Middeleeuwen, geschiedenis v/d wijsbegeerte v/d

Teksten lezen voor de les. 1 keer lezen. Ook al is er veel dat je niet snapt, tweede keer lezen na de les.

Examen:

2 a 3 vragen over gelezen teksten. Thematische essayvraag. Je krijgt een klein stukje tekst dat je hebt gelezen.

Schriftelijk examen: beetje meer achtergrond geven, laten zien dat je kennis hebt.

Daarbij ook 1 of 2 maurer vragen, zie de syllabus.

Niet: “beantwoord vraag 33”

Maurer is een matig gedetailleerd boek over me filosofie.

Als je echt heel geïnteresseerd bent dan moet je john marenbon lezen: medieval philosophy, an historica land philosophical introduction.

In het nederlandse: jos de korte (voorganger aan het HIW) heel persoonlijke visie op ME-filosofie. Misschien niet geschikt als hoofdboek, maar wel mooi geschreven, interessant. Waarheid als weg.

Ook: L.M. de Rijk, middeleeuwse wijsbegeerte, traditie en vernieuwing.

Specialisatie v/d prof is laatmiddeleeuwse filosofie, filosofische theologie, drievuldigheidstheologie, cognitieve.

Waarom zou je een cursus middeleeuwse filosofie nemen?

Is er een goede grond voor?

We denken vaak dat husserl en heidegger hegel lezen, hegele kant, kant descartes, descartes plato.

Waar zijn de middeleeuwen dan?

Ten eerste: descartes kent heel goed de middeleeuwse filosofie. Hij had een heel goede me fi (middeleeuwse filosofie) opleiding. Hij was heel bewust retorisch dat hij daar niets van moest hebben, hij zei dat hij heel origineel was, maar dat is niet zo.

Dus eerste reden: dan snap je beter waar bijvoorbeeld descartes vandaan komt.

Er zijn ook andere mensen die met me fi werken.

Tweede antwoord: middeleeuwse filosofie is als een vakantie. Waarom ga je op vakantie? Ontspannen, ja dat ook, maar ook om een breder perspectief te krijgen, andere cultuur, andere denkwijze, geconfronteerd met andere levensstijlen, zo is het ook met middeleeuwse filosofie. Zij denken heel anders dan wij. Onbewuste filosofische vooroordelen te leren kennen. Niet iets wat je onmiddellijk kan gebruiken, maar waar je van kan leren.

Thomas van aquinas denkt heel anders, maar hij was wel een goede filosoof.

Waar komt het woord middeleeuwen vandaan.

Definieren wanneer de middeleeuwen is.

Volgens de renaissance humanisten was er een periode rond het jaar 0, in die klassieke periode was er goede latijn, grieks, vergilius, cicero, tacitus, die humanisten zagen toen mooie gebouwen, etc.

En in 1350-1450 willen die humanisten weer mooi latijn schrijven, niet zoals het ertussen was. Daarvan komt term middel-eeuwen. Middeleeuwse latijn was lelijk.

Je hebt minder teksten over middeleeuwen dan klassieken of moderne.

Humanisten hebben middeleeuwse filosofie beschadigt, dat is jammer. Maar ook wel interessant, want je kan ontdekkingen maken, alle zinnen van aristoteles zijn 100 x gelezen en besproken, zo is het niet met grote middeleeuwse filosofen, dingen die niemand die leeft heeft gelezen, maar nog wel in de bibliotheken liggen.

## geschiedenis

Me fil gaat van ongeveer 450, val van west-romeinse rijk, Augustinus is van 354-430. Toen hij op zijn sterfbed lag waren de vandalen Hippo aan het omsingelen.

Tot ongeveer 1450. Dat is normaal gezien een goed eindpunt, waarom? Boekdrukkunst, vooral val van oost-romeinse rijk. Constantinopel gevallen.

Pragmatische definitie van de middeleeuwen. Misschien een beetje raar, omdat augustinus als middeleeuwse filosoof beschouwd MOET worden. Er is geen andere mogelijkheid. Hij is ontzettend belangrijk.

Hij kende geen grieks, dus was sterk beïnvloed door nieuw-platoonse ideeën, maar hij kon alleen latijnse vertalingen lezen.

Dus als we kijken wat er in de middeleeuwen is gebeurt kunnen we enkele belangrijke figuren onderscheiden.

Eerste is Augustinus. Eerst over zonde, geluk, vrije wil, etc, daarna over cognitieve theorie.

525: boetius, romeinse senator, hij leest grieks en hij wil alles van plato en aristoteles vertalen naar het latijn en commentaren op die werken schrijven, om te tonen dat ze eigenlijk akkoord waren. Hij had niet de tijd om dat te doen, maar hij heeft een beetje aristoteles vertaald, basiswerken, categorien, etc. dat was alle aristoteles die ze hadden tot 1100.

