

A RESPONSE TO ELEONORE STUMP'S ACCOUNT OF THE RELATIONSHIP OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE TO HUMAN FREEDOM

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Introduction

A debate between Eleonore Stump and Brian Shanley over the nature of God's knowledge of the temporal begins with the following observation and subsequent question: "Most people agree that any being that could count as God would have to know everything there is to know. But *how* is God supposed to know what he knows?"¹ Stump's primary concern is to defend Thomas Aquinas's notion of divine knowledge, while at the same time providing an interpretation that avoids threatening human freedom.² Completely removing God's causative role in human free choices is not possible in a thomistic account, for Aquinas clearly and regularly argues that God's causality is present even in human free choices.³ While many commentators hold to the view that God's involvement in these cases is one of efficient causality, Stump's solution to the problematic issues raised by these accounts is to consider God's knowledge under the aspect of God's *formal* causation. It is this proffered solution that Shanley, who holds to God's efficient mode of causality even in human free actions, challenges as being a misrepresentation of Aquinas.

¹ Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 159. N.B. Although the Stump articles in this debate were co-written with Norman Kretzmann, to avoid awkward wording, and because I am often dealing with Stump's update of their argument in *Aquinas*, I will simply refer to Stump (rather than "Stump/Kretzmann").

² "God's Knowledge and Its Causal Efficacy" in *The Rationality of Belief and the Plurality of Faith*, ed. Thomas Senor (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 94. The language used here was softened a bit in Stump's *Aquinas* (e.g., "is in many respects perplexing" and "is sometimes interpreted in such a way as to exacerbate its difficulties" see pg. 159).

³ This point is not at issue in this debate by either side and numerous references by both sides (which will be cited below) can be found in the series of articles spawned by Stump's original.

Shanley suggests several issues with Stump's unusual solution, but I believe that Stump's account is open to additional, internal problems which are neither dealt with sufficiently in her debate with Shanley, nor in the subsequent revisions of her original writing.⁴ In what follows I will argue that Stump's position either issues in her placing human free actions outside of God's knowledge (an unacceptable result for any thomistic account), or it only succeeds in pushing the question back to the very problem she raises for the efficient causality view.

To this end I will begin by reviewing some of Aquinas's statements on the matter which elicit the divergent explanations that Stump and Shanley offer. I will then give a brief account of Stump's and Shanley's articles relevant to the debate, summarizing each one's take on Aquinas's account of divine causal knowledge. Then I will lay out the dilemma I think Stump has created for herself by looking at whether actions can be properly said to have *form* (and thus be objects of *formal* causality), and whether or not God's knowledge seen as a formal cause simply reintroduces the problem of God usurping human freedom. I will conclude with a return to Aquinas's statements that point to God's knowing both the human free will and its acts via efficient causality.

⁴ Due to the varying presentation/publication formats and chronology, the debate can be difficult to follow. It began with a paper presentation by Norman Kretzmann: "God Knows: But What? And How?" (Lecture, University of Toronto, November 18, 1993) which was later published (with Eleonore Stump) as "God's Knowledge and Its Causal Efficacy" in *The Rationality of Belief and the Plurality of Faith*, ed. Thomas Senor (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995), 94-124. Brian Shanley took issue with Kretzmann's original paper presentation in his article "Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71, no. 2 (1997), 197-224; and later added to this article with "Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (1998), 99-122. Then Stump/Kretzmann and Shanley each responded to the others' original replies in the same journal: Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, "Eternity and God's Knowledge: A Reply to Shanley," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (1998), 440-445. Brian Shanley, "Aquinas on God's Causal Knowledge: A Reply to Stump and Kretzmann" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 72, no. 3 (1998), 447-457. "God's Knowledge and Its Causal Efficacy" became, with slight alterations, chapter 5 in Stump's *Aquinas*.

God's Knowledge via Causation in Aquinas

Aquinas is quite clear that God knows human free acts. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas writes, “God knows our mind’s thoughts and our secret wills” as their cause.⁵ This knowledge, in turn, leads to God knowing “the dominion which the will exercises over its own acts, and by which it is in its power to will and not to will.”⁶ God’s knowledge of human free acts, then, is not debated by either side. It is, rather, that the nature of God’s knowledge is disputed.

