which saw a resur-

[20] See also Utz 1995, introduction.

[21] See Utz 1995, p. 2.

[22] *Idem*.

[23] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 19. Original: "[Es] sollen [...] zwei extreme und einander diametral entgegengesetzte erkenntnistheoretische Grundpositionen verdeutlicht werden".

[24] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 20. Original: "Von der Antike bis ins 11. Jahrhundert wird die philosophische Erkenntnistheorie mehr oder weniger ausschlieβlich vom platonischen Ideendenken beherrscht, welches davon ausgeht, daβ nur die Universalien Realität besitzen und deswegen auch nur sie Ausgangspunkt wahrer Erkenntnis sein können. Im berühmten ‚Universalienstreit' der Frühscholastik wird diese traditionelle Position erstmals radikal in Frage gestellt".

[25] *Idem*. Original: "Grundlegender Trennstrich zwischen beiden war, daβ die Anhänger eines erkenntnistheoretischen ‚Realismus' die Universalien als res, also reale Dinge, bezeichneten, die

gence of interest in nominalism and realism. However, Utz does not subscribe to the idea that this later nominalism, supposedly championed by Ockham and his peers, is defined by a thoroughgoing scepticism, the way for instance Gardner maintains[26].

Nor does he take nominalism to be a destructive force aimed at (or at least resulting in) the dismantling and ultimate destruction of scholastic methods, as Leff proposed in his earlier works. Utz considers the view of nominalism as a destructive force to be the result of an interpretive bias by "a strong force within the philosophy of history"[27]. Utz also states that the view that "in this period there arose no original systems of thought, and that a general decline in intellectual activity can be determined, [is] factually no longer tenable"[28]. Utz speaks out in favour of the interpretation that equates the *via moderna* to nominalism and realism to the *via antiqua*, stating that "the new way (*via moderna*) became especially influential in Oxford and Paris, [whereas] Prague and especially Cologne remained strongholds of epistemological realism and the *via antiqua*"[29]. Given that Utz, too, draws a connection between nominalism and modernity, this should come as no surprise. We may note immediately how Utz's two central pillars of argument[30], on which he bases the methodology of literary nominalism, are two notions which have faced considerable criticism, both in this study and in recent specialist scholarship.

Contrary to many others, Utz does not consider nominalism to be a single or internally cohesive movement[31]. Following the classification in a paper by Obermann, he identifies four different schools of nominalism supposedly founded after Ockham's death by his "students

---

Vertreter des Nominalismus aber als voces, also reine Wortklänge, bzw. als nomina, also bloβe Namen oder Begriffe".

[26] Most other scholars working in the paradigm did, however, draw parallels between Ockham and scepticism.

[27] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 22. Original: "'Verfall' und 'zerstörerisch' gehören u.a. zu den geläufigsten Charakterisierungsmerkmalen, die eine starke Strömung innerhalb der Philosophiegeschichte für das 14. Jahrhundert behauptet hat".

[28] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 22. Original: „Daβ in dieser Zeit keine originären Denksysteme entstanden seien und generell ein Niedergang geistiger Aktivität feststellbar sei, darf aber nach einer Reihe von Untersuchungen als vorurteilsbehaftet und sachlich nicht mehr haltbar bezeichnet werden".

[29] *Idem*. Original: „Besonders einfluβreich wurde der ‚neue Weg' (*via moderna*) zunächst in Oxford und Paris [...] Prag und insbesondere Köln blieben Hochburgen des erkenntnistheoretischen ‚Realismus' und der *via antiqua*".

[30] Namely, the existence of a polemic between nominalist and realist factions, and their equation to the *via moderna* and *via antiqua* in their Burckhardtian interpretations.

[31] He does, however, treat nominalism as a solid and monolithic body of theory, shedding doubts on the degree to which he pursues his own assertion. The 'four wings' proposed here are not discussed further, Utz focuses solely on Ockham and his supposed radical followers. More puzzling still is Ruud's reference to this four wing-classification, which is followed several pages later by the classification of Bradwardine as an 'extreme realist', a contradiction that goes unaddressed. See also Ruud, p. 44.

and successors"[32]: the radical left wing, the conservative right wing, the Parisian Syncretists, and a 'middle-of-the-road solution'. Of these four, Utz is most interested in the left-wing school of nominalism, which he states is composed of "more radical nominalists like Robert Holcot […] and Adam Woodham"[33]. Rather curious is the classification of Thomas Bradwardine as a 'member' of the right-wing school of nominalism, as not only did he not advance any theses that could be construed as explicitly nominalist, but on the contrary has typically been cast in the role of Ockham's main realist opponent. He cannot rightly be considered Ockham's 'student or successor' either, as the men were close contemporaries (Ockham being 15 years Bradwardine's senior, but starting his university education considerably later), and died around the same time (Bradwardine in 1348, Ockham in 1349). The only thing that might link Bradwardine to nominalism would be that, like the canonical nominalists, Bradwardine too favours logic as one of his main disciplines of choice[34]. This odd claim aside, Utz concludes that "late medieval nominalism is not a philosophical school in the strict sense, but rather an intellectual movement. The proponents of this intellectual movement still all propose the individualist epistemology [of] early scholastic nominalists, but otherwise vary from each other in some of their theories. These philosophers also did not choose the name *nominales* for themselves"[35]. What these nominalist philosophers did have in common, however, was that they "concluded from the absolute free will of the omnipotent creator-god the independent freedom of choice of the human will", leaving the forming and performance of moral and immoral actions "in the responsibility of the individual"[36]. Utz here refers to the debate between a *potentia ordinata* and *potentia absoluta* of God. Courtenay also discussed this issue in the context of literary nominalism, cautioning against the sort of approach that Utz takes here[37]. Recent scholarship has largely abandoned this juxtaposition of *potentia absoluta* and *potentia ordinata*: "As William Courtenay and others have shown, this

[32] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 24. Original: "Ockhams philosophischen Schüler und Nachfolger".

[33] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 25. Original: "[Sie] bestand aus radikaleren Nominalisten wie Robert Holkot (gest. 1349) und Adam Woodham (gest 1358)".

[34] In a later paper, Utz posits that a typical feature of the realists is that they posit some type of real existence for attributes or abstract qualities like truth or justice in the mind of God. Given that Bradwardine's only comment connected to the topic of nominalism and realism is to pose just such a real existence of universal values in the divine mind, it becomes even more puzzling why Utz would label him a conservative nominalist.

[35] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 27. Original: "Der spätmittelalterliche Nominalismus ist keine philosophische Schule im strengen Sinne, sondern eine Denkbewegung. Die Vertreter dieser Denkbewegung hängen zwar alle einer wie für die Nominalisten der Frühscholastik beschriebenen individualistischen Epistemologie an, variieren aber ansonsten untereinander in einigen ihrer Vorstellungen. Auch den Namen *nominales* haben sie nicht selbst für sich gewählt".

[36] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 31. Original „[Es] folgerten eine Reihe nominalistischer Philosophen aus dem absolut freien Willen des allmächtigen Schöpfergottes auch die eigenständige Entscheidungsfreiheit des menschlichen Willens. [Eine] ethisch positiv oder negative bewertbare Handlung auszuführen, wurde somit in die Verantwortung des Individuums gelegt".

[37] See Courtenay 1997, pp. 120-121.

view –which remains popular- is very much a child of the scholarship of the 1920's and is now considered obsolete among historians of philosophy and theology"[38].

Utz continues the interpretative tradition of contrasting a free will affirming nominalism with a theocentric realism[39], and sees the focus on human free will as borne out of a logical conclusion from the initial proposition of God's complete freedom. Utz derives from this focus on freedom a preference for indeterminist and polyphonic narratives by poets working under the influence of a nominalist tradition, and an aversion to 'traditional' narrative modes like allegory, which he sees as striving towards establishing fixed meaning[40]. In summation, nominalism to Utz is less a philosophical school than a movement, which is hallmarked not only by the denial of universal categories, but also by the thorough and far-reaching conclusions drawn from this core epistemological proposition. He does not equate nominalism to scepticism, though he does agree it questions the nature and extent of human knowledge. Nominalism is connected to a free will, and realism is portrayed as free-will denying or at least highly theocentric. Finally, and most importantly, Utz sees nominalism as a movement that has relevance beyond a merely academic setting, as he considers it to be a "superstrate" of the "societal and political situation of the 14th century"[41].

Utz states that this key role of nominalism in 14th century thought and society has not always been properly appreciated, and defines two phases in the critical evaluation of the role and import attached to 14th century nominalism. He sees the first phase in critical tendencies as lasting up until the 1960's, referring to Johan Huizinga's *The Waning of the Middle Ages* as a prime example of this approach in 1924[42]. On the topic of realism and nominalism, the Dutch historian noted the following:

> "We should be careful not to make too much of the quarrel about the universals. We know that the realism which declared universalia ante rem, and attributed essentiality

[38] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 414.

[39] For example, Ockham's 'modernity' is typically seen as expressed in his insistence on human autonomy, wherein Bradwardine's conservatism is felt in his insistence on the primacy of God.

[40] Allegory is seen as related to realism, in that it supposedly presents a stable worldview and focuses on a monologic narrative structure that only allows for a single (moral) interpretation. The following chapter of this study concludes this view on allegory to be reductive, both intellectually as well as aesthetically.

[41] Translated from Utz, p. 29. Original "[einen] geistigen Superstrat […] der gesellschaftlichen und politischen Situation des 14. Jahrhunderts".

[42] *The Waning of the Middle Ages* was originally published in 1919 as *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*. It should be assumed that Utz is referring to either the original German or English translations of the original, which were both published in 1924. After that, the text went through a number of reprints and revisions, the fifth (Dutch) edition from 1941 being the final edition in which Huizinga was personally involved. 2019 saw a 38th paperback edition as well as a centenary hardcover 39th edition, showing its enduring popularity.

and pre-existence to general ideas, did not dominate medieval thought without a struggle. Undoubtedly, there were also nominalists. But it does not seem too bold to affirm that radical nominalism has never been anything but a reaction, a counter-current vainly disputing the ground with the fundamental tendencies of the medieval spirit"[43].

In his work, Huizinga traces the autumn years of the Middle Ages and its subsequent supplanting by the renaissance. Utz notes that it is telling how the book "indicates an understanding of the Middle Ages as one unified historical entity, dominated by a clearly identifiable, abstract Medieval Mind"[44]. Within such an "idealist construct, the late Middle Ages are simply an "extreme" extension […] of the high Middle Ages and late-medieval nominalism is a mere "reaction", a marginal "countercurrent"-with no impact on further developments"[45]. In the introduction to the first edition of *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, Huizinga describes the late-medieval world as a "society in its last life cycle, like a tree bearing overripe fruits, thoroughly bloomed and developed. The overgrowths of old, authoritative forms of thought lie over its living core, [effecting] the withering and stiffening of a rich civilisation"[46]. Medieval culture is presented as a monolithic mind-set, which after withering is

[43] See Huizinga 1954 in Utz 1995, p. 3. Original: "Men moet hier zeker niet te veel denken aan den strijd over de universalia. Zeker, het realisme, dat de „universalia ante res" verklaarde, dat aan de algemeene begrippen wezen en praeëxistentie toekende, is geen alleenheerscher geweest op het gebied van het middeleeuwsche denken. Er zijn ook nominalisten geweest: ook het „universalia post rem" heeft zijn voorstanders gehad. Doch de stelling is niet te gewaagd dat het radicale nominalisme nooit anders dan tegenstroming, reactie, oppositie is geweest". See Huizinga 1941, p. 293. See also Huizinga 2019, p. 267 for a modernized Dutch version of this passage. Huizinga wrote in a deliberately anachronistic style, employing an outdated application of the accusative –en, genitival –es, doubled vowels, use of –ae- rather than –e-, and use of –sch instead of –s in the ultimate position of certain words. Spelling was modernized in editions published after Huizinga's death in 1945, an editorial decision not uncontroversial due to the deliberate nature of Huizinga's anachronisms in style and spelling.It is interesting to note that the English translation cited by Utz does not include Huizinga's attribution of a belief in 'universals after the object' (*universalia post rem*) to nominalism (see original text above), which shows that Huizinga equates moderate nominalism to *Aristotelian* nominalism. This supposes the world to be composed of individual objects, but *also* posits that understanding the world is impossible without the aid of universal concepts, which are created to render physical reality intelligible. This in contrast to platonic realism, which supposes the universals to have a real, extramental existence predating human acts of understanding or ordering. The deletion of this interesting aside is also typical for the initial translation of Huizinga's work into English, as numerous passages were altered, and much of Huizinga's often impassioned tone and writing style were blunted by translator Fritz Hopman. A revised translation was not published until 1996, which Utz could not have had access to in writing this paper, which was published in 1995.

[44] See Utz 1995, pp. 3-4.

[45] *Idem*.

[46] Translated from Huizinga 1941, p. VI. See also Huizinga 2019, p. 13. Original: "De middeleeuwsche

replaced by a new spring represented by the renaissance. 'Squabbles', like the nominalist controversy, seem little more than increasingly irrelevant theological discussions, which have long since ceased to yield anything new or innovative, but have instead become obsessive about the minute refinement of minor points of doctrine. Utz theorizes that the "underestimation of the significance of late-medieval nominalism visible in Huizinga is mainly due to the hegemony of theology over scholarship in philosophy (and other disciplines) way into the 1960's"[47]. He claims this is also the source of the common interpretation of nominalism as a destructive force: Because it "successfully critiqued the Thomist synthesis between reason and faith", which many theologians deemed to have "dominated" the 14th and 15th centuries[48], it is "small wonder that William of Ockham […] and many of his fellow nominalists have been judged by scholarship as radical sceptics (or even heretics) whose views are deemed typical of the destructive and decadent quality of late scholasticism"[49].

It is only with the advent of interest in the *philosophy* of the Middle Ages, that Utz sees a change in climate happening, as "after 1945, philosophy increasingly freed itself from its institutional role as an *ancilla theologiae*, and the modern analytical approach to philosophy, which found many a resonance between its own thematic predilections and the problems discussed by their late-medieval counterparts, came to dominate the field"[50]. Thus began, according to Utz, the second phase in the re-evaluation of nominalism as a driving force of late-medieval culture. This second phase was dominated by the conception of an embattled nominalism and realism as we have come to know it over the course of this study. Influenced by the *Wegestreit* theory from the field of cultural history, it saw nominalism as a herald of modernity and the defining intellectual movement of its day, and was particularly shaped by authors such as Leff, Obermann, Gilson, Courtenay, Blumenberg, Vignaux, and others. Only after their re-evaluations, so Utz, did the true impact of nominalism not just on theology, but as intellectual superstrate of the entire 14th century become apparent. As he sees many of the elements that

---

beschaving in haar laatste levensgetij, als een boom met overrijpe vruchten, algeheel ontplooid en ontwikkeld. Het woekeren van oude, dwingende denkvormen over de levende kern der gedachte, het verdorren en verstijven van een rijke beschaving, - dat is de hoofdinhoud van deze bladzijden". The metaphor of the late-medieval era as autumn, a final, beautiful display of a medieval culture in decline before its end is one that *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen* carries as central motif throughout its entire length. This image of a final vibrancy before decline represented by the invocation of autumn in the work's title (literally "autumn tide of the Middle Ages") also carries over poorly into the English version, where it is reduced to a lunar metaphor of waning and waxing, which does not manage to convey the same connotation.

47 See Utz 1995, p. 4. To this could be added that for a long time, at least until the 1950's, the dominant mode for interpreting the 14th century was the *Wegestreit* theory, which at that time was not (at least as far as the 14th century is concerned) equated so directly to supposed controversies between nominalists and realists.

48 The degree of the influence of Thomism, too, has been the site of vigorous debate.

49 See Utz 1995, p. 4.

50 See Utz 1995, p. 5.

supposedly defined late-medieval nominalism as present in literary works of the same period, Utz feels the need to establish a paradigm that studies these issues, and proposes to name it literary nominalism[51].

Utz defines what he sees as the operative principles of literary nominalism through three main avenues of approach. The first focuses on "nominalism or a nominalist thinker as a direct (textual) source in the philological sense"[52]. Critics taking this approach tend to focus on establishing whether a medieval author subscribes to a nominalist or realist[53] worldview, or showing how they are influenced by this or that contemporary philosopher[54]. These responses are thick on the ground within the paradigm of literary nominalism, and discussions typically gravitate towards 'claiming' a particular writer for either the nominalist or realist 'camp' by showing how they respond to issues seen as typical for the nominalist controversy. Utz (and especially also Hugo Keiper, whose developments of the methodological programme of literary nominalism is one of the main concerns of the following chapter) rightfully sees many problems with such a treatment, as this type of analogical interpretation not only dangerously limits the scope of questions literary nominalism can ask, but also leaves little space for original contributions to these debates by literary works[55].

The second approach, which we have already seen represented in the work of John Gardner, is one that sees "nominalism as a historical reassertion for prevalent modern/post-modern perceptions of literary critics"[56]. Analyses of this kind tend to treat nominalism as a herald of modernity or evidence of (proto-) modern attitudes in the late Middle Ages, and locate the attraction of authors like Chaucer in their 'nominalist modernity'. This type of approach is particularly problematic due to its association of nominalism with a Burckhardtian modernity and the corresponding association of realism with conservatism or a 'medieval' mindset.

---

[51] This late surge in the realisation of the importance of nominalism is also used by Utz to explain the seeming lack of interest in the role of nominalism in Chaucer up until the 1970's, noting that "in all the bibliographies of Chaucer studies covering the period before 1974, there is only a single entry on "Ockhamist Theology"", but he found that he could identify "48 titles published after the year 1970". Literary nominalism rose to prominence after Utz's first major publication on the subject, and to date encompasses several hundred articles, monographs, and anthologies.

[52] See Utz 1995, p. 10.

[53] With Chaucer it is usually the former, though, as we shall see later, there are exceptions to this as well.

[54] Most commonly William of Ockham, more rarely figures like John Wyclif, Thomas Bradwardine, Robert Holcot, Ralph Strode, as well as others.

[55] It remains, however, one of the most popular approaches. See, for example, Williams, who adopts this approach in his 2009 study on Chaucer's poetic works. A number of other examples that fall under this category are discussed over the course of this chapter.

[56] See Utz 1995, p. 10.

The final category sees "nominalism as a coeval philosophical superstratum representing a typical late-medieval Zeitgeist"[57]. This approach sees nominalism as more than a theological or philosophical position, but rather as emblematic for late-medieval society as a whole, and consequently seeks to discuss the relationship of literary authors to this *Zeitgeist*. It is also the approach Utz himself favours. It should be noted that there are no clear boundaries between these three approaches, and critical efforts typically combine multiple or all strategies[58].

Common to all three approaches are the assumptions that a) there was a controversy between nominalists and realists, that b) their differences were irreconcilable, that c) one had to declare partisanship for either one or the other, that d) the nominalists did represent a *via moderna* and the realists a *via antiqua* in their Burckhardtian interpretations, and finally that e) it was the *via moderna* / nominalism that stressed free will, whereas the *via antiqua* / realism stressed God's primacy[59]. Utz thus sees literary nominalism as an extension of the pervasive influence of nominalist philosophy in the 14th century, equating amongst other things Chaucer's often diagnosed 'modernity' to the modernity of nominalist thinkers.

Literary nominalism specifically focused on the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, and an analysis of common interpretations of the role or realism and nominalism in Chaucer studies is enlightening in portraying general methodological and interpretative strategies pursued by literary nominalism. That a connection between Chaucer and the nominalists (or at the very least certain nominalist theses) existed, is something Utz maintains to have been very likely[60]. He also states that "fundamental conceptions of the philosophical system of nominalism can correspond with certain aesthetic values of a literary author", and that "as a philosophical superstrate, nominalism can support the preference for certain literary genres (non-judgemental description) and stylistic forms (anti-allegorical), as well as the rejection or disreg-

[57] See also Utz 1995, p. 10.

[58] See, for example, the common claim that Chaucer's modernity stems from an allegiance to contemporary affinity for (Ockhamist) nominalism, and that it is this nominalist modernity that makes Chaucer appealing to a 21st century audience, a statement that combines elements from all three approaches.

[59] See for example Andretta, who states that Ockham's "new way of thinking paved a via moderna which deviated greatly from the old paths of ascertaining truth, [which] appealed to minds seeking logical ways of reconciling such a puzzling mystery as God's foreknowledge and man's free will". See Andretta, p. 21. She adds that the nominalist "emphasis […] on the singularity and contingency of things conforms to his notion of freedom in man. Man is free to choose his own salvation irrespective of the gift of grace". See Andretta, p. 28.

[60] See also Utz 1990, pp. 58-60, where he concludes that "with a high degree of certainty, Chaucer can be supposed to have had direct contacts with late-medieval nominalism and its foundational postulates". Translated. Original: "Zusammenfassend läβt sich sagen, daβ mit hoher Wahrscheinlichkeit von direkten Kontakten Chaucers mit dem spätmittelalterlichen Nominalismus und dessen grundlegenden Postulaten ausgegangen werden kann".

arding of others"[61]. Based on these suppositions, Utz draws the conclusion that "Chaucer's repeatedly posited modernity and presentation style that has often enough been labelled as 'realistic', might be traced back to a –by free admission late-medieval– form of literary nominalism"[62]. In this assertion also lies the central issue of "discussions of Chaucer's poetry in the terms of fourteenth-century nominalism", namely that "critics have tended to see Chaucer as a partisan in the debate between the nominalists and realists in the latter half of the fourteenth century"[63].

In other words, Chaucer is treated by critics working within the paradigm as either "sympathetic to nominalist positions, or as a realist who opposed the nominalists" or (rarely) "as someone who tried to steer a middle course between the extreme positions"[64]. This approach to assign partisanship with either nominalism or realism is a widespread approach for Chaucerians working in the paradigm of literary nominalism[65]. It continues to be a favoured approach, as a recent (2012) article by Jelena Marelj demonstrates by summarising the state of research as follows: "That the philosophical tenets of scholastic nominalism underwrite Chaucer's poetry has been firmly established, yet whether Chaucer's allegiance on the question of the universals lies with realist or nominalist epistemology –or neither– still remains a point of critical contention"[66]. It is typically deemed likely that Chaucer, through "acquaintanceship with [the Mertonian Ralph] Strode[67]" may have "gained access to other leading thinkers of

[61] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 63. Original: "Fundamentale Vorstellungen des philosophischen Systems des Nominalismus können mit bestimmten ästhetischen Vorstellungen eines literarischen Autors korrespondieren. [...] Als philosophisches Superstrat kann der Nominalismus die Bevorzugung bestimmter literarischer Genres (urteilsloser Beschreibung) und Stilformen (anti-allegorisch) bzw. die Vernachlässigung oder Ablehnung anderer unterstutzen".

[62] Translated from Utz 1990, p. 64. Original: "[…] daβ Chaucers immer wieder behauptete Modernität und seine oft genug realistisch genannte Darstellungskunst vielleicht auf eine – freilich spätmittelalterliche – Form des literarischen Nominalismus zurück zu führen ist".

[63] See Watts, p. 146.

[64] See Watts, pp. 146-47. One such critic who argues the latter position is John Michael Crafton, who sees Chaucer as being "infatuated with nominalist thematics until he is finally disillusioned with them". See Crafton, p. 123. Crafton thus posits not so much a mediation between opposing positions, but rather a switching of sides. Peggy Knapp, commenting on the role of nominalism in Chaucer before the formation of literary as a research paradigm, makes the valuable argument that Chaucer uses the fictionality of his literary work to avoid having to make definitive commitments to one side or another. I will argue in the next chapter that one of the most important features of fictional works, which sets them apart from epistemological strategies pursued by academic works, lies exactly in that it does not have to settle debates or take sides, but that it is in the mediation of conflicting positions by the reader that the generative power of fiction is located.

[65] And one to which I would object. See also Chapter VIII of this study.

[66] See Marelj, p. 206.

[67] The connection between Ralph Strode and Geoffrey Chaucer is drawn from the latter's dedication of his Troilus and Criseyde not only to 'moral Gower', but also to 'philosophical Strode'. See also

the period", such as "that other eminent Mertonian, Thomas Bradwardine"[68] as well as John Wyclif. Finally, because of the "realist positions of both Wyclif and Bradwardine, Chaucer may also have become acquainted with their nominalist adversaries who were associated with Oxford"[69] . Amongst these are counted "William of Ockham, Robert Holcot, Thomas Buckingham, and Adam of Woodham"[70]. We may note the grouping of Bradwardine with Wyclif as prime representatives of a realist movement[71], and their opposition to 'nominalist' contemporaries. The issues with such an opposition have been expounded upon at length in the previous chapter, to the conclusion that while there is little enough that links together the 'nominalists', the differences between the 'realists' are greater still. While Wyclif cites Bradwardine frequently and approvingly, their theories are decisively divergent on many key issues.

It was previously stated that Utz feels reason to believe that Chaucer was a nominalist partisan. When it comes to the question of the poet's 'allegiance', this is by far the more common claim. It is explored and advanced by numerous critics, such as Keiper, Grassi, Laird, Sklute, Russell, Ruud, Peck, and others. Keiper, for instance, posits that a sizeable number of late-medieval literary texts "appear to reflect a remarkable degree of interest in nominalist concepts and positions", and that "even granting that it is one thing to read a text as *responding* to the pervasive nominalist challenge of the time, and quite another to speak of its nominalist *partisanship,* one might nevertheless conclude that such texts bear witness to the ascendency of nominalism and can, therefore, be read as indicating a "nominalist turn" in the literature of this "age of transition""[72]. Keiper concludes that "there is ample reason to believe that Chaucer -albeit obliquely and, perhaps, merely in these poems- sides with the *moderni* rather than with their conservative antagonists, [and] may have been far more deeply involved […] in that moment of cultural transformation than has hitherto been acknowledged"[73]. Those who see Chaucer as a realist are rarer, their numbers include critics like Andretta, Williams, Crafton, and Eldredge. They have tended towards interpretation of Chaucer as being a conservative or moderate figure, and therefore attracted to the realist camp. Some, like Peggy Knapp, see

---

Andretta, p. 34.

[68] See Watts, p. 149. The connection between Chaucer and Bradwardine is drawn in turn from a reference in "The Nun's Priest's Tale" in the *Canterbury Tales*, which makes an explicit reference to Bradwardine (the only direct reference to a contemporary philosopher in the *Canterbury Tales*) in the lines "But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren / As kan the holy doctor Augustyn / Or Boece, or the Bisshop Bradwardine". See CT FVI, ls. 3240-3242. These lines evidence at least a surface knowledge of Bradwardine, as they are situated in the midst of a speech on debates on God's foreknowledge, and Augustine and Boethius are among Bradwardine's most invoked authorities.

[69] *Idem*.

[70] See Delasanta 1991, p. 205.

[71] See also Ruud, p. 44 (which sees Bradwardine as an extreme realist) or Grossi, p. 149 (which sees realism as a fast-obsoleting philosophical school).

[72] See Keiper 1995, p. 205.

[73] See Keiper 1995, p. 232.

Chaucer as deliberately withholding final judgement. However, within the confines of the paradigm of literary nominalism, such claims are a minority voice. As the majority of scholarship within the paradigm has focused on the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, we will now turn to the two main interpretations of Chaucer's role in the nominalist controversy, which can be loosely described as the Chaucer-as-realist and Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretations.

In studies of those who see Chaucer as a realist, there is a trend to identify Chaucer's fictional works as spaces of (radical) uncertainty that seek to critique the chaotic and unruly worlds they describe. Discussion tends to focus particularly on *Troilus and Criseyde*, which directly thematises issues of fate (or determinism) and freedom that were current in 14th century philosophy. It also contains a multitude of direct references to Boethius, whose *Consolation of Philosophy* Chaucer translated into Middle English. Andretta, for one, sees the *Troilus* as "an artistic negative response to the sceptical philosophy of the time"[74]. She argues that Chaucer "as a scholarly poet […] can be viewed as having both an intellectual interest in the *via moderna* and a theological respect for the *via antiqua"*, but maintains that Chaucer "can very well have elements of Ockhamism in his works without endorsing the scepticism that the philosophy promotes"[75]. Andretta and Williams especially devote considerable attention to the *Troilus*.

Both Chaucer-as-realist and Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretations tend to agree that the characters of Troilus and Criseyde represent different stances on predestination, fate, and free will. Troilus seems focused on the eternal and fixed order of the world and is thus equated to realism, whereas Criseyde seems to be more focused on the earthly and contingent, which is seen as exemplary of a nominalist attitude. Their different outlooks necessarily result in tension and conflict. On this, both critical traditions are in accord, and the practice of interpreting characters as representing either one or the other philosophical school is common in both interpretations[76]. Typically, inflexible, ideal, stereotypical or static characters are identified as realist, whereas malleable characters, game players, and tricksters are seen as nominalists[77]. They differ, however, in the opinion of which of the two viewpoints prevails. Crafton sees

[74] See Andretta, back cover. In forming her opinion of nominalism, Andretta is influenced primarily by Gilson and Leff, and as such considers it to be hallmarked by a thoroughly sceptic attitude. The association of nominalism and scepticism (and even more so the attribution of scepticism to Ockham), though common, is highly problematic, as was also concluded in the previous chapter of this study.

[75] See Andretta, p. 166.

[76] Williams, for example, states that "Chaucer […] engaged the debate concerning Realism and Nominalism in his writings, especially his later poetry, as a means of constructing many of his characters- There are Nominalists and Realists scattered all over Chaucer's writings". See Williams, p. 6.

