

SIX

Akrasia and Waywardness¹

. . . if the pleasant is the good, no one who knows or believes there is something else better than what he is doing, something possible, will go on doing what he had been doing when he could be doing what is better.²

If you want to identify me [he said to the immigration officials continuing to interrogate him] ask me not where I live, or what I like to eat, or how I comb my hair, but ask me what I think I am living for, in detail, and ask me what I think is keeping me from living more fully for the thing I want to live for.³

ORIENTATIONS⁴

In late summer 2016, two Czech hikers climbing difficult, high-mountain, winter terrain in New Zealand's national parks lost their way in what *The New Zealand Herald* newspaper, in a studied understatement, called "bad conditions."⁵ Petr slipped "on a steep ice slope" and lost his life; rescue workers recovered his body only much later. Pavlina also slipped, but she did not lose her life. After five weeks, rescue workers found her still alive in a mountain hut.

Perhaps we might say figuratively, but with all due respect for the two persons involved in a terrible ordeal, that a certain waywardness had overcome them both.⁶ That is, choosing imprudently not to file in advance, as required, the detailed information forms for extreme mountain winter hiking, their actions

did not conform to the fixed rules. Indeed, Petr and Pavlina's imprudent actions showed a certain willfulness.⁷

Also in the late summer, but years earlier, and this time in the northern hemisphere, two Americans were, figuratively speaking, climbing mountainous personal challenges between Lexington, Kentucky, and a remote rural area. No winter snows threatened them, but they, too, lost their way in "bad conditions." Margie apparently lost her way on, as it were, a slippery slope. She seemed to have freely and seriously compromised her chosen vocational obligations and rules as a nurse. Later, however, she saw her way through, returned to her hospital work, and successfully continued in her nursing vocation. Tom also lost his way on the same slippery slope. He seemed to have freely and seriously compromised his chosen vocational ideals and rules as a monk. But, later, he too saw his way through and persevered in his monastic vocation.⁸

Perhaps we might say here also, but again with all due respect for each, that a certain waywardness had overcome them both. That is, in choosing intemperately to venture outside the clearly marked trails of their respective paths—to enjoy illicit picnics together—their actions did not conform to the fixed rules. But instead of demonstrating a certain strong willfulness, Margie and Tom's intemperate actions showed a certain weakness of will, an "unorthodox" kind of *akrasia*.

But is all this really accurate? Is the opposite of strong willfulness really weakness of will, as this account seems to suggest? And is the opposite of "weakness of will" really willfulness? Isn't it rather the case that both couples had simply made not willful errors, but simple cognitive mistakes? Such a supposition is surely controversial. Am I, for example, acting against my better judgment, that is, actually just making a cognitive mistake, when, out of *gourmandize*, I deliberately and freely choose to eat what I rationally know to be an unhealthy second piece of chocolate cake? Or when, out of lassitude, I postpone my planned running, am I just making a cognitive mistake, that is, am I just being irrational? And when I do not file required forms before setting out on extreme mountain winter hiking?

And when I choose not always to live more fully for the thing I most want to live for?

Many reflective persons probably remember Socrates claiming that no one errs willingly. No one errs willingly because a willful error is finally no error at all. Very roughly, all so-called willful errors result neither from vagaries of the will, nor from passions overpowering reasons, nor even from cognitive mistakes; willful errors follow simply from cognitive dysfunctions.⁹ Given, however, the frequent experiences of many importantly different basic kinds of error, such a strongly rationalistic claim raises the question of whether I can act rationally against what I indefeasibly know to be best. Long ago, Socrates thought not. More generally, can I act rationally against my own better judgment?¹⁰ Today, many philosophers differ.

Trying to answer this general question eventually brings us from the history of philosophy to the consideration of significantly different particular cases, like the two stories with which we began. Still, getting such questions into better critical focus, which is mainly what I hope to do here—that is, not to relativize improperly so-called standard analyses of *akrasia* in English as just “weakness of will”—involves reviewing briefly several crossroads in the history of philosophy. In what follows, my central concern will be merely to indicate several arguably non-naturalistic metaphysical aspects of persons. These aspects are just those that some important contemporary reflections on persons’ apparent weakness of will seem often to overlook. My basic strategy will be to confront several standard examples of this reflection on *akrasia* as “weakness of will,” with a deeply perplexing example of what I will call “spiritual *akrasia*” or “spiritual waywardness.” That is, by returning, in my concluding section, to the story of the nurse and the monk, my hope is that confronting such an unorthodox story with several representative examples in standard philosophical analyses might prove fruitful. Such a confrontation might help disclose several good grounds for importantly qualifying some standard philosophical reflection today on “weakness of will.”¹¹

I. About *Akrasia*

After Socrates' largely epistemic reflections, Plato writes of the person who regularly acts, not irrationally, in general, but on the bases of his or her particular irrational appetites and desires.¹² Such a person, Plato claims, is not suffering mainly from an epistemological deficit, but from *akrasia*.¹³ Moreover, such a person is said to suffer from what English language versions of the history of philosophy have almost always called "weakness of will" (hereafter, WW).¹⁴ Understanding Plato's views on *akrasia*, however, needs to take account of Plato's larger views on the troubled analogy between the soul (the *psyche*) and the state (the *polis*).¹⁵ Here, we must be brief.

Plato's analogy between the three-part structure of the state and the three-part structure of psyche, while genial, is also notoriously vague. The analogy itself is helpfully described as follows: ". . . just as he argues that justice for an individual consists in the harmony of the three parts of the individual's psyche [appetite, spirit, and reason]," one specialist writes, "so he argues that justice for a state consists in the proper harmony of its three parts . . . [producers or workers for the polity's material needs, auxiliaries or soldiers for the polity's defence, and guardians for the polity's rule] with each part (class) fulfilling its function."¹⁶ We remember that Plato himself goes from the triple structure of the state back to the triple structure of the psyche. But the movement could just as well go from the psyche to the state. The consequences for our understandings of both the structures of the state and those of the psyche are not necessarily the same.