That Aquinas sees God’s causality in free human acts is clear in several of his writings. In question 89 of *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas discusses the movement of the will by God. He begins by noting the error of those who do not understand how God could move the human will without violence (a topic he deals with in the previous chapter). These people say “that providence does not apply to things subject to free choice, that is, to acts of choice.”⁷ To this Aquinas replies, “Opposition is offered quite plainly by the texts from Sacred Scripture. . . . we receive not only the power of willing from God, but also the operation.”⁸ Thus, divine causality is not limited to causing the existence of the human will, nor even to the power of the will.⁹

These and other similar statements must be reconciled with any explanation of Aquinas’s position on God’s causative knowledge. Since Aquinas does not always qualify divine causality

⁵ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) I, 68.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Aquinas, SCG I, 89. 2-3.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Therefore, God is for us the cause not only of our will, but also of our act of willing. . . . every movement of the will must be caused by the first will, which is the will of God. . . . God is the cause of every action.” SCG I. 89, 4-7.

as being of a specific sort, it is up to his interpreters to make the types of causes explicit – and it is here that the debate between Stump and Shanley finds its origin.¹⁰

Stump's Proposed Solution to the Problem of God's Knowledge

As shown above, and agreed upon by both parties in the debate, there is no doubt that Aquinas bases God's knowledge in divine causality.¹¹ Stump cites Leo Elders's view as a "representative exposition" of Aquinas's account of divine knowing, stating that "God's knowledge of things other than himself can only be based on his causality,"¹² and she admits that this view is based on a claim Aquinas makes repeatedly.¹³ Stump holds that God's knowledge includes all things which have ever had existence in the past, have existence in the present, or that will come to exist in the future.¹⁴ Further, God knows things that no longer have existence, or do not have it yet - not through some sort of sensing, but rather through knowing these things as their cause.¹⁵

The problem, as Stump sees it, is that the traditional interpretation of Aquinas's words (viz., referring to *efficient* causality), is distorted and would produce an inconsistency in his

¹⁰ That Aquinas's options are limited to those listed by Aristotle is not questioned in this particular debate. In *Physics* II 3 and *Metaphysics* V 2, Aristotle recognized four types of causes of a thing: (1) the material cause: that out of which it is produced; (2) the formal cause: that which it is to be; (3) the efficient cause: that which produces it, and (4) the final cause: the end for which a thing is produced.

¹¹ See Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* (ST) Ia, 14, 8 or *Summa Contra Gentiles* (SCG) I, 65.

¹² Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters (New York: E. J. Brill, 1990), 230 in Stump, *Aquinas*, 159.

¹³ Stump, *Aquinas*, 160 (cf. Stump and Kretzmann, "God's Knowledge and Its Causal Efficacy," 95).

¹⁴ Stump, *Aquinas*, 159.

¹⁵ Stump does not defend the notion here, but simply cites the thomistic position on God's incorporeality as reason to exclude any sensitive kind of knowing process from the divine mind.

system.¹⁶ Stump believes that if God's knowledge of human free actions is based on divine efficient causality in Aquinas, it would commit him to a position he does not hold: namely, a divine determinism which would "leave no room for human freedom."¹⁷

Stump thinks that the problem arises not so much due to Aquinas's statements themselves, but in two assumptions held by many of his interpreters: (1) that the causation Aquinas has in mind is efficient, and (2) that this divine causation has as its effects "all actions, events, and states of affairs in the world."¹⁸ As to the former, Stump believes that if God is said to be the efficient cause of human free acts, then these acts are no longer free.¹⁹ Thus, the *way* God is said to know undermines *what* he is said to know.

As Stump points out, however, Aquinas, following Aristotle, recognizes more than one type of causality. Besides efficient causality, Aquinas also recognizes formal causality. This is made clear in the illustrations he uses to explain God's causal knowledge – his favorite being the artist or the craftsman who is said to know his finished product prior to its existence.²⁰ According to Stump, what Aquinas has in mind in this illustration is the causative work of the divine ideas

¹⁶ Stump and Kretzmann, "God's Knowledge and Its Causal Efficacy," 98.

