Chapter 5
Desire and Freedom: Are We Responsible for Our Emotions?

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Abstract In this chapter, we address the problem of whether we are responsible for our desires. For desire to enter the field of responsibility, it must fall into the category of a human act; that is, it must be deliberate and voluntary. Desires, insofar as they are emotions, apparently belong to the non-rational and not free sphere of the human being, and are often activated without the participation of reason, will and consciousness. In our chapter, however, we demonstrate how the emotional life and, therefore, the desire can enter the moral sphere itself. We do so by resorting to the Thomistic conception of the relations between reason, will and emotions. For this purpose, we distinguish, in the first place, two different genres of desire, those of the rational appetite (as the acts of intention and choice) and those of the sensitive appetite. Second, we appeal to the scholastic distinction between antecedent emotions and consequent emotions, which are different in their relation to morality and are an important point to approach the education of desire from the point of view of the virtue ethics.

Keywords Desire · Free will · Philosophy of Emotion · Psychology of Emotion · Emotional Responsibility

5.1 Emotions: Between Health and Moral Sciences

To talk about desire is to talk about the realm of feelings and emotions. In the vernacular of today, this seems to be a field of study mainly of psychology and neurosciences and, therefore, apparently of natural determinism. This would give the impression that we cannot choose what we desire but, at best, we can only give free channel to desire or curb it by the action of the will. It would be, therefore, a field

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outside of morals or that, at most, concerns it in terms of the execution of acts that lead to satisfying desire, but not in terms of the inner movement of desire.

Despite the apparent evidence of these claims, we believe that they depend on a significant misunderstanding that has its roots in Cartesian voluntarism and Kantian formalist ethics. For a non-dualistic anthropological concept and for the Aristotelian ethical tradition, the substantial and operational unity between the spiritual and the bodily, and between will and desire, gives rise to a much more subtle and nuanced discourse on the morality of passions. Nevertheless, in our time, we have reached a situation of maximization of the bio-sanitary perspective, which tends to absorb all human affairs into its perspective. An example of this is seen in the World Health Organization's (WHO) constitutional definition of health: "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." This definition has been much praised for its holistic character. However, one suspects that it is so holistic that it goes beyond the field of health sciences. In fact, in essence it matches Boethius' definition of happiness (*De consolatione philosophiae*, III, 2): "the perfect state in which all goods are possessed." For classical philosophy, there are three kinds of goods: exterior, of the body and of the soul (*Summa Theologiae*, II-II, q. 85, a. 3, ad 2[1]). These three goods correspond to the physical, mental and social well-being as defined by the WHO. This shows us clearly how easy it is to slip from the field of health sciences to ethics. At this point, the issue of emotions is especially delicate.

In the last century, Yves Simon lucidly stated that the field of emotions is intertwined with that of freedom; therefore, a merely empirical and aseptic psychological approach is not enough, but that ethical valuation is required. These are his words:

> At the same time, however, we must not let pass unchallenged the persistent attempts to extend the scope of psychology to problems that are really problems of ethics and can only be understood in the light of moral principles. In fact, such efforts to subject all affective life to empirical speculative procedures of modern psychology go back at least three-quarters of a century. For instance, writing in the 1860s, a well-known author [Ribot] insisted that for psychology there are not good or bad passions any more than there are useful and harmful plants for the botanist. Such distinctions, he said, are what moralists and gardeners are interested in. That is a seductive but sophistic parallel. To a plant it matters not whether it causes joy or its opposite in the lover of gardens; but a passion, considered in its concrete exercise, directly affects the moral destiny of the free agent. And that is why, when it studies human passions, psychology becomes less of a natural science than when it studies, for example, memory. It may not be easy to draw a straight line between a psychological and an ethical problem, but it is safe to say that the moment the possibility of free choice enters the picture, psychology, if it eschews all value judgements, cannot provide a full explanation of the case.
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> Leaving choice out of consideration cannot but distort our understanding of human experience, including emotional responses. We found in such attempts the last word of scientism.