Moreover, Plato's analogy between the two triple structures themselves does not clearly hold between the ordering within each of the two triple structures. For example, Plato does not make it clear enough whether the structural analogy between the two triples generally reaches down into the relations between the first items in each triple (workers or producers and appetite), the second (auxiliaries or soldiers and spirit), and the third (guardians or philosophers and reason). Auxiliaries certainly have just as much appetite as workers.¹⁷

Further—and this is where some recent Plato scholarship has been innovative—such a movement needs to be understood as a dynamic one, perhaps even as an oscillating movement. Still more, the important philosophical task is not so much to rid Plato’s analogy of its unhappy consequences by further characterizing the movement between the two triple structures. Rather, the general task is to elucidate how these two opposed poles may be bridged or, better, reconciled. More particularly, the task is to draw the consequences from these larger contexts for Plato’s discussions of *akrasia*.¹⁸

In much fuller and much more nuanced discussions, notably in his *Nichomachean Ethics* (*EN*) Book VII, Aristotle writes similarly about *akrasia*, although not without running into difficulty.¹⁹ For Aristotle, acratice actions, or what he calls in the traditional English translations “incontinent actions,” are most fundamentally cognitive errors in judgment.²⁰ Such errors occur when “we sometimes find ourselves at variance with our own reasoned decisions, to the point where we find ourselves doing things we had determined not to do^[21] . . . such experiences are puzzling because they raise questions about the relations between the different parts of souls. . . .”²²

Importantly, Aristotle approaches such experiences with a very different moral psychology and metaphysics than that of either Socrates or Plato.²³ The *psyche* or soul, far from being basically a unified whole, has rational and non-rational parts that can conflict, hence making changes of mind more explainable.²⁴ (Note, however, that Plato, too, thought of the *psyche* as having both rational and irrational parts that could conflict.) Moreover, Aristotle investigates acratice action puzzles by introducing a distinction between agents having knowledge and agents using or not using the knowledge they have. Accordingly, an acratice agent may not suffer from cognitive dysfunction, but simply from not using, or not using correctly, the knowledge he or she already has. Further, Aristotle also introduces some of the antecedents of the implicit intention to act acratice as implicit, invalid, practical syllogisms that guide such actions. Thus, an acratice agent may also not suffer from cognitive dysfunction but

from simple cognitive failure. The failure is either one of faulty knowledge or of the faulty use of a universal or particular premise in an implicit syllogism in the intention to act.²⁵

Unsurprisingly, such Greek philosophical reflections have proved to be extremely rich resources for those who would understand better the apparently universal and quite important, yet puzzling, experiences of WW.²⁶ And many contemporary philosophers continue to return to these texts with impressive results.²⁷ In the second part of the twentieth century, several Anglo-American philosophers took up freshly some of the traditional issues surrounding the vexed problems of *akrasia*. Notably, the English philosopher Richard Hare (1919-2002) focused critical reflection on the nature of moral judgments.²⁸ One of his major philosophical concerns was to understand how acratik judgments could be properly understood as free actions despite their being psychologically compulsive.

More significantly, the American philosopher, Donald Davidson (1917-2003), centered his critical reflection on issues in the philosophy of action. He was particularly interested in conceptual puzzles arising from some intentional actions seeming to be deliberately chosen despite their contradicting the results of rational deliberation.²⁹ “Davidson retains the assumption,” one scholar has written authoritatively, “that acratik behavior is irrational in being contrary to what in some sense the agent considers at the time that reason requires—contrary to an all-things-considered or better judgment—and in contravention of a principle of practical reason, which enjoins us always to act on such judgments. . . .”³⁰

While trying to keep these classical and modern discussions in mind, we might now center our reflections on putative examples of *akrasia* discussed in several contemporary philosophical reflections on this still puzzling multifaceted phenomenon about persons in action.

II. Standard Examples

Consider, then, several strongly representative examples of *akrasia* in two recent, widely recognized, and already standard contemporary English language philosophy reference books. In his well-informed discussion of *akrasia* in the latest edition of *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Alfred Mele offers analyses of several standard examples of *akrasia* understood as WW.³¹ A first example—call it for convenience “The Second Piece of Cake Example”³²—goes as follows:

The Second Piece of Cake Example

“. . . while judging it best not to eat a second piece of cake, you intentionally eat another piece, you act incontinently—provided that your so acting is uncompelled (e.g. your desire for the cake is not *irresistible*).”

Several remarks may prove helpful for discussion.

- a. First, this example introduces a quite basic element that explaining acratia actions must account for, namely the un-compelled nature of acratia action.
- b. Second, the set of acratia actions involves several related, but quite different, members than acratia judgments only. Thus, acratia reasoning, acratia knowledge, acratia formations of belief, and so on also require explanation.
- c. Accordingly, The Second Piece of Cake Example is an example of but only one type of acratia action, in fact of the currently fashionable type in most contemporary philosophical reflection.
- d. Further, the acratia action at issue here is helpfully characterized in more detail as an instance of just that kind of “un-compelled, intentional action that conflicts with a better or best judgment consciously held by the agent at the time of action.”
- e. Besides introducing the key elements of intentions and judgments, this example also involves the temporalization of intentions leading to occurrences of WW.
- f. Thus, the example focuses on what is taken not as any necessary antecedent to an evaluative judgment, but on an evaluative judgment that is co-temporal with competing motivations and intentional bodily actions.

- g. The focus is not on the nature of any particular states of character, but on the nature of a particular action.
- h. Further, the acratia action here is understood as being in disaccord, perhaps even in contradiction, with a coincident mental act of judgment.

All of this discussion, however, may strike some as overly complicated. Helpfully, Mele offers an important variant on The Second Piece of Cake Example. The variant is an instance of acratia action where the action is not in disaccord with the agent's better judgment, but in accord with it. The variant—call it “The Dangerous Prank Example”—goes as follows:

The Dangerous Prank Example

“A boy who decides, against his better judgment, to participate in a certain dangerous prank, might—owing to an avoidable failure of nerve—fail to execute his decision. In such a case, some would claim, his failure to act on his decision manifests weakness of will or *akrasia*.”

Mele characterizes The Dangerous Prank Example as what he calls an “unorthodox” instance of acratia action. This description suggests that the notion of orthodoxy, with respect to instances of acratia action, turns on whether the action is in accord or in disaccord with an evaluative judgment. We will need to come back to this point. For now, however, we need to note that Mele takes *akrasia* as “a character flaw . . . exhibited primarily in intentional behavior that conflicts with the agent's own values or principles.”

Although this description echoes Aristotle's discussion in *EN* 1152a25-27, Mele points out that contemporary discussion of *akrasia* is less restrictive than Aristotle's own concerns with *akrasia*, which focus especially on pains and pleasures, appetites and aversions. That is, for many philosophers today, *akrasia* is the situation of a person who is lacking the power “to act as one judges best in the face of competing motivation.” But the philosophical emphasis today falls less on character traits than on action types. In particular, many contemporary philosophers focus largely on what Mele usefully summarizes as

“uncompelled, intentional action that conflicts with a better or best judgment consciously held by the agent at the time of action.” Accordingly, the main problem they are concerned with seems to be the Socratic puzzle all over again, namely that such actions as willful errors appear to be irrational.

III. More Standard Examples

Consider now a second set of examples in Sarah Stroud’s 2014 protracted discussion of *akrasia* in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, and on her own comments on these examples.³³ Here is an initial example, a negative case for purposes of comparison and contrast.

The Personal Finances Example

Julie chose *b* over *a*, even though she knew *b* was more expensive than *a*.

Stroud comments: “There is nothing puzzling about Julie’s choice. . . . Julie evidently took the overall merits of *b* to outweigh those of *a*, even if *b* was inferior from a financial standpoint.” So The Personal Finances Example is not an example of *akrasia*.