¹⁷ Stump, *Aquinas*, 161. Stump further argues that it is clear that Aquinas cannot simply mean that what God knows he causes, for God knows many things (e.g., evil, necessary truths, pure possibles, and the divine essence) of which he is not the cause. Ibid., 160 cf. Stump and Kretzmann, "God's Knowledge and Its Causal Efficacy," 99. Thus, simply equating God's knowledge with divine causation will not do for a general account.

¹⁸ Stump, *Aquinas*, 179.

¹⁹ See Stump's discussion of the necessary and sufficient conditions for free will acts in *Aquinas*, ch. 9.

²⁰ Aquinas, SCG I, 68: "Now the products of art are in the craftsman through the intellect and will of the craftsman, even as natural things are in their causes through the powers of the causes: for, just as natural things liken their effects to themselves by their active powers, so the craftsman by his intellect gives his handiwork the form whereby it is likened to his art." See also SCG II, 1, 24, and III, 89, ST Ia, 14, 8c.

which are, for Aquinas, the exemplar-formal causes of created things.²¹ Not being efficiently causative, the problem of free will is said to be avoided.

Shanley's Response to Stump

In his "Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal," Brian Shanley criticizes Stump's position when discussing the "powerful a priori assumption that a causal account of divine knowledge entails a form of epistemic-causal determinism."²² While deferring this specific issue to another article, Shanley is quite clear that to interpret Aquinas's position as restricting God's causation in such a way that it does not extend to events or states of affairs is a mistake.

Rather, according to Shanley, God's causality is both formal *and* efficient. When Aquinas states that God causes what he knows (for God's "knowledge is the cause of a thing,"²³), Shanley takes this to be an all-encompassing knowledge.²⁴ Shanley agrees with Stump that the craftsman (or artisan) analogy is Aquinas's main model, but denies her inference that this limits God's causation to the merely formal. In fact, for Shanley, the image is used precisely to contrast God's causative knowledge with human knowledge.²⁵ That is, while the human artisan's knowledge is limited to providing formal causes, "the range of God's knowledge extends to

²¹ Stump and Shanley use both of these terms equivalently. While it may have little bearing on this debate, the proper distinction between formal and exemplar causality has to do with the causal mode: *Formal Cause* speaks of a thing's inherent, intrinsic form, while *Exemplar Cause* refers to a thing's imitative, extrinsic form. See Gregory T. Doolan, *Aquinas on the Divine Ideas as Exemplar Causes* (Washington, DC: Catholic University Press, 2008). Following the majority of writers, and to avoid confusion of Aristotle's categories, I will use "formal cause" when referring to either.

²² Shanley, "Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal," 206.

²³ Aquinas, ST I, 57, 2.

²⁴ Shanley, "Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal," 207.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 211.

everything that has existence in any way, including individual entities, their accidents, and their actions.”²⁶

Because God’s knowledge is based on efficient causality, and encompasses the actions, thoughts, and will of every creature, when Aquinas refers to God’s causal knowledge of the soul (which includes both intellect and will²⁷), Shanley believes this to mean that God has caused the intellect and will – *including their operations*—efficiently.²⁸ Contra Stump, Shanley says that although “Aquinas did not shrink from a consistent and thoroughgoing causal account of God’s knowledge as encompassing . . . human beings in all their activities—including their thoughts and volitions,” nevertheless, “Aquinas is quite confident that his position does not entail divine determinism.”²⁹

Shanley offers the metaphysical relationship between God and creatures as the key to understanding how God can cause all that exists, including free human actions and willing, yet not doing so in a manner that results in determinism. The reason for this is that God transcends all mundane causes. God, rather than stepping in and causing human willing in a foreign, extrinsic manner, actually works interiorly as creator and thus becomes the creature’s “enabling origin.”³⁰ This divine mode of causality is working as efficient cause, *but so is the human*

²⁶ Ibid., 214.

²⁷ E.g., “God knows all these differences of things and whatever is contained under them. Now the things in the soul are those that are in our will or our thought. It remains, therefore, that God knows what we have in our thoughts and wills. Moreover. God so knows other things in knowing His essence, as effects are known through their cause being known. Accordingly by knowing His essence God knows all the things to which His causality extends. Now this extends to the works of the intellect and will” Aquinas, SCG I, 68.