[1] Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* will be quoted in the classical way (part, volume, question, article), and the pages and edition will be used just in the case of text quotations. The translation of the text of the *Commentary on the Sentences* is ours.

> After its arrogant pretention to subject metaphysical problems to the judgements of positive science, scientism is now working on the *physication of moral things*, so to speak (Simon 2002).

It is evident that emotions are ordinarily impregnated with morality. Envy, for example, which has always been regarded as morally bad, is a form of sadness aimed at the good of another, likewise shame and cowardice are forms of fear, and so forth. In the following pages, we therefore address the issue of freedom of emotions from a psychological and ethical perspective based on the Aristotelian ethical tradition and, within it, on the contributions of Thomas Aquinas.

5.2 Desire, Appetite and Emotions

Before proceeding to the core issue, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of words. When we talk about responsibility, firstly, we are referring to the ability to give a "response" to the reasons for our actions. This ability to respond depends on our being a perfect cause of them; that is, that these acts are free. That they are free means that the judgement that specifies them is free and that the act of following that judgement is free. The notion of freedom implies, on the one hand, full causality: "*liber est causa sui*" (*Summa Theologiae,* I, q. 96, a. 4, co.). This causality is that of an appetite specified by a previous judgement, coming from a deliberation. On the other hand, it means an absence of coercion. More specifically, this means that in order to cause the act, judgement that specifies and is the formal cause of the free act depends on the indeterminacy of the will.

Let's turn to the word "desire." According to the *Oxford Dictionary of English* (2006), the word "desire" means "a strong feeling of wanting to have something or wishing something to happen". Read philosophically, this definition can correspond to two distinct concepts, one broader and one narrower. In its broad sense it may correspond to the Greek "*orexis*" and the Latin "*appetitus*". In this first sense, when we ask ourselves whether desire is responsible, we ask ourselves if one can be responsible for one's orectic movements, whether these be love, hate, envy, sadness, anger, hope, joy, etc. Since the Greeks, philosophy has distinguished between the sensitive appetite, which in turn is divided into concupiscible and irascible, and the rational appetite. Taken in this first meaning, the question of the responsibility of desire could therefore refer to (a) the responsibility of any affective tendency of any kind, (b) the responsibility of the tendencies of the sensitive appetite (emotions) or (c) the responsibility of the rational appetite. The second, narrower meaning of desire is that according to which the word designates a particular type of act of the appetite, which is one that consists of craving something that is not possessed. This corresponds to the Greek "*epithymía*" and Latin terms "*concupiscentia*" and "*desiderium*". Since, however, all these questions are theoretically connected to each other, we will try to answer all of them, starting with the most general and finishing with the most particular.

Let's start, then, by framing the notion and types of appetite. Appetite in general is defined as an inclination or tendency towards the good. Thomistic philosophy distinguishes three types of appetite: natural, sensitive and intellectual or rational (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 80). Because of its substantial form, the natural appetite is the inclination, proportion or reference of any entity to its own perfect act (Prevosti 2016). This is not the type of appetite that interests us here. The other two forms of appetite are what are known as an elicited appetite. The elicited appetite results from the intentional existence of the entities in the mind through their forms, that is, through knowledge (Echavarría 2017). As there are two levels of knowledge—the sensitive and the intellectual—there are also two kinds of appetite: the one that follows sensory knowledge, and the one that follows rational knowledge. Of these two types of appetite we will consider the problem of their freedom and responsibility, including in both cases the freedom of desire understood as "*concupiscentia.*"

The movements of the sensitive appetite have been referred to by classical philosophy as "passions", a word that, after Descartes, ends up being replaced by the word "emotions" (Echavarría 2019). While it is true that "emotions" is a polysemic word that cannot be fully identified with the classic "passions" (Lombardo 2011); nevertheless both words ordinarily tend to coincide in their meaning. In this regard we will use the word "emotion".