The first real life case (and not a presumably fictional, artificial, philosophical example) with which we began, call it hereafter “The Winter Mountaineering Example,” could arguably, on similar grounds, be clearly not an example of WW, either. By contrast, weighing the overall merits of *a* and *b* in terms of any financial standpoint is entirely beside the point in the second real life case, what we may call hereafter “The Illicit Picnics Example.” But here is a further example of *akrasia*, a positive one.

The All Things Considered Example

Joseph did *f* rather than *e*, even though he was convinced that *e* was the better thing to do all things considered.

Stroud comments: “Here, by contrast, we have a genuinely puzzling case. . . . Why would Joseph do *f* when he assessed *e* as the superior course of action *all things considered* [Stroud’s emphasis]?” Stroud’s own comments, however, merit several

remarks. For clarity's sake, let me put these remarks in point form and underline what I take to be their most important elements.

- a. Stroud believes that the judgment that one course of action is better than another, that is, "not simply better in some respect" but "better overall, or better all things considered," is a distinctive type of judgment.—Note however that Stroud provides no argument for this key claim.
- b. Stroud also believes that this type of judgment seems "to enjoy a special connection [“a special character,” she writes further on] to the agent's actions, which other judgments do not possess.”—Note that Stroud here does not specify this important “special character” any further.
- c. Stroud stipulates that the specific kind of judgment that *e* is a better thing to do, all things considered, may be called Joseph's “better judgment.” In particular, Joseph's specific kind of judgment here is better not in the sense that Joseph's judgment is superior, but in the sense that Joseph's judgment is a judgment “as to which option is overall better.”
- d. Stroud then concludes that Joseph “appears to have acted freely and intentionally, contrary to his better judgment. And this is precisely the phenomenon the philosophical tradition calls ‘weakness of will.’ ”—Note that this conclusion, while quite plausible, takes without any question the traditional English translation of *akrasia* as “weakness of will.”

In short, The All Things Considered Example takes several elements of *akrasia* as so-called WW (weakness of will_ to be centrally important. *Akrasia* taken as WW is said to exhibit a distinctive type of judgment, one having “a special connection . . . to the agent's actions,” and one concerning “which option is overall better.”

On the grounds of a likely weighing of alternatives with all things considered, The Illicit Picnics Example could arguably be an example of *akrasia* as WW. The Winter Mountaineering Example, however, given the refractory and obstinately self-willed character of the action,³⁴ is not an example of WW but of its contrary.

All of this seems rather straight-forward. But consider now one of Stroud's more complicated examples.

The Exercise Example

“. . . one reason I might form an intention on Monday to run five miles on Tuesday—as opposed to leaving the issue open until Tuesday, for decision then—is to reduce the effect of feelings of lassitude to which I fear I may be subject when Tuesday rolls around. Then suppose Tuesday rolls around; I am indeed prey to feelings of lassitude; and I decide as a result not to run. Now I can be charged with weakness of will” (emphasis omitted).

Here, The Illicit Picnics Example may come back to mind. However, since that earlier example is taken from the lives of actual persons, we cannot know fully, as we can with fictional examples, just what the complete details of the actions in question were. Nonetheless, it seems plausible to say that, however non-definitive any decisions might have been to persist in having summer picnics together despite the rules disallowing such actions for such persons, the persons do seem chargeable with WW. But with respect to the habitual intentions, the grounds are not lassitude but something else, although just what we cannot know.

Still, several further remarks may prove helpful for subsequent critical discussion.

- a. Note that, with respect to acratia actions, Stroud’s three examples here, when taken together, introduce a series of cardinal terms apparently required for explaining *akrasia* – intentions, decisions, and feelings.
- b. Note also that The Exercise Example highlights the role of feelings in making some decisions to act on an agent’s previously formed intentions.
- c. On the bases of successive analyses of these examples and others, Stroud concludes with talk of “resolution.”
- d. “Weakness of will,” she claims, “involves, specifically, a failure to act on a resolution; this is sufficient to differentiate weakness of will from mere change of mind and even from caprice. . . .”—Note, however, that Stroud does not comment on whether further differentiations of *akrasia* as WW are necessary, for example, distinguishing WW from “general irresolution or infirmity of purpose.”³⁵

In short, The Exercise Example takes several further elements of *akrasia* as so-called WW to be especially important. Thus, in addition to *akrasia* as WW exhibiting a distinctive type of judgment, *akrasia* is also said to exhibit intentions, decisions, and feelings. Moreover, two aspects of intentions are of particular importance for explaining WW—their temporality and their firmness or resolute unchangeability.

IV. Current Reflections

Understanding this additional talk of *akrasia* as WW, especially in terms of failed resolutions, requires filling in briefly the main contexts of Stroud's discussion. In fact, her insistence on failures of resolution as the key to the various phenomena comprising different experiences of *akrasia* draws heavily on one of the central pieces in contemporary analytic discussions of *akrasia*, that of Richard Holton.³⁶ According to Stroud, Holton tries to sideline the roles of *akrasia* as mainly a phenomenon where the agent decides against his or her "better judgment." He claims "that weakness of will is not action contrary to one's better judgment at all. . . . [W]eakness of will is actually quite a different phenomenon, in which the agent's better judgment plays no role."³⁷ Stroud summarizes,

For Holton, when ordinary people speak of weakness of will they have in mind a certain kind of failure to act on one's *intentions*. What matters for weakness of will, then, is not whether you deem another course of action superior at the time of action. It is whether you are abandoning an intention you previously formed. . . . , a certain kind of failure to stick to one's plans. . . . (Stroud's emphasis)³⁸

Note here several additional points.

- a. Holton's view that the expression WW denotes mainly a failure on acting to fulfill one's intention and not to acting against one's better judgment is based on his appeal to the usages of ordinary language.
- b. The implication is that this failure to act on one's intention Holton understands as a lack of resolution.

- c. Note also that the question for Holton, as to whether some action is a genuine instance of *akrasia* taken as WW, is not whether the action has been carried out “against one’s better judgment.” The crucial question, rather, is whether the action has been carried out in the abandonment of one’s previously formed intention.
- d. On Holton’s view, then, if one sticks to one’s previously formed intention in acting, one is “resolute; one is not acting acrationally.” If one does not, then one is irresolute and one is acting acrationally.

Stroud continues with her summary of Holton’s nuanced position.

This understanding of weakness of will [as irresolution] changes the subject in two ways. First, the state of the agent with which the weak-willed action is in conflict is not an evaluative judgment (as in *akrasia*) but a different kind of state, namely an intention. Second, it is not essential that there be *synchronic* conflict, as *akrasia* demands. You must act contrary to your *present* better judgment in order to exhibit *akrasia*; conflict with a *previous* better judgment does not indicate *akrasia*, but merely a change of mind. However, you can exhibit weakness of will as Holton understands it simply by abandoning a previously formed intention.

