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Concerning the Coercion of the Intellect

E. Peter Royal

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Concerning the Coercion of the Intellect

Freedom is, without doubt, a perfection for the will. Yet this same freedom which we predicate of the will as a perfection, is, when applied to the intellect, evidence of imperfection. For whatever pertains to the perfection of a power is secured by the virtues that regulate the operation of that power. It is of the nature of the virtues of the speculative intellect that they attain with infallibility an object essentially immune from change. The object, for its part, forces the power to elicit its act with necessity. The response of the speculative intellect, perfected by its proper virtues and confronted by a necessary object, is ineluctably determined. Where the speculative intellect does remain indeterminate with respect to its object, its relation to the latter is defective. Such being the context in which the speculative intellect must be envisaged, one cannot say that freedom is a perfection for it.

The word best expressing the dominion which the object exercises over the intellect is the word coercion, and while it is certainly true that the intellect is coerced by the object, this statement is not without ambiguity. For the word coercion has several meanings, and the sense of our affirmation will vary with the meanings given to the central word coercion. Hence only after we have carefully determined the several meanings of this word can we state in an unambiguous way that the intellect is coerced by its object.

I. THE SEVERAL MEANINGS OF "COERCION"

The senses of the word coercion are varied. They extend from a sense in which the word signifies a certain violence to another in which, far from indicating violence, coercion is predicated rather of operations that are purely natural. That coercion in its strictest sense implies violence, and indeed violence imposed upon men, seems certain enough. Indeed St. Thomas frequently equates the two and treats them in much the same way. In the treatise on marriage, for example, he deals with coerced consent as consent that is violent, and applies to his discussion the same principles as those applied to violence. And, discussing freedom from coercion in the will, he defines coercion in terms of violence. His words are: "Coactio enim nihil aliud est quam violentiae cuiusdam inductio. Violentum . . . est cuius principium est extra, nil conferente vim passo."¹

1. *Q. D. de Veritate*, q. 22, a.5, c.

Something done as the result of the imposition of force is violent. Now the force brought to bear may either impede movement springing from an inclination or prohibit it from springing forth at all. Either of these possibilities involves violence. Coercion or force exerted on the will would be of the nature of violence, for it would prohibit the power from either instigating or continuing human action. An impeding or prohibition of the will to pursue its end would be of the nature of something violent. This obstruction of the will finds a parallel in the domain of natural agents where force impedes natural inclination from issuing into its convenient motion or prohibits it from continuing motion already begun.¹

Violence and coercion may be sufficient or insufficient according as they drive their subject to the effect with or without necessity. The will is free from coercion which implies necessity. Natural agents are not. They must submit to force that is exerted with sufficiency. No such force can constrain the will. However there is a kind of coercion from which the will is not immune. It is called "impulsio" by St. Thomas.² This is the coercion that is operative in cases where an action is done out of passion, or out of respect for the sanctions of law, or by reason of some external force diminishing the perfect liberty of the act. However, such actions are here and now, and in the light of the circumstances, voluntary. Although St. Thomas says of this form of coercion "potius impulsio quam coactio dicitur," he does call it "coactio impellens,"³ and includes it as a member of one of his divisions of "coactio."⁴ But this impulsion merely inclines the will; it does not compel it to act.⁵

There is a sense of coercion which comports no violence at all, and is in fact applicable to natural operations and effects. This is the coercion which is applied to natural agents when we speak of them as being coerced or constrained by nature to produce their convenient operations. Although this coercion implies necessity, it is a wholly natural necessity. It is to be noted, however, that powers or agents

1. "In naturalibus quidem est impetus, sive inclinatio ad aliquem finem, cui respondet voluntas in natura rationali; unde et ipsa naturalis inclinatio appetitus dicitur. Utrumque autem, scilicet et impetum naturalis inclinationis, et propositum voluntatis, contigit impediri et prohiberi. Impediri quidem, in prosecutione motus iam incepti. Prohiberi autem, ne etiam motus incipiat. Illud ergo dicitur esse violentum, 'quod est praeter impetum,' idest praeter inclinationem rei naturalis, et est 'impediens praevoluntatem,' idest propositum in prosecutione motus voluntarii iam incepti, et prohibens etiam ne incipiat. Alia littera habet 'Et hoc est secundum ormin,' idest secundum impetum." In *V Metaphysicorum*, lect. 6, n. 829.