[77] This is especially common in the Chaucer-as-realist tradition, where those (e.g., Pandarus or the Pardoner) who bend words, lie, or trick are interpreted as representative of nominalist thought. Their nominalism is seen as represented by their divorcing of the words they speak from what they mean; their villainous nature is interpreted as an indictment of the nominalist worldview as a whole.

the narrator of the *Troilus* as an in-between figure[78], whereas Pandarus is identified by both Williams and Andretta as a prototypical nominalist. The Chaucer-as-realist interpretation especially insists on the nominalism of Pandarus, seeing the negative portrayal of his character as representing a general dismissal of nominalist attitudes[79]. Williams, for instance, proposes that "Pandarus's sexual impotence signifies the impotence of his Nominalist worldview"[80]. Troilus is unfailingly read in both traditions as representing a *via antiqua* or realism, due to his beliefs about fate and predetermination, and the inflexibility of his character. Andretta, however, does not "identify Troilus with the ultra-realism of Wyclif, as Utz does", but rather sees "Troilus as representative of confused medieval man in his attempt to find certainty amid the conflicting philosophies of his time"[81]. Criseyde, on the other hand, is interpreted as nominalist due to her insistence on contingency: Whereas Criseyde "considers love a fleeting joy, Troilus values it as abiding happiness[82]. While Criseyde seizes the day in her love of Troilus, […] Troilus tries to capture all eternity in his love of her"[83]. Through the tragic ending to their love affair, so critics from both traditions conclude in concord, the fundamental incompatibility of the two philosophical outlooks is expressed.

Finally, the closing lines of the *Troilus* are taken as representing an intervention by Chaucer to 'set the record straight': Williams, for instance, states that "the capacity of language to mislead and to misrepresent through ignorance and deceit, represented respectively by the Narrator's incompetence and by Pandarus's sophisticated Nominalism, has now been transcended, and the Realist power of language is made evident in the concluding stanzas where love, faith, honour, and truth are expressed as objective realities possessing real existence"[84]. Troilus' ascension thus becomes a symbolic transcendence of nominalism. In this manner, according to Williams, it constitutes a "redemptive ending" for a "poem that has dramatized the catastrophe of the separation of word from truth, of promise from act, of signification from meaning"[85]. Andretta, too, sees in this ending a resolution of the problems of divine omniscience and human freedom through faith"[86]. While the Troilus is the main locus of at-

[78] See Crafton, p. 125.

[79] The Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretation, on the other hand, tends to insist on Criseyde's status as allegory for nominalism, seeing it represented in her focus on earthly love, and the here-and-now. The lack of an overt antifeminist context for her portrayal (in contrast to Bocaccio's *Filostrato*) is interpreted as a more optimistic approach to nominalism.

[80] See Williams, p. 25. In the original publication, "Nominalist" is misspelled as "Nomiinalist". I took the liberty of correcting this error in my citation.

[81] See Andretta, p. 10.

[82] In other words, Troilus sees love as a universal and eternal value, whereas Criseyde recognizes only singular loves, which are by nature contingent, capricious, and finite.

[83] See Andretta, p. 65.

[84] See Williams, p. 66.

[85] *Idem.*

[86] See Andretta, pp. 144-149.

tention for the Chaucer-as-realist tradition[87], considerable attention is also paid to the *Canterbury Tales*.

The portrait of the pilgrims in the *Canterbury Tales'* "General Prologue" is sometimes seen as a response to 'Ockhamism' in that it "synthesizes the individuality of the pilgrims with the universality of their representations"[88]. The apparently stereotypical portrayal of the pilgrims and their respective professions in the "General Prologue" is thus interpreted as an allegorical representation of universal categories. Similar allegorical interpretations of the various pilgrims are made by Andretta and others. The Pardoner, for example, is read by Williams as representing a negative portrayal of nominalism, which he sees expressed chiefly in the Pardoner's severance of signifier from signified: There is a deliberate discrepancy between what he says and what he means. The association between a disconnected signifier and signified and nominalism is a common argument within the paradigm of literary nominalism[89], and is equated to the nominalist denial of universals. If there exists, so literary nominalism, no universal giraffe, but only many singular instances of long-necked ruminants with yellow patterned skins, the signifier 'giraffe' loses its connection to any real signified animal. Realism is equated to a belief that sees language as having a real and tangible relation to the world it represents, whereas nominalism is seen as Saussurian semiotics *avant la lettre*, stressing an essentially arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified, as well as a psychological, rather than real and extramental, connection between the two. The claim that any variety of realism should espouse a natural relationship between signifier and signified should be met with severe scepticism. A natural relationship between words and the objects is typically only supposed to apply to Adamic language, which was irretrievably lost. Even Latin, the language that carried the most authoritative weight, was seen as little more than a post-Babelian vernacular. The claim that a literary realism in vernacular works would stress a natural relationship between sign and signifier seems, therefore, to be highly unlikely and must be considered rather adventurous at best.

On the subject of an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified, Williams states that in "the Pardoner's worldview, it is human believing, knowing, and naming that give reality to the intelligible- subjective credence […] that quickens the objects of belief"[90]. The Pardoner sees his relics[91] as becoming valuable through his audience's perception of them as

[87] Specifically, the Chaucer-as-realist tradition focuses on allegorical readings of *Troilus'* characters and plot.

[88] See Andretta, p. 164. I argue differently in the ninth chapter of this study, following Thies Bornemann's and Jill Mann's readings of the deliberate distinction between the portrayal of the pilgrims in the prologue and their own tales as simultaneously refraining from moral judgement of their characters and setting a 'trap' for the readers.

[89] It is also common to both Chaucer-as-realist and Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretations, though as before, its attribution differs.

[90] See Williams, p. 99.

[91] Which are blatantly false, and thus have no relation to any real objects of religious significance.

valuable[92]. A critique of nominalism is seen in the fact that the relics are blatantly false, and also in the Pardoner's character, as he "occupies a ghastly world deprived of all that is vigorous and life-affirming, and the sign of this deadliness is sexual impotence, a sign signifying not only the debility of the body, but of the intellect and spirit as well. The Pardoner's words, like his manhood, are without issue; his sexuality is disconnected from life, his words disconnected from truth"[93]. The Pardoner's sexual impotence, status as a castrate, or homosexuality is read allegorically as representing the infertility of the nominalist worldview. Another representation of nominalism is found in the figure of the Old Man, and in his identification as the Pardoner. The Old Man can point the *riotours* the way to Death, but can never find or have it himself. Likewise, the Pardoner can 'point the way' to salvation for others, but cannot find it for himself due to his lack of belief in the meaning of his own words. Thus, he is a "sign bereft of a signified: He can "point to" it, but he cannot be one with it. The portrait of the Pardoner throughout the text is one who, as a materialist, literalist, and relativist has no belief in the truthfulness of the relation between sign and signified, and who continually separates signs from what they are intended to signify"[94]. The Pardoner's tragedy and unhappiness, so Williams, stem from his nominalist attitude: As it does not allow him to recognize the universal value of the rituals he performs and the words he says, he becomes utterly cynical about the whole endeavour, and in so doing dooms himself. He can perform the rituals, but due to his nominalism cannot partake in their meaning, and thus remains a hollow shell, an aesthetic performance without content. Other tales, such as the Clerk's[95] and the Wife of Bath's[96] are occasionally also read as being critical of nominalism. As with the final lines of the *Troilus,* Chaucer's retraction at the end of *The Canterbury Tales* is also understood literally by the Chaucer-as-realist tradition: Chaucer, so Williams, "speaks straightforwardly in the so-called *Retraction* at the end of the *Canterbury Tales,* where he apologizes for any aesthetic or philosophical failures of his poetry"[97]. Here, too, the final passage is interpreted as Chaucer 'setting the record straight', and bringing the unruly world he has presented back into some form of order.

As seen in the previous paragraphs, analyses in the Chaucer-as-realist tradition tend to focus on classic narrative devices such as plot and character, and the direct utterance of opinions deemed typical for 'realist' authors. It is further marked by a strong tendency towards analogical interpretation, as characters and plot elements are seen as representative of specific philosophical theories. It assumes definite partisanship on the part of the author, and the ex-

[92] Though Williams does not draw this conclusion, one could extend his argument to suppose that the Pardoner is applying nominalist practices in order to exculpate himself from a guilty conscience: His character may be immoral, but he is in a certain sense redeemed due to his audience's belief in the righteousness and validity of his sermons.

[93] See Williams, p. 98. Williams makes the same argument for both Pandarus and the Pardoner, namely that sexual aberrance is used to represent the infertility of the nominalist worldview.

[94] See Williams, p. 109.

[95] See also Andretta, pp. 164-167.

[96] See also Williams, pp. 79-95.

[97] See Williams, p. 118.

pression of that partisanship within the text. Philosophy is presumed to be discussed for the sake of philosophy: 'Realist' opinions are presented in order to advance or support a realist worldview. Traditionally contentious passages like Troilus' ascension or the Retraction are understood literally and as corresponding directly to the opinions of the biographical author. Focus on character and plot, analogical interpretation, partisanship, and the assumption that philosophy is always discussed qua philosophy are also common features of the Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretation[98]. However, this critical tradition tends to see the expression of nominalism as most poignantly expressed through other means. Of special interest to the Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretation are the connection between *literary form* and *genre* and nominalism. Emphasis is placed on the rejection of allegory[99] as a rejection of realism, and the interpretation of polyphony, heteroglossia, open-endedness, irony, and game playing as hallmarks of nominalism[100].

The distrust of traditional norms and forms is taken by the Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretation to extend to a preference in genre and narrative form. A move away from poetic modes like allegory and towards other narrative structures, such as the frame narrative model used in the *Canterbury Tales,* is seen as the result of nominalist influence. Joseph Grossi, in his analysis of the argument between the Clerk and the Wife of Bath in the *Canterbury Tales*, feels that the latter presents her narrative in a thoroughly nominalist style, which the former seeks to counter using 'realist tactics'. He states that the Clerk's "stylistic deviations also imply a Realist agenda and his desire to challenge the wife by presenting the sinister extreme to which her Nominalism can be taken. The Clerk's Realism underlies his attempt at allegory and his defence of orthodoxy against the newer radicalism personified by the Wife of Bath"[101]. Another way in which the Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretation sees a distrust of absolutes or fixed positions is expressed in a preference for polyphonic, heteroglossic, and open-ended texts.

Writing on the subject of polyphony, Hugo Keiper uses the narrator of the dream vision of the *Parliament of Fowls*[102] as his example, stating that he does not "seem to endorse, let alone

[98] Utz 1990, for instance, devotes a great amount of space to discussion of characterisation to express philosophical attitudes, the use of sayings, and other such issues. This tends to also be more typical for early investigations into literary nominalism, with many later works (particularly in Keiper et al) being more concerned with discussing literary nominalism through structural analysis, rather than focusing on plot or character.

[99] And related, 'traditional', narrative modes with strong emphasis on a single meaning or emphatic moral component.

[100] These features are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.

[101] See Grossi, p. 154.

[102] In his discussion of dream visions, Keiper uses the *Parliament of Fowls* rather than the *House of Fame* because he believes the former better represents Chaucer's 'mature' philosophical outlook. He fears that using the House of Fame as an example might lead to his claims being dismissed because it relies on Chaucer's early work to provide an account of his later philosophical strategies and outlook.

privilege any single perspective. His prismatic mind, then, would seem to reflect a heteroglossic multiplicity of voices and points of view that are not characterized nor privileged in any way- which in effect could be termed a marked "enfranchizement" of subjectivity and individual perspective"[103]. Where polyphonic or heteroglossic narrative is concerned, much attention is also paid to the *Canterbury Tales*. Here Grossi chimes in, describing how, in the debate between the Clerk and the Wife of Bath, "the Clerk's univocal realism must yield, at least to some extent, to Nominalist multivocality"[104]. The development and presentation of multiple points of view is related to nominalism[105], whereas the presentation of a single, fixed, viewpoint is presented as typical of realism. In a related development, the increasing focus on open-ended narratives is also seen as a typical attribute of nominalist-influenced literature. On this subject, Richard Utz comments on the way many of Chaucer's texts "were left uncompleted"[106]:

> "*House of Fame* stops right when "A man of gret auctoritee" might have begun to categorize and enlighten the narrator's abundance of confusing impressions. *The Legend of Good Women* contains two prologues and ends at the very instant when the narrator had decided to relate his "conclusioun" to the "Legend of Hypermnestra". The *Canterbury Tales*, of course, have remained a fragment, just as the individual tales of the Cook, Squire, and Chaucer, the pilgrim, remain without closure"[107].

Moreover, writes Utz, even those texts which "have been completed leave the reader with the uneasy feeling that the closures provided do not satisfactorily resolve the problems presented in the main parts of the respective poems"[108]. He refers here to Larry Sklute's observation that Chaucer's works often conclude on a different note than their beginning would have suggested. Specifically, Sklute summarizes that "the *Book of the Duchess* solves a problem different from the one its beginning raises; the *Parliament of Fowls* raises several questions about value but does not answer them. *Troilus and Criseyde*, on the other hand, insists on answers that I […] feel the body of the work neither requests nor requires. And the *Canterbury Tales* […] refuses to be conclusive"[109]. Chaucer's abstaining from moral judgement of his characters is also seen as a nominalist trait, whereas aggressive moralizing is regarded as indicative of realism. This view is based on the interpretation that if universal values like love or charity have a real existence, they constitute a fixed and inflexible moral order, which the realist literary author would necessarily seek to represent in their works. For the same reason, a parallel is drawn between realism and the presentation of the world as stable; any destabilizing or

[103] See Keiper 1995, pp. 213-214.

[104] See Grossi, p. 178.

[105] This association goes for both interpretations, though those who feel Chaucer to be a realist partisan would argue that heteroglossia, polyphony, etcetera, are invoked to critique rather than support them.

[106] See Utz 1995, p. 18.

[107] See Utz 1995, p. 18.

[108] *Idem.*

[109] See Sklute, p. 3.

multivalent representations are seen as indicative of nominalism. Russell also makes this point, stating that "it is a nominalist distinction because it entails multivalent signs and multiple modes of supposition, and nominalism is in large measure founded upon perceptions of multivalence and ambiguity"[110]. The insistence on heteroglossia or polyphony as constituting a specifically literary nominalism also informs Keiper's further development of the paradigm, as will be discussed in the following chapter: Multivocality too, is seen as indicative of a nominalist worldview[111].

Despite Utz's cautioning against interpreting Ockhamism or nominalism as scepticism, the attribution of varying levels of scepticism to Ockham is one of the most common approaches in literary nominalism[112]. This scepticism is attributed to a supposed insistence of Ockham's on the impossibility of attaining true knowledge of anything other than the empirically demonstrable[113], and that even this knowledge is limited to knowledge of singular things or instances. This is taken to mean either that Ockham proposes that nothing can be known at all, or (a more moderate interpretation) that knowledge can only be *approximated* but is never absolute[114]. Fortunately, the former stance is rarely taken. It does occur sometimes, surmises Edgar Laird, that "in Chaucer criticism, nominalism is […] reduced to Ockhamism and Ockhamism to an extreme scepticism regarding the intelligibility of the world"[115]. If it is then supposed that "Chaucer, like the half century in which he flourished, is consciously or unconsciously nominalist, it follows that whenever his poetry seems to represent the world as intelligible, it should be read as an ironic demonstration of the faultiness of such a representation, or should be deconstructed so as to demonstrate the same thing"[116]. Thus, even textual

[110] See Russell, p. 58.

[111] In the following chapter I will seek to demonstrate how concepts like heteroglossia and multivocality are essential characteristics of the specifically *literary* text, rather than indicative of nominalism, and that what Keiper et al describe as a nominalist turn in the 14th century is better understood as a 'literary turn'. This, of course, begs the question of what factors might have conceivably brought about such a turn.

[112] See also Andretta, p. 1, or Williams, p. 60. The latter citation discusses Pandarus' sceptical attitude, whilst also framing him in the role of a "consistent nominalist". See Williams, p. 60.

[113] Andretta, for instance, sees Troilus and Criseyde as "a world of uncertainty with truth only as probable", where "so confused are Troilus, Criseyde, and Pandarus about the certainty of anything in their lives that we can regard them as sceptics". See Andretta, p. 90. Gardner suggests that, regardless of whether Chaucer himself was a nominalist, much of the comedy in Chaucer's works comes from the fact that his poetry takes place in nominalist worlds, in which nothing is known, everything is up in the air, and everybody is confused most of the time. Indeterminacy, so Gardner, becomes hilarity.

[114] Ockham indeed argues that knowledge of many things can only be approximated, though this is not exclusive to Ockham, as probabilistic logic generally does not result in absolute knowledge, but arrives only at plausible answers. Bradwardine also explicitly acknowledges this, as was demonstrated extensively in the fourth and fifth chapters of this study.

[115] See Laird, p. 104.

[116] See Laird, p. 104.

instances that show an interest in 'realist' thinking, or in some way present the world as stable, would become further proof that Chaucer is a thoroughgoing nominalist by reading them as ironic deconstructions of an intelligible world. Thus, potential counterarguments are not only neutralised, but even co-opted to support the original position, and interpretation of Chaucer's work is reduced to repeated insistence on its unintelligibility, or the unmasking of seemingly contrasting opinions as instances of authorial irony. John Michael Crafton comments that, if read in this way, "a nominalist-inspired literary text could appear realist or even pagan and still be theoretically consistent with the basic principles of nominalism"[117]. These approaches then, seem particularly unhelpful, though they are typically not taken to these extremes[118]. It should be emphasized, however, that the notion of Ockhamist philosophy or nominalism as defined primarily by a sceptic attitude has been thoroughly critiqued, if not outright discarded by critics from other fields.

Chaucerian irony is seen as an expression of the author's nominalist attitudes. Irony, too, is linked to indeterminacy of meaning: What is said is not the same as what is meant, signifier and signified are not (or no longer) in alignment. The author's "pervasive sense of irony", which Keiper claims strikes out "in virtually every direction, including himself", would appear "to disclose a profound distrust on Chaucer's part of abstractions and absolutes"[119]. Irony is equated to a distrust of absolute moral values, which are in turn equated to realist universals. It also signals, according to Keiper, a distrust of "static, idealized perceptions of one's experience, or undialectical constructions of (one's) reality; of conventional or ritualized postures and unquestioned patterns of behaviour and perception"[120]. This mistrustful posture concerning definite pronouncements is extended to "anyone's construction of their experience that would unfalteringly conform to ready-made solutions, or traditionally sanctioned norms as to how things ought to be seen"[121]. This last passage, in particular, portrays Chaucer as being thoroughly distrustful of a supposedly typically medieval and scholastic outlook, which is stereotypically portrayed as reliant on authority instead of experience, favouring dogma over innovation, Christian idealism over rationality, etcetera. Irony, so the Chaucer-as-nominalist interpretation, is used as a deconstructive tool to undermine these behaviours. The relation of use of irony to nominalism is typically constructed from an equation (or at least relation) of nominalism to sceptic attitudes to knowledge[122]. Here, again, nominalist scepticism is also equated to a nascent empiricism through its focus on experimentation and experience. The following chapter addresses the issue of irony in more detail, arguing particularly against the

[117] See Crafton, p. 118.

[118] An exception being Gardner's understanding of nominalism discussed earlier in this chapter.

[119] See Keiper 1995, p. 219.

[120] *Idem*. It is also in this sense of a rigid, ritualized posture that the figure of Troilus is seen to represent realism.

[121] See Keiper 1995, pp. 217-218.

[122] This approach is common, too, for those who do not consider Ockham to have been a sceptic: scepticism is then attributed to supposedly more radical followers of Ockham's, like Holcot or Buckingham.

notion that play with signifier and signified, or the literal and figurative, can be legitimately regarded as indicative of a 'nominalist mindset'.

This, in brief, is an overview of how literary nominalism as a research paradigm has approached issues related to realism and nominalism in Chaucer. It takes the battle of nominalism versus realism to be the central philosophical and intellectual dispute of the age, with the former representing progress and the latter regression or at least conservatism. Debates on the issue in Chaucer studies have largely focused on the question whether Chaucer was a realist or nominalist partisan[123], the answer given being seemingly dependant mainly on prior convictions whether the biographical Chaucer was conservative or progressive. There are a number of problems with these approaches, some more obvious and some less so. A distinction can be made between a critique of literary nominalism's *philosophical background*, and its *treatment of literature as a discursive mode*. The latter issues are explored in depth in the following chapter, which also develops suggestions for future directions in scholarship, in light of the recent shifts in debates concerning the 'nominalist controversy'.

Based on the previous conclusions of this study, a number of problematic assumptions and claims made by literary nominalism about 14th century philosophy present themselves. First and foremost, the diametric opposition of nominalism and realism as the central organizing principle for 14th century thought is no longer a tenable position. Secondly, the assumption that 'realism' can be equated to rigid determinism or a dismissal of human freedom must likewise be dismissed[124]. The analysis of Bradwardine's theory of predestination in the fourth and fifth chapters of this study, and the highly divergent thought of those figures typically considered 'realist' are sufficient to cast heavy doubts on this assertion. The positive association of nominalism and *scepticism* likewise is no longer tenable, as it "is not clear why nominalism, any more than realism, should lead to scepticism. Generally speaking, medieval philosophers make modest claims regarding what can be known about the world, and about the natural world in particular"[125]. Though Utz cautions against the interpretation of Ockham as a sceptic, many scholars in the paradigm have not followed this advice. Nor can, as per discussion of Holcot and other contemporaries, it be readily concluded that such a radically sceptic nominalism was proposed by Ockham's 'followers'. Nominalism also cannot be easily equated to a preference of the indeterminate over the definite, which the following chapter investigates in closer detail. While it is true that Ockham sought to limit what can be known with certainty, and proposed primarily linguistic arguments about knowledge, it does not follow that these should be tendencies exclusive to nominalism: Probabilistic logic increased in popularity after Aquinas, and is also applied by Bradwardine. This is exemplified by Bradwardine's solution to the problem of *Insolubilia,* which is based entirely on a *linguistic* ana-

[123] The question of Chaucer's supposed partisanship for either nominalism or realism tends to result in investigations into how this partisanship was expressed in his works.

[124] And, in turn, literary nominalism's claim that a focus on free will and contingency is the sole provenance of nominalism.

[125] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 414.

lysis of what constitutes 'truth' and a 'true sentence'. Literary nominalism's claim that open-endedness or heteroglossic narratives are typical of a nominalist mindset must also be dismissed: This would require a realism that seeks fixed answers and eschews free will (this is not the case), and a nominalism to which an emphasis on plurality, contingency, and probabilistic reasoning is exclusive (it is not). It is particularly this misattribution of textual features like heteroglossia or open-endedness[126] to nominalism that the next chapter is concerned with. That nominalism should be dismissive of allegory also seems doubtful: "Chaucer, so the argument goes, shows himself to be a nominalist in his refusal of allegory […]. This reasoning presupposes a straightforward connection between allegory and realism about universals. But why should such a straightforward connection exist? What does an abstract ontological question have to do with what is, in the end, a question of literary style?"[127]. It should be noted that Ockham indeed *supported* the use of allegory in religious instruction[128]. The claim that a literary nominalism should eschew allegory, when philosophical nominalism explicitly *endorses* it, seems rather spurious at best.

Particularly problematic is literary nominalism's conception of language in their realist and nominalist epistemologies. While it is true that "nominalists and realists[129] disagree about semantics [and] the nature of language", these "disagreements certainly [do] not concern the question of whether or not language is arbitrary. It is wrong to insinuate that nominalism entails anything like the loosening of the natural relationship between words and objects, whereby all signification becomes merely arbitrary or otherwise unstable"[130]. A split between signifier and signified cannot be said to be a typical characteristic of nominalism: Bradwardine, for example, never proposes any natural relation between sign and signifier[131], while Ockham at no point seeks to prove that their relation is arbitrary[132]. Indeed, "nominalists as well as realists hold that words signify things in the world: […] The main difference between the nominalist and the realist is about *what* general terms signify, not *that* they signify"[133]. Play with the use of words as conventional rather than natural signs thus cannot be said to constitute a literary nominalism, as on this issue both 'sides' are in accord.

Finally, the Burckhardtian interpretation of the role of the *via moderna*, also no longer a tenable position, is applied in full force to resolve the issue of the Chaucer's 'modernity': The attribution of Chaucer to either realism / *via antiqua* or nominalism / *via moderna* seems largely

[126] Which I argue are hallmarks of the *literary*, rather than *nominalist*, text.

[127] Michelet and Pickavé, p. 415

[128] See also Courtenay 1997, p. 120.

[129] That is to say, nominalists and realists in the narrow understanding of the terms.

[130] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 413.

[131] Indeed, the claim that realists see language is having a natural relationship between signifier and signified seems rather doubtful, as this is a feature that is typically ascribed only to Adamic language. The issue of language and vernacular is explored in more detail in chapters VIII and X of this study.

[132] He sees an important relationship between objects and our conception of them.

[133] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 413.

to correspond to whether one held the anterior belief that the historical Chaucer was either progressive or conservative. As the *Wegestreit* theory that gave rise to this understanding of the two *viae* has been abandoned, its application in Chaucer studies must likewise be questioned. While the shifts in 14th century literary productions noted by scholars in the paradigm (an increased engagement of literary works with philosophical material, increased focus on heteroglossic and open narrative structures, etcetera) are well attested, their *attribution to nominalism* is not just problematic, but untenable. The following chapter presents some possible reattributions for these phenomena[134], based on earlier conclusions of this study and on historical developments in the second half of the 14th century. Apart from its philosophical background, literary nominalism also runs into severe conceptual problems in its treatment of literary works as an independent medium or form of discourse. Some of these issues, discussed in the following chapter, were addressed by Keiper, while others remain unaddressed.

The problems with literary nominalism's treatment of literature, and its (hierarchical) relationship to philosophy, are roughly fourfold. Firstly, its focus on allegorical interpretation and attribution to specific theories posited by contemporary theologians had the effect of directing attention away from literature, and also places it in a secondary and dependant hierarchical relationship to philosophical nominalism. The rigid analysis of characters and plot elements as allegories of specific contemporary developments in philosophy also greatly reduces the scope of possible interpretations. Secondly, influence seems to only flow top-down from philosophy to literature: Not only does literary nominalism not seem to account for any influence of literary works on contemporary philosophy[135], a power of literature to generate its own, original, answers to philosophic inquiries seems wholly absent. Thirdly, the role of literature seems (contrary to Utz's own aims) to be confined to the passive reflection of philosophical positions from contemporary theologians, with little to no active contribution of its own, a direct result of a stifling emphasis on analogical readings. Finally, it can be concluded that literary nominalism describes a *translation* of philosophical theories into literary form, rather than a *transformation* of these philosophical positions through literary discourse[136], which I will argue in the next chapter is the chief locus of generating meaning in literary works when engaging with philosophy. In short, literary nominalism's overinsistence

[134] Seeking to demonstrate, amongst other things, that what takes place in the 14th century represents a literary (rather than nominalist) turn.

[135] On this issue, the next chapter argues that the issue of *language* is vital to understanding the influence of philosophy on literature *and* vice-versa. Particularly the vernacularisation of religious and philosophical issues and tractates opened up these discussions to a non-Latinate audience. Their response to (and engagement with) these issues then reflected back to the clergy, who through these responses could gain greater insight into the philosophical concerns of the people, which demanded a response. Nor was the reception of these issues by a lay audience uncritical.

[136] Keiper addresses this issue in his further development of literary nominalism by focusing on the development of nominalist and realist aesthetics, rather than direct representations of nominalist or realist thought in literature. He is not entirely successful, however, as the literary nominalist and realist

on the influence of philosophical nominalism likewise resulted in an underappreciation of literary works as an independent epistemological mode.

Nor is this limitation of the generative power of literary works under literary nominalism limited to over discussion of philosophical themes and theories: Literary nominalism also sees many *structural* developments in literary productions from the 14th century as the result of nominalist influence. A notably increased pervasiveness of heteroglossic narratives, as well as an increased focus on multivalency[137], polyphony, open-endedness, and stress on free will[138] are attributed to a nominalist mindset. Humour[139] and irony, too, flow downhill from the well-spring of nominalism. Even a turning away from 'traditional' narrative genres like allegory is seen as an effect of nominalism. In short, most (if not all) the major developments in 14th century literary production seem to become absorbed, in some fashion or another, under the wide banner of literary nominalism. Not only does 14th century poetry seem not to be capable of generating original thought, even developments in *literary genre* and *aesthetics* are co-opted by nominalism[140].

The focus of literary nominalism of claiming Chaucer (or, indeed, any Medieval author) for either nominalism or realism is also highly problematic. For one, the association of nominalism with modernity and realism with conservatism lead to an *a priori* categorisation of authors as either nominalist or realist based on a previous reputation for modernity or conservatism. It also limits interpretation in an unacceptable way, in that an overly rigid division into two mutually exclusive camps does not allow for the presentation of issues from both sides of the fence: If one sees Chaucer as a nominalist author, any representation of the world as stable must necessarily be interpreted as ironic: In this fashion, even potential counterarguments can be co-opted to fall under nominalism. If, on the other hand, one believes Chaucer to have been a conservative realist, any invocation of what might be considered nominalist would only be made in order to critique it. In the case of Chaucer, although "Chaucer scholars agree that he never explored the ontological aspects of universals, it should by now have become clear that even establishing that Chaucer was interested in 'nominalist questions' […] is difficult, simply because many of these allegedly 'nominalist questions' are not actually genuine to the nominalist enterprise"[141]. Secondly, such an approach also leads to the treatment of a literary work as the direct expression of its authors' own convictions, and the con-

---

aesthetics he proposes are still ultimately derived from philosophy, and it disregards the potential influence of literature on philosophy; the dependant relationship thus remains.

137 See also Utz 1990, p. 137. Manifold interpretation of texts is seen as indicative of nominalism.

138 See also Utz 1990, p. 125. The *via antiqua* (represented by Bradwardine), Utz believes, precludes free will.

139 See Russell, p. 58. Humour is the property of the nominalist; the literalist realist cannot conceive of it.

140 As mentioned above, these elements cannot be properly understood as shaping any form of nominalist epistemology, which begs the question of what they *are* a sign of.

141 See Michelet and Pickavé, pp. 414-415.

flation of what is stated in the literary text to what the historical author believed.

Literary nominalism also tends to assume that all mention of religious or theological material is to be interpreted *qua* theology. Heavy doubts upon such an analysis are cast by the work of Barbara Newman, whose excellent study on 'Medieval Crossover' is highly insistent on the way that in the Middle Ages it is the sacred, not the secular, that formed the standard frame of reference[142]. In the same way that a reference to Einstein in a modern detective novel does not necessarily imply an intended discussion of physics, so too does reference to the Eucharist in Chaucer not necessarily imply that a debate on contemporary Eucharistic practices is (solely) intended. Apart from this different frame of reference, philosophical or religious themes are often used as a vehicle for altogether unrelated discussions[143], as the penultimate chapter of this study will explore in greater detail.