In short, Holton’s account of *akrasia* as WW involves two further important points. The conflict in WW is not a conflict between the conclusions of two evaluative judgments. Rather, the conflict is between two intentions, one fulfilled and the other unfulfilled. Moreover, it is “essential” that, temporally speaking, the intentions of acting acrationally be synchronous with, and not antecedent to, the agent’s present better judgment.

In general, one persistent problem with this otherwise rather rich analysis is that some cases where a person abandons a previously formed intention to act in a certain way do not appear to be instances of *akrasia* at all. And that is exactly the case Stroud provides in The Running Example. Given that case, Holton seems to be up against a rather strong counter-example to his basic account.

Still, are Holton and Stroud right in claiming that the nature itself of *akrasia* is not the idea of the WW, but the rather different idea of a failed resolution? We do well to recall our initial stories. For these true stories raise several serious questions about the representativeness of the standard or orthodox examples of *akrasia* understood as WW, as well as about the satisfactoriness of the conclusions drawn from their analyses.

V. Several Generalizations

When we survey much English language philosophical reflection today on the topic of *akrasia* translated as WW, I believe that we can discern the outlines of a general, but overly restricted, metaphysical account of persons. This account may be articulated as a group of ontological commitments and metaphysical presuppositions embedded within careful analyses of a rather narrow range of what are taken to be standard examples of WW. Going carefully through all the necessary details would be the task of another paper. However, the initial analyses of the standard examples seem to have yielded a certain understanding of WW that might be very roughly summarized, if only in part and in no systematic order, under the following points.

1. *Akrasia* is traditionally and even today most often rendered in English as WW.
2. Explaining the occurrences of WW is both an issue for scientific, neuropsychological investigations, mainly about certain cognitive brain states rather than about states of mind, and for philosophical argumentative reflection, mainly about agents' actions rather than about their characters.
3. The basic philosophical issues arising from the phenomena of WW are initially to be approached against the backgrounds of the empirical nature of certain cognitive brain states.³⁹
4. Once critically evaluated, the scientific naturalistic statements of the puzzling nature of some of these brain states may then be philosophically investigated in the contexts of non-reductive philosophies of mind.
5. The centrally relevant contexts for philosophical investigations of WW are those of agents' particular actions.

6. And the centrally pertinent materials for these investigations are carefully crafted philosophical fictions. These are quite plausible examples of certain agent behaviors in the face of conflicting mental states.
7. Concerning WW, the focus of such philosophies of mind is on the nature, kinds, relations, and structures in the interconnections among cerebral and mental phenomena.
8. The relevant extension of mental phenomena includes beliefs, motivations, intentions, deliberations, choices, resolutions, desires, feelings, passions, wantings, tryings, willings, and so on.
9. In the phrase “weakness of will,” the primary expression “will” is to be construed in the contemporary terms of volition.⁴⁰
10. Volitions are understood as mainly concerned with the initiation of actions as a conjunction of either beliefs and intentions, or of beliefs and desires.
11. The conative elements of volitions are taken to be velleities as necessary, but only partly sufficient, to initiate action, and motivations as the underlying impetus for action.
12. The secondary expression in the “weakness of will” phrase, namely “weakness,” is to be understood as both the manifest incapacities of the will in certain circumstances to fulfill the agent’s cognitive intentions, and its rational, all-things-considered, evaluative judgments to act.
13. The opposite of WW (*akratia*) is taken to be “strength of will” (*enkratia*).
14. The volitions at issue in WW are understood to be, at least in some circumstances, as fully free in the sense of completely caused yet not completely determined by their proper antecedents.
15. The objectives of WW volitions are taken to be mainly the successful pursuits of pleasure of different kinds and the avoidances of pain of different kinds.

More elements could of course be added. But these points are sufficient for investigating now the contrast I have in mind here.

VI. Recalling Historical Contexts

We need now, however, to look at some of the further historical backgrounds that this contemporary set of approaches seems to have set aside with insufficient reasons. For much later, in very different cultural contexts, Augustine explains acratia actions by retrieving the Stoic technical notion of “assent” (*sunkatathesis*).⁴¹ In the case of a proposition, assent in English is one’s agreeing to the truth of a proposition. In the case of an action, “assent” in English becomes “consent,” that is, the committing of oneself to the doing of an action.⁴² In his own complex theory of mind and moral psychology, Augustine situates this twofold notion of *sunkatathesis* (whether as assent or as consent or as both) between, roughly, the push of reasons and the pull of emotions (understood broadly as including affections, sentiments, feelings, etc.).⁴³ He then proceeds to argue, as one specialist has recently summarized, that “it is possible both to act and to choose against better judgment, and even reluctantly so, in the sense that it is possible to consent to the stronger pull of emotion against the influence of reason.”⁴⁴

By contrast with Greek reflection, however, what much complicates comprehending the matter of *akrasia* for the medieval Christian philosophers is that Augustine situates his reflections within the religious world of God and especially of sin. Thus, for Augustine, acratia actions are neither irrational moments nor cognitive errors; some acratia actions are basically sinful actions. More generally, they are simple, blameworthy choices of a lesser good. Here, sinning is understood as consenting to and acting on bad moral and spiritual emotional longings, that is, “concupiscence” (in its Christian medieval senses).⁴⁵ This Augustinian view lies at the source, down through the course of the centuries, of Bernard of Clairvaux’s quite influential views about *akrasia* as “*infirmetas voluntatis*,”⁴⁶ and even to twentieth-century Trappist monks like Thomas Merton and his illicit picnics.

Less original than Augustine, but no less Christian, are Aquinas’ nonetheless largely Aristotelian reflections on *akrasia*. Like Aristotle, Aquinas thinks that what explains acratia actions are

intellectual errors. “The intellect under the influence of emotion or passion,” one scholar summarizes, “produces a dictate that such-and-such ought to be done even given a settled belief that the opposite is the case (that such-and-such ought not to be done). . . . The settled belief, however, fails to be occurrent, and the opposite of that belief is the one that is assented to. And this, of course, is a case of intellectual or rational malfunction.”⁴⁷

Only after Aquinas’ arguably exaggerated emphasis on cognition, do some of the very substantial problematic aspects come into view in the work of Duns Scotus.⁴⁸ Scotus brings philosophical attention back from the puzzles concerning freedom and divine foreknowledge to those concerning the freedom and the will of the uniquely particular person⁴⁹ struggling with finiteness and ontological dependency. Because the will is able to freely choose one thing or its opposite, the will is not irrational but rational.