There are very differing classifications of emotions in contemporary psychology (Cornelius 1996). The most widespread is that of Paul Ekman's basic emotions (Ekman 1972), which is neither the only one nor the most accurate. We will follow the classical classification of Thomas Aquinas, which has been updated and validated by the experimental psychologist Magda B. Arnold (1960a, b), to whom we shall return shortly. This is a classification based on differences in the object of the acts of the appetite, which is what specifies them. The emotions of the concupiscible appetite are aimed at the pleasurable good for the sense, or the evil that opposes it, resulting thereby in six emotions:

1. Love, which is the first reaction of the appetite to the presence of a good
2. Hate, which is the first reaction of the appetite to the presence of what opposes the beloved one, such as an evil that threatens or has apprehended the beloved one
3. Desire, which is the tendency to search for an absent good
4. Aversion, which is the tendency to flee from an approaching evil
5. Joy, which is the reaction of the appetite to the present good
6. Sadness, which is the reaction of the appetite to the presence of evil (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 25, a. 2)

The emotions of the irascible appetite are more complex because its object is the difficult good. The difficult good is something that is appreciated as a good by a faculty superior to the senses, and that, for these, is rough and, therefore, is a good with a mixture of bad. What is good attracts, and what is bad repels. The result of the irascible appetite is five passions, which include:

1. Hope, which is the movement of appetite towards the search for an arduous good that is considered achievable

2. Despair, which is the opposite movement, of escape from an arduous good that is considered impossible to achieve
3. Daring, which is the movement of the appetite to combat a future evil that is seen as possible to overcome
4. Fear, which is the movement in the form of escape before a future evil that is considered impossible to overcome
5. Anger, which is movement in the form of resistance and combat against the evil that is present (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 25, a. 3)

If we take "desire" in its most general sense, all these movements could be called desire. If we take it in its strictest sense, "desire" means only one kind of movement of the sensitive appetite, namely that in which we tend to find something apprehended as an absent good (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 30, a. 1 and 2). You desire what you want but do not have. As such, desire has not been apprehended—at least not yet—as an arduous good. Desires can be natural, such as sexual desire, the desire to eat or drink, the desire to sleep and so forth, or they can be cognitively and socially acquired desires, such as the desire to have wealth, or to have certain clothing brands, or to become a film star (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 30, a. 3). Are desires—that is, these types of movements of the concupiscible appetite—be considered responsible? To be responsible, they should be authentic human acts, that is, acts that come from deliberation and are free. This seems to be something difficult to affirm, since emotions, including desires, are activated by non-rational and even unconscious processes.

5.3 The Psychology of the Activation of Emotions

That emotions are activated by non-intellectual processes is a very well-established thesis today. Cognitive psychology usually recognizes two levels of cognitive functioning (dual process theory). One level is singular, automatic, which produces contingent associations and is shared by people and animals (System 1 or Type 1). The second level is an abstract, reflexive, rational type that is specific to the human being (System 2 or Type 2) (Evans 2017; Kahneman 2003; Sloman 1996). The second activates the actions we call voluntary. The first, which is relatively independent of the second, activates emotions. These theses of cognitive psychology are recent derivations of the theory of the activation of emotions as proposed by the Czech-American psychologist Magda B. Arnold. Arnold formulated the first cognitive theory of emotions, known as the "appraisal theory", in the late 1950s and early 1960s. (Arnold 1960a, b). From this theory the work of Richard Lazarus was founded (1966) and, from him, all the subsequent developments of cognitive psychology of emotions (Echavarría 2019). This theory was intended to overcome the problems of previous theories, which were inserted in the discussion initiated by the James-Lange theory (James 1884). In the latter, which was heir to the Cartesian approach to emotions (Echavarría 2019), emotion was reduced to the sensation of