²⁸ “Bringing into being what is known.” Shanley, “Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal,” 215-216.

²⁹ Shanley, “Eternal Knowledge of the Temporal,” 207. and Shanley, “Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas,” 100 respectively.

³⁰ Ibid.

willer's. God's efficient causality is seen as primary and the human's, being dependent upon God's, as secondary.

Difficulty arises when one tries to imagine how these can both be genuine causes in the way "cause" is often conceived. Unfortunately, this is where Aquinas finishes his discussion—not because his work is incomplete, but because the mystery cannot be penetrated further. The important thing for Shanley is to avoid attempting to go beyond what can be known in order to discover the mechanics of God's causation, and instead affirm the theological truths concerning God's primary efficient causality and its effects on human secondary efficient causality. A mistake made by many interpreters is to demean God's transcendent causality by considering it univocally with mundane causes - and then add to that error by trying to "fill out" Aquinas's explanation to make it more satisfactory.³¹ Because we are dealing with a cause unknown in creation, we can say little more without distorting the truth.³²

What *can* be said in this regard is that God, as an interior creative cause, is not acting coercively.³³ Further, "God moves the will so that it acts in accord with its own nature as a self-determining power. . . . this motion is interior, non-coercive, and non-determining."³⁴ Once the idea that freedom requires an agent to be its own first cause is given up, the intuitive problem lessens considerably. God, as ultimate first (i.e. primary efficient) cause, determines not only *what* comes about, but *how* it comes about. Some effects God wills to come about by necessary

³¹ Shanley cites Bañezianism and Molinism as examples of this two-fold error. "Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas," *passim*.

³² "The nature of this non-determinative motio whereby God causes the will to be *causa sui* and self-determinative remains opaque." Shanley, "Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas," 115.

³³ Shanley, "Divine Causation and Human Freedom in Aquinas," 113.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

causes, while He prepares contingent causes for others.³⁵ These contingent causes include the free will choices of human creatures. Stump, says Shanley, is offering a modified explanation of Aquinas in an attempt to avoid uncomfortable deterministic overtones that he thinks are really based in Stump's own misunderstanding of Aquinas, and he maintains that the efficient causality view is a better explanation.³⁶

Summary

From the above considerations it seems that Stump would be committed to the following four assertions:

- (1) God knows human free actions via divine causation.
- (2) God's knowledge can be efficiently or formally causative.
- (3) If God knows human free actions via efficient causation then they are not truly free.
- (4) Therefore, concerning human free actions, God's causation is formal.³⁷

Shanley accepts (1) and (2), but denies (3) and (4) because he believes that God's knowledge of all things is based on divine efficient causation.³⁸ Stump believes that because God, on Shanley's view, is the ultimate efficient cause and thus the ultimate *agent*—this makes God responsible for the actions caused.³⁹ So, while Stump agrees that “nothing creaturely is independent of God,”

³⁵ See Aquinas, SCG I, 85 and ST I, 19, 8.

³⁶ Shanley, “Aquinas on God's Causal Knowledge,” 457. This is not imply that Aquinas's position is easy to reconcile. Hartshorne's response to Aquinas's position is succinct if dismissive: “Don't laugh, the saintly theologian is serious.” Hartshorne, Charles. *Omnipotence and Other Theological Mistakes* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1984), 12.

³⁷ Stump, *Aquinas*, 159, 161-163, and 181 respectively.

³⁸ With the important exception of God's knowledge of the divine essence itself. Shanley also answers Stump's objections to God's efficient causal knowledge based on God's knowledge of things that do not exist per se (e.g., evil or future acts), but these are not the subject of this paper.

³⁹ Stump and Kretzmann, “Eternity and God's Knowledge,” 441-442. Stump actually takes issue with several of Shanley's conclusions and raises three major issues: First, if God knows human actions in virtue of divine efficient causality then this would have to include sinful activity which makes God responsible for sin. The other two objections concern God's knowledge of future contingents of necessary truths. These will not be dealt with in any detail in this paper.

she thinks that Shanley's view cannot be reconciled with the human freedom he espouses. Both affirm, however, that God's causation (whatever it is) does not result in divine determinism.⁴⁰ All of these factors, then, will have to be dealt with in a coherent explanation of Aquinas's position. I believe that Stump's view fails to accomplish this.