This chapter has circumscribed the main developments that led to the establishment of the paradigm of literary nominalism, and detailed the two most common approaches within the field of Chaucer studies. Based on conclusions from the three preceding chapters, a number of conceptual problems on the level of philosophical background of the paradigm were identified, which make apparent the need of a major reconceptualization of the discussion of philosophical material in 14th century literature. Furthermore, it identified a number of problematic areas in literary nominalism's treatment of literature: an over-insistence on the ubiquity of nominalist thought and a nominalist mindset threatens to subsume virtually all accomplishments of late-medieval literary works under the ever-expanding umbrella of nominalism.

Based on this chapter's findings, the following issues present themselves. Firstly, if a binary opposition between nominalist and realist camps were abandoned[144] as central organizing principle both in 14th century literature and 14th century as a whole, is there something that might replace it? The following chapter makes some (tentative) suggestions. The conceptual problems literary nominalism runs into in its treatment of literature also gives rise to the twin issues of a) how a greater emphasis may be placed on the specifically *literary* qualities and approaches of representations of philosophy in literary works and b) how the (hierarchical) relationship between literature and philosophy might be reconceptualised. Thirdly, if features like heteroglossia, polyphony, open-endedness, turning away from moralizing, etcetera, are not the result of nominalist influence, this begs the question of what they *are* a feature of, and why these developments are so markedly expressed in literary productions from the 14th century. Finally, the following chapter also seeks to impress two points that do not directly result

[142] See also Newman, Introduction.

[143] See for example, the ninth chapter of this study, which reads a sequence of responses between several Church-affiliated figures as representing not so much as constituting a debate on a theological issue, but as one that uses a theological issue to spark a debate on the ability of literary works and other fictions to generate genuine meaning.

[144] Which, based on the current state of research, seems inevitable.

from the discussion in this chapter. For one, I will argue that a greater degree of attention is due to the shifting societal, political, and religious conditions and contexts of the 14th century when it comes to a discussion of representations of philosophy in literary works, and also that there is no easy continuity with Chaucer's time and that of Ockham or Bradwardine. Secondly, the issue of *language*, particularly the tension between Latin and the vernacular, is a fundamental aspect in the discussion of philosophical and religious elements in lay poetic works that has gone entirely ignored by literary nominalism.

Chapter VIII

Literary Nominalism: Developments, Literature and Play, Moving Beyond the Paradigm

The previous chapter centred on the origins and establishment of literary nominalism as the dominant research paradigm in the interpretation of the role of philosophy in 14th century literary works. Though literary nominalism has been highly successful in encouraging studies focused on the expression and exploration of philosophical ideas in late medieval literary texts, it is plagued by a number of conceptual issues, such as a misinterpretation of the nature[1] and role of nominalism, an overextension of the term, the unintentional reduction of literature to a passive *ancilla philosophiae*, and the attribution of a variety of literary achievements exclusively (and incorrectly) to nominalism. As this chapter will demonstrate, while later developments in the theory of literary nominalism partly ameliorate the latter two issues, the former two remain firmly in place. Despite its undeniable finesse and strength of arguments, this later literary nominalism still suffers from the fundamental misassumptions and misattributions that have in recent decades led specialist scholars to abandon the concept of a diametrically opposed nominalism and realism as representing a major organizing force in 14th century intellectual history. This chapter seeks to describe not only the achievements and shortcomings of this later literary nominalism, but also seeks to explore potential ways forward for studies in this area. It also considers other recent theories on how literature 'does' theology, and proposes a methodological synthesis. Focusing on aesthetics and reader response, Jim Rhodes' excellent 2001 study *Poetry does Theology*, for instance, bears marked similarities to the central operating principles of later literary nominalism, while avoiding many of its pitfalls.

What scholars of literary nominalism in the 14th century have dubbed a 'nominalist turn', is better understood as a 'literary turn', in the sense of the development of a distinctively literary mode of staging and exploring philosophical issues, and the different epistemological strategies this entails. It may be relevant for future studies to examine how different discursive modes discuss issues related to philosophy through their own epistemological strategies, and the ways these distinct strategies may be mixed to produce different results. This mingling of discourses would also be in line with earlier conclusions drawn in the sixth chapter of this study, which argued that the 14th century might be construed as a period focused on exploring the *implications* of 13th century synthetic thought, and the fluid integration of methodologies

[1] Particularly in the application of the via antiqua / moderna theory to create a totalizing cultural mode for the 14th Century. Lee Patterson made "a similar point when he traced the roots of exegetics back to nineteenth-century *Geistesgeschichte*. Whether they incline towards the right or the left, such critical programs share the notion of an airtight period subjectivity. Robertson's "medieval mind", like the Hegelian *Zeitgeist* or the Foucauldian episteme, totalizes the mentality of the cultural production of a past era so fully that it can neither account for real diversity within that past nor explain how the past became the present". See Newman, pp. 3-4.

formerly kept more separately.

Furthermore, this chapter argues that that the effects of historical events like the Black Plague, the Western Schism, and the Peasants' Revolt provide a radically different societal context for the first and second half of the 14th century, which literary nominalism has not managed to appreciate: It has typically assumed an easy and unproblematic continuity between Medieval culture at the beginning and close of the 14th century. Finally, the hitherto neglected issue of *language* is considered: The proliferation of lay theological material in the vernacular from the start of the fourteenth century, and the growing tension between vernacular and Latin are also intrinsic factors in understanding the role and rise to prominence of philosophy in mid- to late 14th century literary works. The increasing dissemination of (lay) theological material especially from the early 14th century onwards also helps explain why the 14th century in particularly should be so increasingly concerned with the discussion of religious and philosophical issues.

Later literary nominalism reached its mature form with Hugo Keiper's introduction to the 1997 anthology on literary nominalism, though some of its ideas were already explored in nascent form in 1995. Keiper emphasizes the specifically *literary* character of literary nominalism by establishing opposed nominalist and realist *aesthetics* in literary works, in an attempt to relieve an earlier overreliance on the creation of direct textual analogues between literary authors and canonical nominalists. To emphasize the unique status of literature, Keiper greatly stresses the importance of reader response in generating meaning from a literary text. The focus on *aesthetics* and the *transformative nature of fictional discourse* provide the most worthwhile contributions to the debate.

Keiper's critique of earlier approaches to the topic of nominalism within the field of literary studies is twofold. First, like Utz, he provides a more general criticism of other trends in studies on a specifically literary nominalism. Secondly, Keiper also focuses on Utz's suggestion about a threefold approach to literary nominalism. Though he agrees with a number of the fundamental assumptions posed by Utz[2], and seems largely amenable to the view of nominalism as a superstrate, Keiper also formulates powerful objections to a number of (sometimes unintended) consequences of Utz's theories. One issue Keiper takes with past approaches to literary nominalism concerns common assumptions about the way authors incorporated philosophical elements into their works, and how their audiences received and responded to these allusions. Keiper states that "most proponents of literary nominalism have tended to act on the assumption that Late-Medieval culture was characterized by a high degree of general public awareness of and interest in the philosophical debate", and as a result "have

[2] For example, Keiper is very much in concord with the notion that "'Nominalism' and 'Realism' in the 'narrow', strictly semiotic sense of the terms can be construed as paradigms, or more precisely, as an opposition of conflicting, competing paradigms that are grounded in incompatible, even incommensurable concepts of semiotics and semiosis". See Keiper 1997, p. 12. In this fashion, Keiper maintains the view of a 'battle of the universals' as a battleground of mutually exclusive opinions.

often also placed strong –perhaps unduly strong– emphasis on the strictly philosophical side"[3]. This prompted many critics, as was demonstrated in the previous chapter, to conclude that "almost any analogue or homology between philosophical nominalism and literary discourse reveals a more or less direct influence of nominalism, but especially so of Ockham, who soon came to hold the stage in quite lopsided ways"[4].

Keiper and other contributors to the 1997 anthology did not seek merely to continue the discussion of literary nominalism, but rather sought to *re-conceptualize* a number of its key features. One major feature is that this new stage in literary nominalism sought to rethink the whole problem "from a typological point of view- that is to say, if it is conceptualized within a frame of reference which would include, as its basic constituents, a 'discursive' and 'transdiscursive' dimension, as well as the various transformational processes occurring between them"[5]. It also sought to approach the issue as a more general *literary debate about universals*, rather than strictly focusing on a nominalism / realism dichotomy. In so doing it also expanded the *temporal* scope of literary nominalism, incorporating discussion of, for example, the role of nominalism in early modern plays[6]. These innovations have the effect of allowing more flexibility of interpretation than an either / or approach to the problem of the universals. Secondly, Keiper recognizes that nominalism and realism are and remain primarily theological / philosophical orientations, regardless of whether one considers them to be philosophical schools or only acknowledges them in the narrow sense.

Focusing on the more general issue of a debate over universals is instrumental in decoupling literary debates from contemporary theology, so Keiper. The core of his new approach to literary nominalism is the "notion that the literary debate on the one hand, and the philosophical, theological, scientific or any other debates, on the other hand, can be regarded as *related but separate cultural phenomena*"[7]. In "the case of literary texts we may venture the surmise that their authors, as when as not, will feel less obligated to assume a partisan stance towards either position than writers of text types which strive for clear-cut answers and whose very

[3] See Keiper 1997, p. 29.

[4] *Idem*.

[5] See Keiper 1997, p. 38.

[6] See also, amongst others, Mahler, Fendler, and Hudson. This temporal expansion is proposed to relieve the nominalist debates from their historiographic representation as debates between a medieval *via antiqua* and a (proto-)modern *via moderna*, relieving the paradigm of some of the problematic associations of this outdated interpretation of intellectual history.

[7] See Keiper 1997, p. 38. However, Keiper also recognizes that literary debates on philosophical issues cannot but be influenced by contemporary developments in theology and philosophy. This leads him to remark that "at the same time, and on very fundamental levels indeed, such different types of engagements with the problematic will in turn be informed, governed, and shaped- to a greater or lesser degree, and in more or less pronounced ways- by the conceptual frameworks and constraints of either a realist or a nominalist paradigm, or in fact by both". See Keiper 1997, p. 39

raison d'être might depend upon providing neat, definitive conclusions"[8]. This will "regularly set in motion a yet more complex dialectics between the two basic positions, which will often be 'dramatized' rather than brought to a definitive conclusion"[9]. Given this apparent tendency towards dramatizing rather than resolving issues, it comes as little surprise that, given interpretative strategies in the Chaucer-as-nominalist approach described in the previous chapter, Keiper surmises that literary works "might be generally expected to gravitate towards the nominalist pole rather than its realist opposite"[10]. While this conclusion might point towards a continuation of the practice of division of literary works into either a nominalist or realist camp, Keiper does add the disclaimer that this theoretical division is somewhat reductive, as although "it is easy to see that there must be fundamental differences between various types of discourse, it might be much harder, in actual practice, to establish the precise relationships as well as patterns of exchange or interaction that would hold between them"[11].

Keiper further recognizes that the philosophical and theological systems that support and influence literary debates are by no means a stable affair, but are themselves constantly shifting and changing, and certainly subtler than a clear-cut debate between two embattled fronts. This problematic of attribution of exchange and interaction, as well as the ever-shifting nature of debates as a whole, leads to a further innovation within this second stage of literary nominalism, namely the notion that the "ultimate site- hence our ultimate point of reference- will ever be the individual literary text (which in turn has to be seen as a particular historical manifestation of literary discourse), our analytical approach will thus need to be flexible in the extreme, even ad-hoc"[12]. Focus is thus shifted away from the interpretation of literary texts by comparing or contrasting them to contemporary scholastic texts and theories, and (rightfully) re-centred on the individual literary texts themselves.

These proposed changes to the overall framework of literary nominalism of course have far-reaching methodological implications. Keiper states that such changes must be able to "accommodate and theorize any type of 'debate over universals', and hence of 'nominalism' and 'realism', including their specifically literary forms of 'expression' or manifestation"[13]. However, an increased focus on literature as a related but separate discipline, as well as a movement away from an either / or approach to the problem of universals allows it to "conceptualize the discursive properties as well as dynamics of these various debates, and thus arrive at a deeper, more extensive understanding of their illusively complex relationships to one another"[14]. Key in this new approach to literary nominalism is its attempt to flatten

[8] See Keiper 1997, pp. 39-40.

[9] See Keiper 1997, p. 40. The dramatization, rather than affirmation of certain positions is, I agree with Keiper, a vital part of the epistemological difference between literary and scholastic works.

[10] *Idem.*

[11] *Idem.*

[12] See Keiper 1997, p. 45.

[13] See Keiper 1997, p. 42.

[14] *Idem.*

hierarchical relationships, so as "to preclude the a-priori privileging of any one debate over universals, or of a single brand of nominalism or realism over others. Hence, literary nominalism and realism are „no longer seen as derivative 'secondary discourses' that are fundamentally parasitical upon the philosophical or theological debates"[15]. This focus on literature as a related but distinct medium of discussion has a number of consequences for the general methodology of the paradigm. One of these conclusions is that if one flattens the hierarchy between different debates about universals, there is frankly "no cogent reason any longer to uphold the traditional, limiting notion that that the literary debate, yet specifically literary nominalism, ought to be viewed as predominantly (late-)Medieval phenomena, and hence to keep up the all-too narrow historical boundaries that critics themselves have so far imposed upon research in that area"[16]. It thus seeks to unshackle literary debates over universals from the interpretive model of nominalism versus realism as a narrative of transition from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Not only does this mean that subject matter can now be extended temporally, but an independent mode of literary inquiry into debates on the universals also "need no longer rely solely upon our finding of exact philosophical analogues, or even of direct sources, for every single text or aspect we might want to consider"[17]. This allows far more flexibility in discussing how a certain literary text philosophizes, without directly needing to draw on philosophical analogues.

The most important point, however, is Keiper's insistence that literary texts should be approached "'*on their own terms*', *qua* literary/aesthetic artefacts"[18]. Keiper directly responds to what I believe to be one of the most problematic features of earlier approaches to literary nominalism, namely its tendency to only consider literary representations of philosophy *qua philosophy*. Keiper's insistence on the opposite, in turn, requires that discussions arise "from the close literary-critical analysis and interpretation of our primary textual material, and it will be only in a second or parallel step that an attempt would be made to relate such findings […] to pertinent non-literary co(n)texts or extra-literary circumstances"[19]. While up until that point, much thought was given to determining to what degree texts conform to a generic model of nominalism or realism, and whence this conformity can be said to originate, this approach "would no longer demand a definite decision in favour of any one of these conceivable causes, nor indeed […] would this even be a matter of primary interest for us. [The] mere 'fact' of such semiotic slippage[20] […] would be sufficient in itself as a potential marker of

[15] *Idem.*

[16] See Keiper 1997, pp. 43-44.

[17] See Keiper 1997, p. 44.

[18] See Keiper 1997, p. 43.

[19] See Keiper 1997, p. 44.

[20] Keiper here refers to the common interpretation of the rift between signifier and signified as a 'sign' of nominalism. Past discussions tended to focus on first establishing discord between signifier and signified within a text, and then discussing whether this discord could be related to nominalism / Ockhamism, or whether it is due to some other factor. See also Keiper 1997, pp. 45-46.

'literary nominalism'"[21]. In order for these innovations to become functional and valid interpretive models, however, there needs to be some sense of what can be said to actually *constitute* a nominalist or realist literary text. In response, Keiper forms a general outline of a nominalist and realist literary aesthetics, which are indicative of nominalist and realist epistemologies. This aesthetics, while interesting, retain the problematic conception of literary nominalism / realism critiqued in the preceding chapters of this study.

Keiper's sets of literary aesthetics are derived from numerous theories on what might be seen to constitute an instance of nominalism or realism in literature, and in its conception focuses on the issue of the universals, and what a realist or nominalist mindset would imply for the relation of a literary artefact to issues such as language and signification. A major problem with Keiper's version of nominalism is which issues he considers to be indicative of literary nominalism. A major area of focus, for example, is the view that nominalism represents a view of language as arbitrary, and of sign and signifier being related accidentally (not intrinsically). For realism, the opposite assumption is made:

> "Thus, if literary authors believe -or choose to project the belief in particular texts- that verbal signs and language in general are capable of reflecting […] the actual structure […] of reality […] and if they see it as their task to lay down and convey to their readers this 'essential' order of things, they will probably tend to design and manipulate the various elements and structural levels of such texts in ways that would hierarchize- and ultimately fix or even arrest- textual meaning. […] A realist literary text, therefore, might want to use any means to check the undue, 'unruly' proliferation of the dissenting viewpoints it incorporates, doing its utmost to contain any dissident attitudes voiced"[22].

Keiper also suggests that texts adopting a realist literary aesthetics might attempt to establish or reveal some transcendent truth, or generally adopt an essentialist perspective. Given this tendency to look for stable or fixed meaning, he continues, realist texts might be "expected to espouse a static, or in any case an essentialist, universalizing view of reality as it is or should be. […] As a result, they would probably be strictly monologic or 'closed' texts"[23]. Texts adopting a realist aesthetic would thus be, according to Keiper, many of the moralizing fictions, religious allegories, and the lay theological works that proliferated from the early 14th century onwards. These would be "staunchly supportive, even uncritically affirmative of a stable, universal world-view, and might thus, ultimately, be regarded as firmly centred (or logocentric) discourses that gravitate towards a supreme transcendental signifier/d"[24].

[21] See Keiper 1997, p. 46.

[22] See Keiper 1997, pp. 47-48.

[23] See Keiper 1997, p. 48.

[24] *Idem.*

However, if, on the other hand, literary writers "see verbal signification, and language in general, as contingent and its referents -if indeed they believe in the pertinence of that notion- as no more than concepts in the human mind", these texts "might exhibit a pronounced tendency to emphasize their precarious character as mere human constructs which need not necessarily correspond to the 'actual' order of things, or refer to any ultimate or solid reality […] that can be recuperated through language"[25]. Indeterminacy or instability of language's capacity to signify is thus placed front and centre in this new literary nominalism. Likewise, the nominalist literary aesthetic would "loudly proclaim its impugnable status as an event or open-ended, self-referential process of signification"[26], emphasizing the open-ended narrative as a main feature of the nominalist literary text. Conversely, such a text would likely abandon "the quest for any ultimate source and authority, or for an authorizing, pristine moment of privileged insight or revelation"[27]. This portrayal of realism as equating to a linguistic essentialism or as representing an intrinsic relationship between sign and signifier is immediately problematic, as this type of realism was never espoused or endorsed by any of the canonical realists: A natural relationship between sign and signifier was typically seen as a feature of the irretrievably lost Adamic language, even Latin could at best be considered a post-Babelian vernacular. Likewise, nominalism can in no way simply be presented as supposing an *arbitrary* relationship between sign and signifier. The deductions that a nominalist aesthetics should tend to open-ended heteroglossic texts and a realist aesthetics to closed, monologic texts likewise cannot be inferred from contemporary developments, philosophical or otherwise[28]. Finally, the claim that contemporary vernacular theological works would be uncritically affirmative of extant dogmas is made highly doubtful by Fiona Somerset's and Nicholas Watson's inquiries into vernacular theology discussed later in this chapter. While Keiper's proposal to focus on aesthetics in discussion of philosophical issues in literature represents an important step forward, the attribution of various textual strategies to nominalism or realism remains highly problematic.

Keiper continues by describing that different authorial or textual modes of literary expression not only influence and determine how a specific text displays its attitudes to language, signification, and knowledge, but also have implications for the relationship between text and reader. Whereas the realist literary text would function much like an authoritative religious text, aiming at instruction through clear metaphors and moral content, texts that display a nominalist sense of aesthetics would eschew such methods, and leave a text's meaning or instructive purpose (provided there even is one) suspended. In the former set of aesthetics, the role of the reader is that of a willing pupil, receiving the knowledge that is presented to them. There is little active participation or exchange between reader and text,

[25] See Keiper 1997, pp. 48-49.

[26] See Keiper 1997, p. 49.

[27] *Idem*.

[28] In this fashion, this later literary nominalism perpetuates perhaps the greatest flaw in earlier literary nominalism, namely its vast overexpansion of what can reasonably be assumed to constitute 'nominalism' or 'realism'. Refer also to the seventh chapter of this study.

knowledge flows downwards from text to recipient. With a nominalist aesthetics, Keiper argues, the opposite would rule: As the text only presents different viewpoints, opinions, and problems, without delivering resolution or fixed answers, the reader is forced to take *actively participate* in the generation of meaning by developing their own attitudes towards the polyphonic narratives of the nominalist literary text. This in turn changes the way meaning is generated: The active process of interpretation of a heteroglossic narrative depends on the viewpoint and thought processes of the reader, making them a key component in *generating* and *transforming* (as opposed to receiving) meaning from a given text. On an epistemological level, then, texts adopting a nominalist aesthetics would operate on different premises than those that display realist leanings: In the latter, the author inscribes a fixed meaning into his text, which is then received by the reader. In the former, various meanings and viewpoints are inserted into a text by its author, but its meaning is generated only through the (individual) reception of a (necessarily biased) reader. Keiper's insistence on the way that literary works operate is vital to gaining a better understanding of the interaction between philosophic theories and literary works. However, his attribution of these operations to *nominalism* is problematic: As the previous chapter of this work has shown, this attribution relies on a vast overextension of what can be considered 'nominalism' which cannot be inferred from claims by canonical 'nominalists'.

This new iteration of literary nominalism also at least notionally attempts to 'soften the fronts' between realism and nominalism. The degree to which it succeeds, however, is questionable, as the stark contrast between the suggested realist and nominalist literary aesthetics still seems to allow for little mediation, as they pursue fundamentally opposed epistemological stratagems: It remains nebulous what a blurring of the lines between monologic and heteroglossic, between radically open and thoroughly closed texts might look like. It is likewise unclear how the creation of realist and nominalist aesthetics helps sever its reliance on philosophy, as the definition of these aesthetics are derived in their entirety from interpretations of *philosophical* nominalism and realism. The processes described by literary nominalism[29] do indeed occur, but their attachment to *nominalism* is a misattribution, and what is witnessed is not so much the literary translation of a specific philosophical outlook, but rather the expression of a mode of engagement with philosophic material using the epistemological tools specific to literature. Jim Rhodes' theories on literature as a play space and how poetry 'does' theology are crucial to understanding how features like heteroglossia, dialogism, polyphony, irony, etcetera, are epistemological tools of literary texts, rather than the expression of nominalist tendencies in literature.

Rhodes' landmark 2001 study sets out to describe how 14th-century English poetry and theological writings interact, and seeks to establish a particularly literary way of approaching theological (and by extension philosophical) issues in the 14th century that is independent on

[29] That is, a growing tendency to develop different sets of aesthetics for the transmission of philosophical meaning, which can be marked by an opposition of closed / open texts, and an increasing tendency towards heteroglossic narratives.

specific philosophical theories. Rhodes focuses of the works of Chaucer (particularly the *Canterbury Tales*), Robert Grosseteste's[30] poetic work *La Château d'Amour*, as well as the *Pearl*-poet. He follows Adorno in insisting that "poetry can and should be treated as a separate discourse which works according to rules quite different from those operative in other modes of didactive writing"[31]. However, this need not lead to a radical separation of theology or philosophy from poetry: Though there is a "sharp distinction between art and religion as well as between art and philosophy", this "should not blind us […] to the intimate relationship which existed originally between them and which led again and again to productive interaction"[32]. Rhodes, like later literary nominalism, approaches discuss literary interaction with theological and philosophical matter not *qua philosophy* but *qua literature*. Also, like Keiper's suggestions for literary nominalism, Rhodes insists on the treatment of poetry as a separate discourse, and the importance of aesthetics, stating that:

> "As one reader of this manuscript remarked, "this book could be called old-fashioned in its refusal of the kinds of historicism currently dominant in Middle English studies, with their emphasis on culture and politics, not aesthetics, and their refusal to isolate 'literature' as a special realm of inquiry and interest." And so it is. I have never wavered in my teaching and in my writing from my view that poetry is an inventive and absolutely serious mode of exploration of issues that are neither transparent nor able to be ignored"[33].

Unlike Utz or Keiper, Rhodes is by and large unconcerned with linking the appearance of theological material in his primary texts to contemporary developments in 14th century theology, and focuses rather on describing a more general literary mode of representing philosophy. He explicitly seeks to "show that poetry is a significant discourse unto itself and that it has its own interests"[34]. Only brief reference to a division between nominalism and realism, or the *via moderna* and *via antiqua* is made, with a distinction between two camps being drawn only in order "to avoid further confusion and for the sake of convenience […] with the understanding that there were innumerable differences between them"[35]. It draws a distinction between the 'traditionalist' (Bradwardinian) view that "God's foreknowledge is his predestination and that human beings could not earn their own salvation" versus the 'modern' (Ockhamist) emphasis on "the moral autonomy of human beings and their capacity to be

[30] Grosseteste, one of the great theologians of the 13th century, was mentioned in passing several times throughout this study. Bradwardine cited Grosseteste frequently (usually referring to him as the 'great bishop of Lincoln') and approvingly. Some critics even see Grosseteste as one Bradwardine's greatest sources of inspiration, almost on an even footing with St. Augustine.

[31] See Rhodes, preface p. X.

[32] See Adorno, p. 296.

[33] See Rhodes, preface p. X

[34] *Idem.*

[35] See Rhodes, pp. 27-28.

virtuous *ex puris naturalibus*"[36]. Despite its brevity, this description seems to do more justice to the theological background of the 14th century than many cut-and-dry descriptions of an irreconcilable battle between *antiqui* and *moderni*.

The notions of play and game playing are central in delineating a literary approach to the generation of (philosophical) meaning. An important subject when it comes to discussion of the role of play in literature is the question of whether art is serious or light-hearted. Adorno concedes that "there is a measure of truth in the platitude[37] about art's light-heartedness"[38]: After all, "if art were not a source of pleasure for people, in however mediated a form, it would not have been able to survive […]. This is not something external to it, however, but part of its very definition"[39]. An element of light-heartedness – of *play* – is essential to art, and by extension to poetry. However, art, "like knowledge, takes all its material and ultimately its forms from reality [and] in order to transform them, thereby becomes entangled in reality's irreconcilable contradictions"[40]. Though art contains elements of play, it is not *wholly* playful: "As something that has escaped from reality and is nevertheless permeated with it, art vibrates between this seriousness and light-heartedness. It is this tension that constitutes art"[41]. This conception of art is central to the interaction between poetry and theology, as it is the "special mixture of play and seriousness that distinguishes the tale from the sermon"[42]. Wolfgang Iser sees play as "an umbrella concept that covers all the ongoing operations of the textual process, and the literary text itself is first and foremost a playground where authors play with the readers"[43]. In order to understand how play operates in a literary text, and how such play spaces are established, it is necessary to first understand how a literary text itself operates, and how this differs from other textual modes.

A basic observation might be to note that literary texts tend to be fictional, though the definition of fictionality is complex enough to make such an apparently innocent claim far more hazardous than it may initially appear. Besides, such an observation alone would not suffice to describe the operation of a literary texts, as every text necessarily refers to things outside itself: Literary texts thus seem to be comprised of a mixture of reality and fiction(s).

[36] See Rhodes, p. 28.

[37] Adorno here refers to the final line of the prologue in Schiller's Wallenstein, "Ernst ist das Leben, heiter ist die Kunst". Translated: "Serious is life, light-hearted / cheerful is art". See Schiller, p. 194.

[38] See Adorno, p. 248.

[39] *Idem*.

[40] See Adorno, p. 249.

[41] *Idem*.

[42] See Rhodes, preface p. IX.

[43] See Rhodes, p. 2. This description immediately highlights two key differences between the sermon and the poem. Firstly, the poem contains an element of playfulness. Secondly, the hierarchical relationship between author and reader is different: The sermon is delivered to the reader from high up on the pulpit, and is accepted as it is delivered. The poem, on the other hand, is the result of author, text, and reader 'playing' in unison: the reader plays an active role in the generation of meaning.

Interaction and tension between these referent fields results in the creation of what Iser terms 'the imaginary', stating that the "apparent reproduction of items within the fictional text brings to light purposes, attitudes, and experiences that are decidedly not part of the reality reproduced. […] Because this act of fictionalizing cannot be reduced from the reality repeated in the text, it clearly brings into play an imaginary quality"[44].

The interplay of 'real' and fictional elements are the enabling media of the literary text, and meaning is generated through an imaginative act on the part of the reader. It should be noted, however, that even those elements that have an identifiable exterior reference within the literary text, should not be treated the same way as an extratextual reference in, say, an academic text: Though the literary text may contain "recognisable 'realities"', these are "marked as being fictionalized. Thus, the incorporated 'real' world is, so to speak, placed in brackets to indicate that it is not something given but is merely to be understood as if it were given. […] It turns the whole of the world organized in the texts into an 'as if' construction"[45]. This 'as-ifness' gives the literary text a markedly different slant from those text types that seek to discuss exterior reality more directly, creating a mode of suspension in which the world presented may *seem* to represent a certain reality, yet simultaneously (through its fictional nature) highlight its very *un*reality.

And so, too, our response to this world is changed: In a text that attempts to display the reality represented in it *as* reality, there is no need for the reader to alter their natural attitudes towards that reality. When engaging with literary works, on the other hand, readers "must and do suspend all natural attitudes adopted towards the 'real' world once we are confronted with the represented world"; reality may be "reproduced in a fictional text, but it is there to be outstripped, as is indicated by its being bracketed"[46]. It is this act of *suspension* that particularly distinguishes the literary texts from other discursive modes and textual forms. Vaihinger adds that in order for a fictional text to be meaningful, it should not be "merely an empty game of ideas but [have] a practical purpose through which the comparison may lead to consequences, the conjunction 'as-if' takes its rightful place because […] it compares an existing something with the necessary consequence of an imaginary case"[47]. If a literary text would content itself with merely importing 'real' material it would fail to be interesting. On the insertion of referential fields, Culler suggests that fiction can "hold together within a single space a variety of languages, levels of focus, points of view, which would be contradictory in other kinds of discourse organized towards a particular empirical end"[48]. *Heteroglossia* and *polyphonic narratives* are especially accommodating to such simultaneous presentation of (conflicting) viewpoints. These terms are used in the Bakhtinian fashion, which he used to describe the operational

[44] See Iser 1991, p. 3.