the organic modifications produced by a previous perception. Arnold sees two problems in this concept: (a) emotions would be activated by mere perceptions, and (b) emotion is reduced to a sensation, thereby losing its orectic character. In general terms, Arnold's thesis, widely confirmed by subsequent research, is that emotions are psychosomatic tendency movements that have their origin in an appraisal. This appraisal is a cognitive act that is not reduced to a perception or an idea. This appraisal must include a type of judgement of value or evaluation that presents, to the animal or individual, what it had previously known perceptually as something that has some kind of vital relationship with the subject that it values. The appraisal is knowledge of the vital value to the animal or individual of the perceived or imagined object. This judgement is not intellectual or reflexive. Arnold calls it "sensory judgement". This sensory judgement is not abstract, but concrete; it is not reflexive, but unthinking and automatic; and it is not necessarily aware. Arnold argued, however, that while emotions motivate us, they do not ordinarily force us to act. An intellectual, reflexive assessment can prevent us from acting according to an emotion and that we can choose to act in a way opposite to the inclination of the emotion.

This way of understanding emotion is, at least in general, not completely new. It is an updated version of a theory that has its roots in Aristotle (Pearson 2012). Avicenna explicitly developed this theory, with the introduction between the inner senses of an estimative power (Wolfson 1935), an idea that scholastics, particularly to include Thomas Aquinas, adopted (Allers 1941; Klubertanz 1952; Fabro 1961; Muszalski 2014). In its Thomistic version, the general idea is as follows. The external senses are those that capture the formal information of the bodies (proper senses and common senses) through peripheral nerve terminals (the distinct senses). In addition to the external senses are the inner senses. The inner senses are central faculties located in the brain that elaborate the sensory information at a higher level. These are (in its Thomistic version): common sense; imagination; the estimative power (or "cogitative power" in man, following Averroes); and sensory memory (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 78, a. 4).

Common sense and imagination are "formal" senses. In other words, common sense and imagination elaborate at a more complex level of integration the same data received by the senses without yet apprehending meanings. Common sense integrates data from the distinct senses, connects and compares it. The imagination retains what is received from the external senses and the common sense and reproduces it in an image when the object is absent from the senses. In contrast, the estimative power and memory are "intentional" senses, that is, senses that add to the mere formal elaboration the apprehension of meanings (*intentiones*). The meanings can be of two types: universal, which are apprehended by the intellect, and particular, which are those that are apprehended by the estimative power. The "*vis aestimativa*" is so called because its function in the animal psyche is to apprehend vital meanings in the configurations apprehended by the external senses and the formal internal senses (Allers 1941). These meanings are particular, vital and pragmatic (Echavarría 2018). They are particular because it is not a universal concept, but of the individual ("my mother", for example, not "mother"). They are

vital because they affect the life of the subject (such as its food, its home, its friend). They are pragmatic because they move to action (for the animal mother, to apprehend something as her offspring is, at the same time, to prepare to act on her offspring with some action of maternal care), but they do it by activating first the passions or emotions in such a way that the estimative power would be, in this theory, the one that evaluates the vital value that a thing has, and this evaluation would activate the emotion. As it is a non-intellectual evaluation that depends on many factors (instinctive or learned), it can be unconscious and precede an assessment made from intellectual principles.

It is important to note that the coincidence between these theories of classical philosophical psychology and those of cognitive psychology is not accidental. Arnold, who was an experimental psychologist, received an explicit and documented influence of the Thomistic concept of the inner senses and passions, an influence she herself recognized (Arnold 1963). The way in which she conceived the evaluation that precedes the emotions, her concept of emotion and even her classification of emotions are based very deeply on Thomistic psychology (Cornelius 2006; Echavarría 2019). From this cognitive and Thomistic conception, it follows that emotion depends on cognition, but not immediately on intellectual cognition. Instead, emotions depend on that specific cognition which relates to that sensory evaluation. Consequently, the possibility of being responsible for our emotions will depend on the ability to govern that type of cognition.