2. In *II Sententiarum*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 5, c. — Cf. CICERO, *De Inventione*, II, V, 17.

3. In *II Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, c.

4. "Coactio . . . est duplex: una compellens, et alia inducens vel impellens". In *II Sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 4, c; Cf. *Ibid.*, a. 2: "... Est duplex coactio: quaedam sufficiens, quae compulsio vocatur; quaedam vero, insufficiens, quae vocatur impulsio."

5. In *II Sent.*, d. 25, a. 2, ad 5.

which are coerced in this way can, unlike the will, be subject to violence. In other words, violence will not be contrary to their definition as it is contrary to the definition of the will. A case of this is the intellect, and St. Thomas writes: "coactio non est contraria intellectui secundum suam rationem, sicut et voluntati."¹

Thus we have a number of senses of the word coercion. How are they ordered? There are two characteristics of coercion in its strictest meaning: it must be violent and it must be referred to the will. For this reason one can oppose coercion to spontaneity in the strict sense.² Thus the senses of coercion will vary in relation to the senses of spontaneity. The strictest meaning of coercion will oppose the strictest meaning of spontaneity, while less strict senses of coercion will oppose less strict senses of spontaneity. This is, of course, because while coercion implies a force acting from without, spontaneity is a characteristic of operations that are from within.

The strictest sense of spontaneity is that of the perfect voluntary. It is the perfect form of operation from within. Coercion, taken according to its "ratio propria," will oppose this perfect voluntary or spontaneity in the strict sense. This, we think, is why St. Thomas so often speaks of coercion as being contrary to the human will. "Coactum enim est quod est voluntati contrarium," he writes, and he means here strict coercion.³

As we move away from this opposition to the strict spontaneity of the perfect voluntary, we also move away from coercion in its "ratio propria." Actions that are from an interior principle, whether or not this is the will, are spontaneous in a broad sense. St. Thomas writes:

... Omnis inclinatio alicuius rei vel naturalis vel voluntaria, nihil est aliud quam quaedam impressio a primo movente; sicut inclinatio sagittae ad signum determinatum, nihil aliud est quam quaedam impressio a sagittante. Unde omnia quae aguntur vel naturaliter vel voluntarie, quasi propria sponte perveniunt in id ad quod divinitus ordinantur.⁴

1. *De Veritate*, q.22, a.5, ad 3.

2. Cf. JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Cursus Theol.*, In Iam IIae, q. VI, disp. IV, a.1, n.8, t.5, p.408 b: "Coactum fere est idem quod violentum, sed proprie loquendum coactum solum opponitur spontaneo, seu voluntario. Et ideo solum invenitur in cognoscentibus, violentum autem etiam in rebus inanimatis, ut cum lapis projicitur sursum." This opposition is found in ST. THOMAS. He says, for example, that Our Lord's will is determined to love God. Then he adds, this does not involve loss of merit, "quia in illud non coacte, sed sponte tendit..." In *III Sent.*, d.18, a.2, ad 5.

3. "Est enim triplex necessitas. Quaedam coactionis. Et haec laudem virtuosorum actuum diminuit, quia voluntario contrariatur: coactum enim est quod est voluntati contrarium." *Contra Gentiles*, III, cap.138. "Coactio autem excludit in nobis actum voluntatis: coacte enim agimus cujus contrarium volumus." *Ibid.*, cap.148.

4. *Ia*, q.103, a.8, c.

It is to be noted that in this text, the "quasi propria sponte" extends to natural as well as voluntary agents. As applied to the former, it has a broader sense. To this purely natural spontaneity, we would oppose the coercion which is contrary to natural inclination. It is the coercion of the efficient cause acting violently on the recipient of its action.

Finally, we have a very general sense of coercion which can be attributed to operations carried out in a purely natural way. This sense of coercion implies no violence. It coincides with the spontaneous taken in the general sense intended by St. Thomas in the passage last cited. It does not apply to the perfect voluntary, however. It applies rather to all actions that proceed in a necessary way from within the agents that produce them. This is indicated by St. Thomas in the following way :

Et inde est quod omnes aliae vires animae coguntur a suis objectis praeter voluntatem ; quia omnes aliae habent appetitum naturalem tantum respectu sui objecti ; voluntas autem habet praeter inclinationem naturalem aliam cuius est ipse volens causa.¹

This, then, is the general sense of the word coercion, a sense which we would say applies "per posterius," because of the absence of violence. One may well ask what this posterior meaning of coercion has in common with its proper one. That which is common to the two is, we believe, the absolute necessity of the efficient cause.

