DIVINE CAUSALITY AND HUMAN FREE CHOICE: DOMINGO BANEZ, PHYSICAL PREMOTION AND THE CONTROVERSY *DE AUXILIIS* REVISITED. By Robert Joseph Matava. Leiden: Brill, 2016. Pp. xii + 365. Hard cover $194.00, ISBN: 9-789004-310308.

If it is common sense to bring fresh eyes to an old problem, then this book is brimming with common sense. In reviewing the hoary debates around the Controversy *de Auxiliis*, Robert Matava not only comes up with a fresh approach but also suggests how the core presuppositions (or mistakes) that gave rise to the controversy are still evident in contemporary philosophy and theology. Shining a light on them can therefore be useful in ways that go beyond the Controversy itself.

The book, as "an exercise in historically informed philosophical theology," begins with an even-handed presentation of both sides of the Controversy—Domingo Bañez (the "Dominican" side) and Luis de Molina (the "Jesuit" side)—though focusing more on Bañez as "the less studied side" (8). In a *tour de force* of meticulous scholarship, Matava examines their proposals and mutual critiques in fine detail, revealing their common presuppositions which he sees as the real source of the Controversy (chapters 1–4). Historically, the Controversy "ended" with a papal bull in 1607, ordering both sides "to await the final determination of the Holy See, which, more than 400 years later, has yet to come" (33).

To Matava's fresh eyes, the Controversy was really about causality. Both sides saw divine causality as "something distinct from God and his effect that antecedes his effect in the physical order and links the effect with God as its cause." This led Bañez "to posit a divine predetermination that undercut human self-determination" (physical premotion) and Molina to "an antecedent circumscription of God's causal possibilities that undercut the doctrine of creation" (general concurrence and middle knowledge). Both sides subscribed implicitly to a univocal notion of causality. Divine and human causalities became a zero-sum game: the more God did in causing a free human act, the less the human being could do, and vice versa. "The implications of divine transcendence were thus obscured so that no one grasped the true meaning of Aquinas's claim that God, as universal cause of being, causes the necessary and contingent as such" (322).

Matava includes Bernard Lonergan's account of free choice as "the first significant attempt to forge a new way through the impasse" (chapter 5). While finding much of value in Lonergan's analysis, Matava argues that he makes the same mistake as Bañez, holding that God "infallibly causes free choices indirectly by created means" (215).

Matava then offers his own constructive proposal which models divine causality as "creation" rather than "motion." He argues that his proposal is consistent with the thought of Aquinas (chapter 6) and then shows that it is preferable to the positions of Bañez and Molina (chapter 7). While recognizing that Aquinas frequently uses the analogy of motion to discuss God's action, he nonetheless

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argues that "for Thomas, God *creates* human acts of free choice: His causation of them must be understood as a creative act. By 'creative act' I mean an act that results in the existence as such of the effect—not just the effect's being this or that, or its being in a particular kind of way, but its being as such. Such an act—the imparting of *esse*—is necessarily ex nihilo and therefore immediate, and it is within the power of the creator alone to perform" (243). He allows that "God can be said to 'move' creatures to act," but adds that "strictly speaking, God does not cause the changing *as such* of things; rather he causes the *being* as such of things and change by derivation, as a logical consequence of his causing the being of things" (276).

To show that Aquinas shares this view is something of an uphill struggle—especially because, as Matava freely admits, "Aquinas nowhere explicitly articulates the view I attribute to him" (243). Recognizing that God's causality of *esse* is central to Aquinas's thought, he shows how this teaching grounds the claim that divine effects may be contingent: "Because God's proper effect is the being of things as such, and contingency and necessity are pursuant upon being as features of it, the very contingency or necessity of a particular effect is included within the total effect God intends: God's causality reaches to the very mode in which things obtain" (276).

Matava also carefully parses how Aquinas uses the models of "creation" and "motion." In distinguishing God's action from that of creatures, Aquinas insists that creation is not motion. When his aim, however, is "to distinguish . . . differing instances of divine action," he uses the analogy of motion "to illustrate how God's application of creatures [to their proper actions] differs from his making them to be at their inception and his conserving them in being" (249).

Such differences are always denominated from the side of the creature and not from God whose action is simply "God's essence with a relation to the creature" (*ST* I.45.3, ad 1). In explaining such differences on the part of the creature, however, Matava seems to reduce them all to time: "Clearly, however, divine causality can only be parsed into distinct 'modes' from a creaturely perspective. That is because *time* is the prism which refracts the clear light of God's *esse*-communicating action into the spectrum of creation, conservation and application" (250–1).

While Aquinas uses the analogy of motion for God's action, Matava argues that this should be translated into the language of creation since "'motion' in these contexts is simply a way of referring to God's creative causality." He wants to avoid the language of motion "because while motion language, rightly understood, is perfectly appropriate (indeed necessary), it can also invite confusion, especially if the demands of the unique subject matter—divine action—are not borne in mind" (247). He is certainly correct in thinking that the analogy of motion may be misunderstood and that this can result in a univocal understanding of divine and creaturely causalities and a consequent sense of competition between them, so that "the inescapable alternatives become *Dieu déterminant ou déterminé*" (247). Yet, although the analogy of motion, if wrongly understood, may invite confusion, it seems that a greater confusion might arise if it is replaced by the language of creation, where there is the danger of eliminating the action of the creature altogether since

creation ex nihilo is an exclusively divine prerogative. Matava is not unaware of this danger (301–5).