Ze hadden ook bijna geen plato in die tijd.

Rond ongeveer 1100 begint de economie opnieuw te bloeien, minder ziektes, minder invasies.

Ze hebben weer wat meer vertrouwen in zichzelf.

Daarna anselmus (vader v/d scholastiek) heel belangrijk voor latere middeleeuwse filosofie.

Zelfverzekerde filosofie. Vanaf 1100 een heel grote vertalingsperiode, vooral van aristoteles.

Hij was geïnteresseerd in alles, en in die hele lange periode hadden ze niets van arist, ineens metafysica, ethiek fysica, zoologie, etc, etc.

In minder dan 30/50 jaar hebben ze een ecyclopedie van antieke wetenschappen en filosofie gevonden.

Ongeveer 1200 is er een verteringsperiode, ze willen aristoteles gebruiken, maar ze moeten eerst beslissen hoe: hij was geen christen, zij wel. Heel veel ideeën waren wel moeilijk.

Een eeuw waarin ze aristoteles meer wilden gebruiken en uitvogelen hoe ze hem willen gebruiken.

Dat is ook de periode van de universiteits, parijs, cologne, oxford. Rond 1200.

Mensen wiens job het was om te denken. Dus nieuwe periode met veel interessante filosofen.

Pieter abelard, pas voor aristoteles terugkomt, een van de laatste denkers die niet alles van aristoteles had, heel interessante denker.

Daarna aristoteles: Thomas van aquinas. We gaan het over de schepping hebben, heel moeilijke doctrine om in in aristotelisch denken te passen. Er was geen schepping voor aristoteles.

Daarna over zijn, goedheid en kwaad. (kwaad bestaat niet).

Aquinas is gestorven 1274, hij was dominicaans.

Daarna duns scotus. Gestorven in 1308, moeilijk denker, heel subtiel. Maar waarschijnlijk de eerste die zegt dat als je iets snapt, je dat zelf doet, zonder hulp van God of andere wezens, volledig natuurlijk.

Universalia en duns scotus. Belangrijk onderwerp in ME, hij is realist. Mensheid bestaat. niet alleen in e hoofd, hij heeft daar heel goede argumenten voor.

9 december william ockham. (zowel scotus als ackham zijn fransiscanen) gestoreven 1347.

Dus we krijgen verschillende figuren, op verschillende onderwerpen. Zo een beetje ME fi leren kennen, wat was van belang voor hen, hoe heeft het zich ontwikkeld?

Als er een \* naast de vraag staat dan hebben we het ook behandeld in de les.

Op examen hoef je niet precieze data te kennen, maar wel de eeuw waarin filosoof leefde bijvoorbeeld.

# Augustinus

## Antieke filosofie

Antieke filosofie die belangrijk is om augustinus te verstaan, maar is ook belangrijk voor anselmus en later. Vooral platoons nu.

Plato 347 BCE

Aristoteles 322 BCE

In polis, stadsstaat.

Belangrijkste onderwerp in voorplatoonse filosofie is het probleem van verandering.

Voorbeeld: kastanje, kan je planten, beetje water en zonlicht, dan krijg je een klein kastanjeboom na een jaar, die groeit etc. bladeren worden bruin, vallen af, worden weer groen, etc. na 100 jaar gaat de boom dood.

Probleem van verandering: wat is de boom.

Is dat de kastanje?

Is dat de sapling?

Is dat de grote boom?

De groene of de bruine?

Etc.

Het probleem van identiteit door de tijd.

Boom is niet iets, want hij is telkens iets anders.

Je kan zeggen: er is geen boom, er is alleen verandering, instabiliteit. Heraclitus.

Andere radicale antwoord: er is geen verandering. Parmenides. (en zeno) verandering is contradictoir.

Plato nam een andere weg. Empirisch feit, de wereld van de ervaring verandert continu. Geen stabiliteit. World of becoming. In die wereld, over die wereld kunnen we geen kennis hebben.

Hij zoekt naar een metafysische en epistemologische claim. Er is geen kennis over de wereld van de zintuigen.

Heel belangrijk:

Knowledge in the ancient and medieval world is about what is neccesary, immutable and universal.

Dat kan je niet krijgen in de wereld van de zintuigen zegt plato.

Maar er is een andere wereld, intelligibele wereld, onderscheid tussen zintuigen en intelligibele, intellectuele wereld. Die divisie is heel rigid.

Zintuigen gaan over het veranderende.

Kennis gaat over kennis, onveranderende.

Vormen of ideeën. Bestaan meer dan de dingen die we zien.