Does Divine Knowledge via Formal Causality Safeguard Human Freedom?

Stump's solution is problematic because of the following dilemma: Either (1) human free actions do not possess form, and therefore have no formal cause, or (2) human free actions possess form, and therefore have a formal cause. If (1) is the case, and God knows via formal causality only, then God does not know human free actions. This conclusion is unacceptable to both Stump and Shanley. Further, as shown above, it is certainly not a position Aquinas would affirm.

If, however, (2) is the case, then it appears to simply bring the original question up again. If formal causality alone is said to account for God's knowledge of human free actions, then it seems God would *still* be responsible for causing them. If, as their formal cause, God causes these actions to be *what they are*, then how is this any less determinative than if God efficiently caused the existence of those actions ("*that they are*")? Whether or not Stump maintains that human free actions are properly said to have form, either an unacceptable or unhelpful conclusion results. Both possibilities will be explored briefly below.

The "Form" of Actions

It might seem difficult to imagine what the "form of an action" would be, but a few suggestions have been put forward. Joseph Owens posits actions as real accidents of a

⁴⁰ Both also agree that God is not responsible for sin. Since one's response to God's causative relation to non-sinful free actions will also serve as a response to sinful free action, I will not distinguish the two issues here.

substance.⁴¹ He notes that for Aristotle, “action adds no new absolutely inherent being in the agent,” and that for Aquinas, action “is not part of [the actor’s] substantial nature,” and thus, “from one viewpoint, action adds no ‘formal content’ over its corresponding operative potency.”⁴² However, the “formal content” of the action is known by its object.⁴³ Thus it seems that as accidents, actions do produce new forms – for they are *something*. On this account, while actions *qua actions* are not “essences” possessing form the way a substance would, this does not necessarily relieve them of any formal quality whatsoever.⁴⁴

Further, it may be that actions do indeed possess proper form. Jeffrey Brower argues that although they are in the category of accidents, motions possess form. He takes Aquinas’s commentary on Aristotle’s *Physics* (3.5.13) to say that motion is a “special type of form,” and that Aquinas identifies “an action and a passion with a single form.”⁴⁵ He believes that for Aquinas, “motion is a form or property inhering in a patient.”⁴⁶ Whether or not Brower is presenting an accurate reading of Aquinas, he does show that a metaphysical account of actions having formal content is at least possible.

⁴¹ Joseph Owens, *An Elementary Christian Metaphysics* (Houston: Center for Thomistic Studies, 1985), 192.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 196-198.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 198.

⁴⁴ Further, Owens argues that finite substances are given their operative powers by the First Cause and require it as their First Mover. Thus, “in the operation of every finite creature there are at least two efficient causes at work.” Owens goes on to argue that God, as First Cause, exercises causality “directly upon the agent, and not directly upon the operation or the product. It moves the *agent*.” [*Ibid.*, 198-199 (emphasis in original)]. This seems to be the very conclusion Stump wishes to avoid.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey Brower, “Types of Hylomorphic Compound” in *Aquinas and Material Objects* (unpublished manuscript, 2012), 29.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 30. Similar arguments for formed actions might be found in contemporary accounts of property-based metaphysics. Consider Michael J. Loux, *Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 1998), ch. 6.

Aquinas himself uses language of form when referring to human actions (e.g., *DP* 3.6.12; *ST* I-II, 73.3.1), but unlike the form of a substance making it be what it is, “form” is used analogously to describe the *purposes* of actions. In these cases, Aquinas does not imply that any informing of matter is going on. “End [i.e., final cause] is, or is as if, the form of a human action for Thomas, then, not because end is a (substantial) form, but because in its relation to a human action, end performs certain functions which are comparable to what a (substantial) form gives to a bodily creature.”⁴⁷

Whichever view one holds, Stump nowhere indicates that it is her position that actions do not have form. Further, given the unacceptable conclusion that formless acts would necessitate ignorance on God’s part should his causality be relegated to the formal type, the question need not be belabored here.⁴⁸ Rather, as will be argued below, opting for formal causality as the means of God’s knowledge of human free actions only reintroduces the original issue.