When Aristotle discusses the notion of the necessary, he points out that one mode of the latter allows violence to receive the name necessary.² Now the necessity of the efficient cause is reducible to this mode of necessity. There is a correlation between efficient cause and coercion or violence. St. Thomas summarizes the matter in the *Summa Theologica* :

Dicendum quod necessarium dicitur aliquid per se, et per aliud. Per aliud quidem dupliciter. Uno modo, sicut per causam agentem et cogen-tem ; et sic necessarium dicitur quod est violentum. Alio modo, sicut per causam finalem ; sicut dicitur aliquid esse necessarium in his quae sunt ad finem . . .³

Note the strict equivalence here between "causa agens" and "quod est violentum." But this equivalence is not an undifferentiated one. There are efficient causes, which, while remaining extrinsic to that upon which they act, do not act violently, causes which insert in a given nature the inclination for its proper term.⁴ Such efficient

1. *In III Sent.*, d.27, q.1, a.3, c.

2. *In V Metaphys.*, lect.6, nn.829 and 835.

3. *Ia*, q.41, a.2, ad 5.

4. *Contra Gentiles*, III, cap.88 ; *In VIII Physic.*, lect.8, nn.2174-2179.

causes will act in a manner external to the subjects of their action, yet because they invest these subjects with an inclination to the effect, the action will be natural.

One can also speak of the object as acting upon the power. Its action is natural ; and it acts, in a way, within the power in so far as it assists the latter in the very elicitation of its act. The object, as Cajetan indicates, has a certain influence even in the order of the efficient cause.¹ St. Albert calls this cause a "cogens intra," and makes of it a kind of efficient cause.² The object thus enjoys a certain efficiency, operates "per modum agentis," even though, far from implying any violence, it perfects and completes that upon which it acts. And one can note that both violent and natural coercing causes bring about their effects with necessity. Both of them so submit the patient to themselves as to bring forth the effect with inexorable determination. And the necessity here is absolute, in the sense in which the absolutely necessary opposes the conditionally necessary.

II. COERCION AS FOUND IN THE INTELLECT

1) Coercion as Innate Necessity

There are, we believe, two main senses in which coercion can be predicated of the intellect. First of all, it can be subjected to coercion taken in a general sense. Second, it can be subjected to coercion that is, in its own way, contrary to the inclination of the will, and which for this reason, approaches the definition of coercion as "id quod est voluntati contrarium." We begin our discussion with the first of these two senses of coercion.

The intellect is naturally ordered to an object in which the power finds a certain perfection. When the object is presented to the power under the proper conditions, the power is determined to act. In so far as there is a determination of the power, there is coercion, understood as coextensive with natural inclination. In the last analysis, we are here on the plane of action, or if you prefer, on the plane of exercise, understood as that exercise which is peculiar to the powers themselves. It is not merely the specification of the several acts of the intellect that is in question.³ It is rather the necessity

1. CAJETAN, *In Summam Theol.*, Ia IIae, q.9, a.1, n.4.

2. *In I Sent.*, d.6, q.2, sol., Edit Borgnet, V.25, p.198 b.

3. Commenting *Ia IIae*, q.17, a.6, JOHN OF ST. THOMAS writes: "Ubi duplex exercitium distinguit, aliud quoad applicationem attendendi ad hoc vel illud objectum, aliud quoad applicationem assentiendi. Et prima applicatio est in manu voluntatis, . . . secunda vero applicatio quoad ipsum assensum non est in potestate voluntatis, nisi respectu objectorum, quae non convincunt intellectum." *Cursus Philosophicus*, T. I, II P., Q.XXIV, a.III, edit. Reiser, p.764 a10-20. — "...Potentia aliqua dupliciter movetur: uno

by which the act of the power must be produced once the object of the power is presented to it. And indeed this depends upon the very nature of the power itself, and upon such dispositions as perfect that nature in the line of its operation.