5.4 Antecedent Emotions and Consequent Emotions

What has been said so far allows us to understand that, on the one hand, emotions are immediately activated by a faculty other than reason, and that on the other hand, in the human being the mere activation of emotions is not ordinarily sufficient to move to action. Instead, action is waiting for the consent of the will, when this is possible. We must now take another step to understand that emotions are not just another motivational factor of moral action but an element that can be intrinsically moral. For this it is necessary to explain two things: (a) the articulation between intellectual evaluation and internal sensory evaluation and (b) the articulation between will and emotion. The most complete explanation of this dual articulation is the Thomistic doctrine of antecedent passions and consequent passions.

According to Aquinas, the sensitive appetite can be considered in two ways: either in itself, or in its functional relationship with reason and will. Considered in itself, the sensitive appetite, which is also found in animals, is foreign to the will and, therefore, to responsibility. It is activated by the estimative faculty. From this point of view, the sensitive appetite can be the source of involuntary acts (or at least, mitigate the voluntary nature of the acts), but it is not free and responsible. Considered in its relation to reason and will, the sensitive appetite enters the field of morality (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 24, a.1). This is because there are two types of emotions: (a) those that are activated before the judgement of reason and (b) those

that are activated as a result of the activity of reason and will. The first are called antecedent emotions or passions, or the "first movements of sensuality" (Echavarría 2013), and the second, consequent passions. The former are not activated by acts of deliberation and choice, and, therefore, do not fully comply with the concept of the human act. The latter, although movements of the sensitive appetite, are fully voluntary and, therefore, responsible, deliberately and freely participating in the acts of reason and will. This is how Aquinas explains the process by which both types of emotion occur (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 24, a. 3, ad. 2):

> The passions of the soul may stand in a twofold relation to the judgement of reason. First, antecedently: and thus, since they obscure the judgement of reason, on which the goodness of the moral act depends, they diminish the goodness of the act; for it is more praiseworthy to do a work of charity from the judgement of reason than from the mere passion of pity. In the second place, consequently: and this in two ways. First, by way of redundance: because, to wit, when the higher part of the soul is intensely moved to anything, the lower part also follows that movement: and thus the passion that results in consequence, in the sensitive appetite, is a sign of the intensity of the will, and so indicates greater moral goodness. Secondly, by way of choice; when, to wit, a man, by the judgement of his reason, chooses to be affected by a passion in order to work more promptly with the co-operation of the sensitive appetite. And thus a passion of the soul increases the goodness of an action (Aquinas 1914).

We have, first of all, the preceding passions. These are activated in the way explained by the psychological theories mentioned above. This is to say that antecedent passions are activated regardless of the action of reason. Preceding passions will instead be activated first, by the preceding evaluation of the estimative faculty based on instinctive inclinations and previous experience. Secondly, we have the consequent passions. Aquinas proposes two ways in which these consequent passions or emotions would be activated. We will begin by explaining the second mode, and then we will move on to the issue of redundancy. Aquinas refers here to the possibility of choosing to be affected by certain emotions. How is it possible for one to choose which emotions affect one, if they are activated by a sensitive faculty, the estimative faculty? The key to the solution is in the cogitative power or *vis cogitativa* (De Haan 2014). Cognitive theories, particularly the recent dual processing theory, give the impression that the human being is radically divided into two minds: the intuitive and the rational. This point of view is useful for explaining cognitive biases and other unconscious cognitive processes. But this point of view can lose sight of the operational unit of the human being, which is so important for understanding the moral dimension of emotions. The cogitative power is a key point in this integration.