Formal Knowledge of Actions

As stated above, problem (2) is that formal causation seems to simply lead back to the divine determinism via God’s causal knowledge. This is because if God knows human free actions via formal causality then God is acting as the formal cause – viz., the cause of *what* those actions *are* (from the “role” of the formal cause). But this leads back to the original problem that

⁴⁷ Joseph Pilsner, *The Specification of Human Actions in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), 49-51.

⁴⁸ Stump does not, in fact, go into detail as to exactly how formal causality solves the problem of God’s knowledge. Perhaps it is that God’s ideas would only cause things with form – but then this would exclude God’s knowledge of actions, events, and states of affairs and do Stump little good. Stump might contend that things lacking form could still somehow be known via formal causation, but this would seem to re-cause the problem of free actions possessing form, and therefore requiring a formal cause. Or possibly she thinks that God knows these things in some way other than formal causality (which would make her argument seem moot or at least oddly incomplete). See Shanley, “Aquinas on God’s Causal Knowledge,” 454.

Stump wanted to avoid. How, it can be asked, does God get “off the hook” for *what* is willed if God is the cause of the action’s “whatness”?

Thomas Pink notes that, “Formal causation is not, of course, causation in the modern sense—what Aristotle called causation in the efficient form. For the object of thought need not be actual; it need not be realized or instanced in the world as, on the other hand, genuine causes in efficient form must be.”⁴⁹ So, if God knows the thoughts and intents of the human mind via formal causation, God would *also* know which objects of intellect and will issue forth in action.⁵⁰ These objects, if they have form, also require a formal cause, and if God knows them via formal causality then God is, once again, the cause of what these actions’ “*whatness*.”⁵¹

Returning to Aquinas’s own artist illustration, if the artist paints (*per impossibile*) a woman *willing herself to be climbing a mountain*, it is still the form (exemplar) in the artist’s mind that is the cause of the woman’s *willing* (and not just the woman’s substantial form).⁵² The fact that the artist knows the woman’s willing via his own mind does not change the fact that, as the formal cause, the artist is still the primary cause of *what is being willed* by the woman in the painting. Once again, this returns us to the original problem that Stump is trying to avoid.

⁴⁹ Thomas Pink, “Freedom and Action Without Causation: Noncausal Theories of Freedom and Purposive Agency” in *The Oxford Handbook of Free Will*, 2nd ed, ed. Robert Kane (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 351.

⁵⁰ This issue is reflected even in modern behavioral theory: “The sense of the formal cause most commonly found in psychology is that of an internal mechanism or structure . . . far from the notion of *psykhé* or soul as a functional form of the organism . . . it does not undertake the meaning of model as a prior figure or example to be followed (transmits or is imitated).” Álvarez suggests that formal causality in behavior theory might be better described as “Formal causes as models would condition the possibilities for what we can become.” Marino Pérez Álvarez, “The Four Causes of Behavior: Aristotle and Skinner,” *International Journal of Psychology and Psychological Therapy* 9, no. 1 (2009): 51-52.

⁵¹ Shanley notes a similar difficulty (but does not elaborate upon it) when he asks, “If *esse* is distinct from essence in every created being, then how can formal-exemplar causality be enough to explain the divine knowledge of that *esse*?” Shanley, “Aquinas on God’s Causal Knowledge,” 454.

⁵² Disregarding, for the sake of simplicity, that the artist might be recalling a woman he actually saw willing herself to be climbing a mountain.

Finally, as will be discussed next, it is a problem that Aquinas does not appear to resolve in the way Stump suggests.

Aquinas on Divine Determinism and God's Knowledge

Besides the above internal problems with Stump's proposed solution, there is also the difficulty of squaring her interpretation of Aquinas with other statements he makes that bear on the debate. Aquinas clearly believes that God knows both the intellect and will of a person via divine causation.⁵³ Rather than concluding from this fact that God's causality is limited to the production of these powers, Aquinas asserts that while it would be violence upon a free will to move it "from without . . . it does not exclude the influence of a higher cause from which it has being and action. Thus causality remains in the first cause which is God, *in respect of the movements of the will*; so that God is able to know them by knowing Himself."⁵⁴ Aquinas includes the chosen actions of the will, and not just its power to will actions, in God's causality.