Where the object is not such as to draw the act from the intellect in necessary fashion, the act will be within the scope of the free use of the subject, and can be commanded by the will. Even though the act is determined in the order of specification, it can still remain matter for command in the order of exercise, in the sense that, while applied to the object, the power can suspend its act, — in which case, the will can freely command the act. St. Thomas writes :

*Sunt autem quaedam apprehensa, quae non adeo convincunt intellectum, quin possit assentire vel dissentire, vel saltem assensum vel dissensum suspendere, propter aliquam causam ; et in talibus assensus ipse vel dissensus in potestate nostra est, et sub imperio cadit.*¹

That there can be acts of the intellect in which there is necessity of specification along with the capacity to suspend its act seems to be clearly the case. In the above text, St. Thomas notes that the intellect can be free to assent to or dissent from objects not sufficient to move the power with necessity. But there are other objects presented to the power in such wise as at once to exclude this freedom of assent and dissent, and yet allow the power to suspend its act.

When, on the other hand, the object is such that the act of the intellect cannot be suspended by that power itself, the act will be brought about by the native impetus of the power, and will not, therefore, be subject to command. In other words, the object answers to the innate appetite of the intellect. Since this appetite is beyond human control, it does not lie within the power of man to determine the way in which the intellect responds to the object. The response of the intellect results simply from the union of object and power.

And this brings us to a point where we can finally fix the several perspectives in which the natural coercion of the intellect can be envisioned. St. Albert divides the "*causa agens et cogens*," of which mention has been made, in this way :

Respectu autem esse efficientis, similiter est duobus modis : scilicet respectu agentis extra et respectu agentis intra. Respectu agentis extra, sicut Dionysius dixit, quod necessarium est contristatus, et violenta est

modo ex parte subjecti ; alio modo ex parte objecti. Ex parte subjecti quidem, sicut visus per immutationem dispositionis organi movetur ad clarius vel minus clare videndum ; ex parte vero objecti, sicut visus nunc videt album nunc videt nigrum ; et prima quidem immutatio pertinet ad ipsum exercitium actus, ut scilicet agatur vel non agatur aut melius vel debilius agatur : secunda vero immutatio pertinet ad specificationem actus, nam actus specificatur per objectum." *Q. D. de Malo*, q.6, a.un., c.

1. *Ia IIae*, q.17, a.6, c.

aliqua necessitatus . . . Respectu autem cogentis intra, sicut dicitur, *III Esdrae*, III, 12, quod *super omnia vincit veritas* : quia cogit consensum : et hoc modo dicit Philosophus, quod necessitas non permittet opinantem ad verum reverti, et mutari a sua opinione.¹

This victory of the truth takes place, we think, in three closely related ways. They are the following :

1. *The domination of the intelligible object over the intellect envisaged as determinable by its object.*

There is an expression of John of St. Thomas in which he says of the object that "trahit intellectum ad totum esse objecti."² St. Thomas speaks in the same way :

. . . Quantum ad aliquid forma recepta trahit subjectum recipiens ad modum suum : pro ut scilicet nobilitates quae sunt de ratione formae, communicantur subjecto recipienti . . . Et hoc modo . . . per irradiationem ab immobili veritate elevatur mens prophetae ad hoc quod mobilia immobiliter videat.³

Here, the "cogens intra" is the object which informs the power, and overcomes the latter in its potentiality. It brings about the passage of the power from essential potency to essential act. And we can note that here there is an influence in the order of efficient causality in so far as the object assists the power in the very eliciting of its act. But efficiency is taken broadly here.

2. *The control of the intellect by prior knowledge when the intellect, informed by certain intelligible species, makes explicit what is potential in this prior knowledge.*

The "cogens intra" here is the intellect itself taken precisely as invested with the determinations of antecedent knowledge, and issuing into act under the control of these determinations. Prior knowledge serves as a "ratio agendi," directing the operation of the power to a definite term which will emanate in a predetermined way from existing knowledge. It is clear that the outcome of such operation is to a large extent settled in advance.

3. *The natural orientation of the intellect to its congruent good.*

The object here is envisioned as the proper complement of the act of the power, to which the latter is ordered as to its end. The "cogens

1. *In I Sent.*, d.6, q.2, sol. ; Edit. Borgnet, V, 25, p.198 b.

2. JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Cursus Theol.*, Ia, q.XII, disp.13, a.4, n.13 ; Edit. Solesmes, T. II, p.174 b.

3. *De Veritate*, q.12, a.6, ad 4.

intra" is here the author of nature who inserts in the power the inclination to this end. In a very improper sense, one might say that the end itself is the "cogens intra," in so far as it draws the power to itself in the order of final causality. And in the degree that we leave the order of "causa agens," in that degree do we diminish the strictness with which we must take the "cogens intra."

