**1.Introduction**

**Passions of the will**. A passion of the will is either a

(a) genuine act of will – such as desire (and aversion) ⇒ motivation

or (b) a causal consequence of some act of will – pleasure (and distress) ⇒ affective reaction

**Ockham’s Razor**. A principle of ontological parsimony

“Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity” – (“Entia non sunt multiplicanda sine necessitate” *Ord*. I, dist.1, q.3, (OTh I, 421)

**General question.**

Why is love irreducible to desire or pleasure? What is special about love that it cannot be reduced to any other passion of the will according to Ockham?

**General assumption.**

Love **grounds** desire and pleasure: Love, as the most simple and basic **passion of the will**, is **irreducible** to both desire and pleasure because desire and pleasure **presuppose love.**

At bottom, **love** is something like a **basic**, merely **objectual,** **non-propositional**, **affective** state or act that unlike desire, is itself not **motivational**, and, unlike pleasure, is not a mere **affective reaction** involving our actual willing, but grounds both.

**Love according to Thomas Aquinas**

To love = to will good to someone[[1]](#footnote-1) (whether oneself or another person)

“Anne loves Peter” = Anne wills some good for Peter[[2]](#footnote-2)

Peter

Anne

some good

**Love according to Ockham?[[3]](#footnote-3)**

Anne

Peter

some good

**2. Against the reduction of love.**

**The reductionist assumption (Peter Auriol)**

(Acts of) love are nothing but (acts of) desire or (acts of) pleasure.

(Acts of) hate are nothing but (acts of) avoidance or (acts of) distress.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Ockham’s argumentative strategy against the reductionist assumption:**

**a.** Ontological independence

**b.** Different causes

**ad a.**

P1 If a thing *a* exists without a thing *b*, then *a* and *b* are distinct. (General metaphysical principle).

P2 (An act of) love can exist without (an act of) desire or pleasure.

K Therefore, (an act of) love can be distinct from both (acts of) desire or pleasure.

Two cases to establish **P2**:

**1.** The bad angel (Lucifer)

A word on angels:

* Angels are privileged creatures in that, unlike human beings, they “act under optimal psychological conditions”. The case of angelic sin is just a special case of the problem how a “good creature” can “sin for the first time”, since “sin” means, as Hoffmann says, “a morally deficient act for which the agent is responsible.”[[5]](#footnote-5)
* Both are “important test cases for the robustness of their theories of free will. The hypothesis of the first choice of the angels allows them to focus exclusively on the interaction of intellect and will, for it results only from thinking and willing some object.”[[6]](#footnote-6)
* “Thus, this hypothesis prompted thinkers to refine their theories of free will, just as philosophers today employ thought experiments to test commonly accepted opinions and develop innovative ideas.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

🡪 If the bad angel were not *willing or did not want* to detain Peter in his sinful state, then he would not *do* it.

🡪 Question: Is this *act of will* in the bad angel an act of desire? – Anwer: **No**.

**“Death of Desire”**

One can desire something only as long as one at least believes that one does not have yet obtained it.

“It is a widely held thesis that one cannot desire what one already has, or at least what one thinks one has. The idea is that the desire for S must vanish once one comes to believe that S already obtains. Hence the **death of desire** through the acquisition of belief.”[[8]](#footnote-8)

Finding🡪 There is an act of will that is neither desire nor pleasure.

**2.** The despaired one

**The assumption that Ockham seeks to refute here:**

* To say ‘I love something’ (‘amo aliquid’) is the same as to say ‘this is pleasurable to me (illud delectabile est mihi’).[[9]](#footnote-9)
* In short: love = pleasure

**Ockham’s argument**

P1 Any desire is caused by some love which is not desire.

P2 However, not any desire is caused by pleasure.

K Therefore, there is some love that is neither desire nor pleasure.[[10]](#footnote-10)

**Relation to object**

Desire ⇒ with respect to absent things (or things “not had”)

Pleasure ⇒ with respect to present things (or things that are “had”)

Love ⇒ with respect to both things that are present or absent, but not “had or not had”, in the sense in which the objects of the two other passions are

🡪 Finding: the desire to take revenge is caused by an act of love for himself (*amor sui ipsius*).

**Ad b.**

Love, desire and will are also distinct insofar as they have different **causes**:

(An act of) love is – immediately – caused by the will.

(An act of) pleasure is – immediately – caused by an act of will, and not by a – pleasurable – object.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Why is the **object** of pleasure not the – immediate – **cause** of pleasure, but an act of will?

“If a like (*aequali*) act of will is posited, then a like (*aequalis*) act of pleasure follows, **whether or not there is an object**, and without such an act of will, no pleasure can follow in any way. Therefore, only an **act of will is the immediate cause of pleasure**.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

**Love.**

**complex acts ⇒ propositional acts**

such as an act of judging that the weather is nice.