[45] See Iser 1991, p. 13.

[46] See Iser 1991, p. 13.

[47] See Vaihinger in Iser 1991, p. 14.

[48] See Culler, p. 261.

processes of the novel[49]. Rhodes in turn stretches Bakhtinian notions of the process of novelisation to encompass the engendering of a theological poetics in the 14th century. For Bakhtin, the concept of heteroglossia is the "master trope behind all his other projects, one more fundamental than such other categories associated with his thought such as "polyphony" or "carnivalization""[50]. Holquist defines it as follows:

> "Heteroglossia is Bakhtin's way of referring, in any utterance of any kind, to the peculiar interaction between the two fundamentals of all communication. On the one hand, a mode of transcription must, in order to do its work of separating out texts, be a more or less fixed system. But these repeatable features, on the other hand, are in the power of the particular in which the utterance is made; this context can refract, add to, or, in some cases, even subtract from the amount and kind of meaning the utterance may be said to have when it is conceived only as a systematic manifestation independent of context"[51].

What sets Bakhtin apart is his insistence on "the extraordinary sensitivity of the immense plurality of experience", something which both literary nominalism (in its later stages) as well as Rhodes have substantially drawn inspiration from. Interestingly, in describing the treatment of novelisation in academia, Bakhtin laments that "historians of literature usually reduce this struggle between […] all these aspects of novelization, to the actual real-life struggle among "schools" and "trends""[52]. It is hard to resist the temptation not to draw at least a broad comparison to the operation of literary nominalism, which has subsumed the development of a poetic mode of philosophical expression under the expansive wings of theological schools of nominalism and realism. This study would argue for a *dissolution* of such associations, and suggests to approach literary productions and philosophy as independent epistemological modes. Heteroglossia, polyphony, humour, parody, carnivalization, and playfulness are essential tools in the generation of meaning in literary texts. Bakhtin's theories on 'the road' as a literary trope work well to explain the basic operation of the *Canterbury Tales'* frame narrative, where the play space created by the pilgrims on their way to Canterbury is applied to create a dialogue that crosses regular social barriers. Bakhtin also presents a version of an 'as-iffness', stating that "the represented world, however realistic and truthful, can never be chronotopically identical

[49] Bakhtin's understanding of what constitutes the novel is much broader in scope than typical categorisation would have it. Portrayed as the 'odd one out' among literary genres, present since antiquity, Bakhtin sees novelized texts as "more free and flexible" than other texts: As "their language renews itself by incorporating extraliterary heteroglossia and the "novelistic" layers of literary language", they "become dialogized, permeated with laughter, irony, humour, elements of self-parody and finally, […] an indeterminacy". See Bakhtin, p. 7. See also Rhodes, p. 9, p. 14, and p. 170. Note, once more, how these are all elements literary nominalism ascribes as features of nominalism, rather than essential features of the literary text.

[50] See Holquist in Bakhtin, p. xix.

[51] See Holquist in Bakhtin, pp. xix – xx.

[52] See Bakhtin, p. 7.

with the real world it represents"[53].

Finally, Bakhtin develops an interesting contrast between authoritative discourse and novelized discourse. Bakhtin states that, unlike novelized discourse, "Authoritative discourse permits no play with the context framing it", and that it "cannot be represented, [but] only transmitted"[54]. Play and a focus on referential networks are what set the novelized texts apart from authoritative discourse. I would be hesitant, however, to follow Bakhtin in his suggestion that 'authoritative' discourse permits no play whatsoever: What are, for instance, the polemic or the disputatio if not formalized play patterns centred on conflict? We may also note the close resemblance between Bakhtin's authoritative discourse and Keiper's conception of realist aesthetics. Keiper's conception of literary nominalism is also heavily influenced by Bakhtin, as constructs of heteroglossia, dialogism, and polyphony play an important role in establishing the nominalist aesthetics. Unlike Rhodes, however, who understands them as essential features of literary texts which can be *applied* to create a specifically literary mode of doing philosophy, literary nominalism sees these features as constituting the expression of *nominalist influence*. The difference in approach is significant: In literary nominalism, this interest is interpreted ultimately as the by-product of a philosophical movement, whereas Rhodes understands it as the constitutive element of a *literary approach* to philosophical and theological themes: It is the specifically literary mode of exploration of philosophical issues, rather than the expression of specific philosophical theories in literature. I would add to this, however, that play patterns need not be the exclusive domain of the literary text, but are also encountered in other discursive forms. The intermingling of different epistemological strategies in different types of texts may also prove fruitful for future inquiries.

Based on the preceding, it would be "reasonable to presuppose that author, text, and reader are closely interconnected in a relationship that is to be conceived as an ongoing process that produces something that had not existed before. This view of the text is in direct conflict with the traditional notion of representation, insofar as mimesis entails reference to a pregiven "reality" that is meant to be represented"[55]. While the concept of mimesis is important in the literary text, a text cannot be claimed to consist of imitation *only*: The performative aspect of the literary text is paramount in the generation of meaning. How, then, does this interaction occur? At the most basic level, the performativity of the text revolves around a process whereby "the pregiven is no longer viewed as an object of representation but rather as material from which something new is fashioned"[56]. The process of generating such material is through play, and games played in the text. Iser claims play to be an overarching 'umbrella concept', preferring it over representation as a locus for textual operation for two reasons: "1. Play does not have to concern itself with what it might stand for" and "2. Play

[53] See Bakhtin, p. 256.

[54] See Bakhtin, pp. 343-344.

[55] See Iser 1996, p. 325.

[56] See Iser 1996, p. 325.

does not have to picture anything outside itself"[57]. Iser defines play (with respect to the author-text-reader dynamic) in the following manner:

> "Authors play games with readers, and the text is the playground. The text itself is the outcome of an intentional act whereby an author refers to and intervenes in an existing world, but though the act is intentional, it aims at something that is not yet accessible to consciousness. Thus, the text is made up of a world that is yet to be identified and is adumbrated in such a way as to invite picturing and eventual interpretation by the reader. This double operation of imagining and interpreting engages the reader in the task of visualizing the many possible shapes of the identifiable world, so that inevitably the world repeated in the text begins to undergo changes"[58].

A prerequisite for such textual games is the 'as-iffness' of the literary text: It forces the reader to surrender their natural dispositions and to engage the world of the text on *its* terms, while simultaneously relieving the text of the real-world consequences it refers to. In "disclosing itself, fictionality signalizes that everything is only to be taken as if it were what it seems to be, to be taken – in other words – as play"[59]. All games, including those played within the literary text, need a playing field on which they can be carried out. These fields can be described as *play spaces* or *spaces of play*, largely occur on two levels, and operate on a principle of countermovement which serves to shift the operational mode of the literary text from purely mimetic to performative. The smallest play space is that of the split signifier: The normal relationship is between signifier and signified is disrupted, opening up a state of suspension which can be used as a space of play[60]. This is also achieved through the essential structure of the literary text, where meaning is always bracketed in an 'as-if' construction. In literary texts that establish their own fictionality, a signifier may denote something, while simultaneously negating this same thing through explicit reference to the text's own fictionality, all the while never entirely letting go of the denotive *function* of the signifier. In this double mode of expression, the split signifier is simultaneously denotative and figurative, and thus "invokes something that is not a pre-given for the text, but is generated by the text, which enables the reader to endow it with a tangible shape"[61].

---

[57] See Iser 1996, p. 327.

[58] *Idem.*

[59] See Iser 1996, p. 327. This as-iffness is also a way in which the partly serious, partly playful nature of art manifests itself in the literary text: while it can engage with graver topics as it likes, its state of suspension as an as-if construction allows the literary text to maintain a playful distance to the serious topics under discussion. It can also use constructions like laughter to utterly destabilize what may have at first appeared to be a serious discussion.

[60] Note how the split signifier is seen as representative not of nominalism or anything of the sort, but as a basic operating principle of play in the *literary* text.

[61] See Iser 1996, p. 330.

One of the most influential early voices in describing the role of play in human culture was Johan Huizinga, who proposed that humans could not only be considered *homo sapiens*, but also *homo ludens*. Huizinga characterizes play as something that is simultaneously serious and playful[62], is free[63], and takes place in a state of exception where 'normal' rules are temporarily suspended[64]. As such, it contains a number of essential features still found in later definitions of play. However, unlike such later theories, Huizinga focuses almost exclusively on play as conflict, to the extent that *Homo Ludens* mostly seems to be an analysis of the play element in various types of conflicts[65], rather than an exploration of the concept of play itself. On this limited scope on play, Huizinga was swiftly criticized. Roger Caillois states that Huizinga "deliberately omits […] the classification of games themselves, since they all respond to the same needs and reflect […] the same psychological attitudes. His work is not a study of games, but an inquiry into the creative quality of the play principle in the domain of culture, and more precisely, of the spirit that rules certain kinds of games- those which are competitive"[66]. Caillois does not stop at critiquing Huizinga, but sets forth his own classification of four different types of games, creating a much more encompassing sphere of play, which Iser is prepared to follow. Caillois divides games into the categories of *agon*

[62] See also Huizinga 1974, p. 5. "Examined more closely, the opposition between seriousness and play is revealed to be neither conclusive nor fixed. We may say: Play is not serious. However, […] this is rather shaky […] as play can very well be serious". Translated. Original: "Zien wij nader toe, dan blijkt ons die tegenstelling spel-ernst noch sluitend noch vast. Wij kunnen zeggen: spel is niet-ernst [doch] is zij uiterst wankel […] want spel kan zeer goed ernstig zijn".

[63] See also Huizinga 1974, p. 8. "This is the first main characteristic of play: It is free; it is freedom". Translated. Original: "Ziehier dus een eerste hoofdkenmerk van het spel: het is vrij, het is vrijheid".

[64] See also Huizinga 1974, p. 12. "Within the sphere of a game, rules and customs from normal life hold no sway. We *are* and we *act* 'differently'. This temporary suspension of the 'normal world' is already readily apparent even in childhood". Translated. Original: "Binnen de sfeer van het spel hebben de wetten en gebruiken van het gewone leven geen gelding. Wij zijn en wij doen ‚anders'. Deze tijdelijke opheffing van de ‚gewone wereld' is reeds in het kinderleven volkomen uitgebeeld".

[65] It is interesting to note that Huizinga also sees the medieval *disputatio*, as well as academic debates, as representing both conflict and play. The nominalist controversy is specifically mentioned in this regard, as Huizinga states that "the long-enduring *vogue* of the problem of the universals as central topic in philosophical discussion, which was divided in nominalists and realists, was no doubt connected to the primary need for partisanship on a point of discussion which is inseparably connected to any spiritual cultural growth. […] One must take sides for the 'Anciens' or the 'Modernes'". The fierceness of the debates is thus clarified as a cultural need to take sides which originated in the (playful) practice of the *disputatio*. See also Huizinga 1974, pp. 153-154. Translated. Original: "De langdurige vogue van het probleem van de Universalia als central thema van de wijsbegerige discussie, waarover men zich scheidde in Realisten en Nominalisten, hangt ongetwijfeld samen met de primaire behoefte aan partijvorming over een twistpunt, die aan elke geestelijke cultuurgroei onafscheidelijk verbonden is. [...] Men kiest partij voor de ‚Anciens' of voor de ‚Modernes'".

[66] See Caillois, p. 4.

(contest[67]), *alea* (fate determines the winner[68]), *mimicry* (involving the acceptance of an illusory world[69]) and *ilinx* (games of chance[70]). These categories are by no means insular, and many games revolve around the simultaneous involvement of multiple or all types of games. Caillois' theories on games are catered to physical play, and need to be adapted for application to literary texts. Given that physical games are composed of a fluid expression of attitudes that gain their value through interaction and interrelation, and texts operate on rather similar premises, such a translation seems to be manageable.

Caillois' fourfold categorisation of games adapted for texts can be defined in the following fashion: Games of *agon* have "a double effect: On the one hand it consolidates the opposing norms […] into positions; on the other, it initiates a surmounting of what has congealed into positions through the conflict"[71]. This definition of games centred on strife is an interesting one, particularly when it is applied to the issues discussed in this study. Strife is not seen[72] as a stifling force in argument, but as simultaneously establishing boundaries and fronts while in the very same act subverting and effacing them. Whereas *agon* focuses on strife, the main drive of *alea* lies in patterns of defamiliarization in order to surprise and innovate. Unlike *agon*, which establishes positions and thus reduces the elements of chance, *alea* seeks to *enlarge* the role of chance by tilting the familiar: It "breaks open the semantic networks formed by the referential worlds and also by the recurrence of other texts"[73]. It seeks to overturn familiar patterns, such as genre conventions, familiar semantics, established relations between sign and signifier, familiar intertextual references, etcetera. This defamiliarization of established patterns also grants *alea* an interesting role as far as intertextuality is concerned. However, if a literary text consists of nothing but entirely unfettered free play, all meaning is, "so to speak, played away, even if there have to be certain pregiven conditions whose removal is the prerequisite for the game of chance"[74]. As *agon* oscillates between simultaneous establishment and subversion of antagonistic positions, *alea* in its process of breaking open semantic networks is dependent on those same familiar patterns it seeks to disrupt. A similar process of oscillation is at work in games centered on *mimicry*: The difference it seeks to efface will simultaneously always be apparent in the literary text due to its as-iffness. The illusion can thus never be seamless or identical to the thing it represents. However, if the illusion "is punctured and revealed for what it is, the world it depicts turns into a looking glass enabling the referential

[67] *Agon* is conceived of largely in Huizinga's terms. Caillois thus expands, rather than contradicts, Huizinga's conception of play, moving from a singular focus on conflict to a multi-layered conception of games and play.

[68] See also Caillois, p. 17.

[69] See also Caillois, p. 19.

[70] See also Caillois, p. 23.

[71] See Iser 1991, p. 260.

[72] Unlike Huizinga's example of an embattled nominalism and realism, congealed into embattled fronts due to games of strife.

[73] See Iser 1991, p. 261.

[74] See Iser 1991, p. 261.

world outside the text to be observed"[75]. Games of *mimicry* thus do not merely represent reality, but use their own constructedness to make some statement or allow some insight into its object. *Ilinx* is the only category that is somewhat difficult to apply directly to literary texts. Iser turns to the Bakhtinian notion of carnivalisation, as well as pivoting and doubleness, in order to introduce a 'vertiginous' element to this pattern play. Its patterns of disrupting normal relations and its anarchic tendencies seem to make it a natural partner to *alea*, as it, too, focuses on play patterns of defamiliarization.

These games are, of course, not played in isolation, but rather appear together side-by-side or jumbled together. The different combinations of patterns of gaming result in a large tableau of textual games with a multitude of different objectives and results. Even textual games presented in isolation can serve different purposes: Games of *agon,* for instance, take on a different significance when directed toward winning, losing, or a (deliberate) stalemate. Games can be pitted against one another, for instance pitting games of *mimicry* against games of *Ilinx,* where meaning is created through tension between on the generation of illusion through *mimicry* and its simultaneously dispelling through games of *Ilinx*. Different patterns of gaming can also be united in a single game, such as the combination of *agon* and *mimicry* to generate a play space of conflict which seems as close as possible to the world it depicts, or the combination of *Ilinx* and *alea* to defamiliarize known patterns through subversion and carnivalisation. Many more patterns of play could be identified, but these examples should suffice to show that in its application as an epistemological tool, the literary text has recourse to a distinct arsenal of patterns of play to approach a variety of issues. Much of the tension and imaginative quality of literary texts comes from the way various referential fields and seemingly incongruous opinions or positions can be presented side by side without resulting in contradiction. Meaning in the literary text is generated from the way readers respond to (and participate in) the different games played in the text: It comes into being through active engagement, and is neither received passively nor can a single 'true' meaning be extracted from the text by its reader. Iser summarizes that "meaning is primarily the semantic operation that takes place between the given text, as a fictional gestalt of the imaginary, and the reader"[76].

After this excursion into the operation of the (literary) texts, and the role of play and textual games, we return to the subject of literary nominalism. Keiper is right in identifying a marked tendency of literary works to pursue certain types of textual strategies in the discussion of philosophical subject matter. The attribution of this tendency as representing a *nominalist turn*, however, is problematic. Keiper's proposition for a realist aesthetics closely follows the Bakhtinian definition of the authoritative text[77], whereas Keiper's nominalist aes-

[75] See Iser 1996, p. 333.

[76] See Iser 1991, p. 20.

[77] Though, as stated before, I would be hesitant to fully pursue Bakhtin's definition of the authoritative text, or unreservedly accept his claim that authoritative discourse permits no play. Games patterns of *agon*, for instance, seem highly appropriate for formalized and authoritative discursive modes like the

thetics is closely aligned to Iser's conception of the operating principles of literary texts. It is my suggestion, then, that rather than discard analyses that follow Keiper's methods, they can be broadly reconceptualised in the following fashion: That what has been generally been interpreted as a *nominalist* turn in late medieval literature is better described as the development of a poetic mode of representing philosophy or philosophizing, and that many features previously assumed to be the result of nominalist influence represent typical (though not exclusive) features of literary epistemological strategies. The operating principles of such a 'literary turn' in discussion of philosophical issues differs in method as well as objective. Following Rhodes as well as Keiper, I would also stress that analysis of philosophical elements in literary and poetic works should be *qua* literature rather than *qua* philosophy, and emphasize a shift of focus from establishing analogous relationships with contemporary theologians or philosophical movements to on modes of expression.

Literary works tend to generate meaning through the act of suspending final judgements, or the expression of definite opinions. Among its epistemological tools are heteroglossia, polyphony, humour, laughter, irony, carnivalisation, and various patterns of gaming and gameplaying between author, text, and reader. Academic or scholastic works, on the other hand, do tend to attempt to seek to establish a final (or at least, highly likely) solution to particular problem, though the degree to which they succeed is always up for debate[78]. This does not mean, however, that these represent inflexible or fixed discursive modes, or that they are mutually exclusive[79]. There are many instances in which discursive strategies overlap: Some literary works may in fact attempt to achieve firm expression in favour of certain beliefs, while an academic text may adopt poetic stylings to express their opinions in a somewhat looser format to relieve it of the rigorous demands of formal logic. Grey areas are also represented by moral allegories[80], the semi-fictional genre of the Hagiography (or 'Saints' Lives') that flourished in the 14th century, as well as the proliferation of works of lay theology. Patterns of play and game playing, while typical of literary works, are also not limited to it: Academic works also habitually employ patterns of play to generate meaning. This can be seen in the application of play patterns of *agon* in the polemic or the *disputatio*, which have the intent of surmounting difficult (philosophical) issues through a ritualized textual or oral form of playful conflict.

While this chapter has so far developed an account of how literary works operate, and described what a literary approach to philosophical issues might entail, it has not answered the

---

polemic or the *disputatio*: They are not just a clash of contrasting opinions, but are also an attempt to *surmount differences* and reach a higher understanding of the subjects under discussion through this playfully staged conflict.

[78] This is exemplified, for instance, by Bradwardine's acknowledgement that if his *De Causa Dei* proves to be founded on unsound principles, large parts of its claims may well have to be rejected.

[79] A division, for example, in the sense of Keiper's distinction between realist and nominalist epistemologies, which roughly equates to a contrast between 'literary' and 'authoritative' discourse, the differences between which seem hard to surmount and allow for little mediation.

[80] Which is a genre by no means void of depth or 'uncritically affirmative' of accepted doctrine.

question (as literary nominalism has done) *why* there seems to be such a surge of interest in philosophical themes in literary works in the late 14th century. Though I neither can nor wish to present such a firmly realized and totalizing historical narrative as that of literary nominalism, a number of factors can be posited that significantly contributed to a rising interest in philosophical / theological themes and a shift in writing practices. These involve the hitherto underrepresented issues of an emerging vernacular tradition[81] and a budding (literary) authority, framed by a continuation of conclusions from the sixth chapter of this study. The issue of language itself is also critical to understanding philosophical and theological discussions in 14th century society. Furthermore, the difference in social, political, and religious circumstances between the first and latter half of the 14th century have been underappreciated and warrant more attention if one wishes to theorize the interaction between literature and philosophy in a meaningful way.

Perhaps the most significant issue that has gone virtually ignored in the paradigm of literary nominalism, but which nevertheless is a necessary component of any approach to philosophical discourses in the later Middle Ages, is the issue of *language*. I refer here specifically to the steep increase in production of (theological) works in the vernacular, the tension and friction with Latin scholastic works this generated, and the effects this had on non-religious work in the vernacular. A shift of focus to the issue of the vernacular also helps explain *why* the rise of interest in developing modes of philosophizing or the representations of philosophy in literary works should have risen to such prominence in the 14th century, rather than before or after. The discussion of philosophical issues in literary works in the English vernacular is inextricably linked to the role of the vernacular in lay learning and instruction. The term 'vernacular' itself, state Fiona Somerset and Nicholas Watson, does not denote "a language as such, but a relation between one language situation and another, with the vernacular at least notionally in the more embattled, or at least the less clear-cut, position"[82]. The study of the *role* of the vernacular demands "more attention be paid to the multilingual nature of English society […] and to a variety of emergent textualities (whether merchant, bureaucratic, or dissident) at the end of the medieval period"[83]. Barbara Newman adds that it is "only with the religious turn of the past two decades that [...] a new interest in the study of vernacular theology [has sparked], a movement spearheaded by Nicholas Watson"[84]. Newman's theories on a crossover between sacred and secular can be understood as a continuation of Watson's project, which focuses on "the vernacular as an emergent medium for religious teaching"[85]. Newman's theories on crossover, and theories on the vernacular by Watson and Somerset, can

[81] Both in terms of literature in the vernacular, as well as vernacular theology. Indeed, the tension between Latin and vernacular traditions provides an interest point of entry for future examinations of the role of philosophy in literary texts or mixed modes of discourse.

[82] See Somerset and Watson, p. x.

[83] See Somerset and Watson, p. xi.

[84] See Newman, p. 3.

[85] See Newman, p. 3. The apparent recent lack of interest in the *interplay* between sacred and secular is explained as stemming from a 'battle-weariness' after debates between Robertsonian exegetics and their

be used not only to explain a surge of interest in philosophical issues, but can also be applied to bridge perceived gaps between different modes of discourse, as it focuses specifically on the crossover between different textual modes.

Somerset writes that during the Middle Ages, there "had developed an expectation that the clergy in England should instruct the laity in the essentials of faith, [which] might be viewed as resulting from the reformative movement in the church that produced the provisions for universal lay instruction of the Lateran council of 1215"[86]. The rule of *omnius utriusque sexus*, instituted during the 4th Lateran council, required that each Christian perform auricular confession at least once every year. The requirement for yearly confession resulted in an increased need for priests to be trained in its performance, which led to a proliferation of confessional and penitential manuals, often written in the vernacular. Katherine Little concludes that the "Fourth Lateran Council generated a veritable industry of texts for lay instruction", and that "the sheer number of texts concerned with pastoral instruction suggests that this council, and the resulting attempts to instruct the laity, must be viewed as foundational for the identity of the laity and the church"[87]. This increase resulted "within England more particularly as a consequence of the systematic programme of instruction mandated by Pecham's Ignorantia sacerdotium of 1281 and the very similar Lay Folks' Catechism issued in both Latin and English by Thoresby in 1357, whereby the basics of faith were to be conveyed to the laity by the clergy"[88]. The necessity of lay instruction of the faithful also required manuals and guidance for how this instruction might be fruitfully carried out. The resulting proliferation of religious manuals on various subjects were not solely aimed at the clergy either, as they "came to be written not only for parish priests, but directly for their parishioners"[89]: Religious teaching, and by extension the philosophical elements they contained, was increasingly disseminated across the lay population, who took a great interest in these matters. This interest in turn reflected back to the clergy, opening the possibility for an oscillating process of mutual influence. The ever-increasing interest in philosophical and religious issues witnessed towards the end of the 14th century should thus be considered the culmination of a process started in the first half of the 13th century following the decisions of the 4th Lateran council. We see here a similar process to that described in the sixth chapter of this study, namely that the 14th century sees the continuation and culmination of processes started in the previous century. In an analogous movement, we can also observe a greater degree of boundary-crossing, in this case from Latin to the vernacular, from scholastic to literary, as well as various mixtures and variants. In this fashion, an increasing literary interest in philosophical issues can be interpreted along the lines of the 14th century as a period marked by an increased willingness to experiment with novel forms, and the fluid integration of different types of discourse.

---

opponents: With "respect to the question of sacred and secular, fruitful theorizing in English departments effectively shut down in the wake of Robertsonianism". See Newman, p. 3.

[86] See Somerset 1998, p. 13.

[87] See Little, p. 6.

[88] See Somerset 1998, pp. 13-14.

[89] See Somerset 1998, p. 14.

The issue of language is further complicated by the multiplicity of epistemological approaches taken by these vernacular religious texts. These came in a multitude of forms: Direct translation of Latin sources (or, indeed, of the Bible itself) into the vernacular, penitential manuals, Saints' Lives, moralizing fictions and sermons, and even occasional 'excursions' by scholastic authors into poetry, which went largely disregarded in literary nominalism. Where literary nominalism does discuss such forms, it is only to place them in the realist camp as uncritical affirmations of contemporary doctrine[90]. However, discussions of religious and philosophical issues in the vernacular were neither uncritically affirmative of existing doctrine, nor free of ulterior motives. Somerset describes in detail how extraclergial writing is frequently applied to critique contested clerical practices, and states that "the period c. 1273-1410[91] seems to have been the extraclergial writing's most oppositional phase, when transferring the terms, modes, and topics of academic argumentation to English carried a special charge, and claims to write clerically for a wider audience had a kind of untried excitement"[92]. Keiper's claim that vernacular theological writings would be uncritically affirmative must be regarded with deep suspicion. Likewise, the increasingly critical tone of these extraclergial writings seems in line with conclusions drawn in the sixth chapter of this study, which sees the early 14th century as marked by an increasing criticism of common epistemologies.

Amidst this surge of interest in vernacular religious writing aimed at a lay audience, and the increase in availability of material previously reserved for the clerical caste, it is unsurprising that we encounter a rising interest in the representation and exploration of philosophic and religious issues in literary works of the period. This interest is not only motivated by a pious impulse to partake in contemporary religious debates: It is also used for the invention of *authority* for vernacular literature. As Nicholas Watson "pointed out, poets in the 14th century had to "invent" their own authority because the church had established as the sole authority and arrogated to itself the power to determine boundaries of thought"[93]. On the one hand, the discussion of theological and philosophical issues in literary texts represents an attempt of establishing its own authority by *sharing* in the authority that was previously the sole property of the church. However, in this very act of sharing, literary texts also *transform* and *subvert* this authority: "Once placed in a text or poem, then, theological discourse becomes another text, one that can no longer claim its privileged status. It no longer can claim access to secret knowledge or to the hidden order and it becomes subject to criticism and revision."[94]. This "increasing lay interest in devotional materials therefore [had] the potential

[90] See also Keiper 1997, p. 48. Keiper states that "A realist literary text, therefore, might want to use any means to check the undue, 'unruly' proliferation of the dissenting viewpoints it incorporates, doing its utmost to contain any dissident attitudes voiced" and be "staunchly supportive, even uncritically affirmative of a stable, universal world-view".

[91] However, it should be added that this period "certainly […] does not mark the beginning and end of extraclergial writing, much less of the larger processes amid which it is produced". See Somerset, p. 16.

[92] See Somerset, p. 17.

[93] See Rhodes, p. 10.

[94] *Idem*.

for disruption as the laity took over the languages and practices that had hitherto belonged to the clergy"[95]. Philosophy is thus not only discussed for its own sake, but also used as a *vessel* to invent authority for vernacular literary works and their authors. These works established their uniqueness by pursuing different epistemological strategies, which have the (potential) effect of transforming and subverting the very authority it seeks to share in by reducing it to 'just another text'.

The church, on its part, did not welcome these developments in vernacular theology and representations of theological issues in poetry without suspicions: Indeed, a series of measures put in place at the start of the 15th century made an attempt at hindering the unchecked spread of potentially dissenting writings. Watson and Somerset have both written on the way that "orthodox vernacular devotional writers along with heretics were affected by the repressive measures introduced by Archbishop Thomas Arundel's *Constitutiones* in 1409"[96]. During this time, penalties and persecution of heterodoxy were increased, and discussion of heterodox subjects like Lollardy became dangerous even to extraclergial writers and poets. This shift in which topics can be safely discussed in literary works can be felt, for instance, in the way Thomas Hoccleve approaches the topic of the vernacular or movements like the Lollards. Little, for instance, describes how "for Hoccleve, writing in 1410-1411, the debate over lay instruction was no longer possible in the same terms it was for Gower"[97]. Contributing factors to this were "the burning of the first Lollard, William Sawtry, in 1401; the statute to burn heretics in 1401 (*De heretico comburendo*); Arundel's *Constitutions* (1409), which severely restricted writing in the vernacular; the examination of William Thorpe (1407); and the trials and recantations of famous Lollards, such as John Purvey"[98]. These rapidly changing circumstances in the beginning of the 15th century make the case that a separate treatment of the role of philosophy in vernacular writings 14th century is warranted.

Finally, it is also important to note that social structure of England had changed markedly between the early decades of the 14th century, when Ockham and Bradwardine wrote their treatises, and the final decades of the century, in which authors like Chaucer produced most of their work. The first, and perhaps most dramatic, rift that divided the two was the outbreak of the black plague in 1348, during which roughly a third of England's population perished[99]. The reduction in population also resulted in social changes; land (previously in short supply)

[95] See Little, p. 12.

[96] See Somerset, p. 11.

[97] See Little, p. 102.

[98] *Idem*.