This necessity of the act of the intellect, if taken purely and simply as we have here described it, is opposed in merely negative fashion to spontaneity in the strict sense. That is to say, while the spontaneous in the sense in which the spontaneous is equivalent to the voluntary, requires that the inclination of the power to its good or end be elicited by the power, the coerced act of the intellect is not the result of an elicited inclination. Note that here we do not have anything contrary to the inclination of the will, for we consider the intellect only in itself, and not in relation to the subject in which it is found. The conditions under which it is verified are proper to the intellect alone.

2) *Coercion as Contrary to the Inclination of the Will*

There is another sense in which one can take the word coercion — the sense in which it implies the contravention of the voluntary. Taken in this sense, the coerced is contrary to the spontaneous. In discussing the conditions required for this kind of coercion, one must call into play the relations which obtain between the intellect and the whole, or, to be more precise, the relations between the intellect and the will, the inclination of the whole man. The will is a "primum movens," conferred upon the rational nature for the good of that nature. The good under any of its aspects is naturally sought by the will, is indeed the natural object of that power. But this good includes not only the good that properly perfects and finalizes the will, but also all the various modalities under which anything may be good for the rational nature to which the will belongs. St. Thomas writes :

Non enim per voluntatem appetimus solum ea quae pertinent ad potentiam voluntatis ; sed etiam ea quae pertinent ad singulas potentias et ad totum hominem. Unde naturaliter homo vult non solum objectum voluntatis, sed etiam alia quae conveniunt aliis potentiis, ut cognitionem veri, quae convenit intellectui ; et esse et vivere et huiusmodi alia, quae respiciunt consistentiam naturalem ; quae omnia comprehenduntur sub objecto voluntatis, sicut quaedam particularia bona.¹

This text indicates that one can speak of two kinds of natural desire in the will depending on whether the latter seeks its own proper good or the good of something else in man. There is a difference

1. *Ia IIae*, q.10, a.1, c.

between these desires that is vital to the present discussion. The desire of the will for its proper good is an indefectible one, because the proper good to which a power is ordered is sought whenever the power operates. However, man does not invariably elicit the desire for goods perfecting that in him which is extrinsic to his will. Life and knowledge are surely goods of this kind, and there is in the great majority of persons a desire for these so deep and firm so as not to require antecedent deliberation. Yet that there are persons who prefer death and ignorance is an evident fact which urges upon us the conclusion that life and knowledge are naturally desired only for the most part and 'ut frequenter.'¹

Now one may well ask why the desire of goods of this kind is a defectible desire. The reason lies in the possibility of conceiving the opposites of these goods as fulfilling the same function as these goods themselves. One can, for example, fancy that death will bring a sort of happiness in so far as one finds life miserable. Or one can repudiate knowledge in so far as this knowledge will be such as to prevent one from doing an evil act that one would do were one ignorant of its evil. Non-being or ignorance are not in themselves desirable. This would imply that life, being, knowledge, are not good in themselves, which is impossible. They are in themselves goods which admit of no repugnance "ratione sui." If they are not desired in a particular case, this is only "per accidens," and in the degree they bring some evil to the subject. This evil will be only accidentally connected to the goods in question.

The reason why such goods can become evil "ratione adjuncti" is in the power of the human mind to conceive of non-being after the manner of being. While ignorance and non-being are indeed incapable of supporting the form of goodness, if taken from the viewpoint of reality, which they do not possess, they can be conceived of after the manner of being, and as conferring some good on the subject to which they are attributed. They can, that is, appear to possess a certain goodness for the subject.²

Furthermore, it is to be noted that the subject here is not conceived as the "terminus ad quem" of the removal of these goods. It is not as if the subject were directly willing ignorance or the destruction of his being. This would be impossible, for operations are specified by the terms to which they tend. One cannot operate or intend to operate in view of a term whose destruction alone is to be secured by the operation. When a person wills not to be or not to know, he wills that some adjunct of being or knowledge be removed

1. CAJETAN, *in hoc loco*, n.4.

2. *Ia IIae*, q.29, a.5, ad 2; *De Malo*, q.1, a.1, ad 17. — Cf. SYLVESTER OF FERRARA, *Commentary on I Contra Gentiles*, cap.81, n.II; cap.84.

from him. The willing subject is a "terminus a quo."¹ Thus, while the true is among those goods which are desired naturally by the will because of the nature of man, it can, under certain conditions, be hated by the will.