**incomplex acts ⇒ non-propositional acts**

such as an act of tokening the term ‘weather’ or ‘nice’

“[…] there is some willing with respect to the incomplex, and this is properly called love, and there is some with respect to the complex, taking “complex” largely, such as willing to have happiness or willing not to be or some such thing, so that there is some nilling with respect to the incomplex, and this can be called ‘hatred’ .., and there is some nilling with respect to the complex, such as nilling to be or nilling to be rich or nilling to have honours […].”[[13]](#footnote-13)

**complex volition ⇒ desire (*desiderium*) and aversion (*fuga*)**

desire to become famous or the desire not to get caught.

**incomplex volition ⇒ love (*amor*) and hatred (*odium*)**

love for a person (such as for God or for oneself)

hate for a person (such as for God or for oneself)

“[…] although desire is with respect to something complex, love or enjoyment (*fruitio*) is not, since the principal object of desire and of love or enjoyment is not the same.”[[14]](#footnote-14)

**love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) ⇒** love for a person (such as for God or for oneself) for her own sake (*propter se*) or “in itself” (*in se*).[[15]](#footnote-15)

**concupiscible love (*amor concupiscibilis* = desire) ⇒** love or desire for something for the sake of something (or rather, someone) loved for its own sake.

Example: A person desires to be healthy (only) for the sake of herself, or because she loves herself:

to be healthy

for the sake of

loving

desires

herself

Anne

**Conclusion.**

Love is a basic, non-propositional, objectual passion in the will, taking **persons** as its proper object. In this basic sense, persons love themselves (or other persons, such as God). This love is to be conceived as something occurrent or actual, not as something merely dispositional.

**Love** (*amor amicitiae*) **grounds desire** (*amor concupiscibilis*), insofar as, structurally, **desire** is only **the love for something for the sake of something else**, namely for something, that, in the end, is **loved “for its own sake” or “in itself**”.

**Pleasure**, in comparison, is derivative: It merely follows upon – the fulfilment of – desire or another kind of volition such as some “affective appreciation” or “liking” of something that is conceived to obtain or “to be had”, if only one’s thoughts. Since pleasure is not a full-fledged act of will, it is only improperly said to have an object, namely the same object as the act of will upon which it follows.

1. “... *amare est velle alicui bonum*”. Thomas Auqinas, ST I.-II.q.26, art.4. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The blue arrow should indicate the “loving-relation” between herself and Peter on the one hand, and the good she wills for Peter on the other. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The red arrow should indicate the “desiring-relation” between Anne who loves Peter and some good. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. “... quod omnis actus voluntatis affirmativus est desiderium vel delectatio, sic quod omnis amnor est amor desiderii vel delectationis; et per oppositum, omne odium dividitur per fugam et tristitiam, sic quod omne odire vel est abonimari et fugere vel tristari et displicere.” Ockham, *Ord*. I, dist.1, q. 3 (OTh I, 405: 6-10). For Peter Auriol’s view, see id., *Scriptum* I, d. 1, sect. 7, n. 50 (ed. E. Buytaert, I, 394). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. See Tobias Hoffmann, Free Will and the Rebel Angels in Medieval Philosophy, Cambridge: CUP, 2021, p.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid., p.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Ibid., p.3. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Graham Oddie, Desire and the Good – In Search of the Right Fit, in: The Nature of Desire, ed. by Federico Lauria; Julien A. Deonna, OUP: Oxford, 2017, p.46. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ockham, *Ord*. I, dist.1, q.3, (OTh I, 411:1-3) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. “... omne desiderium causatur ab aliquo amore qui non est desiderium; sed non omne desiderium causatur ex delectatione; igitur est aliquis amor qui nec est desiderium nec delectatio.” Ockham, *Ord*. I, dist.1, q. 3 (OTh I, 411: 17-22). [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. „.. concedo quod dilectio (love) et delectatio (pleasure) sunt a diversis agentibus, sed illa diversa agentia non sunt voluntas et obiectum sed sunt voluntas et actus voluntatis.“ Ockham, *Ord*. I, dist.1, q.3, (OTh I, 421) [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. “Ideo d i c o ... quod obiectum non est causa immediata delectationis, sed causa immediata delectationis est ipse actus voluntatis. Et ratio est quia posito actu voluntatis aequali – sive obiectum sit sive non sit – sequitur aequalis delectatio, et sine actu voluntatis nullo modo potest sequi delectatio. Ergo solus actus voluntatis erit causa immediata.”Ockham, *Ord*. I, dist.1, q.3, (415: 17-22). [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. “[…] quoddam est velle respectu incomplexi, et hoc proprie vocatur amor, et quoddam est respectu complexi, large accipiendo complexum, sicut velle habere beatitudinem vel velle non esse vel aliquid tale, ita est quoddam nolle respectu incomplexi, et potest vocari odium vel detestatio, et est quoddam nolle respectu complexi, sicut nolle esse vel nolle habere divitias vel nolle habere honores, […].”*Ord*. I, dist.1, q.6, (OTh I, 502-503). See Panaccio 2012: 81. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. “Ad q u a r t a m patet per idem, quod quamvis desiderium esset respectu alicuius complexi, non tamen fruitio, quia non est idem obiectum primum desiderii et fruitionis.” *Ord*. I, dist.1, q. 4 (OTh I, 445:4-6). [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. See *Quaest. var*., q. 4: OTh VIII, 137: 813-816. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)