[99] It should also be noted that during this first outbreak, roughly half the clergy died as well, significantly and permanently weakening its position. Bradwardine, too, was among the black plague's many victims. He died shortly after his return to London to take up his position as Archbishop of Canterbury (his predecessor, John Ufford, having also died of the plague) in 1348. Many other Mertonians, as well as (in all likelihood) William of Ockham likewise fell victim to the pandemic.

became more available, and conditions for workers and farmers improved slightly[100]. This "encouraged upward social mobility as people rose to fill empty places higher up the social ladder"[101]. In the wake of a call for social reforms, particularly focused on the abolition of serfdom, the prices of rent, and the heavy taxation levied to finance the Hundred Years' War against France, the Peasants' Revolt of 1381 presented an unprecedented shift in social dynamics. While "in the short term, the revolt of 1381 was crushed, […] the English peasants did […], in the course of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, manage to secure by their local actions an end to compulsory labour services, a reduction of manorial impositions and restrictions, and protection of their rights in royal courts. By 1500 serfdom in England was virtually extinct"[102]. Finally, the Western Schism of 1378, which saw the establishment of two[103] simultaneous papal courts in Avignon and Rome, thoroughly upset the unity of the western Christian church, creating a rift that never fully mended. This break also led to a decrease in church funding, which in turn contributed to the establishment of controversial practices like the sale of indulgences. England, meanwhile, faced with the Lollards its first 'home grown' heretical movement. All in all, the world of Geoffrey Chaucer in many ways was a different one than that of Thomas Bradwardine and William of Ockham, and these developments at least partially explain suspicions or criticism towards the church expressed in literary works from this period. The way literary nominalism has assumed an unproblematic continuation of cultural and societal context between the first and latter half of the 14th century seems a simplification of historical realities. The rapid shifts in social, political, and religious climate of the late 14th century is another factor that future studies might take into account, particularly in the interaction between religious and extraclergial or poetic works. The following chapter makes some observations about the role of philosophical themes in the works of Geoffrey Chaucer, and is particularly interested in tracing an implicit debate over the course of a sequence of tales on the possibility of generating genuine knowledge from fictions. Analysis focuses not only on the direct appearance and discussion of philosophical material, but also highlights the generation of meaning through quick allusions and interpretation, and the use of play structures to create a state of exception that suspends the regular social and religious boundaries between the Canterbury pilgrims and allows for a free exchange of thoughts and opinions.

[100] See also Rigby, pp. 29-32.

[101] See Rigby, p. 31.

[102] See Rigby, p. 35.

[103] At times, there were even three separate papal courts: One in Rome, a second in Avignon, and a third in Pisa.

Chapter IX

Philosophy, Play, and the Tale-telling Game in Chaucer's Canterbury Tales

The previous chapter has outlined potential revisions to literary nominalism, suggesting that while its approach to literature as a medium (in Keiper's conception of the paradigm) is by-and-large thoughtful and sound[1], its attribution of literary discursive strategies to nominalism and its depiction of realist and nominalist epistemologies are highly problematic, and better understood as a *literary turn* in late 14th-century poetic discussions of philosophical material. The issue of language has also been underappreciated, as has that of literary authority: Poetry not only shares in, but also subverts and transforms clerical discourse. The philosophical and theological concerns of the laity expressed in extraclergial works also allows a mutual influence between laity and clergy. This chapter seeks to showcase, through a number of examples from the C*anterbury Tales*, the way in which some of the operations described in the previous chapter manifest themselves in Chaucer's work. It focuses on an implicit debate staged throughout the *Canterbury Tales* over the value of fictions as means of religious instruction and tool for generating genuine knowledge. It also considers play structures and patterns of gaming, the constant tension between different epistemological modes that threaten to disrupt the tale-telling game, and issues related to language and lay preaching. Throughout a series of tales[2], the (in)ability to meaningfully communicate ideas through fiction is thematized[3], and through this, the generative force (or lack thereof) of literary works is put up for discussion.

A brief overview of the "General Prologue" offers an opportunity to make some preliminary remarks about the *Canterbury Tales'* approach to character and narration. Jill Mann comments that "Chaucer models his pilgrims according to the common stereotypes of European literature, and, where models lacked, combined established elements into a new whole"[4]. This apparently stereotypical portrayal of the pilgrims coincides with a universal praise of their characters by the narrator, which often stands in contrast to their portrayal in the rest of the work. Donaldson influentially portrayed this seemingly incongruent praise as resulting from a featherbrained narrator that is beguiled by the author: The narrator, so Donaldson, is "acutely unaware of the significance of what he sees, no matter how sharply he sees it. He is, to be sure, permitted his lucid intervals, but in general he is the victim of the

[1] Though it never manages to convincingly do away with the problematic top-down hierarchical relationship between theological nominalism and other forms of 'nominalist' discourse.

[2] Discussed in this chapter are, in order, the General Prologue, the Epilogue to the Man of Law's Tale, the Pardoner's Introduction, Prologue, and Tale, the Monk's Prologue and Tale, the Nun's Priest Prologue, Tale, and Epilogue, The Parson's Prologue and Tale, and Chaucer's Retraction.

[3] Made explicit through the use of Pauline references to support different stances on the issue in "The Nun's Priest Tale", "The Parson's Tale", and the Retraction.

[4] See Bornemann, p. 71.

poet's pervasive – not merely sporadic – irony"[5]. Thies Bornemann, in his excellent study on narrative voice in the *Canterbury Tales*, also states that the "General Prologue [stands] certainly [in] stark contrast to the rest of the poem", and adds that the individuality that "Mann and others unearth in the portraits becomes visible only retrospectively. The concept of individuality is therefore misapplied to the General Prologue in all its forms"[6]. While the figures presented in the prologue appear stereotypical, they are individualized by their tales. Re-reading the prologue afterwards causes elements of their individual nature, formerly invisible, to come to the fore. On the subject of the narrator's universal praise, Bornemann makes the interesting suggestion that the narrator's refraining from moral judgement of his fellow pilgrims is deliberate. On the one hand, this allows the reader to form their own verdict on the (im)morality of the individual pilgrims, while on the other the contrast between prologue and tales serves to make the reader aware through "the developing plot, its 'psychological' complexities but also other elements, that he fell for a trap"[7]. Once the stereotypical images of the pilgrims are replaced with their realistic and individualized personalities over the course of the text, the reader will "retroactively trace his prejudging back to the unreliability of the intertextual assonances provided by 'Chaucer's' fallible literary perspective"[8]. In an interesting and complex movement, the contrast between prologue and tales not only allows for moral ambiguity, but also calls attention to the fallible and unreliable narratorial self-representation in the text, while encouraging readers to reread and revise their own prejudgement of its characters. It further calls attention to the way text and reader interact: meaning is created not through top-down instruction, but through an active engagement with the text, even to the point of going back and revising one's own initial interpretation based on later findings[9]. It also highlights immediately the kind of games that played out in the author-text-reader relationship, presented in the form of a tilting game of shifting perspectives. The unreliability of the narrator and the 'trap' set by "The General Prologue" immediately call attention to the unstable nature of this (literary) text, and demonstrates the transformational power of literary discourse.

After the introduction of the pilgrims, and before the group sets off for Canterbury, the Host proposes that the pilgrims should engage in a game of tale-telling to pass the time. This narrative frame, in which different pilgrims relate stories to their fellow travellers, harmonizes with Iser's conception of the literary text as a play space in which games are played: Harry Bailly, in proposing the tale-telling game, has quite literally opened up a play space in which the pilgrims can freely engage each other, in a manner that regular social divisions would not allow. The pilgrims use the play space of the game as their favoured mode of discourse, because the

[5] See Donaldson, p. 929 in Bornemann, p. 67.

[6] See Bornemann, p. 92 and p. 74.

[7] See Bornemann, pp. 91-92.

[8] See Bornemann, p. 92. Note that the bracketing of 'Chaucer', signals a reference to the narrator figure/pilgrim character Geoffrey Chaucer, *not* the biographical author of the text.

[9] This also exemplifies Iser's theory, by which the reader of the literary text must surrender their ordinary stance and engage the text on its terms.

as-iffness of their fictions allows a state of exception in which ideas can be explored and advanced without the usual constraints of social and religious boundaries. Rhodes states that, "in effect, the Host proposes that the pilgrims suspend the usual social rules and enter into a game or play world in which they relate to one another as players"[10]. The pilgrims come from all walks of life, and normally would not interact so freely and unreservedly. On the pilgrimage, however, they use the tale-telling game to level the social distance that normally divides them. The play space of the game thus becomes its own discursive mode, opening a state of social suspension in which a miller can bandy words with a knight, a knight can stop a monk from sermonising, and a housewife can challenge clerical misogyny[11]. Among the many subjects of the dialogue created and sustained by the game are, of course, subjects touching on religious and philosophic material. Fictions, and textual play, are used to bridge class and gender differences, and allow the pilgrims to enter into a dialogue. The Host initially seeks to organise the game by fairly strict (social) rules, where the pilgrim of the highest social standing (the Knight) speaks first, with the others following him in descending order. This class-conscious organisation of the tale-telling game quickly unravels, however, when the loutish Miller interjects after the Knight has concluded his tale. However, "even though the Host's plan dissolves after the first tale, the new model that emerges, one of spontaneous play, more closely captures the spirit of conversation desired by the pilgrims"[12]. The rules of the game are thus adapted to fit the players, who seem to prefer flattening (rather than maintaining) regular social hierarchies. They also seem to prefer fictions as their discursive mode of choice, and tend to react with some hostility at attempts to introduce or revert to other modes of discourse. This is exemplified early on, when the Parson attempts to deliver a sermon rather than tell a tale.

After the Man of Law has finished his tale, the host turns to the Parson, bidding him to take the next turn. The Parson seems reluctant to do so, and is evidently intent on delivering a sermon. The Host becomes derisive towards him, calling him 'Jankin' and a 'Lollard'[13]. He relents, however, and informs the group that instead of a tale, they will now hear a sermon, stating "Abydeth, for Goddes digne passioun, / For we schal han a predicacioun; / This Lollere heer wil prechen to us somewhat"[14]. Host and Parson immediately receive a hostile

[10] See Rhodes, p. 173.

[11] The various interactions between the pilgrims also occur along the lines of the different types of games presented by Wolfgang Iser: Instances of *Agon* are very frequent, such as the quarrel between Miller and Reeve, the Pardoner's exempla can be seen as a mimicry of his own penitential performances that is tilted or carnivalized by its advertised insincerity, while "The Nun's Priest Tale" presents a powerful instance of vertigo or the carnivalesque, and the proliferation of possible readings seems related to play patterns of *alea*.

[12] See Rhodes, p. 173. It is also in this spontaneous "tale-telling game that takes over the pilgrimage" that "Chaucer's commitment to the autonomy of his fiction is manifest". See Rhodes, 172.

[13] The ambiguous association of the Parson with Lollardy is explored in further detail later in this chapter.

[14] See CT, FII, ls. 1175-1177.

response to this from the Shipman / Wife of Bath[15], who replies "Nay, by my fader soule, that shal he nat!" / […] Heer schal he nat preche; / He schal no gospel glosen here ne teche"[16]. Various suggestions have been offered for this interjection, such as a dismissal of the supposedly Lollard doctrine the Parson might hold. However, there is also a strong suggestion that it is not just the content of what the Parson might tell that is objectionable, but its *form*. It is not the engagement with religious material that is problematic[17], but that it should be done *through a sermon*. To turn from tale to sermon would signal an abandonment of the tale-telling game, as the introduction of authoritative discourse into the play space would potentially collapse the state of social suspension that allows the pilgrims to freely communicate with each other: If the Parson is allowed to step outside the game and orate from his usual position as a figure of religious authority, the lack of such authority by the other pilgrims may stifle discussion, and cause the free discourse established through the tale telling game to disintegrate. In his desire for sermonizing, the Parson, so the Shipman / Wife of Bath, "[…] wolde sowen som difficulte, / Or springen cokkel in our cleene corn"[18]. The tale-telling game is dialogic in nature, and thus essentially incompatible with the type of discourse the Parson proposes. This leads the Shipman / Wife of Bath to seize the initiative, throttle the Parson's suggestion, and to present their own tale, of which it is emphatically stated that it "[…] schal not ben of philosophie, / Ne phislyas, ne termes queinte of lawe. / Ther is but litel Latyn in my mawe!"[19]. In other words, what is suggested is material that can be more readily responded to, not requiring intimidate knowledge of the authoritative modes of philosophy, legal documents, or Latinate sermons. These are presented as *exclusionary* discursive modes that are at odds with the *inclusive* aim of the tale-telling game. The suppression of the Parson's discourse displays firstly the pilgrims' commitment to fictions as their preferred mode of discourse, and secondly that the integrity of the tale-telling game is at risk if the play space opened by the game is ruptured: To allow the type of sermon the Parson proposes, would be, in essence, to re-establish the social boundaries that are levelled by the tale-telling game: The fragile new social order that is established through the telling of fictions can be easily disrupted by the introduction of other discursive modes.

[15] Who speaks here is not clear exactly. The speaker of the cited passage is identified as the Shipman, the next tale, however, is told by the Wife of Bath. Her tale also forms an excellent response to the exemplary narrative about Constance from the Man of Law.

[16] See CT, FII, ls. 1178-1180.

[17] Indeed, the Man of Law just delivered a lengthy exemplary narrative in the Christian tradition, and in general the pilgrims show themselves to be quite open to a large variety of topics being brought up through discussion. What is received negatively is not poor opinions expressed in a tale, but a tale that is poorly told. See, for instance, "The Monk's Tale" (discussed below), or "The Tale of Melibee".

[18] See CT, FII, ls. 1183-1184.

[19] See CT, FII, ls. 1188-1190. If the speaker is indeed the Wife of Bath, her objection could be interpretated as carrying further connotations that she seeks to prevent a specifically *male* form of authoritative discourse, women being typically excluded from the type of discourse the Parson wishes to present.

"The Pardoner's Tale" also presents an instance where the lines between play and seriousness become blurred and confused, and offers an interesting exploration of the relationship between tale and teller, and is concerned deeply with the issues of the sale of indulgences and clerical abuses of this contested religious practice. There has been a long tradition of a dramatic reading of the *Canterbury Tales*, which sees each tale as an extension of its teller and an expression of their character, psychology, and inner turmoils. While this link is not always apparent[20], there certainly is a strong critical tradition for such readings in the case of the Pardoner, as it is the Pardoner himself who inextricably binds his own position and moral character to the narrative he presents. The selling of indulgences in the 14th century was a common but contested practice, often carrying with it at the very least a connotation of charlatanry or religious fraud[21]. Though his excellence in his chosen profession is not denied[22], the Pardoner is presented in the "General Prologue" as physically and sexually aberrant[23]. He has hair "[…]as yellow as wex, / But smothe it heeng as dooth a strike of flex"[24], a voice "small as hath a goot" and "no beerd hadde he ne nevere sholde have"[25]. Lastly, the narrator speculates the Pardoner to be a "geldyng or a mare"[26]; that is, a castrate or a homosexual. His odd appearance and aberrant sexuality are typically read as the external manifestation of a rotten character. Williams, for instance, states that "the Pardoner occupies a ghastly world deprived of all that is vigorous and life-affirming, and the sign of this deadliness is sexual impotence, a sign signifying not only the debility of the body, but of the intellect and the spirit, as well"[27].

The Pardoner does not preach for the good of his flock but rather, he admits to being 'in the game' solely for his own profit. Though his sermons always center on the theme of *Radix malorum est Cupiditas*[28], the Pardoner is guilty of exactly this: His "[…] entente is nat but for to

[20] In the case of the Monk, character and tale seem to be in deliberate incongruity, as we shall see in the next section.

[21] It is, however, important to keep in mind that the selling of pardons and indulgences were "activities sponsored and sanctioned by the church" and that pardoners "were official agents of the Church in the late Middle Ages". See Rhodes, p. 229. These practices particularly soared during the time of the split papacy following 1378, when Church revenue was down, and money was scarce.

[22] "He was in chirche a noble ecclesiaste. / Wel koude he rede lessoun or a storie, / But alderbest he song an offertorie". See CT, FI, ls. 708-710.

[23] On the reception of the Pardoner in Queer studies, and its role in a re-evaluation of the Pardoner's character, see also Johnston, pp. 817-821.

[24] See CT, FI, ls. 675-676.

[25] See CT, FI, ls. 688-689.

[26] See CT, FI, l. 691.

[27] See Williams, p. 98. This physical and sexual aberrance is discussed by Williams as representative of the infertility of the nominalist worldview. Andretta made a similar analysis of the character of Pandarus in the *Troilus*.

[28] See also CT, FVI, l. 334. *Radix malorum est cupiditas* is a common maxim, which translates to "cupidity/greed is the root of all evil".

wynne, / And nothing for correctioun of synne"[29]. He is not one to live modestly, restrain his passions, or perform physical labour. He loudly proclaims that he "[…] wol have moneie, wolle, chese, and whete", and "wol drynke licour of the vyne / And have a joly wench in every toun"[30], even if "[…] it [were] yeven of the povereste page, / Or of the povereste wydwe in a village, / Al sholde hir children sterve for famyne"[31]. The Pardoner thus presents himself in the most repugnant way possible, as a predator preying on the piety of common folk for his own gain, and a hypocrite of the highest order. Lee Patterson remarks that it is through "language [that] the Pardoner creates himself for others and for himself […]. The *Prologue*, for all its apparent candor, participates in this image making. For there he presents a theatricalized self-representation of evil so extravagant that it necessarily calls itself into question"[32]. I agree with Patterson's reading of the Pardoner's self-presentation as a deliberate exaggeration, and posit that his reasons for doing so are twofold: Firstly, to 'spice up' the game by incorporating himself directly into his narrative, and secondly to covertly address his very real concern of whether a 'false Shepard' can save his flock. This conflict is, in turn, employed to open a debate on the usefulness of fictions as a means of religious instruction[33]. From the onset, the Pardoner makes it clear that he "is willing to reveal his secrets and admit his viciousness to the pilgrims because he has no intention of duping them"[34]. While he certainly aims to give a performance similar to those sermons he delivers to his usual audience on Sunday, *this* performance is held for different purposes: He has recognized the sophistication of his audience and understands that "the theological content of his tale is too simplistic and inadequate for the moral and ethical problems that face society and Christianity in the late fourteenth Century and he reserves it exclusively for the unlearned"[35]. The Pardoner is keenly aware that his audience would not respond well to preaching or overly simplistic moralizing, as was already illustrated by the hushing of the Parson, and which will be demonstrated anew in the interruption of the Monk's tale[36]. Rather, what the Pardoner presents here is a sermon that is "framed by his art"[37], thereby making it interesting for the other pilgrims: It is the *performance* of the Pardoner's sermon that is the object, not its simplistic moral content.

[29] See CT, FVI, ls. 403-404.

[30] See CT, FVI, l. 448 and ls. 452-453.

[31] See CT, FVI, ls. 449-451.

[32] See Patterson 1991, p. 398.

[33] That is, both on the level of the use of fictions in the teaching of religion to lay folk, as well as a larger discussion on whether tales or stories can produce meaning of genuine value. The latter issue is also apparent in the presentation of the Pardoner's bulls and relics which, while blatantly false, seem to be able to induce genuine piety in his audience through aesthetics effects.

[34] See Rhodes, p. 241.

[35] See Rhodes, p. 241.

[36] The Monk presents a large collection of exempla centred around the common theme of the Fall, that grow so repetitive and depressing in their structure (which leaves nothing for the pilgrims to respond to or engage with) and content, that the Knight ultimately has to step in and cut short the Monk's narration.

[37] See Scase, p. 278.

Not wishing his Sunday audience to take him for a charlatan or a rogue, the Pardoner's first concern is to legitimize himself through the bulls and patents he carries on his person[38]. As it is highly unlikely that a simple Pardoner would possess documents not only from bishops, but also from cardinals, patriarchs and popes, these can be presumed to be forgeries. The unlettered lay folk, however, seem to be suitably convinced. The Pardoner's waving around of bulls and patents provokes a response that is *aesthetic* rather than intellectual: It is the pageantry of these written artefacts that legitimizes him, not an understanding of their content. He underlines this point by stating that he 'spices up' his preaching with some words in Latin. Though his audience is incapable of understanding their meaning, they are nonetheless moved to devotion, betraying strong association of Latin as the vessel religious authority and significance. The actual meaning of these Latin words irrelevant, it is the Pardoner's *performance* that counts: The association of Latin with the sacred is so powerful that it puts his audience in a penitential mood, never mind the content. For the second part of his performance, the Pardoner provides his audience with *material* objects to inspire further devotion: "Thanne shewe I forth my longe cristal stones, / Ycrammed ful of cloutes and of bones - / Relikes been they, as wenen they echoon"[39]. His relics are of equally suspect provenance as his scrolls and bulls: The Pardoner claims to possess, amongst other 'treasures', the veil of Mary and a piece of sailcloth belonging to Peter. His relics are blatantly false, but in treating them as real, the Pardoner is able to use them to spur his audience to further devotion. Here, too, form dominates over function, and appearance over value or meaning.

After his preparing his audience in this fashion, the Pardoner relates to them in his sermon "[…] ensamples many oon / Of olde stories longe tyme agoon. / For lewed peple loven tales olde; / Swiche things can they well import and holde"[40]. The stories themselves are simple moral examples of the dangers of cupidity, 'old stories' which his unlearned audience is better capable of remembering than dry theological discourse: The Pardoner sees such narratives as essential in lay instruction, as scholastic discourse would be too complex, and unsuited for inspiring devotion in his audience. It is here that the Pardoner issues a challenge to his audience, and presents them with a dilemma: Though it is not at all his aim, though his relics and his bulls are false, and though the Pardoner is blatantly and unrepentantly vicious, he claims that he can "maken oother folk to twynne / From avarice and soore to repente"[41], to which his success in his profession would seem to testify.

This introduces a famous and hotly debated theological issue current at the time, namely the question of whether the unclean or corrupt priest can elicit true contrition in his flock[42].

[38] See CT, FVI, ls. 335-346.

[39] See CT, FVI, ls. 347-349.

[40] See CT VI, ls 435-438.

[41] See CT, FVI, ls. 429-430.

[42] See also Knapp, pp. 77-80. In this, the Pardoner and Parson form an opposite pair, with the Pardoner suggesting that though his soul is sullied, yet can he bring others to contrition, while the Parson bemoans that if a priest is foul it is no wonder that the lewed man should go 'to ruste'.

The Pardoner's claim that "a vicious man can tell a moral tale […] threatens the stability of the moral structure we assume exists, in which there is some relationship between what one is and what one says"[43]. In his act of first "painting his own sinfulness in the most vivid colours, and then delivering through his tale a highly effective *exemplum* sermon, [the Pardoner represents] exactly the thing most feared by contemporary *Ars praedicandi*: The scandal of an openly sinful preacher"[44]. While the case of the sinful preacher already presents a controversial issue, an *openly* sinful preacher issues an even greater challenge, as a person like that might easily undermine the trust of the faithful in Church authority. Therefore, preachers were typically only allowed to practice "in so far as they managed to keep their sins […] a secret"[45]. The Pardoner's almost comically evil self-representation is thus used to stage a highly contested debate, which is further complicated by his evident brilliance as narrator: "Despite all his excessively showcased sinfulness, his sermon-typical exemplum loses none of its potency"[46]. It seems, then, that the Pardoner's tale "confirms his claim that he still manages to do good, or at least, that his tale is not lacking in literary efficacy"[47]. The Pardoner thus presents his audience with the question of whether his publicly displayed sinfulness is sufficient to eliminate the potential spiritual benefits of his obviously effective preaching, or whether it can still have value as an instrument of salvation. It also suggests a hidden anxiety in the Pardoner: His awareness of his sinful nature, and his insistence on efficacy of his sermons, suggest that the Pardoner is asking his audience (albeit in a roundabout fashion) whether this might constitute a redemptive quality for himself: The Pardoner seems acutely aware "of his spiritual deficits", and his own cynicism has not only led to "a state of doubt, but even one of desperation (*desperatio*), as he is paradoxically no longer capable of believing in the very thing that could save him"[48]. The Pardoner's challenge is thus also an implicit plea for help to his fellow pilgrims: If, despite his deficiencies, they still see him as "capable of working in accordance to the divine plan for salvation and to save the souls of others, there still remains a possibility that there might be a way out for him"[49].

[43] See Rhodes, p. 171.

[44] Translated from Johnston, p. 829. Original: "[Der Pardoner thematisiert] indem er erst seine eigene Sündhaftigkeit in den grellsten Farben schildert und dann mit seiner Geschichte ein höchst gelungenes predigttypisches Exemplum abliefert, genau den Fall, die zeitgenössischen *Artes praedicandi* am meisten fürchteten: Das Skandalon des offen sündigenden Predigers".

[45] *Idem*. Original: "[…] sofern es ihnen gelang, die Sünden […] geheim zu halten".

[46] Translated from Johnston, p. 839. Original: "Denn bei all seiner exzessiv ausgestellten Sündhaftigkeit verliert sein predigttypisches Exemplum nichts von seiner Eindringlichkeit".

[47] *Idem*. Original: "[…] seine Geschichte aber bestätigt seine Behauptung, dass er dennoch gutes tue, zumindest, dass seine Geschichte ihre literarische Wirkung nicht verfehlt".

[48] Translated from Johnston, p. 824. Original: "Er befindet sich nicht allein in einem Zustand des Zweifels, sondern gar in einem der Verzweiflung (*desperatio*), da er paradoxerweise nicht an das glauben kann, von dem er weiß, dass es ihn retten konnte".

[49] Translated from Johnston, p. 843. Original: "Ist der Pardoner aber selbst in seiner schlimmsten Verworfenheit noch in der Lage, am göttlichen Heilsplan mitzuwirken und die Seelen anderer zu retten, so besteht damit grundsätzlich die Möglichkeit, dass es für ihn einen Ausweg gibt".

While the Pardoner's challenge focuses on whether the immoral can preach morality, it can be expanded to incorporate that the "authority of the teller, which may be of consequence of education, social position, or religious training, no longer takes precedence over the context of the tale itself"[50]. Within this debate, another question, exterior to the Pardoner's narration is raised about the meaningfulness of fictions as epistemological tools or modes of (philosophical) discussions. In this way, Chaucer "explores the relation of his art with these vernacular traditions", while also raising the question of "what distinguishes the Pardoner and his vernacular tale-telling from Chaucer and his narrative art"[51]. Here we may also draw a parallel between the Pardoner's relics and literary works[52], as all three are essentially fictions, and their effect is aesthetic to a significant degree. This also highlights a potential *danger* of fictions, in that the uninstructive or harmful may hold more appeal to an audience, if it manages to produce a stronger aesthetic effect: The chaff, if dressed in a pleasing guise, may prove more appetizing than the fruit. The Parson's stance on fictions also responds to this possibility.

Having set himself up as an exaggerated example of an immoral clergyman, a 'shiten sheperde' of the most superlative degree, and having described his fraudulent practices for the purposes of extracting money from his audience, the Pardoner then offers to deliver one of his sermons. By describing the types of people and the way he 'plays' them, and then offering to deliver just such a sermon to the pilgrims, he is not poking fun at his travelling companions, but is inviting them to play a tilting game: To see if, despite laying all his cards on the table, and the falseness of his intentions, he can yet provoke from his fellow pilgrims some emotional response or flicker of genuine piety. To this end, he invites the Pilgrims to enter into a play space in which they listen to his sermon as if they were a part of his typical audience of 'lewed folks': The Pardoner, in setting the scene, provides an interpretative blueprint for his fellow pilgrims. Though the sermon he delivers to the pilgrims and the ones he delivers each Sunday "are fundamentally the same in content, there are differences in setting, circumstance, and intent that obtain in one and not the other. The reader is thus obliged to keep one eye on his sermon in its supposed "real" context – the Church on Sunday – and the other on its immediate setting in the tale-telling game"[53].

The tale itself is an excellent example of medieval parody as defined by Barbara Newman: It is presented by a clerical figure[54], and revolves around the replacement of the figurative with the literal[55]. As Martha Bayless states, "Medieval parodic humor often practices comedy of debasement: it substitutes the literal for the allegorical, the physical for the spiritual, and the concrete for the abstract. This frequently takes the form of the literal-minded visualisation of

[50] See Rhodes, p. 171.

[51] See Scase, p. 279.

[52] See also Johnston, p. 832.

[53] See Rhodes, p. 230.

[54] See also Newman, p. 169.

[55] See also Newman, p. 219.

allegory or spiritual metaphor"[56]. Parodic structures are clearly expressed in at least two instances in "The Pardoner's Tale": The expression that Death has slain one of their friends, normally understood figuratively, is taken literally by the three *riotours* of the tale, who intend to seek this 'traitour deeth' to kill him. This passage has been interpreted as nominalist due to the insistence on semantic confusion, which is seen as a split relation between signifier and signified, and thus indicative of nominalism. I would argue instead, following Newman, that this is *not* an expression of nominalist partisanship, but rather constitutes an example of typically medieval parodic humour. That this is not picked up on may be due firstly to the fact that religious medieval parody has until now attracted little attention[57], and secondly that it may not be immediately apparent to a 21st century audience that this passage *is* parodic, resisting as it does the Bakhtinian notion that parody must always be subversive. Knapp, however, does recognize that this passage presents an instance of literalized parody[58].

The second instance of parody is encountered close to the conclusion of the tale when the *riotours*, "quarrelling over possession of a buried treasure, share a meal of bread and poisoned wine that brings all three to their death"[59]. The death of the *riotours* constitutes the moral content of "The Pardoner's Tale": They are covetous of the treasure, betray each other to claim it for themselves, and for this treachery pay with their lives[60]. Since, continues Newman, the "Pardoner presents his tale as an exemplum on avarice and characterizes the riotours harshly throughout, it would not be hard to see that this diabolical trinity, partaking of a diabolical communion[61], are headed straight to hell"[62]. However, we should be careful not to assume this parodic representation of the trinity and the Eucharist to be subversive: "[The] Eucharist itself is not mocked. Rather, its inversion reinforces the wickedness of the riotours to set a crowning touch on the tale's didactic message"[63]. In this fashion, "Chaucer's parody, though intellectually and emotionally powerful, is not subversive (whatever we may think of the Pardoner)"[64]. Though medieval parody certainly *can* be subversive, it "can also serve a didactic function, reinforce the status quo, or engage in sheer, amoral fun for fun's sake"[65]. We should thus be careful of interpreting parody or Chaucerian irony as subversive *per se,* as it can be invoked for any number of purposes.