Further, as Anselm already held,⁵⁰ the will displays an extraordinary double “inclination or affection.” The first inclination of the will is towards the advantageous, while the second is towards the just. “The first,” one scholar writes recently, “endows the will with an ‘intellectual appetite’ for happiness and actualization of self or species; the second supplies the will’s specific difference from other natural appetites, giving it an innate desire to love goods subjectively according to their intrinsic worth.”⁵¹

Anselm’s talk here of “inclinations” or “affections,” however, eventually raised serious metaphysical issues about their respective ontological status. In his 1597 *Metaphysical Disputations*, for example, Suarez took up (among, perhaps, far too many other topics) such specific issues directly by applying his innovative distinction between real and rational beings to three kinds of puzzling phenomena in particular—relations, negations, and fictions. All three Suarez understood as *entia rationis* only and, hence, not real, that is, extra-mental, entities. Such entities have being in the mind only. They are not positive realities but absences of positive realities, purely reason’s creations.⁵²

But the matter is subtle. “Blindness,” for example, “is an *ens rationis*: this does not mean,” as one expert medievalist writes, “that it is something unreal or fictitious; it means that it is not a positive reality, as the power of sight is, but an absence of such a power. . . . [Similarly with regard to relations,] when I become a great-uncle, I acquire a new relationship but there is no real change in myself . . . [and with regard to fictions,] there are creations of the imagination: chimeras and hippogriffs.”⁵³ What then are we to say of the ontological status, in the specific case of the will, of any two of its opposed elements in conflict with one another in a supposed instance of WW? Are all such elements always merely *entia rationis*?⁵⁴

VII. Orthodox and Unorthodox

Against these further historical backgrounds, recall now the story of the two Czech hikers climbing difficult, high-mountain, winter terrain, who lost their way in “bad conditions.” Perhaps we may respectfully try to put these true stories now in the form of a fictional example in which the names are changed. Consider then what we may call “The Icy Slope Example.”

The Icy Slope Example

Steve and Sally freely and intentionally choose not to comply with important official regulations. Their actions are encratic actions, that is, those demonstrating not *akrasia* or weakness of will, but its opposite, *encrateia*, willfulness or strength of will.

Steve and Sally’s actions did not conform to the official rules and regulations that govern quite dangerous extreme winter mountaineering. Sadly, things went very seriously wrong. Steve lost his life and Sally lost her way.

And now consider what we are calling “The Illicit Picnics Example.”

The Illicit Picnics Example

Jennifer and John freely and intentionally choose to act repeatedly in contradiction to their own fundamental pro-

fessional and spiritual ideals. Their actions are acratia actions, that is, those demonstrating not *encrateia* or willfulness, but its opposite, *akrasia* or lack of self-mastery.

Jennifer's and John's actions did not conform either to the fixed rules or to the ideals of their ways of life, either. Their actions, however, did not exhibit any obstinate strength of will. But, very strictly restricting their illicit picnics to intense discussions only, their actions did not show "weakness of will" either. Perhaps Jennifer and John showed, instead, a different kind of *akrasia*, a self-mastery. But this self-mastery was not sufficient enough to ensure their almost always habitually acting in complete accord with their respective vocational ideals. Instead, they left behind their clearly marked paths. They were wayward. But far from being mundane, their waywardness was of a different, a more obscure, but not uninformative, kind. That is, although their actions were also refractory and obstinately self-willed,⁵⁵ more fundamentally, these actions were spiritually wayward. Their actions were not encratic but acratia actions of an "unorthodox" sort, not strongly willful but weakly willful.

Whereas Steve and Sally suffered deeply from their strength of will, Jennifer and John suffered deeply from their weakness of will, but of an "unorthodox" kind. Their weakness was not a spiritual weakness of will but a spiritual "lack of self-mastery," a spiritual waywardness.

In the light of this last set of examples, briefly going back over the points already made in the very rough overview I provided above proves useful. But two quite important issues about the varied and complex phenomena of *akrasia*, however, merit particular emphasis.

The first is that some contexts where *akrasia* seems to call for philosophical analysis appear to be more precisely describable as instances of something other than just WW. Moreover, an alternative description of *akrasia*, as in The Illicit Picnics Example, as "a certain lack of self-mastery" is more general. Thus, in Japanese philosophical reflection, the idea of *akrasia* as always and only WW is rare. For the concept of will in Japanese philosophy is far less central than it is in Western philosophy.

The second, perhaps even more important, issue is that a not-unsatisfactory philosophical characterization of *akrasia* needs to draw sensible conclusions from analyses of more than merely mundane examples. That is, regardless as to how *akrasia* is to be rendered in English, taking as standard instances of *akrasia* only those that correspond to even an informed scientific naturalistic metaphysics of the person is myopic. Clearly, to account not unsatisfactorily for some apparent instances of *akrasia* an alternative account of WW to the standard one available in the leading contemporary philosophy reference works is needed.

VIII. Speculations

Perhaps we might then summarize key elements in such an alternative account, again in part only and in no systematic order, under the following headings. Such an alternative account would call for:

1. Rendering, if not translating, *akrasia* not uncritically into English according to its particular contexts.
2. Understanding less restrictively the nature of non-reductive scientific naturalistic inquiry.
3. Expanding the range of supposed representative examples of WW selected for philosophical analysis.
4. Emphasizing the fact that the phenomenon of WW exhibits very many different kinds.
5. Focusing particular philosophical attention on the relevant contexts in which different kinds of WW occur.
6. Relativizing the over emphasis, in standard examples of WW, of agents' objectives as finally no more than enjoying pleasures and avoiding pains however widely their respective denotations are construed.
7. Introducing into further philosophical investigations of WW the concerns in many wider ethical inquiries with the nature of the actions not exclusively of ordinary persons but also of secular heroes and of religious saints.
8. Qualifying the ideal situation of agents as habitually showing strength of will despite conflicting internal states, by taking

proper account of agents' profound contingencies—their obscurities, their vulnerabilities, and their fragilities.

9. Increasing the metaphysical understanding of the agent, not just as an existing entity, but also as an entity in becoming.
10. Including within the philosophical scrutiny of deliberate actions the critical roles of the diverse phenomena of discernment.
11. Supplementing much excellent contemporary work in philosophy of mind on volition with the no less excellent early, high, and late medieval work on the will.
12. Bringing under analysis the evident need all persons have of receiving help from others in carrying through successfully their requisite actions and especially their life projects.
13. Overcoming the taboo in most contemporary philosophical accounts of WW to draw on outstanding work in the philosophical theological writings of many 20th century Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and Orthodox theologians.
14. Drawing on some of the key elements in the recent extensive renewal of the phenomenological approaches to, and the conceptions of, the philosophy of religion.
15. Attending critically to newly innovative work in comparative philosophical reflection, especially in modern Japanese philosophy,⁵⁶ on issues in the philosophy of mind, such as consciousness, self-consciousness, and conscience.

In short, a cogent alternative account of the disparate phenomena making up *akrasia* must award a central place to the incontrovertible evidence from history and personal experience of the limits of language and of mind, of what some have called the opaqueness of meaning, the darkness of the mind, the fevers of the will, and the deep pathos of things. After this rough overview of some orthodox and unorthodox examples of *akrasia*, together with some still suspect generalizations, I would like now to conclude with several questions that require further critical investigation.