According to the Thomistic perspective, the cogitative power is the same power as the estimative power. The latter is called "estimative" when it proceeds to evaluate according to innate dispositions not dependent on reasoning, as occurs in animals. Although animals are able to associate and learn, animal learning consists of redirecting new forms presented by their sensitive experience to instinctive evaluation schemes. In humans, this level of functioning of the estimative power is present, as is evident in childhood, but also in adults. However, in addition to this instinctive functioning of the ability to apprehend particular meanings, in humans this faculty is

elevated by its ontological and operational insertion into the higher powers of human beings. In addition to functioning in this natural estimative way, in humans this faculty receives the name of "cogitative power" or "particular reason", which differs from universal reason. The reason for this denomination is primarily because humans can enrich their experience of instinctive particular valuation schemes through a kind of reasoning about particulars.

By comparing particular meanings humans can grasp new meanings. These are contingent connections between particular meanings, which are inferences based on experience and which can be expressed in a propositional structure, such as "Peter is my enemy; John is Peter's son; therefore, John is my enemy". These kinds of inferences are not acts of intelligence or universal reason but of the particular reason, which deals with the singular. In addition, the cogitative power, through its radical insertion into the mind, is able to apprehend the individual under the universal concept. Terms such as "this man" or "this orchid" are not only important in terms of vital and pragmatic meanings. Such terms also have an epistemological importance for the development of the speculative capacity of man, which is a discussion that goes beyond the purview of this chapter (Echavarría 2018).

Finally, the cogitative power is called *particular reason* because it is subordinated in its operation to universal reason, that is, to intelligence in the strict sense. Because the action is always about singular judgements, this subordination allows movement from universal moral judgements to particular judgements that can move to action. Thus, starting from a universal premise such as "I must not hate my father," man through his cogitative power introduces a second singular premise. This second premise serves as a middle term, a premise that corresponds to the cogitative faculty, such as "this man is my father". This mediation will allow a conclusive judgement to be reached that may specify the act of choice by the will ("I must not hate this man"). Because the cogitative power is the same faculty as the estimative power—that is, the particular faculty that moves emotions—the emotions are also moved, because the cogitative power is the same faculty as the estimative power. Saint Thomas explains this procedure of rational and free activation of emotions in the following paragraph (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 81, a. 3, co.):

> In two ways the irascible and concupiscible powers obey the higher part, in which are the intellect or reason, and the will; first, as to reason, secondly as to the will. They obey the reason in their own acts, because in other animals the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by the estimative power; for instance, a sheep, esteeming the wolf as an enemy, is afraid. In man the estimative power, as we have said above, is replaced by the cogitative power, which is called by some 'the particular reason,' because it compares individual intentions. Wherefore in man the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by this particular reason. But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason: wherefore in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions. Therefore it is clear that the universal reason directs the sensitive appetite, which is divided into concupiscible and irascible; and this appetite obeys it. But because to draw particular conclusions from universal principles is not the work of the intellect, as such, but of the reason: hence it is that the irascible and concupiscible are said to obey the reason rather than to obey the intellect. Anyone can experience this in himself: for by applying certain universal considerations, anger or fear or the like may be modified or excited (Aquinas 1922).

We all have experiences where emotions have been modified through the influence of thought. This possibility that thoughts affect emotions is given by the synergy of universal reason and particular reason. Reason governs the sensitive appetite with politic and not despotic governance (*Summa Theologiae*, I, q. 83, a. 3, ad 2). However, this influence is not infallible, and the appetite must be habituated to obey reason through the virtues. On the other hand, as the cogitative power, especially functioning under the mode of the animal estimative power, it can also be activated from below. This is to say that, by imagination under the influence of instinctive dispositions and by habits, the influence of reason on emotional activation is limited. Often an experience touches deep instinctive dispositions, or acquired dispositions closely linked to those instinctive dispositions, as sometimes happens in some mental pathologies. In such cases, reason can be impotent in imposing its rational judgement on passions or can generate an emotional conflict. This does not mean that there is no morality in emotions, but that it indicates a limit. Suffice it to say that the healthy individual, in ordinary circumstances, can influence his/her emotions enough so that they have a strictly moral value, and to form in his/her sensitive appetite the virtues or vices that will incline him/her to accept or reject the mandates of the right reason. However, the possibility of the influence of reason on emotions allows us to also glimpse the opposite situation, that is, those in which it is the moral disorder that depends on a non-right reason—that is, dependence on an unordered will and the vices of the sensitive appetite—which can end up producing a disorder in the internal senses and in the sensitive appetite, as recent psychology research shows (Heyman 2010; Dunnington 2011; Álvarez-Segura et al. 2017).