We can also draw the conclusion that though the message of the Pardoner's sermon (cupidity is the root of all evil) may be simplistic, its presentation certainly is not: There is no

[56] See Bayless, p. 197 in Newman, p. 220.

[57] See also Newman, p. 168.

[58] See also Knapp, p. 84.

[59] See Newman, p. 220.

[60] And, in this manner, find the 'Death' they sought, though certainly not in the way they expected.

[61] Here we see the parodic element: the trinity and sacrament are inverted.

[62] See Newman, p. 220.

[63] See Newman, p. 220.

[64] *Idem*.

[65] See Newman, p. 219.

doubt that, irrespective of his character, the Pardoner is a master storyteller. The profound response from his regular audience results not from the complexity of what he tells, but from the way it is told and how it is framed, his artful delivery of a simple message constituting a third and final demonstration of the Pardoner's insistence on the aesthetic effects of his sermonising: Though he is vicious and acts with false intent, he insists they nevertheless produce a genuine positive effect in his audience. This begs the question whether fictions, being inventions that typically operate through aesthetic effect rather than sustained argument should be subjected to the same scrutiny as the Pardoner's sermonizing. If we dismiss the Pardoner, must we dismiss fiction[66], too?

It is also worthwhile to consider the epilogue to "The Pardoner's Tale", as is here that the Pardoner finds (or feels) his covertly posited anxieties to be rebuffed, causing the boundaries between play and seriousness to momentarily become indistinct. After the conclusion of his tale, the Pardoner invites "the Host to "kisse the relikes everychon"", and in this fashion "the parody of the Mass in the Pardoner's narrative continues"[67]. At the same time, his invitation to the Host is also a continuation of his obliquely posed question of whether he, a sinful man, might yet be of use in the instruction of the lewed layfolk: He invites the host to join him to not only continue the charade, but also to perhaps join in (ironic) praise of the relics, or giving some sign of acknowledgement that the Pardoner's rhetorical skills can evoke genuine contrition in his audience. Thus, with "his wallet open in his lap, the Pardoner offers the Host his body to eat, a gross inversion of the Eucharistic offering"[68]. The Host correctly interprets this invitation by the Pardoner as a continuation of the game, and responds with some rhetorical fireworks of his own, stating that he declines to kiss an old pair of undergarments smeared with Pardoner's faeces, and expresses a wish to castrate[69] him and enshrine his testicles in a pig's turd[70]. The Host delivers a crass yet comic retort to the Pardoner's offer, and thereby, "as so often, Harry Bailly, through his crudely humorous interpretations, fails to appreciate the subtlety of what was said"[71]. His response is not made in anger[72], nor does he seek to rebuff the Pardoner's covert anxiety and *desperatio*. Rather, it is meant as a retort to (and continuation

[66] See also Johnston, p. 832, for a discussion on the 'parallel secular discourse' of the sinful poet and poetic authority in the Pardoner's tale.

[67] See Rhodes, p. 244.

[68] *Idem*.

[69] In a satisfying reading of the passage, Rhodes describes how the Host has accidently stumbled upon the Pardoner's sexual secret, namely that he is *already* a castrate. The laughter of the Pilgrims is directed on the one hand at the sudden reversal of the Pardoner's fortune, and also at the Host's befuddlement as to why the Pardoner is suddenly insulted and sulks in silence.

[70] See also CT, FVI, ls. 946-955.

[71] Translated from Johnston, p. 843. Original: "Wie so oft scheitert Harry Bailly mit seinen scherzhaft-derben Interpretationen an der Subtilität des Gesagten".

[72] This is shown clearly by the Host's response to the when the Pardoner's mood turns sour, as he becomes "chagrined to learn that the Pardoner grows sullen over what [he] had deemed a clever retort". See Rhodes, 245.

of) the Pardoner's performance: After all, he had admitted that his relics were fake, and the Host's comically exaggerated dismissal of them is entirely in line with the nature of the game, and the Pardoner's own self-representation.

The Pardoner, however, does not take Bailly's crude jab in stride, and suddenly turns morose, silent, and red-faced with anger. It seems that he has mistaken the Host's intentions, and has taken his response as being serious[73]: The ruthless dismissal of his relics is interpreted by the Pardoner as a wholesale dismissal of all he has on offer. The Pardoner feels himself "exposed, to his own eye, for what he is, a "shiten sheparde," to borrow a term from the Parson […]. In its comic irony, Harry Bailly's "excremental vision" makes the Pardoner acknowledge the shame he feels about his own existence"[74]. To the Pardoner, the line between play and reality has been crossed, and feels the Host has attacked him personally, whereas the Host intended only a retort to the Pardoner's exaggerated self-representation. We may conclude that the Pardoner in some fashion has flown too close to the sun: He has integrated himself into his own narrative to such a degree, that he can no longer tell reactions to his tale apart from those to his person. The Host merely continues the joke the Pardoner started, but the Pardoner finds himself at the end of it. The Host never picked up on the Pardoner's underlying condition of *desperatio*, and is befuddled as to why the Pardoner has suddenly grows so wroth. Indeed, it is this sudden sullen silence that rouses the Host to anger, stating that "[…] I wol no lenger pleye / With thee, no with noon other angry man"[75]. Both men in this instance feel that the rules of the game have been violated, and grow angry because of it: The Pardoner feels personally attacked, and sees the underlying anxiety of his position violently dismissed: He feels that Bailly's "threat of castration refers to the spiritual sterility of the Pardoner and exposes his specific psychologic-mental wounds, the core of his desperation"[76]. The Host, on the other hand, feels that the Pardoner is souring the game by responding in earnest to a response meant in jest: He had tapped into the "blasphemic-provocative discourse" of the Pardoner, and felt that he had responsed adequately, in the "mode of *Überbietung*"[77] (outdoing). All he said, was said in the spirit of the game, and he receives the Pardoner's moroseness with annoyance. It takes an intervention of the Knight to restore the rupture. In a significant moment, he tells the two:

> "Namoore of this, for it is right enough!
> Sire Pardoner, be glad and myrie of cheere;
> And ye, sire Hoost, that been to me so deere,

[73] See also Johnston, pp. 824-826.

[74] See Rhodes, p. 246.

[75] See CT, FVI, ls. 958-959.

[76] Translated from Johnston, p. 825. Original: "[Die] Kastrationsdrohung verweist auf die spirituelle Sterilität des Pardoners und legt gerade seine spezifische psychologisch-religiöse Wunde, den Kern seiner Verzweiflung, offen".

[77] Translated from Johnston, p. 825. Original: "[Der Host nimmt an] auf den blasphemisch-provokativen Diskurs des Pardoner adäquat, nämlich im Modus der Überbietung eingegangen zu sein".

I preye yow that ye kisse the Pardoner.
And Pardoner, I pray thee, drawe thee neer
And, as we diden, lat us laugh and pleye"[78].

Through this offering of a kiss of peace between the two parties, the Knight "brings the allusions to the Mass in [the Pardoner's] tale to a fitting close. The kiss of peace comes just before the Communion rite, indicating that the Pardoner has not been excluded from the "compaignye""[79]. The Knight, it seems, has picked up the thread of doubleness of meaning in "The Pardoner's Tale", and draws it to a conclusion to effect a reconciliation between the aggrieved parties. It seems there may be a chance for redemption of the Pardoner after all[80]. This invitation to be merry and re-join the game also signals a shift away from the personal note by which the Pardoner felt so offended. The Pardoner's "assenting to kiss the Host also occasions a meaningful shift of values. It implies a movement, of some significance, away from the violence and viciousness that defined human relations in the Pardoner's tale"[81]. The Pardoner's does not find himself ostracized or excluded from the company: On the contrary, when "the Knight invites the Pardoner to draw near and join the group in laughter and in play […] he mitigates the derisive laughter that followed the Host's blunder and opens the road to Canterbury anew to the Pardoner"[82]. Though the issue of whether the corrupt clergyman can still elicit genuine piety[83] has been lost in the excremental tides of Harry Bailly's fecal metaphors, there seems to be some hope at least for the Pardoner's redemption, who remains on the road to Canterbury as a player in the tale-telling game.

In contrast to "The Pardoner's Tale", the dramatic reading seems to unexpectedly break down in the case of "The Monk's Tale": The tale does not fit the expectations raised by the Monk's initial characterisation, and his tale is so poorly received, that the Knight must step in and end it[84]. In the "General Prologue", the Monk is described as an "outridere" and "manly man"[85] who loves the hunt and keeps a fine stable of horses and swift dogs. He is a man of vigour, a "lord full fat and in good poynt"[86], whose coming is announced by the jingling of the many bells hanging from his bridle. He is presented as a man who does not feel monks ought to live in seclusion in their monasteries, poring over books. It is the stereotypical portrait of an indulgent monk, very much engaged in the worldly pleasures a man in orders is

[78] See CT FVI, ls. 962-967.

[79] See Rhodes, p. 246.

[80] That it is through a kiss that the two parties are to be reconciled is also significant: After all, their misunderstanding started over a proposed kiss.

[81] See Rhodes, pp. 246-247.

[82] See Rhodes, p. 247.

[83] As well as the parallel secular discourse about the position and authority of the poet.

[84] Another instance, after "The Pardoner's Tale", in which the Knight acts as peace maker and adjudicator of the tale-telling game.

[85] See CT, FI, ls. 165-166.

[86] See CT, FI, l. 200.

supposed to renounce. His physical appearance provides an opposing pair to that of the Pardoner, as the Monk seemingly possesses all the vigorous and worldly qualities the Pardoner lacks. The Host, it seems, has from the initial characterisation of the Monk also formed certain ideas about this man: He describes him in potent and virile terms[87], and seems to expect him to deliver a worldly, masculine, and eroticized narrative.

The Monk, for his part, is willing to tell a few 'tales', but seems uncertain what he actually wishes to relate, stating that he will narrate "a tale, or two, or three. / And if yow list to herkne hyderward, / I wol yow seyn the lyf of Seint Edward; / or ellis, first, tragedies wolle I telle, / Of which I have an hundred in my celle"[88]. He seems unsure not only of what type of story he wishes to tell, but also of what manner of discourse might be appropriate, stating that he "[…] wol doon al my diligence, / As fer as sowneth into honestee"[89]. What is expressed here is a concern to what degree the telling of tales can be conducive to honesty and decency, and the Monk, seemingly on the fence on the issue, seems unsure what would be appropriate to tell. He settles on first presenting a series of tragedies, a genre he describes as follows:

> "Tragedie is to seyn a certeyn storie
> As olde bokes maken us memorie,
> Of hym that stood in greet prosperitee,
> And is yfallen out of heigh degree,
> Into myserie, and endeth wrecchedly"[90].

In his description, the "conception of tragedy that appears […] is not the Aristotelian idea of tragedy as a product of some tragic flaw in the protagonist's character but the medieval idea that the protagonist is a victim rather than a hero, raised up and then cast down by the workings of fortune"[91]. His tales present the world as "a grim and discouraging place in which happiness is to be avoided since it inevitably leads to tragic misery"[92]. These narratives, the Monk continues, are either versified, or written in prose. In his definition, he also locates the value of these tales specifically in their overtly stated moral content: A tragedy describes a final downward turn on the wheel of fortune, where men that once held a high position fall irredeemably. "The Monk's Tale" consists of no less than seventeen of such 'cases concerning illustrious men'[93]. The Monk's 'case file' contains not only fictional and mythical characters, but also includes religious and historical personages. After almost a score of such tales, the Knight

[87] Bailly laments that a man like the Monk was ever called to orders, and speculates that if it were not for this, the Monk would have "been a tredefowel aright" and would have "bigeten ful many a creature". See CT, FVII, ls. 1945 and 1947.

[88] See CT, FVII, ls 1968-1972.

[89] See CT, FVII, ls. 1965-1966.

[90] See CT, FVII, ls. 1975-1977.

[91] See Benson in CT, p. 17.

[92] *Idem*.

[93] The tale has "*De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*" as its subtitle. See CT, p. 241.

has to step in and put a stop to the teller, stating that this was too much 'hevynesse' for the other pilgrims: The depressing nature and repetitive iteration of these narratives of reversals of fortune are neither suitable in subject matter, nor do they seem to warrant being repeated so insistently. The Host exclaims: "Sire Monk, namoore of this, so God yow blesse! / Youre tale anoyeth al this compaignye. / Swich talking is nat worth a boterflye, / *For therinne is ther no desport ne game*"[94]. What the Host criticises is not just the gloominess of the Monk's tales[95], but that there is no sport in them and leave little to respond to.

However, neither Knight nor Host wish ill to the Monk, and instead give him some suggestions on how he might continue. The Knight suggests that the irreversible fall of men is too gloomy a subject matter, and invites him to speak of something more cheerful, like a man whom, reduced to 'povre estaat', manages to claw his way back to fortune. The Host suggests he might tell some story about hunting. The Monk, however, declines, and states "I have no lust to pleye"[96], signalling an ultimate unwillingness to engage the other Pilgrims with the type of discourse they prefer. The Monk's suspicion of fictions, it seems, wins out in the end. This is not to say, however, that the Monk has not tried: "However unsuccessful his tale, the Monk's willingness to discuss a philosophical problem in the vernacular does indicate a desire both to break out of the circularity of his argument and to enter the play space of the pilgrimage more wholeheartedly"[97]. His final remark that he no longer wishes to play likewise does not signify that he has "lost interest in theology [or] tale telling; he simply has not found through his recitation a way to combine the two discourses or to reconcile their differences"[98]. The Monk thus remains on the fence, and is "saying in his own way that he too cannot "bulte it to the bren""[99].

The Host, meanwhile, "with rude speech and boold"[100], invites the Nun's Priest to tell the next tale, and to make it a merry one. "The Nun's Priest's Tale" presents an enigma, insofar as there has been a huge proliferation of readings, without any one of them coming close to setting forth a stable meaning of the text. The Nun's Priest encourages his audience to consider the moral of his story, to 'take the fruit and let the chaff be still'. But what is the moral, and what is the fruit? What, for that matter –if anything– is chaff? This segment suggests that the 'fruit' of the tale lies in the reader's *decision* which elements are fruit and which are chaff, in doing so restoring the tale-telling game to proper order and providing a rebuttal to the Monk. As this study has focused so heavily on issues connected to free will and predetermination, it should come as little surprise that this reading sees as fruit of the text a passage

[94] See CT, FVII, ls. 2788-2791. Italics my own.

[95] There has been plenty of gloominess before, such as in "The Prioress' Tale", to which no-one objected.

[96] See CT, FVII, ls. 2806.

[97] See Rhodes, p. 30.

[98] See Rhodes, p. 32.

[99] *Idem*.

[100] See CT, FVII, ls. 2808.

directly referencing Thomas Bradwardine and exploring issues related to free will. Furthermore, the "Nun's Priest's Tale" starts a series of responses that continues throughout the *Canterbury Tales,* which has as its subject the way fiction generates (philosophical) meaning, and represents the first instance of a discussion that continues in the Parson's Tale and Chaucer's retraction[101]. The same citation from St. Paul is cited on these three occasions to back up three different stances on the issue of the usefulness of fictions.

After the Monk's unsatisfactory and monotonous series of tragedies, the Host burdens the Nun's Priest with furnishing the pilgrims with the manner of tale he expected from the Monk, and to restore the game to proper order. The Nun's Priest relates what at first appears to be a simple beast fable about the encounter of the cock Chauntecleer with a fox in his barnyard: "The Nun's Priest places us in the enclosed, present-day world of an English dairy farm, as if to say that the drama of life occurs in the humblest of circumstances as well as the exalted"[102]. The genre of the beast fable is described by Boccaccio as "a form of discourse, which, under guise of invention, illustrates or proves an idea; and, as its superficial aspect is removed, the meaning of the author is made clear"[103]. Spearing adds to this definition that the beast fable presents "stories of the cock and fox, or the lion and mice, manifestly untrue but devised to teach truths amusingly, especially to school children"[104]. Yet "The Nun's Priest's Tale" is anything but simple, featuring many asides and allusions to different narrative traditions that leave the reader in bewilderment as to where actual meaning resides. On the question of genre and subject, Peter W. Travis concludes the following:

> "In addition to beast fable, [the tale] has been defined as a sermon, an *exemplum*, a comedy, a tragedy, a tragicomedy, a satire, an epyllion, a mock epic, a romance, a fabliau, even a fictional *poéme à clef*. It includes bits of many other kinds of literature as well: fortunate fall motives are intercalated with fasciles of the *Fürstenspiegel* ("mirror of princes"), the *consolation,* and the *disputatio,* which in turn are set of against discursive snippets relating to theology, psychology, astronomy, gastronomy, philosophy, and the proper measurement of time"[105].

While the base narrative of the "The Nun's Priest's Tale" is a beast fable, its many asides lend it a far greater complexity. Indeed, as Maurice Hussey has pointed out, the main narrative comprises only 175 lines out of 696, the rest is made up of the various asides by the narrator

[101] Namely, the citation that 'Paul said that all is written for our doctrine'.

[102] See Rhodes, p. 33.

[103] See Boccaccio in Spearing, p. 159. "The Nun's Priest" seems to simultaneously confirm and defy this definition, as it presents a tale which ostensibly possesses a 'moralite', but which simultaneously contains so many potentially interesting asides that any stable meaning of the text is rendered impossible.

[104] See Spearing, p. 159.

[105] See Travis, p. 8.

and Chauntecleer[106]. These asides cover a wide range of topics, further complicating the act of separating fruit from chaff, leading Talbot Donaldson to pronounce "conclusively that the fruit of The Nun's Priest Tale is its chaff"[107], and Derek Pearsall to state that "the fact that the tale has no point is the point of the tale"[108]. It certainly seems reasonable to assume, as Charles Muscatine famously put it, that "The Nun's Priest Tale does not so much make true and solemn assertions about life as it tests truths and tries out solemnities. If you are not careful, it will try out your solemnity too; it is here, doubtless trying out mine"[109]. While the sheer volume of references and subject shifts does seem to preclude any definite settling of the tale's subject, I would be hesitant to follow Donaldson or Pearsall in their suggestion that *irrelevancies* or *pointlessness* are the point of this tale. Rather, I would argue (in concord with Travis and Muscatine) that the point of the tale lies in its *interpretability*, the interpretation being affected by the preferences and attunements of each reader, resulting in a proliferation of readings of the same text. It represents an instructive text that showcases how literary works operate. St. Paul is invoked to make a case for the usefulness of fictions: 'All we write is for our doctrine' is framed in such a way as to include stories and tales like the one the Nun's Priest tells his audience. It shows itself to be "Chaucer [as] most generous – insisting that we respond to The Nun's Priest Tale, not as he might wish, but in our own quite singular fashions"[110]. This section offers one such reading from a perspective that is interested in philosophical debates on topics like predetermination and free will, and has examined the works of Thomas Bradwardine in detail. "The Nun's Priest Tale" allows for a reading perfectly suited for a reader attuned to these issues.

The narrative of the Nun's Priest's 'tale of the cock and hen' centres on Chauntecleer, a beautiful rooster who lives on a widow's small farm. He is described in potent and virile terms, a true cock of the walk[111], who has seven wives and 'feathers' his hen Pertelote twenty times in the morning[112]. Having dreamt of being mauled and killed by a creature with claws and fangs, Chauntecleer finds himself scared witless, seeing in this dream a portent of fate. Pertelote berates him for being unmanly, reminding Chauntecleer that dreams are only dreams. Later on, Chauntecleer meets a fox. Wary at first, Chauntecleer lets down his guard after the fox's successful attempts at flattery, claiming he comes as a friend, having heard that Chauntecleer has the most marvellous singing voice. Chauntecleer, beguiled, makes to burst into song, and is at that moment seized by his 'admirer'. After a desperate struggle, Chauntecleer wrenches himself free from the fox's grasp, flying up to a branch of the nearest tree. The fox tries to talk Chauntecleer down from his safe position, again employing flattery. Chauntecleer, having learned his lesson, does not come down, and rebukes the fox. The grue-

[106] See also Travis, pp. 9-11.

[107] See Donaldson, p. 20.

[108] See Pearsall, p. 12.

[109] See Muscatine, p. 242.

[110] See Travis, p. 349.

[111] See also CT, FVII, ls. 2859-2964.

[112] See also CT, FVII, ls. 3176-3177 and ls. 3191-3192.

some fate foreboded by his prophetic dream is narrowly avoided, in a parodic inversion of a tragedy of reversal of fortune: While Chauntecleer frets over its portents in advance, the dreaded downward turn of fortune's wheel never arrives through his upward flight or fortunate fall. This ending also provides an interesting reversal of the Monk's narratives about great men falling from prosperity, while simultaneously satisfying the Knight's request for a tale about someone who "clymbeth up and wexeth fortunate"[113].

On the subjects of free will and predetermination, Andretta notes that "The Nun's Priest's Tale" is "second only to Troilus and Criseyde in its philosophical concern for the relationship between divine foreknowledge and human free will", and that the tale "seems to acknowledge the truth of divine foreknowledge in the communication of future events through dreams. The dreams also reveal the opportunity for avoidance of catastrophe through free will"[114]. Michelet and Pickavé likewise consider "the problem of human freedom, and in particular how human free will and divine foreknowledge may be compatible" to be "the clearest instance of a philosophical question appearing in Chaucer's poetry"[115]. It is in the context of the overt discussion of issues of free will and predestination that the tale makes a direct reference to Thomas Bradwardine, which places him in a tradition of thought linked to Augustine and Boethius. This reference is located after the scene in which the fox first enters the narrative, and the narrator bemoans that Chauntecleer did not heed the warning of his dream, stating that:

> "But what God forwoot moot nedes bee,
> After the opinioun of certein clerkis.
> Witnesse on hym that any parfit clerk is,
> That in scole is greet altercacioun
> In this mateere, and greet disputisoun,
> And hath been of an hundred thousand men.
> But I ne kan nat bulte it to the bren
> As kan the holy doctour Augustyn,
> Or Boece, or the Bisshop Bradwardyn"[116].

Chaucer, it seems, knows Bradwardine at least superficially, as he mentions him in context of the problem of divine foreknowledge, and places him in a tradition with Boethius and Augustine. The passage on prophetic dreams is used here to open an aside on the necessity of divine foreknowledge, with the Nun's Priest remarking that while this topic is hotly debated by many clerics of his time, he does not feel qualified to "separate the valid from the invalid arguments"[117]. While stressing the magnitude of these debates, the "tone of this passage is

[113] See CT, FVII, l. 2776.

[114] See Andretta, p. 166.

[115] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 416.

[116] See CT, FVII, ls. 3233-3242.

[117] See CT, p. 258.

ironic, and the voice of the one 'parfit clerk' whom the narrator invokes as his authority on this question dissolves into the comically inflated number of a hundred thousand discussants"[118]. Still, Chaucer's mention of Bradwardine in this passage is the only instance in *The Canterbury Tales* where a contemporary theologian is mentioned, a fact that certainly *seems* important. We should, however, be cautious of overstating the import of Chaucer's 'name-dropping' of Bradwardine: Boccaccio, for instance, whose influence is felt everywhere through Chaucer's oeuvre, is at no point named or referenced specifically. *Naming* in Chaucer is no guarantee for *influence*. Some surface awareness of Bradwardine's theories seems, at least, apparent, as he is rightly placed in a critical tradition drawing on Augustine and Boethius, and is connected to the subject of the necessity of God's foreknowledge. The lines that follow also mirror Bradwardine's interests closely. Despite the Nun's Priest's self-disqualification as knowledgeable on the subject, he then goes on to deliver a highly condensed yet apt summary of the positions in contemporary debates on free will:

> "Wheither that Goddes worthy forwityng
> Streyneth me nedely for to doon a thyng -
> "Nedely" clepe I simple necessitee -
> Or elles, if free choys be graunted me
> To do that same thyng, or do it noght,
> Though God forwoot it er that it was wroght;
> Or if his wityng streyneth never a deel
> But by necessitee condicioneel.
> I wol nat han to do of swich mateere;
> My tale is of a cok, as ye may heere"[119].

The first three lines discuss the problem of absolute or simple necessity; whether divine foreknowledge *forces* one to act the way they actually do. The Nun's Priest showcases his knowledge of the terms of the debate by specifying that by 'constrains' ('streyneth') he is referring specifically to the concept of *simple* necessity. We encountered this before in the third chapter of this study: The "technical detail" of "the distinction between conditional and absolute (or simple) necessity" is used by Boethius "in the solution he offers to the question regarding divine foreknowledge in Book Five, Prose Six of the Consolation"[120]. Bradwardine used a similar distinction to buttress his own account of the compatibility of free will and divine

[118] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 417. If one were to presuppose a familiarity of Chaucer with Bradwardine's work (an assumption I would be hesitant to make, given the lack of any concrete positive proof), one might also see in this an ironic reversal of Bradwardine's self-portrayal as being like 'a lone prophet standing against the 850 prophets of Baal': Here, rather than a single opposing voice, he becomes part of an innumerable chorus of clamouring voices.

[119] See CT, FVII, ls. 3243-3252.

[120] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 417. According to Boethius, "Because God knows them, future human actions will come about in the way they have been foreseen by him. But this does not mean that God's foreknowledge is the cause of human actions". See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 417.

foreknowledge.

Like Bradwardine and Boethius, the Nun's Priest seems to posit that this type of determinism, where God's foreknowledge forces human agents into a particular course of action, is not compatible with free will[121]. Free actions are defined along the standard line of an 'up-to-usness' in the decision-making process and execution, and free choice is described as being able 'to do that same thing, or do it not', despite God 'foreknowing it before it was done'. This explicitly refers to a soft determinist understanding of free will, which allows for free choice while affirming the truth of determinism. The following two lines could be interpreted along a Bradwardinian slant[122], as they posit that God's foreknowing might not matter at all for man, and that the mode of his foreknowledge is that of a conditional necessity: Just in the same fashion that, if I see a man walking down the street, it is conditionally necessary that he is walking down the street so, too, does God's foreknowledge relate to man's actions. God, in this interpretation, exists outside of our linear conception of time, and experiences all moments of past, present, and future simultaneously. God thus acts as an *observer*[123] of our actions, whose knowledge[124] does not impede our free choosing. The Nun's Priest thus shows a more than adequate knowledge of the problematic at hand, and has summarised it skilfully and accurately in just ten lines. The subjects of foreknowledge of free will remain present throughout the tale: Chauntecleer's prophetic dream, and the fact that *it comes true* seem to suggest a determined order is in place, and simultaneously opens up the rather prickly issues of prophetic dreams[125]. Chauntecleer's flight seems to suggest that free actions are possible, and might even suggest an *openness* of the future: While his prophetic dream did come true, real events do not end with a mauling but with a flight to freedom.

We should note the following about the Nun's Priest digression on the topic of the compatibility of free will and divine foreknowledge: Firstly, while the Nun's Priest makes an apt *summary* of the debate, the "distinction between two kinds of necessities on its own does not yet amount to a real solution to the question of how divine foreknowledge can be compatible with human freedom, for it remains to be seen how God's foreknowledge can be compatible with human freedom"[126]. Indeed, a resolution is neither sought nor given, something that seems to be a deliberate decision on the part of the Nun's Priest: His "exposition of the two kinds of necessity" is prefaced "by saying that he cannot go to the heart of the matter, as Augustine, Boethius, or Bradwardine could; he instead emphatically turns his back on the

[121] The statement 'or else, if I free choice is granted to me', seems to imply that the preceding form of determinism does not allow for free will.

[122] It could just as easily, however, be interpreted as Boethian, on whom Bradwardine draws heavily in his conception of time, and the way it relates to God's foreknowledge.

[123] Albeit an observer that co-acts and co-moves in the actions we decide on with our own free will.

[124] *Fore*knowledge is inaccurate due to God's different perspective on time.

[125] For the problems that arise from the issues of divine revelations and prophetic dreams, refer to the fourth chapter of this study.

[126] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 417.

problem: 'I wol not han to do of swich mateere'"[127]. The Nun's Priest has keenly recognised that the pilgrims enjoy ambiguity and interpretability in their tales as opposed to firm meaning and so he deliberately refuses to settle the matter, reminding them instead that his 'tale is of a cock', and nothing more.

This passage presents an interesting moment of doubleness where a subject is brought up for discussion and, having been summarised expertly, is dismissed as being beside the point. Yet in the very act of dismissal, the issue has been raised, and the reader's attention has been called to the subject of divine foreknowledge, and the way such an abstract subject affects even Chauntecleer's barnyard world. While this passage clearly *thematises* issues also mentioned in Bradwardine, we should be wary of constructing from this mere act of mentioning an agreement or influence: While Bradwardine may be the only contemporary theologian (except for Strode) that is explicitly named by Chaucer, there is no evidence that Chaucer actually read or was familiar with his work in more than a highly superficial manner. What we *can* conclude from this passage, however, is that philosophy is mentioned here not innocently or to develop a philosophical argument: Rather, these "lines are part of the playful multiplication of genres and registers […] that constitutes the very fabric of this tale and its comic trigger"[128]. It also highlights the epistemological differences between the different texts, as the "contrast between Bradwardine- who goes on to examine thirty-three rival views on the compatibility between divine foreknowledge and human free will before stating his own position in *De Causa Dei*- and Chaucer's light-footed allusion to the scholastic debate, could not be starker"[129].