This conclusion rests on the limitation of the true taken as a good. The true is indeed a certain good. It is a good for the intellect, in the sense that it is the congruent term of the act of the power. It is also, as was intimated above, a good for the will, in so far as that power naturally seeks the goods of the several other powers.² Now any particular good is susceptible of a double comparison. It may be compared either to the common notion of good, or to some other particular good. The true, which is a particular good, can never be opposed to the common notion of good, since common notions can be predicated of all particular instances. But it can be contrary to some particular good. For, being itself a particular good, it can oppose another particular good.

One must be careful to understand just what is meant by this. The notions of true and being, if taken universally, comport uniquely relations of congruence. It will be impossible for the subject to repudiate all being or to repudiate all truth. Even in willing death or total destruction, there is a certain desire of being. And even in willing not to know the truth, there remains a desire to know some truth. No man will sincerely desire to be ignorant of all truth. But one can hate this or that truth, in so far as the particular truth is opposed to some good that is desired. Hence, St. Thomas can write :

Ens autem et verum in universali quidem odio haberi non possunt, quia dissonantia est causa odii, et convenientia causa amoris ; ens autem et verum sunt communia omnibus. Sed in particulari nihil prohibet quoddam ens et quoddam verum odio haberi, in quantum habet rationem contrarii et repugnantis ; contrarietas enim et repugnantia non adversatur rationi entis et veri, sicut adversatur rationi boni.³

Now the good of the intellect is independent of that of the will, in the sense that the intellect is a power determined by any object to which it is properly ordered. The intellect is transcendently related to its own proper object, and on the presentation of that object with evidence, the intellect will accept it. The object is a good for the intellect. From this it follows that the good of the intellect will remain a good for that power even though it be hateful to the will. When this happens, there is a conflict within the willing subject. On the other hand, when the will desires that which is good for the intellect, the subject can be said to be at peace with itself, at least as far as the

1. *De Malo*, q.16, a.3, ad 9.

2. *Ia IIae*, q.10, a.1, c.

3. *Ia IIae*, q.29, a.5, c.

relations of intellect and will in the given case are concerned. Hence, the acceptance of the truth will be a matter of delight for the will.

Commenting on the words of St. John's Gospel, "Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater, qui misit me, traxerit eum," St. Thomas raises the problem whether, if the Father must draw men to Christ, this will involve violence, since "tractio importat violentiam quamdam." His response is lengthy. We shall quote it in part:

Sic ergo trahuntur a Patre, sua majestate allecti; sed trahuntur etiam a Filio, admirabili delectatione et amore veritatis, quae est ipse Filius Dei. Si enim, ut dicit Augustinus, trahit sua quemque voluptas, quanto fortius debet homo trahi ad Christum, si delectatur veritate, beatitudine, iustitia, sempiterna vita, quod totum est Christus? Ab isto ergo si trahendi sumus, trahamur per dilectionem veritatis...¹

One can see from this text that the man who loves the truth is in no way forced to accept it, if, by force we mean a certain violence that is contrary to the inclination of the will. For violence always implies submission to what is repugnant to the will.

The will can, as we saw, repudiate the truth in certain circumstances. When it does repudiate the truth, we then have the following situation. The intellect, if applied to its object by the will, must accept the truth. The will, on the other hand, finds the truth contrary to its inclination, in so far as the truth brings with it something inconvenient for the will or for some other part of the whole man. Thus the innate appetite of the intellect for the truth is in conflict with the elicited act by which the will rejects the truth.

The operation of the intellect, though indeed flowing immediately from a particular power, is to be attributed to the whole, in virtue of the axiom, "actiones sunt suppositorum." For the intellect is a "principium quo" completed by the substance in which it adheres. Its operation is rooted in the reality it receives from this substance. Strictly speaking, it is not the intellect that is said to know, but rather man through the intellect.² And one can make the same remarks in regard to the will. The will is an accident of "man" and compares to the latter as a conjoined instrument of operations which must be attributed to him as to their "principium quod."

The actions of the whole tend to conflicting goods when the intellect knows an object contrary to the inclination of the will. It can be asked which of these tendencies is violent. Must it be said that the tendency of the will to repudiate the true is violent? Or rather must it be said that any violence verified here consists in the fact that a particular power is forced to accept an object, in this case, a truth, that is contrary to the inclination of the will? It is the second

1. *In Joan.*, cap.6, v.3, lect.5, edit. R. Cai (Marietti, 1952), n.935.