ENVOI: QUERYING *AKRASIA* AS WEAKNESS OF WILL

I think that at least three quite basic questions call for further critical investigation. The first question concerns mainly issues in the philosophy of mind. Perhaps we might put this first question provisionally as follows:

- (1) What elucidations of the affective dimensions of mind will allow proper limitations on the overemphasis on rationality and irrationality in the explanation of genuine akratic actions?⁵⁷

Despite Socratic rationality, the Greek philosophers—Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Epictetus, and others—certainly do not omit the role of the emotions and of the will in their attempts to explain *akrasia*. Nor do the Christian philosophers—Augustine, Anselm, Aquinas, Scotus, and Suarez. Their difficulty is, then, not one of omission. Rather, their Greek understandings of emotions and the will seem to be more rudimentary—say, not completely, but still too centrally, non-cognitive—than their understandings of rationality. And this needs remedying.

A second question concerns issues in the philosophy of language and in metaphysics. This question might run:

- (2) Just what exactly are the ontological commitments, and the concomitant metaphysical presuppositions, of what the polyvalent Greek expression *akrasia* may properly be said to denote in English?⁵⁸

Despite the multiplicity in the number of apparently standard examples of the *akrasia* phenomenon, closer analyses show basic obscurities about just what the standard examples are supposed to be examples of. In particular, all too often, just what actions we are talking about—physical actions, mental actions, spiritual actions—is not clear enough. Part of the problem here is the great variety, not just outside of, but even within, a closed scientifically naturalistic culture of the key elements involved. For example, are the fundamental elements in any not unsatisfactory explanation of the *akrasia* phenomenon to be identified as situations, facts, states of affairs, objects, events, actions, persons, beliefs, desires, intentions, values, or, if not as any of these, then as precisely what?⁵⁹ Given these multiplicities, it may appear that truthful talk about *akrasia*

can only be, if not always specific, at least always particular and never universal.

Accordingly, a third general question for further critical investigation emerges, a question concerning epistemological, and once again metaphysical, issues.

- (3) Just what exactly are the truth-bearers of true propositions about particular experiences of *akrasia*?

But specifying the nature of truth bearers generally turns out to be quite difficult.⁶⁰ So it may also appear that contemporary philosophers are not going to be able to agree on the central, as opposed to the peripheral, truth-bearers of any particular experience of *akrasia* without bringing into discussion many more basic metaphysical issues than just metaphysical aspects of moral motivation. Perhaps one fundamental idea needed here is the contemporary notion of metaphysical grounding,⁶¹ especially in connection with some of its original and still very suggestive analyses in Bolzano's four-volume 1837 *Wissenschaftslehre*.⁶²

Whatever such further investigations might come to, it already seems clear enough that the manifold philosophical problems of *akrasia* are not going to go away anytime soon. Nor, I need to add in ending (full disclosure!), is that second piece of chocolate cake!

Endnotes: Essay Six

- ¹ This previously unpublished essay is a newly revised version of a paper presented in shorter form at an invited international workshop on "*Akrasia*" held at the Philosophy Department of the Palacky University in Olomouc, Czech Republic, 13-14 September 2016.
- ² Plato, *Protagoras* 358b7-c3, tr. S. Lombardo and K. Bell, in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. J. M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), 787.
- ³ T. Merton, *My Argument with the Gestapo*, cited in E. Rice, *The Good Times and Hard Life of Thomas Merton: The Man in the Sycamore Tree* (New York: Image Books, 1972), 31.
- ⁴ Note that after the two preceding parts on events and actions respectively, this third and final part once again consists of two essays, this time devoted to two aspects of the nature of persons.
- ⁵ *The New Zealand Herald* (25 August 2016); cf. BBC World News (26 August 2016).

- ⁶ Here and throughout, I use the expression “waywardness” to denote the propensity for someone to be “marked by willful . . . deviation from what is desired, expected, or required in order to gratify one’s own impulses or inclinations” (*The American Dictionary of the English Language*, 4th ed. [Boston: Houghton, 2000]).
- ⁷ I use the expression “willfulness” to denote the propensity of a person to say or do something purposefully, deliberately, voluntarily, in such a way as to be “obstinately bent on having one’s own way” (*Ibid.*).
- ⁸ See T. Merton, *Learning to Love: Exploring Solitude and Freedom. The Journals of Thomas Merton*, Vol. 6: 1966-1967, ed. C. M. Bochen (New York: Harper Collins, 1997), 35-126.
- ⁹ For the argument, which Aristotle attributes to Socrates and not to Plato (*NE VII 2*, 1145b22 ff.), see especially Plato, *Prot.* 353c-357e, and *Prot.* 352c3-6, *Prot.* 352d4-353a2, *Prot.* 358c6-d4; see also *Gorg.* 491d7-e1 and 493b1-3; cf. *Gorg.* 467c-468e and 509e5-7.
- ¹⁰ This is a standard, but overly brief, statement of the traditional philosophical problem of *akrasia* according to the latest edition of Proudfoot and Lacey 2010, 184. Here, and in almost all standard English language philosophy reference books, *akrasia* is rendered as “weakness of will.” Since, with others, I find reasons sometimes to question this translation in some contexts, in what follows, I will use the expression “weakness of will” only in scare quotes.
- ¹¹ See C. Porebski’s 2016 *Akrasia Workshop* paper, “*Akrasia*, A Discovery?,” on the more fundamental issues concerning the historical moment when the phenomenon of *akrasia* first appears. The question that arises here is just what the philosophical problem may be that the appearance of *akrasia* discloses. One response may be: the appearance of *akrasia* discloses the previously philosophically unsatisfying ways early Greek reflection makes the distinction between the rational and the irrational.
- ¹² For the philosophical contexts of Plato’s remarks, see the various articles and bibliographies in *The Oxford Handbook of Plato*, ed. G. Fine (Oxford: OUP, 2008), esp. on Socrates, D. Devereux, “Socratic Ethics and Moral Psychology,” 114-138; and on Plato, H. Lorenz, “Plato on the Soul,” 243-266; each with bibliographies.
- ¹³ Cf. *Rep.* 430e-431d, *Prot.* 352b-c, and *Gorg.* 491d.
- ¹⁴ Cf. S. Blackburn’s definition of *akrasia* in Blackburn 2016, 13: “(Greek, incontinence). The condition in which while knowing what it would be best to do, one does something else. . . . commonly translated as weakness of will, although that properly includes general irresolution or infirmity of purpose, which is rather different.” This “condition” the SOED (2007) particularizes as “*the state of mind in which one acts against one’s better judgment*” (my emphasis).
- ¹⁵ See H. Lorenz, “The Analysis of the Soul in Plato’s *Republic*,” in *The Blackwell Guide to Plato’s Republic*, ed. G. Santas (Oxford: Black-

well, 2006), 146-165; and N. Blössner, "The City-Soul Analogy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Plato's Republic*, ed. G. R. F. Ferrari (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 345-385.