In chapter 7, Matava presents his position ("that God creates human acts of free choice"), which he calls "*total personal creation* (TPC)" (277). After reviewing a number of contemporary authors who have also employed God's creative causality in this context, he effectively shows that reference to God's creative causality firmly establishes God's transcendence and demonstrates that God's action is fundamentally unlike that of creatures—removing the univocal notion of divine causality implicitly present in both Bañez and Molina and so showing the superiority of his position to theirs.

In addressing the objection that TPC seems to eliminate human agency altogether since "creation is ex nihilo and the work of God alone" (301), Matava again refers to time—invoking a distinction between "metaphysical" and "temporal" priority. "Metaphysically, God's application of a creature [to its act] does not presuppose the existence of the creature" since "apart from God's creative causality, there quite literally is nothing" (302). Matava uses the example of "Peter," who begins to exist at time t_1, is conserved at t_2, and applied to action by God at t_3. God's application of Peter to his free act "does not presuppose Peter's existence at t_3, as if application were some distinct, additional action over and above God's making Peter to be at t_3. Rather, divine application is just constitutive of Peter at t_3" (303n65). While God's action has metaphysical priority, it is the creature who has temporal priority: "However, while the creature is not *metaphysically* presupposed by divine application, nothing about TPC compels one to deny that the creature is *temporally* presupposed by divine application. On TPC, the creature God moves to act is temporally prior to God's moving it to act" (302). Matava introduces new categories here according to which either God's action is prior to the creature or the creature is (in some way) "prior" to God's action. Rightly understood, this may be unproblematic, but it does seem to raise the specter of the struggle for priority between divine and creaturely action that so plagued the Controversy.

The notion of temporality is recruited for some more metaphysical heavy lifting in sorting out the different modes of creation: "Recall that God's transeunt action is itself unitary, comprehensive and *ab aeterno*; it is inherently creative, able to be refracted into the distinct modes of creation de novo, conservation, and application only through the prism of time" (303). Certainly God's action (one with the divine essence on God's part) is distinguished only according to its effects in creatures. But should the distinction of those effects be reduced simply to "the prism of time"?

It seems that, in rightly emphasizing the unity and simplicity of divine action on God's part, Matava has overlooked key distinctions on the part of the creature. The most important in this context would be the distinction between "the form and integrity of a thing" (first act) and "its operation" (second act) (*ST* I.48.5; 105.5). This is an ontological distinction, not dependent on considerations of time. In Matava's example, Peter's action seems to be conflated with his being: God's application of Peter to his free action at time t_3 "does not presuppose Peter's existence at t_3, as if application were some distinct, additional action over and above God's

making Peter to be at t_3" (303n65). But if, on Peter's part, his free act is distinct from his substantial act, then we would have to distinguish God's act of causing his free act from God's act of causing his substantial act, since God's act is distinguished according to its creaturely effect. It is only by conflating the substantial and operational acts in Peter that we could conflate God's action in his case.

If God is the ultimate source of all actuality, and the actuality of the creature's operation is ontologically distinct from its substantial actuality, then we must make a distinction (not in God, but in God's effect) between God's causality of the substantial existence of the creature and of its operation. For Aquinas, this is the distinction between God "as the cause of universal being" and God, as "the cause of action in every agent," who "moves things to operate" (*ST* I.105.5). Here, the analogy of motion is again useful to show how both God (as primary cause) and Peter (as secondary cause) are the source of Peter's free act. The analogy also makes it clear that the creature is always secondary: there is no sense in which it has "priority" over God's action.

Matava effectively shows how introducing the creative causality of God into the discussion of God's action and human freedom can at once preserve divine transcendence, show that God is unlike creatures, and ground the doctrine of primary and secondary causality. He clearly reveals the fundamental mistakes of Bañez and Molina in the Controversy *de Auxiliis*. Matava also suggests how the issues surrounding the Controversy may have significant implications for fostering ecumenism, deepening Christian spirituality, addressing modern atheism, and understanding more general contemporary conundrums about causality (7, 322–4). His work will be of great value not only for those concerned with the question of God and human freedom but for all who are interested in the nature of divine action.

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JUSTICE AS A VIRTUE: A THOMISTIC PERSPECTIVE. By Jean Porter. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2016. Pp. xiii + 286. Paper $40.00, ISBN: 978-0-8028-7325-5.

The twentieth-century revival of virtue ethics as a normative theory of morality has helped to reinsert the study of Aristotle into the modern, secular university. While Aristotle has long had a central place in Catholic philosophy programs given the appropriation of his works by the scholastics, the watershed studies of such thinkers as Elizabeth Anscombe, Philippa Foot, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Rosalind Hursthouse has made the virtue-centered approach a viable option in mainstream philosophy. That being said, recent critics such as Christopher Miles Coope, David K. O'Connor, and M. T. Lu claim that a clear weakness in this revival is its failure to address one of the central virtues in the tradition: justice.

As Jean Porter points out toward the beginning of her most recent book, Hursthouse herself acknowledges the

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