2. *De Veritate*, q.22, a.13, ad 7.

of these alternatives that we must take. The will is the inclination of the whole man. As such, its good compares to the goods of the several other powers, as a whole to its parts. The other powers will thus be inclined to obey the good of the will, since its good is in a sense their good — since, that is, the will seeks naturally the good of the whole. The will thus draws with it all the other powers. If an operation is to be denominated violent, this denomination will be made in reference to the will. In the present case the submission of the intellect to the truth is violent in so far as it involves the occurrence of an operation contrary to the inclination of the will ; or, if you prefer, contrary to the good of the whole man.¹

This final point is worth emphasizing. If the will repudiates the truth, finds some evil attached to it, this is only because the will loves more strongly some other contrary good. Thus there is here a good desired by the will which, as inclination of the whole, draws with it all the other powers, which naturally subordinate themselves to the good of the will. This subordination is based on the fact that the good of the will compares to the goods of the other powers as a common good. These other powers will naturally seek this common good. The intellect cannot draw with it the other powers in this way. It cannot subordinate them to its own good. If its good is in conflict with that of the other powers, this conflict is an irreducible one. On the other hand, the intellect remains subordinated to the will in the sense that it will naturally seek the good of the whole in the measure that this is possible. In the present case, this subordination is impossible, because the acceptance of evident truth is of the very nature of the intellect. Furthermore, since the intellect's good is only partial, it cannot be said that this good is the good of the whole.

Thus the operation is natural to the intellect, but contrary to the desire of the will. It is at once an operation that accords with the interior inclination of the intellect to the true, and which is nevertheless contrary to the inclination of the will, in virtue of the fact that the will finds the object of the act repugnant. In all such cases where there is a mixture of natural and violent, that formality of the operation is denominated violent which is contrary to the inclination of the will. St. Thomas writes :

... Coactio non est contraria intellectui secundum suam rationem, sicut et voluntati. Intellectus enim si habeat inclinationem in aliquid, non tamen nominat ipsam inclinationem hominis, sed voluntas ipsam inclinationem hominis nominat. Unde quidquid fit secundum voluntatem, fit secundum hominis inclinationem, et per hoc non potest esse violentum.

1. JOHN OF ST. THOMAS, *Cursus Philosophicus*, Phil. Nat., I, P. Q.IX, a.IV, edit. Reiser, V.2, p.194. This doctrine seems to be based indeed on the discussion of violence and the voluntary in regard to the continent and the incontinent man to be found in *II Eudemian Ethics*, chap.9, n.4.

Sed operatio intellectus potest esse contra inclinationem hominis, quae est voluntas ; ut cum alicui placet aliqua opinio, sed propter efficaciam rationum, deducitur ad assentiendum contrario per intellectum.¹

It can be said that the acceptance of the true in the hypothesis here envisioned, is contrary to two tendencies that are from within the subject. First of all, it is contrary to the inclination of the will. It is also contrary to the natural desire of the intellect to subordinate itself to the good of the whole as this good is determined by the will. But both these tendencies are to be referred to the good that is determined freely by the will. The violence here, such as there is, will be always taken with respect to the order of ends established by the will, inclination of the whole.

In an earlier section, we distinguished the various meanings of coercion. We may, therefore, ask ourselves which of these several meanings is verified in the present case. First of all, we must note that the will is in no sense coerced in its proper act. The act of the will is of its nature an act of inclination, and can no more be coerced, in the sense of being in itself touched by coercion, than can the natural inclination of a stone to fall. But these remarks will not hold if we consider the power not in itself but in relation to the dominion it exerts over the other faculties. That is to say, the acts of powers outside the will can, in varying degrees, be commanded by the will ; and in regard to these commanded acts, one can speak of a certain coercion. In the present case, the act of knowledge which is of the nature of a coerced act in regard to the inclination of the will. Yet that power encounters a certain contrariety in the act which it commands, as well as in the object of the act. Coercion, in one of its senses, signifies that which is contrary to the will. In the present instance, the contrariety is not such as to exclude the act to which it is opposed. It does, however, diminish the spontaneity of that act.