Secondly, we have the articulation between will and emotions that occurs in the phenomenon of *redundantia* (Echavarría 2016). "*Redundantia"*, which could be translated into English as "overflow", is a psychological phenomenon whereby an intense tendency of the will overflows the sensitive appetite, thus permeating, so to speak, the emotions of the affect present in the will. A deep understanding of this concept entails two things: first, understanding the will as an affective faculty and not as a cold faculty without feelings (Echavarría 2016), and next, conceiving the faculties as radically linked to each other in the person in such a way that what happens in one can immediately affect the others without going through the mediation of cognition (*De veritate*, q. 26, a. 10, co). Thus, from the bottom up, strong emotions influence the inclination of the will, and vice versa, where the intense inclinations of the will also influence the emotions of the sensitive appetite. In this way the sensitive appetite participates in the voluntary nature of the act of the will. However, not by means of an indirect procedure—namely, the will influences on universal reason as this one at a time on the particular reason and finally this one on emotions—but directly, insofar as the act of will drags with its vehemence the emotions. Aquinas explains this idea it his *Commentary on the Sentences* (L. I, d. 17, q. 2, a. 1, co.):

> The fervour of charity is taken in two ways: properly and metaphorically. Metaphorically, when we say that charity is a heat, and we call the intensity of the act of charity "fervour", according to Dionysus who states that there is a fervent love in angels. Thus, fervour is consequently essential to charity [...]. Otherwise we talk about fervour as soon as it is in the

> sensitive part. Well, as the lower forces follow the movement of the superior ones if it is very intense, as we see that with the apprehension of the beloved woman, the whole body becomes inflamed and moves. Likewise, when the superior affection moves towards God, a certain impression is also followed in the sensitive forces, according to which they are incited to obey divine love (Aquinas 1929).

With this we enter the field of the affective dimension of the will, which we develop below.

5.5 The Desires of the Will

Let's look now at the rational appetite, or will. However, for this we need to begin by overcoming the restrictions of the modern concept of this faculty. In modern philosophical and non-philosophical discussions, and even in popular thought, the word *will* tends to be identified with, on the one hand, the ability to choose, and on the other hand, with the ability to resist the impulse of the most fervent affective tendencies (willpower). In both senses, the will does not seem to have its own inclination, but rather to be an instance that mediates between reason and emotion. Especially in the second of the senses, rather than the freedom of desire, it would be about freeing oneself from desires by the willpower. I believe that this vision of the will is incomplete. This is why, protesting against this dualistic view of the will, Hildebrand spoke of the need to include a third faculty, together with reason and will, which is the "heart", to mean the faculty of spiritual feelings (Von Hildebrand 1965).

Since its origin, both in its roots in Greek thought (*telesis*) and later in Saint Augustine (*voluntas*), but especially in Aquinas, the will was viewed as essentially an affective faculty (Echavarría 2016). The will is the power of the mind by which it tends towards the good that the intellect presents. The first act of the will is "simple will" (*velle*). This is the first affective reception of a good apprehended by understanding (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, qq. 8–10). This act can be called "love" and is analogous to the corresponding first act of the sensitive appetite, which is an emotion. This first act of love of a good may be followed by the act of "intention" (*intentio*) of that good, when it is not yet possessed (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 12). The intention is the act of the will, for which that desired good not yet attained is taken as an end of the action by the one who has previously appreciated it as good. The intention is the appetite of a good as something to be obtained. This implies wanting to take the measures to achieve it. This is a form of intellectual desire, in the strictest sense of the word desire, because it is nothing other than craving what has not yet been achieved. This is similar to how the emotion of desire consists in the appetite of a good not yet possessed.