In this fashion, the Nun's Priest outlines the way a tale or fictional text operates: The emphatic dismissal of settling the debate in either one direction or the other underlines the active role taken by the reader or listener. They decide which of the many threads to pick up on, and how to respond to this. "The Nun's Priest's Tale's" heteroglossic approach to the generation of textual meaning and proliferating allusions to a great variety of subjects allows just about everyone *something* to respond to. While this study concerned itself in large part with the issue of divine foreknowledge, and "The Nun's Priest's Tale" certainly accommodates such a reading, philosophy is far from the only subject at hand. Scholars interested in social history might, for instance, note that "The Nun's Priest's Tale" contains the only direct reference to the Peasants' Revolt[130], one of the greatest social upheavals of Chaucer's time, which may lead them to ponder why Chaucer inserts "his only overt reference to the 1381 Uprising (the most earth-shattering political event of his lifetime) into the carnivalized comedy of a fictional fox chase in *The Nun's Priest's Tale*"[131]. Those interested in depic-

[127] *Idem.*

[128] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 418.

[129] See Michelet and Pickavé, p. 418.

[130] See also CT, FVII, l. 3394, which refers to 'Jakke Strawe and his meynee'. Jack Straw was a protagonist in the Peasants' Revolt that swept England in 1381.

[131] See Travis, p. 21.

tions of women may note recurrent themes of antifeminist morals, particularly in the passage dealing with Chauntecleer's mistranslation of the common misogynist maxim *in principio, mulier est hominis confusio*, which means 'in the beginning, woman caused man to fall', but which is translated as 'woman, who is man's joy and all his bliss'[132]. Finally, the Host also finds something he can happily respond to, namely the hypersexualized portrayal of Chauntecleer's masculine attributes. It appears that the Host "has heard from the Nun's Priest the sort of tale he originally expected from the Monk because he attributes to the Monk those physical qualities he had previously predicated to the Monk, a fully eroticized and fleshly nature"[133]. After his disappointment with the Monk's dour moralizing, he finds the worldly tale he hoped to hear from the Monk's mouth from that of the Nun's Priest, which explains his exuberance, as well as the transfer of physical properties from the former to the latter, an act through which the Host, after a fashion "incarnates" the Nun's Priest, a character who "heretofore has been to us only a disembodied voice"[134]. The Host's reaction further underlines the tale's radical interpretability; ignoring both the surface moral content as well as the multitude of asides, Harry Bailly's response fixates entirely on the erotic content of the tale. In this fashion, the tale "aims to generate an unlimited number of possible meanings, especially those that may have been suppressed by tradition or authority"[135]. It can (and has often been) interpreted as "Chaucer's *ars poetica*, a tale about the act and art of storytelling itself"[136]. If there are any definite pronouncements to be made, one might be the observation that the epistemological value of poetry is located in its radical interpretability.

We turn now to four lines located at the Tale's end: "Taketh the moralite, goode men. / For Seint Paul seith that al that written is, / To oure doctrine it is ywrite, ywis; / Taketh the fruyt, and lat the chaf be stille"[137]. In this passage, the Nun's Priest cites Saint Paul, stating that all that is written is for the good of Christian doctrine. It explicitly addresses the issue of the instructional value of fictions, the debate on which we have traced throughout the course of the *Canterbury Tales*; from the Parson's dismissal, through the Pardoner's insistence on the uses of 'tales olde' in lay instruction to the Monk's ambivalent relationship with fictions and the

[132] See also Rhodes, p. 35, which states that "if this is a joke, it is not at all clear on whom or for whom the joke is made, women or clerks. Most likely it is a comment on the way clerks interpret texts as they apply to women. The "truth" lies in the interpretation, in the fundamental difference that exists between the authoritative, "clerkly" language of Latin and the English vernacular version which is always an interpretation as well as well as a translation and which exerts its own truth or version of reality". This passage, too, allows multiple interpretations, and can be seen as comment not only on common antifeminist narratives of the time, but also remarking on the constant tension between Latin and the vernacular, and the issue of translation which always seems to harbour the potential of transforming or deforming the original meaning.

[133] See Rhodes, p. 43.

[134] *Idem*.

[135] See Rhodes, p. 37.

[136] See Rhodes, p. 40.

[137] See CT, FVII, ls. 3440-3443.

vernacular. The Nun's Priest's stance seems clear, namely that *all* is appropriate. At least, he has aptly demonstrated that even the simple genre of the beast fable can be used to create a heteroglossic and richly interpretable text, and secondly that the manner in which such a text approaches issues like philosophy operates on a different epistemological basis than the authoritative text. Thus, the 'fruit' of the tale may be said to reside in that "Chaucer's poem accommodates the pleasure or enjoyment each pilgrim-teller may derive from his or her text, regardless of its form or content"[138], allowing for individual responses. That the "tale offers such a selection of fruits that we are at a loss to know which to select as 'the moralite'"[139] appears to be precisely the point. In conclusion, if the tale "is Chaucer's *ars poetica* and if the language he uses is redemptive, it indicates that in his poetry he is prepared to transform theological discourse, and along with it epic consciousness, into the language and experience of everyday life"[140]. While the tale "does not arrive at any final resolution to the ambiguities and paradoxes of our experience of time", it "nevertheless, in choosing fiction as a medium, […] helps us to see that while we were created for this world and this world was created for us, we must live in it untruth as well as truth"[141]. Katherine Little makes the suggestion that "perhaps the Nun's Priest's "moral" provides a succinct justification of the way in which doctrine and narrative are intimately related, especially because his invocation of Paul's authority mirrors the Parson's"[142]. This invocation also finds a third echo in the "Retraction" at the end of the *Canterbury Tales*.

The final prologue and tale that directly addresses the issue of the appropriateness of fictions ("Chaucer's Retraction" excepted) is that of the Parson, which not only presents a view on fictions 'from the other side', but also presents a response to the characters and tales of the Pardoner and Nun's Priest, and continues the referencing of St. Paul in furthering the debate on uses of fictions, albeit to argue the opposite point of the Nun's Priest. The Parson made an earlier attempt to deliver a sermon, which was thwarted by the Shipman / Wife of Bath. Now, as the pilgrims approach Canterbury, the Parson, having been moved to the back of the line of speakers due to his refusal to partake in the game, finally receives a second chance to speak: While the Parson is allowed "the last word, he must wait until the last to say it"[143]. Once more, the Host invites him to speak, stating: "Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat oure pley; / For every man, save thou, hath toold his tale. / […] Thou sholdest knytte up wel a greet mateere. / Telle us a fable anon, for cokkes bones!"[144] The Host's request that the Parson tells some fable, coupled with his request not to break the game[145] underlines the importance of fiction as the pilgrimage's preferred mode of discourse a final time. The Parson's

[138] See Rhodes, p. 40.

[139] See Spearing, p. 172.

[140] See Rhodes, p. 41.

[141] See Rhodes, p. 41.

[142] See Little, p. 93.

[143] See Patterson 1978, p. 380.

[144] See CT, FX, ls. 24-29.

[145] A repetition of the same request he made earlier to the Monk.

attitude to fictions and fables[146] and their appropriateness in the teachings of religious materials and the transmission of genuine truths seems unchanged since he first spoke, as he denies the Host's request for a fable, stating that:

> "Thou getest fable noon ytold for me,
> For Paul, that writeth unto Thymothee,
> Repreveth hem that weyven soothfastnesse
> And tellen fables and swich wrecchednesse.
> Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest,
> Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?"[147]

The Parson not only rejects the Host's request for a fable, he also "insists that he would, in accordance with St. Paul's teachings, never tell a 'false' tale if he could sow the wheat of truth", grounding his "hostility of fiction" by mirroring the Nun's Priest's argument: The Parson, too, invokes the authority of Paul, but this time to argue *against* the use of fictions, rather than for it. He also invokes the fruit and chaff debate previously encountered in "The Nun's Priest's Tale", taking the stance that he will not concern himself with fables at all, as he sees them as entirely unfit for moral instruction: His answer to the Nun's Priest is that his tale, and fictions in general, are to him only chaff, and there is no fruit to be found among such ambiguities. In this fashion, "as if to avoid the moral ambiguity of the Nun's Priest's Tale, the Parson refuses to tell any fable at all"[148], and replaces it with straightforward and moral teaching. The Parson not merely replaces "fables with "Cristes loore" […], the material he preaches according to the *General Prologue"*, but rather "sets aside narratives of all kinds, even the biblical narratives that seem to appear consistently in narratives of the penitential tradition"[149]. The explicit rejection of those arguments in favour of narratives put forward by the Nun's Priest, thus "seems to propose that a reformed clergy […] will have to make some sacrifices- and that sacrifice is imagined as narrative"[150].

Nor is the Parson only contrasted against the Nun's Priest: He is also contrasted against the Pardoner. This contrast "can certainly be read in terms of their characters: The Pardoner is both unreformed and unrepentant, mired in the corrupt practices of the established church, whereas the Parson is an ideal"[151]. The Parson's character indeed seems as far removed from the Pardoner as possible: He has "generally been interpreted as […] a figure of higher moral authority. His portrait, if read straightforwardly, puts him among any possible group of per-

[146] See also Knapp, p. 94, for more on the Parson's opposition to fiction and fables.

[147] See CT, FX, ls. 31-36.

[148] See Rhodes, p. 40.

[149] See Little, p. 92.

[150] See Little, p. 93.

[151] See Little, p. 94. Peggy Knapp also sees the Parson's portrayal as mirroring the Pardoner, particularly where personal morality is concerned. See also Knapp, p. 77.

fect pilgrims"[152]. The mirroring of Pardoner and Parson extends beyond character, however, as it also includes their respective stances on narrative, and their role in the penitential process: "The Pardoner embraces both the confessional and the narrative mode as completely intertwined: his narrative extends the "confession" from his prologue, and it encourages the identifications and confessions of his audience. […] The Parson, in contrast, shows that penitential self-definition can succeed only in the rejection of narrative"[153]. Through this double contrast with the Pardoner and Nun's Priest, and a continuation of the fruit-and-chaff metaphor and invocation of Saint Paul's authority, the debate on the uses and application of fictions is emphatically continued. Unlike the Monk's doubts, however, the Parson is much firmer in his stance towards fictions: He rejects outright the Nun's Priest's perspective that fables can contain fruitful elements of moral meaning, and posits, in contrast to the Pardoner, that "penitential self-definition can succeed only in the rejection of narrative"[154]. Finally, in "The Parson's Tale", Chaucer's "concern with the language of lay instruction shifts to the other side of the debate: language authorized by the church" in a "language that is reformed and enables reform but does not threaten the authority of the church. For Chaucer, this is the language of the penitential tradition"[155].

These preceding paragraphs may have made a depiction of the Parson that is perhaps undeservedly harsh, or at least one that may seem overly rigid. Certainly, the Parson's portrayal is not as clear-cut as may have been implied, as he, too, is subject to his own ambiguities. Previous discussion of the Parson in this chapter described how the Host, growing angry with the Parson, derisively refers to him as a Lollard. Likewise, this "accusation of Lollardy […] seems to be confirmed by the portrait of the Parson in the *General Prologue*"[156]. This association is something from which he is never exactly detached, but which likewise cannot easily be confirmed. The Parson's insistence on the pre-eminence of scripture, and focus on pure and poor priests might certainly hint at a Lollard association. On the other hand, the very object of the pilgrimage[157] seems to speak against it, as Wycliffites specifically spurned the veneration of the saints. Likewise, the Parson's delivery of "a penitential manual that reinforces the necessity of auricular confession" is something that "concerns itself with one of the practices vehemently opposed by the Wycliffites"[158]. Furthermore, the Parson in his prologue seeks to "separate himself from his earlier appearances by reasserting the authority he derives from the institutional church [and] he takes pains to defend the orthodoxy of his speech"[159]. Thus, the Parson's character seems to evoke simultaneously two sides of a contem-

[152] See Bornemann, p. 227.

[153] See Little, p. 94.

[154] See Little, p. 94.

[155] See Little, p.90.

[156] See Little, pp. 80-81.

[157] Namely, the veneration of the remains of St. Thomas Becket at Canterbury.

[158] See Little, p. 81.

[159] See Little, pp. 90-91.

porary debate between orthodoxy[160] and Lollardy. Trying to settle the issue of whether the Parson is 'meant' as either Lollard or orthodox seems the wrong question to ask, however: "To engage in this argument seems to miss the point- that Chaucer establishes this figure as a contradiction: he is meant to evoke both sides of the contemporary debate, not to be definitively identified as one or the other"[161].

The 'tale' itself, in consequence, is not so much a tale as it is a penitential manual written in plain prose. However, though it appears at first glance at odds with the rest of *The Canterbury Tales*, the Parson is not unsympathetic to the needs and wants of the rest of the pilgrims, nor does his tale represent as jarring a transition as has sometimes been suggested. Rather, the Parson makes a number of small but meaningful concessions to his audience, and provides both a fitting final tale before the arrival at Canterbury, as well as a smooth transition to the "Retraction". After the Host's invitation to the Parson to tell some fable to 'knyt up' the other Pilgrims' tales, the Parson, though he feels he cannot in good conscience tell a fable, proposes a compromise: If his audience were to accept that he will not tell a fable or narrative, and that its content will be of 'morality and vertuous mateere', he will try his utmost within his abilities to do them 'plesaunce leeffull', and tell them a 'myrie tale in prose' to 'knytte up al this feeste and make an ende'.

The Parson makes clear that he does not wish to impose his authority upon the pilgrims, but finds himself incapable of telling the sort of story they might wish to hear. His penitential manual seems to be the compromise between telling a tale and delivering a sermon; having a clear moral purpose and intent, while not quite carrying the authoritative weight and hierarchical difference a sermon might have had. Therefore, I feel it is significant to point out that the Parson's Tale is not so much, as earlier criticism tended to claim, a sermon but rather a "penitential handbook or treatise"[162]. He also asks his audience explicitly *for their permission* to tell such a tale, signalling that he does not wish to speak to them from a position of elevated religious authority, but as one on equal footing with the rest of his fellows. Furthermore, the

[160] My use of 'orthodox' should be understood here as representing a *dynamic*, rather than static concept. Little rightly notes that "scholars of religious practices have demonstrated [that] the orthodoxy of late medieval England was a fluid and changing set of practices and not a static set of propositions". See Little, p. 90. Furthermore, a claim that the Parson were orthodox would "mean relatively little, since orthodox was in the process of defining itself in relation to a heterodoxy that had only recently appeared". See Little, p. 91.

[161] See Little, p. 80. This conclusion comes with the addendum, however, that "it should be clear to Chaucer wanted his readers to think of his Parson in relation to Lollardy".

[162] See Wenzel, in Patterson 1978, p. 349. "The Parson's Tale" is a combination of two different penitential treatises; one of the deadly sins and the other on the importance on penance. Past critics have typically felt their combination to have been disjointed or unfitting, but Lee Patterson convincingly demonstrated that the "inclusion of these elements into one work not only is not unusual in penitential manuals but is virtually mandatory. Indeed, one would be hard-pressed to find any discussion of penance in the later Middle Ages that does not deal with the sins in more or less details".

Parson hastens to add that it is not his desire to 'glose', thus responding to earlier objections raised when he first attempted to tell his tale[163]. Finally, he apologizes for his lack of rhetorical style, stating that he is good neither at alliterative verse nor at rhyming.

It seems, then, that the Parson is not (or at least does not express to be) opposed to poetry as a stylistic form, but *is* doubtful of the appropriateness of *narrative* in religious instruction. It is not, the Parson states, because he *disapproves* of alliterative verse or rhyming couplets that his penitential manual is dressed in prose, but rather because he is *inept* at doing so. These "various professions of incompetence, the invocation of divine support, the claim to be but an unlearned man unable to rhyme and so forth probably constitute the only instance of diminution in the work that the reader will not see primarily as a rhetorical topos, but, at least to some degree, as genuine humility"[164]. While the Parson's "professed intention to knit together their feast to show the group the way to Heavenly Jerusalem reveals that he is very much convinced of his role as their moral leader" may carry some "trace of pretentiousness", they nevertheless "undeniably breathe honest piety, and as a result, even the Host responds to his solemn speech with courtesy"[165].

It also shows an effort on the part of the Parson, after the earlier rebuke, to abide by the rules of the tale-telling game, to the degree that he is able. His decision to switch from the mode of sermon to that of the penitential manual, represents a small but significant concession to the desires of the other pilgrims and the demands of the tale-telling game. The pilgrims, on their part, seem to accept the Parson's proposed mutual concession: "Upon this word we han assented soone, / For, as it seemed, it was for to doone - / To enden in some vertuous sentence"[166]. The pilgrims, after deliberation amongst themselves, come to the conclusion that these concessions suffice, and that it would be most appropriate to end their series of tales on a pious and virtuous note. The Parson's 'tale' thus functions as a transition from the journey to arrival at the destination. It also 'knits up' the series of tales in another fashion: Both the individual deadly sins and penitential practices he describes have (in passing or at length) moulded a number of the preceding tales, and the Parson provides a continuation of these themes, albeit dressed in a different form of discourse: He makes "the decision to 'knit up' the game not with a fictional tale but rather a warning against the vices that have been dealt with individually before by his fellow pilgrims"[167]. Finally, the Parson's tale also provides a smooth transition into the penitential mode of the Retraction that follows it.

Bornemann provides a succinct summary of the Retraction: "Chaucer entreats his audience and readership to thank Jesus for everything they have found of worth in the work,

[163] The concern was that he would 'sow difficulty' by glossing the gospel or preaching.

[164] See Bornemann, p. 228.

[165] See Bornemann, p. 228.

[166] See CT, FX, ls. 61-65.

[167] See Bornemann, p. 230.

and to attribute all fault to his limitations, insisting that his intent had always been to write for "*oure doctrine*""[168]. The Retraction has been hotly debated by Chaucerians, as its sudden pious turn seems at odds with the rest of the work. While some critics have seen in this passage a reflection of Chaucer's 'true' voice[169], others have interpreted it as representing a formulaic ending[170]. Amongst these is Olive Sayce, who is convinced that "what we face at this point is not the expression of genuine regret but of Chaucer's reflection on the ideological bias against secular literature, which he did not seriously share but rather considered with amusement"[171]. While the Retraction remains (deliberately) ambiguous, Sayce's reading is convincing for several reasons. For one, while "other examples of the retraction tradition do not leave space for anything other than a literal interpretation, Chaucer's text offers layers of meaning"[172]: In the very act of retracting his works, Chaucer simultaneously lays claim to them as their author. There is a "striking contrast between the precise listings of the works to be condemned and the vague general designation (apart from *Boece*) of those works for which credit is claimed, which suggests that Chaucer is more concerned with the establishment of the canon of his works than with their rejection"[173].

Of particular interest in the light of this chapter is Chaucer's repeated reference to the authority of Saint Paul that his 'entente' was always to write for 'oure doctrine'[174]. We see here repeated the same phrase previously cited by the Nun's Priest to defend the value of fictions. While this phrase, "taken in its original scriptural sense lends support to the rejection of worldly literature", its "secularized use […] attested elsewhere in Chaucer […] justified the generally instructive purpose of all literature, secular as well as religious"[175]. In this fashion, the trio of Pauline references from the Nun's Priest to Parson to the Retraction is carried to conclusion, and through repetition of the utterance from the Nun's Priest's tale, the retraction seems to suggest that it was always the 'entente' of the author to write fruitfully: In "placing this assertion [that 'al is writen for oure doctrine'] ahead of his discussion of specific texts, Chaucer counters both the Parson's condemnation of fiction and the possibility of reading the rest of the "Retraction" as an unqualified rejection of the greater portion of Chaucer's literary composition. […] Chaucer here makes clear his intent in his works – an important but con-

[168] See Bornemann, p. 233.

[169] These include, as discussed in the seventh chapter of this study, a number of works from the Chaucer-as-Realist interpretation from the paradigm of literary nominalism, which have tended to interpret the Retraction literally, and meant to bring the unruly world of the Canterbury Tales back into order.

[170] Though Rodney Delasanta raised the valid issue of whether formula would "necessarily neutralize sincerity and force a speaker's tongue into his cheek". See Delasanta in Bornemann, p. 235.

[171] See Bornemann, p. 235.

[172] *Idem*.

[173] See Sayce p. 245.

[174] See CT, FX, ls. 1078-1079:"For oure book seith, "al that is writen is writen / for oure doctrine," and that is myn entente".

[175] See Sayce, p. 245.

troversial issue in determining the value of secular literature"[176] . In this fashion, and through its plea to disregard any unfavourable aspects of the work, the Retraction exhorts its readers to sort the chaff from the fruit, all the while claiming that –even if it may sometimes fail to do so– the intent was only ever to write something fruitful: In the *Canterbury Tales*, stories and literary works are treated "as a vessel of knowledge, a mode of thought *and* a means of action"[177].

[176] See Potz McGerr, p. 101.

[177] See Bornemann, p. 245.

Chapter X

Closing Remarks

The previous nine chapters of this study have sought to examine the way in which totalizing historiographical concepts like the nominalist controversy and the concept of a *Wegestreit* in the mid- to late-14th century have impacted studies in the fields of philosophical history and literary studies. These twin issues were concluded to have had a strongly distorting effect on the critical reception not only of individual works and authors, but also on the assessment of their historical relevance and the overall conception of 14th century intellectual life. Discussion of *literary* nominalism highlighted the problematic application of philosophical theories to literature. Its focus on grafting specific philosophical theories to literary works and their authors diminishes literature as a distinct discursive mode that pursues its own goals and employs its own epistemological stratagems. This study focused primarily on the untenable position of a binary opposition between an embattled nominalism and realism (or *via moderna* and *via antiqua*) as the central organizing concepts of 14th century intellectual history, with discussion of works by Thomas Bradwardine and Geoffrey Chaucer being employed as case studies to demonstrate central concepts and issues. Emphasis in discussion of Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei* was placed on the interaction and integration of different modes of inquiry into a single work, the practice of *a priori* categorisation based on supposed intellectual heritage, and the role of polemical content in formulating ideas. Discussion of *The Canterbury Tales* focused on the notion of *play* as an essential component of a literary epistemology, the role of heteroglossia and polyphony in similar processes, and discussions on the instructive role and authority of literary works that are staged over the course of the tales.

At this time, it is neither possible nor desirable to submit such a firm period definition for intellectual life in the 14th century as theories on (literary) nominalism have done. However, a number of tentative conclusions were drawn in this study, based on research in the fields of historical philosophy, social history, and in literary scholarship. On the subject of scholastic tendencies in the first half of the 14th century, this study noted an increasing willingness to experiment and combine methodological strategies from several philosophical disciplines, which were formerly regarded in isolation. It portrayed this willingness as possibly resulting from an interest in the exploration of the *implications* of 13th-century synthetic thought. In this fashion, the 14th century presents a continuation and culmination of earlier processes. The period is also marked, however, by an increasing *suspicion* or criticism of 'traditional' epistemological systems. Examples of both tendencies are found in Bradwardine's works: The former in his integration of mathematics and the natural sciences in his theological works, the latter in his distrust in the validity of the fundamental assumptions of Aristotelian physics. Literary works written in the second half of 14th century testify to an increasing interest in religious and philosophical themes, as well as a shift in terms of preferred genres and narrative structures. The heightened lay interest in religious and philosophical material, observed by this study in Chaucer's works, can be seen as the culmination of a process of dissemination of religious material in the vernacular following decrees at the 4th Lateran council in 1215. It

is in line with earlier conclusions on the willingness to experiment and integrate diverse disciplines and methodologies. Such lay discussions were, however, by no means uncritically affirmative of contemporary religious dogma, and tended to pursue their own epistemological objectives and strategies. Through concepts like heteroglossia, play structures and patterns of gaming, as well as the generation of meaning through transformative processes, literary works develop their own modes of discussing philosophical issues. This double movement of continuation and critique, observed in literary as well as philosophical texts of the time might, then, serve as the basis for a tentative and highly preliminary characterisation of the hallmarks of intellectual life in the 14th century. In describing the interaction between philosophy / theology and literature, the issue of *language* also seems to warrant greater attention. Furthermore, past approaches have neglected the role of significant social, political, and religious shifts in the 14th century, wrongly supposing a similar climate in the early and late 14th century.

While the scholastic works by Ockham and his colleagues tend to be from the first half of the 14th century, the literary works by Chaucer and his peers were composed in the final decades of the century. However, there is much that divides these two periods, and there is no easy continuation between the first and second half of the 14th century. Perhaps the most dramatic caesura is presented by the black plague, which first broke out in England in 1348, eventually killing roughly a third of the overall population, and half the clergy. Most clerical figures discussed in this study, including Thomas Bradwardine, died of the black plague, marking an abrupt end to an era of scholarship. Scholastic works written after the black plague have until now received little critical attention, making the direct comparison of literary productions and contemporary philosophy even more problematic. The Western Schism of 1378, and the split papacy it resulted in, opened a great rift in the Christian church, and also gave rise to hotly contested practices like the sale of indulgences. Critique of the practices of church institutions is frequently expressed in literary works and lay vernacular theology from the period, and the Church's authority in this period seems much less secure. The Peasants' Revolt of 1381 presented a great social upheaval in Medieval England, and caused a number of significant changes in the social order. Discussion of certain theological issues, whether in literature or in academic works, also became more complicated after Chaucer's time, as an increased crackdown on heretics and heretical writing from the start of the 15th century onwards made open discussion of issues like Lollardy hazardous.

The issue of language also needs to be integrated into further discussion and representation of philosophical material in literature. Potential avenues might be the question of what it means to 'do philosophy' in the vernacular, and the consequences of removing philosophy from its privileged sphere of absolute authority: What happens to theology when it becomes 'just another text', and it appears side by side with other modes of exploring philosophical problems? Aside from the conclusions drawn in this study, a number of areas in which future investigations might prove fruitful can be identified. In the field of historical philosophy, there seems not only to be a pressing need to continue the ongoing processes of re-evaluation of works by Bradwardine, Ockham, and their peers, but a perhaps even greater urgency for an increased editing and study of works by 'post-plague' theologians like Ralph Strode.

In terms of methodology, it seems an increased focus on the interaction between different genres and philosophical disciplines would be fruitful: the 'separation' of discussion of single authors as scientific, philosophical, and theological personae (e.g., 'Bradwardine the Scientist', 'Bradwardine the Theologian') can lead to misinterpretations; therefore, a more holistic approach should be preferred. Such an approach might also take into account a potential influence of literature or literary epistemological strategies on scholastic works. Such influences are felt in *De Causa Dei*, as classical authors are frequently invoked, and the way they are cited suggests that they carry similar authoritative weight as theological and philosophical commentators. Stylistic embellishments are strategically employed to dramatize certain passages, and the section of *De Causa Dei* that was most frequently reprinted deviates from the rest of the volume through its personal and sincere tone. Other scholastics also produced poetry, such as Robert Grosseteste, whose *Chateau d'Amour* enjoyed great popularity in the late Middle Ages, to discuss isolated philosophical issues independently and in a stylistically pleasing fashion.

This work has made the case that methodological strategies such as heteroglossia, multivocality, open-endedness, games, and textual play, are fundamentally related to the way literary texts generate (philosophical) meaning. A continued focus on these issues, and a retreat from the outdated binary model espoused by literary nominalism seems appropriate. The issue of language deserves continued critical attention. The simultaneous absorption, subversion, and transformation of philosophical and theological material to establish a literary authority for vernacular works also merits further exploration. Criticism of the church and clerical practices may also be considered with this in mind, and can also be seen as indicative of an attitude that is increasingly critical (or at least suspicious) of common epistemological tools. The possibility of an influence of literary productions on philosophical discussions in clerical works has gone largely undiscussed, and should be explored. Finally, the role of censorship from the 15th century onwards, and the impact this had on the exploration of philosophical and theological issues in literary works, may be considered.

Finally, it seems that greater interdisciplinary co-operation between scholars of literature and philosophical history is necessary for a holistic approach to the 14th century, and in order to avoid a separation of philosophical and literary inquiries: while literary and theological works typically employ different textual strategies, they are nevertheless deeply interrelated, and by no means divided by rigid boundaries. Indeed, it might be through the *interaction* and *intermingling* of different discursive modes and epistemological strategies in representations of philosophical debates that future interdisciplinary research may find fruitful subjects for discussion. A genre like the popular Saint's lives, for instance, seems to present a mixed mode or hybrid text that borrows and combines various textual strategies. Texts like *Piers Plowman*, too, strike many readers as not easily fitting into any fixed category, something an increased focus on the interaction of mixed forms might further explore.

The position of theological texts in the vernacular, too, seems worthwhile to consider: Their direct engagement with theological issues outside a clerical context and the associated authoritative weight places them in an interesting state of suspension that has not been received the critical attention it merits. Poetry composed by authors associated with the clergy might, too, be seen as a form of hybridized texts, taking advantage of textual strategies common to both clerical and literary works: Grosseteste's poetry, for instance, explores philosophical issues in isolation and in a less conclusive manner, and their poetic form relieves them of some of the more exhausting and rigorous demands of logical inquiry. Religious allegories and moralising fictions, genres which enjoyed great popularity in the 14th century, have also received undeservedly little attention, and the preliminary conclusion by literary nominalism that they should be uncritically affirmative of contemporary dogma seems unwarranted and reductive. Nor need the patterns of fluid interaction and boundary-crossing described here be limited to interactions between literature and clerical works: Bradwardine's *Sermo Epinicius*, for instance, provides a fascinating moment of crossover between the theological, political, and historical. If there is any definite conclusion to be drawn, I would suggest the following: That discussion and appraisal of the role philosophy played in the intellectual life of the 14th century has only scratched the surface, and that for a proper appreciation of the period, much work remains to be done.

Bibliography

The Holy Bible. Authorized King James Version. Oxford University Press, 1998.

Abelard, Peter. *The Letter Collection of Peter Abelard and Heloise*, edited by David Luscombe. Translated by Betty Radice and David Luscombe. Oxford University Press, 2013.

---. *Gespräch eines Philosophen, eines Juden, und eines Christen: lateinisch und deutsch.* Edited and translated by Hans-Wolfgang Krautz. Insel-Verlag, 1995.

Adams, Robert. "Piers Plowman and Langlands Semi-Pelagianism". *Traditio 39,* 1983, pp. 367-418.

Adorno, Theodore. *Notes to Literature Volume 2*. Columbia University Press, 1991.

Aers, David. *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory.* Edward Arnold, 1975.

Anderson, James F. "Time and the Possibility of an Eternal World". *Thomist 15,* 1932, pp. 136-161.

Andersch, Alfred. *Sämtliche Erzählungen.* Zürich, 1983.