Statements affirming the presence, privation, or decrease of spontaneity in the act of the will respecting objects and operations of the intellect are valid only on the assumption that such objects and operations are matter for voluntary activity. This is required by the nature itself of the spontaneous, which, in its strict sense, coincides with the voluntary. May it not be quite reasonably objected that such an assumption is unwarranted, since the notions of voluntary and involuntary are limited to the area of what is within the power of the agent, and objects of knowledge that would be relevant to the present discussion are not within our power in any significant way? This objection can be met with the help of certain rather simple clarifications regarding the ways in which the words voluntary and invo-

1. *De Veritate*, q.22, a.5, ad 3.

luntary are used. Acts are denominated voluntary either because they are subject to the dominion of the will, or because, though not subject to the will, they meet with the concomitant approval of that power. Thus the fact that I am small of stature, or that I shall die, can be involuntary to me in so far as my will inclines to having a larger stature, or to perpetuity of corporeal life.¹ These inclinations are directed to impossibles, and to this extent cannot be called perfect acts of the power. They are rather simple velleities.²

We are now in a position to determine in what sense an act of the intellect concerned with a necessary object can be denominated voluntary or involuntary. Such an act cannot be said to be voluntary, if by the latter word one means that the will is the cause of the determination of the power. However, the act may be said to be voluntary if one simply means that the will concurs or acquiesces in the determination of the intellect by the object. On the other hand, when the determination of the intellect is repugnant to the will, it can be said to be involuntary in so far as the will does not concur or acquiesce.³ Thus one can speak with justification both of an involuntariness which consists of disapproval, and of a coercion which, while not destroying the interior act of the will, diminishes its full spontaneity.

CONCLUSION

Thus there are two general senses in which the intellect is subject to coercion. There is the innate determination of the power. The coercion implied in this determination is threefold, according as one takes the power as actualized by the object, as itself the active principle of the explication of knowledge already possessed, or, finally, as

1. "... Involuntariorum illa tantum rationem poenae habent quae sunt voluntati subijcibilia ; voluntas enim non tantum est possibile, sed etiam impossibile ; et ideo si alicui sit involuntarium illud quod potestati voluntatis non subiacet, non propter hoc rationem poenae habet, sicut quod aliquis est brevis nimis in statura vel aliquid huiusmodi : et hoc modo mors et alia huiusmodi involuntaria sunt." *In II Sent.*, dist.XXX, q.1, a.1, ad 6.

2. "... Voluntas quae dicitur esse impossibile, non est perfecta voluntas tendens in aliquid consequendum, quia nullus tendit in id quod existimat esse impossibile, ut dictum est ; sed est quaedam imperfecta voluntas, quae dicitur velleitas, qua scilicet aliquis vellet id quod existimat impossibile, sed sub hac conditione si possibile esset." *De Malo*, q.16, a.3, ad 9.

3. "Dicendum quod cum dicitur aliquid esse vel fieri voluntate, dupliciter potest intelligi. Uno modo, ut ablativus designet concomitantiam tantum ; sicut possum dicere quod *ego sum homo mea voluntate*, quia scilicet volo me esse hominem. Et hoc modo potest dici quod Pater genuit Filium voluntate, sicut et est voluntate Deus ; quia vult se esse Deum et vult se generare Filium. Alio modo sic, quod ablativus importet habitudinem principii ; sicut dicitur quod artifex operatur voluntate, quia voluntas est principium operis. Et secundum hunc modum dicendum est quod Deus Pater non genuit Filium voluntate, sed voluntate produxit creaturam." *Ia Pars.*, q.41, a.2.

ordered to its proper end. There is also coercion to accept a truth contrary to the inclination of the will. This is a more proper meaning of the word, for it bears the sense of "*id quod est voluntati contrarium.*" But does it realize the "*ratio propria*" of coercion? We think not, for there is not in the hypothesis of our case a strict violence. The elicited act of the will in applying the mind to an unpleasant truth is voluntary "*simpliciter.*" It is violent only "*secundum quid.*"

The doctrine of the coercion of the intellect by its object is one whose defense is of the utmost importance. But before one can defend a doctrine, one must first of all have the assurance that one's formulation of it is genuinely unambiguous. The above pages are submitted primarily in an attempt to eliminate some of the ambiguities inherent in statements about the coercion of the intellect. The further and essential task of manifesting in evident fashion the breadth and depth of the bedrock of irrefragable principle on which these statements rest, still remains to be accomplished.

E. PETER ROYAL, C.S.C.