As a negative corollary to his assertions above, Aquinas cautions that we must avoid the error of Origen, who argued that, "God causes willing and accomplishing within us in the sense that He causes in us the power of willing, but not in such a way that He makes us will this or that."⁵⁵ Origen's account is insufficient for Aquinas, for God is the primary cause of both the power of will and what is willed. In fact, Aquinas uses the artist analogy to make this point.⁵⁶

⁵³ "Wherefore just as God by knowing His being knows the being of everything, so by knowing His act of intelligence and will He knows every thought and will." Aquinas, SCG I, 68.

⁵⁴ Ibid. (emphasis added). Although Aquinas notes that God is the cause of our act of choice and that this subject to divine providence, he is not opposed to human freedom.⁵⁴ He retains this freedom by keeping the power of the soul from being tied to one effect. Thus "the form whereby a voluntary agent acts is not determinate: for the will acts through a form apprehended by the intellect; and the intellect has not one determined form of effect under its consideration, but essentially embraces a multitude of forms." Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, Tr. The English Dominican Fathers (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1932), LXXII.

⁵⁵ See Aquinas, SCG, 89. "So, it seems that there developed from this view the opinion of certain people who said that providence does not apply to things subject to free choice, that is, to acts of choice, but, instead, that providence is applied to external events. For he who chooses to attain or accomplish something, such as to make a

Aquinas offers different ways in which God is said to be the cause of human action, yet God always remains the primary cause, and the actions remain free.⁵⁷ While this presents a conceptual difficulty, and although the opportunity arises, nowhere does Aquinas suggest a limitation of God's causality to the formal type to help resolve the tension. Aquinas simply does not see efficient causality as a problem for human free willed acts.

Conclusion

Stump's proposal is not promising in its current form. Although she does not limit God's knowledge to formal causation in every case, her view is problematic when applied to the issues she wishes to resolve.⁵⁸ Either human free actions are formless and would not be known (contra God's omniscience),⁵⁹ or they possess form and God remains the cause of what they are (contra Stump's requirement for human freedom). This dilemma will have to satisfactorily dealt with for Stump's solution to gain a higher level of plausibility.

building or to become rich, is not always able to reach this end; thus, the results of our actions are not subject to free choice, but are controlled by providence. To these people, of course, opposition is offered quite plainly by the texts from Sacred Scripture." See Origen, *Peri Archon*, III, I (PG, 11, col. 293).

⁵⁶ "God not only gives powers to things but, beyond that, no thing can act by its own power unless it acts through His power, as we showed above. So, man cannot use the power of will that has been given him except in so far as he acts through the power of God. Now, the being through whose power the agent acts is the cause not only of the power, but also of the act. This is apparent in the case of an artist through whose power an instrument works, even though it does not get its own form from this artist, but is merely applied to action by this man. Therefore, God is for us the cause not only of our will, but also of our act of willing." (Aquinas, *SCG*, 89.5)

⁵⁷ While Aquinas is quite clear that God cannot *force* the will, this does not mean that God does not *move* the will. Only an extrinsic cause moving the will would be considered violent to it, and God as cause of the essence and existence of the will does not act violently against it when he moves it. This is the position Shanley argues in "Divine Causation and human Freedom in Aquinas." Stump actually argues in much the same manner in *Aquinas*, ch. 13. See Thomas Aquinas, *De Veritate*, Q.22, A.8 and ST I, 19, A.8.

⁵⁸ Stump, *Aquinas*, 161-162. Should Stump respond to my proposed dilemma with any ground for God's knowledge that is extrinsic to the divine essence, then God's knowledge would become dependent – something neither she nor Shanley would grant.

⁵⁹ Indeed, similar criticisms would apply to God's knowledge of anything without form, such as evil (see Shanley, "Aquinas on God's Causal Knowledge," 447-449) or pure possibles (see Doolan, 139-145) – the very objects she posits as problems for Shanley's view.

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