Andretta, Helen Ruth. *Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde: A Poet's Response to Ockhamism.* Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1997.

Augustine, Aurelius. *Vier antipelagiaanse geschriften.* Translated by Izak Wisse and

Raf Debaene. Uitgeverij Klement, 2014.

---. *Confessions.* Translated by R.S. Pine-Coffin. Penguin, 1966.

---. *On the Free Choice of Will.* Translated by Anna S. Benjamin and L.H. Hackstaff. Prentice Hall, 1964.

---. *The City of God.* Translated by Marcus Dods. Random House, 1950.

Aquinas, Thomas. *Selected Writings.* Translated by Ralph McInerny. Penguin, 1998.

Bakhtin, Mikhail Mikhailovich. The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays. University of Texas Press, 1981.

Belaguer, Mark. *Free Will as an Open Scientific Problem.* MIT Press, 2010.

Berganza, Ignacio Verdú. *Tomás Bradwardine: El Problema de la Libertad.* Ediciones Universidad de Navarra, 2001.

Berlinski, David. *The King of Infinite Space: Euclid and his Elements.* Basic Books, 2013.

Besserman, Lawrence. Editor. *The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives.* Garland Publishing Inc., 1996.

Bettoni, Efrem. *Duns Scotus: The Basic Principles of his Philosophy.* Translated and edited by Bernadine Bonansea. Greenwood Press, 1978.

Bloomfield, M. W. *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-century Apocalypse. Rutgers University* Press, 1962.

Bode, Christoph. "A Modern Debate over Universals? Critical Theory vs. 'Essentialism'". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 301-314.

Bok, Hillary. "Freedom and Practical Reason". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 130-166.

Bornemann, Thies. *Narrative Voice in Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales".* Wvb Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Berlin, 2014.

Boucher, Holly Wallace. "Nominalism: The Difference for Chaucer and Boccacio". *The Chaucer Review Vol. 20, No. 3,* Penn State University Press, 1986, pp. 213-220.

Bradwardine, Thomas. *De Causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute Causarum.* Edited by Henry Saville, London, 1618. Facsimile Print by Book Renaissance, 2015.

---. *De Causa Dei contra Pelagium et de virtute Causarum.* Translated and edited by

Edit Anna Lukács. V & R Unipress Göttingen, 2013.

Bredero, Adriaan H. *Christenheid en Christendom in de Middeleeuwen: Over de Verhouding van Godsdienst, Kerk en Samenleving.* Uitgeverij Kok Agora, 1987.

Caillois, Roger. *Man, Play, and Games.* Translated by Meyer Barash. Glencoe, 1958.

Campbell, Joseph Keim. *Free Will.* Polity Press, 2011.

Campbell, Joseph Keim, et al. Editors. *Freedom and Determinism.* Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004.

McCann, Hugh. *The Works of Agency.* Cornell University Press, 1998.

Carroll, William C. "Semiotic Slippage: Identity and Authority in the English Renaissance. *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 227-236.

Chadwick, Henry. *The Consolation of Music, Logic, Theology and Philosophy.* Clarendon Press, 1981.

Chaucer, Geoffrey. *The Riverside Chaucer.* Edited by Larry D. Benson. Oxford University Press, 1988.

Chisholme, Roderick. "Human Freedom and the Self". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 26-37.

Clarke, Randolph. *Libertarian Accounts of Free Will.* Oxford University Press, 2003.

---. "Towards a Credible Agent-Causal Account of Free Will". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 285-298.

Cole, Andrew, and Andrew Galloway. Editors. *The Cambridge Companion to Piers Plowman.* Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Coleman, Janet. *"Piers Plowman" and the Moderni.* Edizioni di Stori e Letteratura, 1981.

Collins, John E. *A Primer of Ecclesiastical Latin.* Catholic University of America Press, 1987.

O'Connor, Timothy. *Persons and Causes.* Oxford University Press, 2000.

---. "The Agent as a Cause". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 196-205.

---. "Agent Causation" *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson.

Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 257-284.

Copleston, Frederick C. *Aquinas: An Introduction to the Life and Work of the Great Medieval Thinker.* Penguin, 1955.

Courtenay, William J. "Nominalism and Late Mediaeval Religion". *The Pursuit of Holiness,* edited by C. Trinkhaus and Heiko Augustinus Obermann. Leiden, 1974 pp. 26-59.

---. "Augustinianism at Oxford in the Fourteenth Century". *Augustiniana 30,* 1980, pp. 58-70.

---. "The Dialectic of Divine Omnipotence in the Age of Chaucer: A Reconsideration". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 111-122.

Crafton, John Michael. "Emptying the Vessel: Chaucer's Humanistic Critique of Nominalism". Literary *Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 117-134.

Culler, Jonathan. Structuralist Poetics: Structuralism, Linguistics, and the Study of Literature. Ithaca, 1975.

Delasanta, Rodney. "Chaucer and the Problem of the Universal". *Medieavalia 9,* 1983, pp. 145-163.

---. "Chaucer and Strode". *Chaucer Review Vol. 26, Nr. 2*, Penn State University, 1991, pp. 205-218.

---. "Nominalism and Typology in Chaucer". *Typology and English Medieval Literature,* edited by Hugh T. Keenan. AMS Press, 1992, pp. 121-139.

Denifle, Heinrich, and Émile Chatelain. *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis 1-4*. Fratres Delalain, 1887.

Dennett, Daniel. "I Could Not Have Done Otherwise: So What?". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 83-94.

Dolnikowski, Edith Wilks. *Thomas Bradwardine: A View of Time and a Vision of Eternity in Fourteenth Century Thought.* E. J. Brill, 1995.

---. "Thomas Bradwardine's Sermo Epinicius: Some Reflections on its Political, Theological and Pastoral Significance". *Medieval Sermons and Society: Cloister, City, University*, edited by B.M. Kienzle et al. Brepolis, 1998, pp. 357-370.

Donaldson, E. Talbot. "Patristic Exegesis in the Criticism of Medieval Literature: The Opposition". *Critical Approaches to Medieval Literature, English Institute Essays,* edited by Dorothy Betherum, Columbia University Press, 1960, pp. 134-153.

O'Donnell, James J. *Augustine: A New Biography.* HarperCollins Publishing, 2005.

Earman, John. "Determinism: What We Have Learned and What We Still Don't Know". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 21-46.

Eco, Umberto. *The Name of the Rose* Translated by William Weaver. Harcourt, 1980.

---. Zeichen: *Einführung in einen Begriff und seine Geschichte*. Translated by Günter Memmert. Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977.

---. *Art and Beauty in the Middle Ages*. Translated by Hugh Bredin. Yale University Press, 2002.

Edwards, Paul. "Hard and Soft Determinism". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 59-67.

Ekstrom, Laura Waddell. *Free Will*. Westview Press, 2000.

Elford, William Rogers. *Interpretation in Piers Plowman*. The Catholic University of America Press, 2002.

Felt, James. *Making Sense of Our Freedom*. Cornell University Press, 1994.

Fendler, Susanne. "The Emancipation of the Sign: The Changing Significance of Beauty in Some English Renaissance Romances". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 269-282.

Fischer, John Martin. *The Metaphysics of Responsibility*. Blackwell, 1994.

---. "Frankfurt-Style Examples, Responsibility and Semi-Compatibilism". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 94-110.

---. "Frankfurt –Style Compatibilism". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003.

---. "The Transfer of Nonresponsibility". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 189-210.

Fischer, John Martin and Mark Ravizza, editors. *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*. Cornell University Press, 1993.

Fischer, John Martin et al. *Four Views on Free Will*. Blackwell Publishing, 2007.

Flasch, Kurt. *Das philosophische Denken im Mittelalter: Von Augustin bis Machiavelli*. Philipp Reclam jun. GmbH, 2000.

Flasch, Kurt, editor. *Geschichte der Philosophie in Text und Darstellung: Mittelalter*. Philipp Reclam jun. GmbH, 1982.

Fleming, Brian. *Thomas de Bradwardine. Oxford Scholar, Royal Servant and the Archbishof of Canterbury.* Université Catholique de Louvain, 1964.

Frankfurt, Harry. "Identification and Wholeheartedness". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993-A, pp. 170-187.

---. "What We Are Morally Responsible For". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993-B, pp. 286-295.

---. "Alternate Possibilities and Moral Responsibilities". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003-A, pp. 167-176.

---. "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003-B, pp. 322-336.

Frede, Michael. *A Free Will: Origins of the Notion in Ancient Thought.* University of California Press, 2012.

Furr, Grover C. "Nominalism in the *Nun's Priest Tale:* A Preliminary Study". Literary *Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 135-146.

Gardner, John. The Poetry of Chaucer. Southern Illinois University Press, 2003.

Genest, Jean-François. "La Liberté de Dieu à l'Égard du passé selon Pierre Damien et Thomas Bradwardine". *Annuaire de l'École Pratique des Hautes Études 85,* 1977-1978, pp. 391-393.

---. *Le De futuris contingentibus de Thomas Bradwardine.* Études augustiniennes, 1979.

---. *Prédétermination et Liberté Créée à Oxford au XIVe Siècle: Buckingham Contre Bradwardine.* Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin, 1992.

Gilson, Étienne. *Jean Duns Scot.* Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin, 1952.

---. *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages.* Sheed and Ward, 1955.

Ginet, Carl. *On Action.* Cambridge University Press, 1990.

---. "Freedom, Responsibility, and Agency". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane.

Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 205-221.

---. "Trying to Act". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 89-102.

Goddu, André. *The Physics of William of Ockham.* E.J. Brill, 1984.

Goetz, Stewart. "A Non-causal Theory of Agency". *Philosophical and Phenomenological Research 49,* 1998, pp. 303-316.

Goff, le, Jacques. *De Cultuur van Middeleeuws Europa.* Translated by Roland Fagel and Luuk Knippenberg, Uitgeverij Wereldbibliotheek, 1987.

---. *De Intellectuelen in de Middeleeuwen.* Translated by Luuk Knippenberg, Uitgeverij Wereldbibliotheek, 1989.

McGrade, Arthur Stephen, et al. Editors. *The Cambridge Translations of Medieval Philosophical Texts.* Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Grosseteste, Robert. *Le Chateau d'Amour.* Forgotten Books, 2018.

Grossi Jr., Joseph L. "The Clerk vs. the Wife of Bath: Nominalism, Carnival, and Chaucer's Last Laugh". *Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 147-178.

Gössmann, Elisabeth. *Antiqui und Moderni im Mittelalter: eine geschichtliche Standortbestimmung.* Schöninghausen, 1974.

Grant, Edward. "Science and the Medieval University". *Rebirth, Reform and Resilience: Universities in Transition, 1300-1700,* edited by James M. Kittelson and Pame J. Transue. Ohio University Press, 1984, pp. 68-102.

McGrath, Alister E. „The Anti-Pelagian Structure of `Nominalist' Doctrines of Justification". *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis 57,* 1981, pp. 107-119.

Hahn, Sebastian. *Thomas Bradwardina und seine Lehre von der menschlichen Willensfreiheit.* Münster: Aschendorffschen Buchhandlung, 1905.

Haji, Ishtiyaque. „Libertarian Openness, Blameworthiness, and Time". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 135-150.

Hannam, James. *God's Philosophers: How the Medieval World Laid the Foundations of Modern Science.* Faber and Faber, 2010.

Hasker, William. „God, Time, Knowledge and Freedom: The Historical Matrix". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Heisenberg, Werner. *Physics and Philosophy.* HarperCollins Publishers, 2007.

Highfield, J.R.L. *The Early Rolls of Merton College.* Oxford University Press, 1964.

Hirschberger, Johannes. *Geschichte der Philosophie Band I: Altertum und Mittelalter.* Komet, 1980.

Hodgson, David. „A Plain Person's Free Will". *Journal of Consciousness Studies 12,* 2005, pp. 3-19.

Honderich, Ted. „After Compatibilism and Incompatibilism". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 305-322.

Hübener, Wolfgang. "Die Nominalismus-Legende. Über das Miβverhältnis zwischen Dichtung und Wahrheit in der Deutung der Wirkungsgeschichte des Ockhamismus". *Spiegel und Gleichnis,* edited by Norbert W. Bolz and Wolfgang Hübener, Königshausen + Neumann, 1983, pp. 87-111.

Hudson, Nicholas. "John Locke and the Tradition of Nominalism". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 283-300.

Huizinga, Johan. *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen: Studie over Levens- en Gedachtsvormen der Veertiende en Vijftiende Eeuw in Frankrijk en de Nederlanden.* H.D. Tjeenk Willink en Zoon N.V., 1950.

---. *Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen*. Leiden University Press, 2019.

---. *Waning of the Middle Ages*. Garden City New York, 1954.

---. *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*. Chicago University Press, 1996.

---. *Homo Ludens: Proeve eener Bepaling van het Spel-Element der Kultuur.* H.D. Tjeenk Willink Groningen, 1974.

Inwagen, van, Peter. *An Essay on Free Will.* Clarendon Press, 1983.

---. „The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 71-82.

---. "An Argument for Incompatibilism". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 38-57.

---. "Van Inwagen on Free Will". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 213-230.

Iser, Wolfgang. *The Fictive and the Imaginary: Charting Literary Anthropology*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991.

---. "The Play of the Text". *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory.* Edited by Sanford Budick and Wolfgang Iser. Stanford University Press, 1996, pp. 325-339.

---. *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978.

Jameson, Frederick. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Duke University Press, 1992.

Johnson, Paul. *A History of Christianity.* Penguin, 1975.

Johnston, Andrew James. „Chaucers Pardoner – die Geburt der Literatur aus dem Geist der Orthodoxie". *Literarische und religiöse Kommunikation in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit*, edited by Peter Strohschneider, 2006, De Gruyter, pp. 817-843.

Jünger, Friedrich Georg. *Die Spiele. Ein Schlüssel zu ihrer Bedeutung.* Vittorio Klostermann, 1953.

Justice, Steven and Kathryn Kerby-Fulton, editors. *Written Work: Langland, Labor and Authorship.* University of Philadelphia Press, 1997.

Kaluza, Zénon. "La Prétendu Discussion Parisienne de Thomas Bradwardine avec Thomas Buckingham. Témoignage de Thomas de Cracovie. *Recherches de Théologie Ancienne et Médiévale Vol. 43,* 1976, pp. 219-236.

Kaminski, Alice R. *Chaucer's 'Troilus and Criseyde' and the Critics.* Columbus, 1980.

Kane, Robert. *A Contemporary Introduction to Free Will.* Oxford University Press, 2005.

---. "Responsibility, Luck, and Chance: Reflections on Free Will and Indeterminism". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 299-321.

---. "Agency, Responsibility, and Indeterminism: Reflections on Libertarian Theories of Free Will". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 70-88.

---. "Free Will: New Directions for an Ancient Problem". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Kane, Robert, editor. *Free Will.* Blackwell Publishing, 2002.

Keller, Wolfram R. "Chaucer und Boccacio: Literarische Autorschaft zwischen Mittelalter und Moderne", *Giovanni Boccaccio in Europa*, edited by Achim Aurnhammer and Rainer Stillers, Harassowitz, 2014, pp. 261-275.

Keen, Maurice. *The Pelican History of Medieval Europe.* Penguin, 1968.

Keiper, Hugh et al. Editors. *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives.*

Rodopi, 1997.

---. ""I wot myself best how y stoned": Literary Nominalism, Open Textual Form and the Enfranchizement of Individual Perspective in Chaucer's Dream Visions". *Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 205-234.

---. "A Literary 'Debate over Universals'? New Perspectives on the Relationships between Nominalism, Realism, and Literary Discourse. *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 1-86.

Kenny, Anthony. *A New History of Western Philosophy.* Oxford University Press, 2010.

Knapp, Peggy. *Chaucer and the Social Contest.* Routledge, 1990.

Knight, Stephen. "Chaucer – A Modern Writer?" *Balcony 2,* 1965, pp. 37-43.

Kuhn, Thomas S. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. University of Chicago Press, 1970.

Laird, Edgar. "Cosmic Law and Literary Character in Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale'". *Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 81-100.

Langer, Ullrich. "Charity and the Singular: The Object of Love in Rabelais". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 217-226.

Langland, William. *Piers Plowman.* Translated by A.V.C. Schmidt, Oxford University Press, 2009.

---. *Piers Plowman. The C-Text.* Edited by Derek Pearsall, University of Exeter Press, 1994.

---. *Piers Plowman. The B-Text.* Edited by Elizabeth Robertson and Stephen H. A. Shepherd, Norton, 2006.

---. *Piers Plowman. The A-Text.* Edited by Thomas A. Knott and David C. Fowler.

The John Hopkins Press, 1969.

Laun, Justin Ferdinand. "Die Prädestination by Wiclif und Bradwardin". *Imago Dei*, edited by H. Bornkamm. Alfred Töpelmann, 1923, pp. 63-84.

---. "Thomas von Bradwardin, der Schüler Augustins und Lehrer Wiclifs". *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte 47 Series 10,* 1928, pp. 333-356.

---. "Recherches sur Thomas Bradwardine, Précurseur de Wiclif". *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse 9,* 1929, pp. 217-233.

Lawton, David. "The Subject of Piers Plowman". *Yearbook of Langland Studies I*, 1987, pp. 1-30.

Lechler, G. *De Thoma Bradwardina Comentario.* Leipzig, 1862.

Lehrer, Keith. "Cans without Ifs". *Analysis 29*, 1968, pp. 29-32.

---. "Freedom and the Power of Preference". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 47-69.

Leff, Gordon. *Bradwardine and the Pelagians: A Study of his 'De Causa Dei' and its Opponents.* Cambridge University Press, 1957.

---. *Medieval Thought: St. Augustine to Ockham*. Quadrangle Books, 1958.

---. *William of Ockham: The Metamorphosis of Scholastic Discourse.* Rowman and Littlefield, 1975.

Long, Todd R. "Moderate Reasons-responsiveness, Moral Responsibility, and Manipulation". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 151-172.

Little, Katherine. *Confession and Resistance: Defining the Self in Late Medieval England.* University of Notre Dame Press, 2006.

Lukács, Edit Anna. See Bradwardine 2012.

Lull, Ramon. *Das Buch vom Heiden und den drei Weisen.* Edited and translated by Theodor Pindl. Reclam jun. GmbH, 1998.

---. *The Book of the Lover and the Beloved.* Translated by E. Allison Peers. In parentheses Publications, 2000.

Lynch, Kathryn L. "The Logic of the Dream Vision in Chaucer's *House of* Fame". Literary *Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 179-204.

McManners, John, editor. *The Oxford History of Christianity.* Oxford University Press, 1990.

Mahler, Andreas. "Don Quixote, Hamlet, Foucault-Language, 'Literature', and the Losses of Analogism". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 251-268.

Marelj, Jelena. "The Philosophical Entente of Particulars: Criseyde as Nominalist in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde". The Chaucer Review Vol. 47, Nr. 2, Penn State University Press, 2012, pp. 206-221.

Michelet, Fabienne, and Martin Pickavé. "Philosophy, Logic, and Nominalism". *The Oxford Handbook of Chaucer,* edited by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and James Simpson, Oxford Handbooks, 2020.

Miller, Clarence H., translator. *Erasmus and Luther: The Battle over Free Will.* Hackett Publishing Company, 2012.

Minnis, Alastair. *Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010.

Molland, George. "The Geometrical Background to the Merton School". The British Journal for the History of Science 4, 1968, pp. 108-125.

Munson, William F. "Self, Action, and Sign in the Towneley and York Plays on the Baptism of Christ and in Ockhamist Salvation Theology". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 191-216.

Murdoch, John Emery. "Atomism and Motion in the Fourteenth Century". *Transformation and Tradition in the Sciences: Essays in Honor of I Bernard Cohen,* edited by Everett Mendelsohn. Cambridge University Press, 1984, pp. 46-66.

Murtaugh, Daniel Maher. *Piers Plowman and the Image of God.* University Presses of Florida, 1978.

Muscatine, Charles. *Chaucer and the French Tradition.* University of California Press, 1966.

Myles, Robert. *Chaucerian Realism.* D.S. Brewer, 1994.

McNamara, John Francis. *Responses to Ockhamist Theology in the Poetry of the 'Pearl'-Poet, Langland, and Chaucer.* Ann Arbor, 1987.

Newman, Barbara. *Medieval Crossover: Reading the Secular Against the Sacred.* Notre Dame Press, 2013.

Nielsen, Kai. "The Compatibility of Freedom and Determinism". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 39-46.

Obermann, Heiko Augustinus. *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine: A Fourteenth Century Augustinian. A Study of his Theology in its Historical Context.* Kemink en Zoon, 1957.

---. "Thomas Bradwardine: Un Précurseur de Luther?" *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuse 40,* 1960, pp. 146-151.

Ockham, of, William. *Philosophical Writings: A Selection.* Translated by Philotheus Boehner. Hackett Publishing Company, 1990.

Patterson, Lee. *Negotiating the Past: The Historical Understanding of Medieval Literature.* The University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

---. "The Parson's Tale and the Quitting of the 'Canterbury Tales'", Traditio: Studies in Ancient and Medieval History, Thought, and Religion, Vol. XXXIV, Fordham University Press, 1978, pp. 331-380.

---. *Chaucer and the Subject of History.* The University of Wisconsin Press, 1991.

---. "The Place of the Modern in the Late Middle Ages". *The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, edited by Lawrence Besserman. Garland Publishing Inc., 1996, pp. 51-66.

---. *Acts of Recognition: Essays on Medieval Culture.* University of Notre Dame Press, 2010.

Pearsall, Derek. *The Nun's Priest's Tale.* University of Oklahoma Press, 1984.

Peck, Russell A. "Chaucer and the Nominalist Questions". *Speculum 53,* 1978, pp. 745-760.

Penn, Stephen. „Literary Nominalism and Medieval Sign Theory". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugo Keiper et al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 157-189.

Pereboom, Derk. "The Explanatory Irrelevance of Alternative Possibilities". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 111-124.

Perry, John. "Compatibilist Options". *Freedom and Determinism,* edited by Joseph Keim Campbell et al. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2004, pp. 231-254.

Peterson, Michael, et al. Editors. *Philosophy of Religion: Selected Readings. Third Edition.* Oxford University Press, 2007.

Piaget, Jean. *Nachahmung: Spiel und Traum*. Translated by Hans Aebli. Ernt Klett Verlag, 1969.

Pink, Thomas. *Free Will: A Short Introduction.* Oxford University Press, 2004.

Plantinga, Alvin. *God, Freedom, and Evil.* Eerdmans, 1989.

Potz McGerr, Rosemarie. "Retraction and Memory: Retrospective Structure in the *Canterbury Tales*". *Compararative Literature 37:2*, 1985, pp. 97-113.

Joseph Quack. "Alfred Andersch: Ein literarischer Nominalist," *Neue Deutsche Hefte* 32.4, 1985, pp. 717–732.

Randall, Michael. "Reversed Analogy in Jean Molinet's *Chapellet des dames*". *Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 81-100.

Rhodes, Jim. *Poetry does Theology: Chaucer, Grosseteste and the Pearl Poet.* University of Notre Dame Press, 2001.

Rigby, S.H. "Society and Politics". *Chaucer: an Oxford Guide*, edited by Steve Ellis. Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 25-49.

Ruud, Jay. „Chaucer and Nominalism: The Envoy to Bukton", *Medievalia 10*, 1984, pp. 199-212.

---. "Julian of Norwich and the Nominalist Questions". *Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, 31-50.

Russell, J. Stephen. "The Universal Soldier: Idealism and Conceptualism in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight". Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 51-80.

Sayce, Olive. "Chaucer's 'Retractions': The Conclusion of the *Canterbury Tales* and its Place in Literary Tradition". *Medium Aevum 40*, 1971, pp. 230-248.

Sbrozi, M. "Metodo Matematico e Pensiero Teologico nel De Causa Dei di Thomas Bradwardine". *Studi Medivali Ser. 3, Vol. 31*, 1990, pp. 143-191.

Scaglione, Aldo. "The Periodization of the Renaissance and the Question of Mannerism". *The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, edited by Lawrence Besserman. Garland Publishing Inc., 1996, pp. 95-106.

Scase, Wendy. „Literature: The English Background". *Chaucer: An Oxford Guide*, edited by Steve Ellis, Oxford University Press, 2005, pp. 272-291.

Schiller, Friedrich. Sämtliche Werke in zehn Bänden. Greβner und Schramm, ca. 1890.

Scotus, Duns. *Philosophical Writings: A Selection.* Translated by Allan Wolter. Hackett Publishing Company, 1987.

Seaman, Gerald. "Signs of a New Literary Paradigm: The 'Christian' Figures of Chrétien de Troyes". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 87-110.

Siemon, James R. "Sign, Cause or General Habit? Towards an 'Historicist Ontology' of Character on the Early Modern Stage". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 237-250.

Smart, John Jamieson Carswell. "Free Will, Praise and Blame". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 58-71.

Slotemaker, John T., and Jeffrey C. Witt. *Robert Holcot.* Oxford University Press, 2016.

Somerset, Fiona. *Clerical Discourse and Lay Audience in Late Medieval England.* Cambridge University Press, 1998.

---. *Feeling Like Saints: Lollard Writings After Wyclif.* Cornell University Press, 2014.

Somerset, Fiona, and Nicholas Watson. *The Vulgar Tongue: Medieval and Postmedieval Vernacularity.* Penn State University Press, 2003.

Spade, Paul Vincent. "'Insolubilia' and Bradwardine's Theory of Signification". *Medioevo 7*, 1981, pp. 115-134.

Spearing, A.C. "The *Canterbury Tales* IV: exemplum and fable". *The Cambridge Companion to Chaucer,* edited by Piero Boitani and Jill Mann, Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 195-213.

Spinoza, Baruch. *Ethics Demonstrated in Geometrical Order.* Translated by R.H.M. Elwes. Creative Space Independent Publishing Platform, 2015.

Steiner, Emily. *Reading Piers Plowman.* Cambridge University Press, 2013.

Strawson, Galen. "On "Freedom on Resentment"". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility*, edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 67-100.

---. "The Impossibility of Moral Responsibility". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 212-228.

Strawson, Peter. "Freedom and Resentment". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993, pp. 44-66.

Stump, Eleonore. "Intellect, Will, and the Principle of Alternate Possibilities". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993-A, 237-262.

---. "Sanctification, Hardening of the Heart, and Frankfurt's Concept of Free Will" *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993-B, pp. 211-234.

Tierney, Brian, and Sidney Painter. *Western Europe in The Middle Ages 300-1475*. Random House, 1988.

Tompkins, Jane P., editor. *Reader-Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*. Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980.

Travis, Peter W. *Disseminal Chaucer: Rereading the Nun's Priest's Tale*. University of Notre Dame Press, 2009.

Utz, Richard J. *Literarischer Nominalismus im Spätmittelalter: Eine Untersuchung zu Sprache, Charakterzeichnung und Struktur in Geoffrey Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde*. Peter Lang, 1990.

---. "Negotiating the Paradigm: Literary Nominalism and Theory of Rereading Late Medieval Texts". *Literary Nominalism and the Rereading of Late Medieval Texts,* edited by Richard J. Utz, Edwin Mellen Press, 1995, pp. 1-31.

---. "'As Writ Myn Auctour Called Lollius': Divine and Authorial Omnipotence in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde*. *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 123-144.

---. "Medieval Nominalism and the Literary Questions: Selected Studies" *Perspictuitas,* 20.04.2004, pp. 1-16.

Verger, Jaques. *Universiteiten in de Middeleeuwen*. Translated by Vertaalgroep Administratief Centrum Bergeyk, Fibula-Van Dishoeck, 1978.

Vignaux, Paul. *De Saint Anselm à Luther.* Libraire Philosophique J. Vrin, 1976.

Wallace, David, editor. *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature.* Cambridge University Press, 2002.

Watson, Gary. "Responsibility and the Limits of Evil: Variations on a Strawsonian Theme". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, pp. 164-186.

---. "Free Agency". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 337-351.

Watson, Gary, editor. *Free Will: Second Edition.* Oxford University Press, 2003.

Watts, William H. "Chaucer's Clerks and the Value of Philosophy". *Nominalism and Literary Discourse: New Perspectives,* edited by Hugh Keiper et. al. Rodopi, 1997, pp. 145-156.

Weinberg, Julius. *Short History of Medieval Philosophy.* Princeton University Press, 1974.

Weisheipl, J. A. "Ockham and the Mertonians". *The History of the University of Oxford Volume I: The Early Oxford Schools,* edited by J.I. Catto, 1984, pp. 607-658.

Werner, K. "Bradwardin's Verhältnis zur Augustinischen Theologie", *Der Augustinismus des späteren Mittelalters,* 1883.

Widerkerker, David. „Libertarianism and Frankfurt's Attack on the Principle of Alternate Possibilities". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 177-189.

Wieland, Wolfgang, editor. *Geschichte der Philosophie in Text und Darstellung: Antike.* Philipp Reclam jun. GmbH, 2001.

Wiggins, David. „Towards a Reasonable Libertarianism". *Free Will: Second Edition,* edited by Gary Watson. Oxford University Press, 2003, pp 94-121.

Williams, David. *Language Redeemed: Chaucer's Mature Poetry.* Sapientia PR, 2005.

Wolf, Susan. "The Importance of Free Will". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993-A, pp. 101-118.

---. "The Real Self View". *Perspectives on Moral Responsibility,* edited by John Martin Fischer and Mark Ravizza, Cornell University Press, 1993-B, pp. 151-169.

---. „Sanity and the Metaphysics of Responsibility". *Free Will,* edited by Robert Kane. Blackwell Publishing, 2002, 145-163.

Wood, Chauncy. *Chaucer and the Country of the Stars: Poetic Uses of Astrological Imagery*. Princeton University Press, 1970.

Xiberta, P. Bartomeu-Maria. "Fragments d'una qüestio inèdita de Tomàs Bradwardine". *Aus der Geisteswelt des Mittelalters: Studien und Texte Martin Grabmann zur Vollendung des 60. Lebensjahres von Freunden und Schülern gewidmet*. Aschendorfsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1935, pp. 1169-1179.