That said, there is a very important difference between the desires of the rational appetite and those of the sensitive appetite. While the desires of the sensitive appetite do not appear to be essentially free, but by participation, the desires of the rational appetite are essentially free. Proposing or not proposing something as an object of

intention is free in terms of specification, except in the case of the ultimate end or happiness, since every human being naturally aspires to happiness. One cannot not want to be happy. However, more radically, the intention is free with regard to the exercise of the act, because individuals, by their will, are free to implement or not the act of intention. In this regard, this kind of intellectual desire is free. There may be good or bad intentions, and this goodness or evilness of the intention is responsible because it is free. The emotions upon which this spiritual desire results will therefore also be free.

The other form of desire of the intellectual appetite is election, or choice. Choice is the act of will by which it is decided to put into action a practical judgement that is the result of a prior deliberation (*Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 13). If the intention is the appetite of a good taken as an end, for which the means must be sought, choice and practical judgement refer to the most appropriate means to achieve the intended end, that is, what is desired intellectually. This act of choice is an act of the rational appetite to the extent that it depends on prior deliberation. The act of choice is specified by the practical judgement, which is the result of the discernment process of deliberation. This act of choice is free because none of the judgements (still speculative) that deliberation presents necessarily moves (specifying) the rational appetite. This is so because any means presented is a particular good, distinct from the common good and the good of happiness that the rational appetite necessarily desires. Every particular good can be considered in two ways: as a good, or as not the entire good. And if it is considered from this second perspective, it can be rejected and not move the appetite. On the other hand, not only in terms of specification but also in terms of exercise, the act of choice is free. The will is free not only to carry out this or that act, but also to choose or not choose. The act of free choice is also an analogue form of desire in that it consists of the desire for something that is not yet possessed and is, moreover, a form of free desire and therefore morally responsible. The affective intensity of this desire will depend on the intensity of love and on the intensity of the intention.

In summary, in the order of intellectual and rational affectivity we have two analogical forms of desire: intention and choice. Both intention and choice are free. To the question of whether we are responsible for our desires with regard to the elicit desires of the will, the answer is affirmative.

5.6 Conclusion

With regard to the question of whether our desires are free, we have been able to verify that this question is more complex than seemed when formulating it. Desire is a polysemic word. The question can be answered in different ways depending on the meaning in which it is taken. Desire can mean any movement of the appetite, whether sensitive or rational. It can also mean appetite in general, or a special type of appetite. It can refer to one who seeks a good that it does not yet have, especially when referring to a kind of emotion. Simplifying the answer it must be said that,

even if emotions are immediately activated by a faculty of sensory order, the estimative power, which often limits the voluntary character of not only acts but also emotions, emotions can, nonetheless, participate in the category of a voluntary act. It is necessary to distinguish the emotions that precede the rational judgement from the consequent emotions, which are those that can be voluntary. Consequent emotions depend either on the influence of universal reason, through the mediation of the particular reason—the cogitative power—or on the overflow of the fervour of the effect of the will. The will leads us to the discovery of an affective dimension of the rational appetite, which is often unknown. Sensory affectivity and spiritual affectivity can function separately for several reasons. Both generate moral and psychological conflicts. Their normal, mature functioning implies that the metaphysical unity of the person, in which both types of affect lie, be transferred into an operational unity for which the positive character dispositions (the virtues) play an important role. Perfecting the cognitive and affective faculties guides all the forces of the person towards their fullness. Therefore, the discourse on the morality of emotions naturally leads to a discourse on the formation of character.

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