- ¹⁶ Fine 2008, 28; reading "psyche" for "soul" and "state" for "city."
- ¹⁷ Cf., however, M. Cajthaml's qualification: "I agree that the analogy is in some respects imperfect and limited, however, I do not think that the fact that also guardians (or soldiers) have appetitive soul is a fact that shows limits to the analogy. For Plato's point is that; while guardians also have appetites as workers do, they differ from the latter by the fact that they in their action do not follow just appetites but *thymos* that is formed by true knowledge of the good (i.e., the knowledge the philosophers cultivate). Ultimately, the workers, while having also rational and irascible parts of the soul, nevertheless follow not their reason and reason-imbued *thymos* but their sensuous appetites. So the charge against Plato should not be that he does not acknowledge that the guardians also have appetites (and workers also have reason and *thymos*, etc.) but that it is not true that the majority of people are governed just by their sensuous appetites" (Personal Communication, 22 September 2016).
- ¹⁸ Note that the consequences for our understanding of *akrasia* become more complicated when we take proper account of Plato's later work, *The Laws*, where, after his two disastrous trips to Sicily, he propounds a much less optimistic, but no less abstract, view of human nature and the structure of the soul. See, for example, *Laws* 10.892a-893b; and M. Schofield's "Introduction" in the new translation by T. Griffith (Cambridge: CUP, 2016), 13. On Plato's late moral psychology, Schofield points especially to *Laws* 1.633d-634b, 644b-645, and also to 3.688e-689e and 691c-d. On "the foundational books" of *Laws*, see S. Sauvé Meyer, *Plato: Laws 1 and 2* (Oxford: OUP, 2015).
- ¹⁹ Cf. *EN*, especially vii 1-10, but also such texts as 1102b14-18, 1111b13-15, 1114a13-16, 1136a31-b9, 1142b18-20, 1166b6-11, 1179b26-29. Cf. the newly revised translations with excellent glossaries of Aristotle's four ethical works (*Eudemian Ethics*, *Nichomachean Ethics*, *Magna Moralia*, and *Virtues and Vices*), in *Aristotle's Ethics: Writings from the Complete Works*, ed. J. Barnes and A. Kenny (Princeton: PUP, 2014). Note that, for good reasons, Barnes and Kenny place Book VII together with the two other "common books" (Books V and VI) in the *EE* and not in the *EN*. While retaining the page numbers of the first modern text of Aristotle, I. Bekker's *Aristotelis Opera* from 1831-1870, they also delete the traditional Renaissance book and chapter divisions.
- ²⁰ See *EN* VII, 1-10 (1145a15-1152a35). Cf. the excellent and succinct commentary on these cardinal sections in *Aristotle: Nichomachean Ethics*, tr. and ed. T. Irwin, 2nd ed. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999), 255-268. Although the Barnes and Kenny newly revised 2014 translation must

be regularly compared, for ease of reference I use here throughout the Irwin 1999 revised translation.

- ²¹ EN 1102a28-1103a3.
- ²² C. Shields, *Aristotle*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2014), 389.
- ²³ In addition to Lorenz 2008, see F. D. Miller Jr., “Aristotle on the Separability of Mind,” 306-339, esp. 306-308, in *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, ed. C. Shields (Oxford: OUP, 2012). For recent work on Aristotle’s metaphysics, see *Contemporary Aristotelian Metaphysics*, ed. T. E. Tahko (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), esp. E. J. Lowe’s paper, “A neo-Aristotelian Substance Ontology,” 229-248.
- ²⁴ Note here M. Cajthaml’s comment: “This, I think, must be qualified. After all both Plato and Aristotle see the phenomenon of *akrasia* against the background of the conflict between the rational and the irrational part of the soul (this becomes clear from the analysis in my [unpublished paper 2016] “Von Hildebrand on Acting against One’s Better Knowledge: A Comparison to Plato”). For this reason the sentence following directly the one I quoted, namely “The *psyche* or soul, far from being basically a unified whole, has rational and non-rational parts that can conflict, hence making changes of mind more explainable’ could be misleading, for it seems to imply that Plato’s *psyche* was not conceived as a composition of a rational and an irrational part” (Personal Communication, 19 September 2016). I agree. Accordingly, I have added a clarifying sentence in parentheses.
- ²⁵ For a detailed discussion, see N. O. Dahl, *Practical Reason, Aristotle, and Weakness of Will* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984). Shields 2014, 391-393 makes excellent use of some of Dahl’s work.
- ²⁶ In his 2016 *Akrasia Workshop* paper, “*Decipio amoris*: On the Possibility of Acting in Virtue of a Distorted Value-Feeling,” M. Crespo called critical attention to the richness of Max Scheler’s many texts on degrees of moral conflict. These Scheler texts suggest the need to nuance frequent talk of *akrasia* simply in terms of undifferentiated notions of opposing moral motivations.
- ²⁷ See, for example, the bibliography in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle’s Nichomachean Ethics*, ed. R. Polansky (Cambridge: CUP, 2014), 455-456.
- ²⁸ See R. M. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (Oxford: OUP, 1963). On Hare’s distinguished work in 20th century moral philosophy, see, among others, *Hare and Critics: Essays on Moral Thinking with Comments by R. M. Hare*, ed. D. Seanor and N. Fotion (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988).
- ²⁹ See D. Davidson, *Problems of Rationality* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); and esp. Davidson, “How is Weakness of Will Possible?,” in his *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 21-42. For an excellent discussion, see S. Stroud, “How is Strength of Will Possible?,” in *Weakness of Will and Practical Irrationality*, ed. S. Stroud and C. Tappolet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 39-67.

- ³⁰ J. C. B. Gosling, “*Akrasia*,” in Honderich 2005, 19.
- ³¹ Audi 2015, 19. For some of Mele’s substantial previous work on *akrasia*, see A. Mele, *Irrationality* (New York: OUP, 1987); A. Mele, “Akratic Action and the Practical Role of Better Judgment,” *Pacific Philosophical Quarterly*, 72 (1991), 33-47; A. Mele, “Akratics and Addicts,” *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 39 (2002), 153-167; and especially A. Mele, *Backsliding: Understanding Weakness of Will* (New York: OUP, 2012).
- ³² Throughout, I give in parentheses rough titles to the selected examples so as to facilitate their further reference. Here, I have changed Mele’s example from “pie” to “cake” (which I prefer!).
- ³³ See S. Stroud, “Weakness of Will,” in Zalta (Spring 2014), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2014/entries/weakness-will/>. For some of her previous work, see her paper “Irrationality,” in *A Companion to Donald Davidson*, ed. E. Lepore and K. Ludwig (Oxford: Wiley, 2013), 489-505.
- ³⁴ See SOED 2007.
- ³⁵ See Blackburn 2016.
- ³⁶ R. Holton, *Willing, Wanting, Waiting* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009). See also his earlier articles, R. Holton, “Intention and Weakness of Will,” *Journal of Philosophy*, 96 (1999), 241-262.
- ³⁷ Stroud 2014, 15. “. . . for a different revisionist understanding of weakness of will which also bypasses the agent’s better judgment,” Stroud refers here to F. Jackson, “Weakness of Will,” *Mind*, 93 (1984), 1-18.
- ³⁸ *Loc. cit.*
- ³⁹ Cf. the many pertinent articles in Gregory 2004, especially on the brain and on mind-body.
- ⁴⁰ Cf. M. Brand, “Volition,” in Audi 2015, 1117.
- ⁴¹ For a general overview of the transitions, see J. Marenbon, *An Historical and Philosophical Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2007), 6-33, 352-354 (a concise and perspicuous annotated bibliographical overview), and 385-446 (an extensive and recent bibliography); see also J. Marenbon, *Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 2016), esp. 8-43.
- ⁴² *The Stoic Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*, ed. and tr. B. Inwood and L. P. Gerson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008), 206. Cf. the many passages from different Stoics referred to under “assent” (*sunkatathesis*) in the index. See T. Brennan, “Stoic Moral Psychology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*, ed. B. Inwood (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 256-294, esp. 262-263.
- ⁴³ In his 2016 *Akrasia* Workshop paper, “D. von Hildebrand on Acting Against One’s Better Knowledge: A Comparison with Plato,” M. Cajthaml argued forcefully that the very different conceptual frameworks of Greek and Christian philosophy must be taken into account when trying to explain their failure to bring the problem of *akrasia* into proper critical focus.
- ⁴⁴ R. Cross, *The Medieval Christian Philosophers: An Introduction* (London: Taurus, 2014), 58. Cross refers to Augustine’s *De spiritu et littera* XXXI, c. 53.

- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.* Cross refers to Augustine's *Confessions* VI, c. 11, 20.
- ⁴⁶ See Cross 2014, 58. See also, J. Leclercq, *The Love of Learning and the Desire for God*, tr. C. Misrahi (New York: Fordham UP, 1961), esp. 111-138.
- ⁴⁷ Cross 2014, 127. Cross refers both to Aquinas *De malo* III, q. 9, and to his *Summa theologiae* I-II, q. 77, a. 2.
- ⁴⁸ See T. Williams, "John Duns Scotus," in Zalta (Summer 2015), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/duns-scotus/>. Note that although less systematic than Aquinas, Scotus must not be neglected. As one of the most distinguished medieval scholars writes, "There is little doubt in my mind that Scotus was the most talented of all the medieval theologians" (Cross 2014, 163).
- ⁴⁹ On the uniqueness of each person according to Scotus, see M. Brand, "Haecceity," in Honderich 2005, 357.
- ⁵⁰ See the excellent overview of Anselm's theory of action in M. McCord-Adams, "Anselm," in Audi 2015, 38-40.
- ⁵¹ A. B. Wolter, "Duns Scotus, John," in Audi 2015, 289. (Wolter is the distinguished translator of Scotus into English.) Cf. his *The Philosophical Theology of Duns Scotus* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990). On the two inclinations or affections of the will, see especially Cross 2014, 179, and for an overview, 163-185. Cf. Scotus's account of the will with the most elaborate contemporary analytic account in B. Shaughnessy, *The Will: Volume 2, A Dual Aspect Account*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: CUP, 2008), esp. 311-315, 385-448, and 535-597.
- ⁵² Note here M. Cajthaml's question: Are "you suggest[ing] that since the acratia volition is not in accord with what the agent knows to be the best thing for him to do (all things considered), it might (erroneously) be seen as a negation and therefore as *entia rationis*? This is the only way I can make sense of your connecting the debate on *entia rationis* in the sense of negations, relations, and fictions with the issue of *acrasia*" (his emphasis; Personal Communication, 22 September 2016). Reply: No, I am not suggesting that. The connection between Suarez on *entia rationis* and acratia volitions is the suggestiveness both (1) of (always) taking the nature of the fundamental relation between any two conflicting and opposed objects of a subsequent acratia volition, and (2) of (sometimes) taking any one or two opposed putative objects themselves of that acratia volition as *entia rationis*. Cf. especially T. Crane, *The Objects of Thought* (Oxford: OUP, 2013), 89-113.
- ⁵³ A. Kenny, *A New History of Western Philosophy* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), 637, with reference to *Disputationes Metaphysicae in Opera Omnia*, vol. 25 (Hildesheim: Olms, 1965).
- ⁵⁴ For a recent and nuanced account of "beings of reason" (*entia rationis*), see C. Shields and D. Schwartz, "Francisco Suárez," in Zalta (Summer 2015), <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2015/entries/suarez/>.

- ⁵⁵ See the SOED 2007.
- ⁵⁶ See especially the extraordinary collection, *Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. J. W. Heisig, T. P. Kasulis, and J. C. Maraldo (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2011); and the four volumes in the Modern Japanese Philosophy Series (Albany: State University of New York), ed. P. McCormick.
- ⁵⁷ By contrast, see, for example, de Sousa 2014.
- ⁵⁸ For some of the newer perplexities concerning metaphysical presuppositions, see F. Berto and M. Plebani, *Ontology and Metaontology: A Contemporary Guide* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015); and the papers in *Metametaphysics: New Essays on the Foundations of Ontology*, ed. D. J. Chalmers et al. (Oxford: OUP, 2009). Note that "metametaphysics," a very recent expression in analytic metaphysics, denotes "The study of the foundations and methodology of metaphysics" (T. Tahko, *An Introduction to Metametaphysics* [Cambridge: CUP, 2015], 5). Its scope is broader than "metaontology," which in a broad Husserlian sense ("formal ontology"), denotes "the study of the structures and relations in which ontological elements (such as objects) stand," and in a narrow Quinian sense, denotes the study of "quantification and ontological commitment" (*Ibid.*, 4).
- ⁵⁹ In one of their several critical comments during discussion, both the 2016 *Akrasia* Workshop Chair, V. Vohanka, and M. Crespo argued that any kind of metaphysical turn in further philosophical inquiries into *akrasia* requires independent justification. "Why metaphysics here?" was their insistent question. I would attempt to reply by drawing on some recent materials about such justification to be found, for example, in A. Ney, *Metaphysics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2014), esp. 30-59; and in A. L. Thomasson, "Research Problems and Methods," in *The Bloomsbury Companion to Metaphysics*, ed. N. A. Manson and R. W. Barnard (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), esp. 17-53. Cf. McCormick 2016.
- ⁶⁰ On truth-bearers, see among other recent collections, *Truth and Truth-Making*, ed. E. J. Lowe and A. Rami (Stocksfield: Acumen, 2009), and *Truthmakers: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. H. Beebe and J. Dodd (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).
- ⁶¹ See the outstanding papers in *Metaphysical Grounding*, ed. F. Correia and B. Schnieder (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), esp. K. Fine's "Guide to Ground," 37-80, and E. J. Lowe's "Asymmetrical Dependence in Individuation," 214-233.
- ⁶² Bolzano's extraordinary work, the *Wissenschaftslehre* (1837), has finally appeared in English as *Theory of Science*, tr. P. Rusnick and R. George, 4 vols. (Oxford: OUP, 2014).