Je kan overal mooie dingen zien, omdat ze deelnemen aan de vorm van schoonheid zijn ze mooi.

Omdat we die onveranderlijke vorm van schoonheid kennen, kunnen we zeggen dat ze mooi zijn.

Zowel epistemologisch als metafysisch.

Hoe leren we de vorm kennen?

Vormen en ideeën zijn, ze worden niet.

Hoe kennen we ze?

We herinneren ze, recollection, anamnesis.

Voordat je geboren werd was je ziel in cognitief contact met de vormen, je kende ze. Dus weet je wat immutable universal and neccesary is.

Reïncarnatie.

Als je dingen ziet die deelhebben aan die vorm, dan herinner je je die vorm. Dat is anamnese.

Twee grote consequenties in ME fil.

Voordat je geboren werd was je ziel er al, en nadat je dood gaat ook. Immortality of the soul, strong distinction between soul and body.

Heel attractive voor early christian thinkers.

Aantrekkelijk deel van Plato’s ideeën voor augustinus.

Ziel kan het lichaam overleven.

Het lichaam is een cognitieve burden. Je wist dingen beter toen je alleen een ziel was. Lichaam belemmerd het cognitieve, is dus niets goeds. Materie is een obstakel.

Een groot deel van Plato’s filosofie was ethisch, wat is goed en wat slecht, hij erfde van socrates een blik op het kwaad en slechte acties, die het aan cognitief falen toeschreef.

Als je door had dat wat je deed slecht was, dan zou je het niet hebben gedaan.

Als je het goed had begrepen had je het niet zo gedaan.

Augustinus is het daar niet mee eens: je kan iets fout doen, in de kennis dat wat je doet fout is. Dit is de achtergrond voor augustinus.

Aristoteles had niet zoveel met Plato’s ideeënleer. Vooral dat partaking, deelhebben aan. Aristoteles zag dat als een metafoor dat niets verklaarde.

Zijn idee van vorm is heel anders.

Aristoteles gaf les aan alexander de grote, die vanuit Griekenland naar persië, afghanistan, india, egypte was geweest. Hij veroverde de bekende wereld.

Plato en Aristoteles werkten in de polis. Stadsstaat met een beetje land eromheen. Dat was wat ze kenden. Aristoteles: “degenen buiten de polis zijn beest of God” “mens is een politiek dier” zo hoorden mensen te leven.

Alexander neemt de hele wereld over. Polis zijn ineens heel klein in dat enorme rijk.

Vergelijk met globalisation today. Lack of control.

Dat zie je terug in de filosofie van die tijd. Nadruk op hoe om te gaan met een vijandelijke wereld, waar je niet veel controle over hebt, angst voor je leven, bezittingen. Twee belangrijkste adviezen:

1. Niet gehecht raken aan materiele dingen. Dat zijn de dingen waar je over gaat bang zijn.
2. Niet bang zijn voor de dood. Ze zeggen dat in heel verschillende wijzen.

Dat klinkt bekend in veel religies.

Dit waren de belangrijkste thema’s. hoe een grote, gevaarlijke wereld te overleven.

Voor volgende week augustinus lezen.

--------30-9-2014

# Augustinus

354-430

Confessiones is a work of literature and philosophy, allows insight in augustines larger program.

Augustine was a rhetorician, he thaught retoric. That was the path to a career.

He is not so much a rigorous philosopher, he gives you suggestions, het sets up issues and problems that make for interesting questions.

In the confessions, written 33 years old, he presents it as his intellectual oddysey, a series of convergions of intellectual traditions.

The first group that really influenced augustine were the manicheens, religion from persia, they had a very strict dualism. (we know about cartesian dualism, this is an ontological, moral dualism)

Evil really exists, they associated it with the body.

The good exists, associated with the spirit.

They were completely equal, never will there be only one of these principles.

Manicheens held that pregnancy was really bad, you are trapping a soul in a body, manicheens encouraged contraception.

They blamed a lot on the body, this is very attractive to the young augustine, because he was sexually conscious.

The manicheens gave him an excuse. My body is making me do it.

But he became dissatisfied with it and turned to neoplatonism.

He didn’t read greek. There were translations, probably of plotinus, but we are not sure.

Certain aspects of neoplatonism he later rejected, but it was an immense inspiration. Even after he was converted.

Christianity.

Augustine took the neoplatonist background and founded the christian worldview wit hit.

We read 3 parts of confessions, but he wrote a lot.

One of the most wellknown texts, about the pear tree.

He is young, picks pears from a neighbours tree, and throws them to the pigs.

Augustine is agonized by this.

Generations of augustine scholars have been puzzled: what’s the big deal?

P 47.

This sin must have resonated, it reminds of the big sin, the original sin, making everything a life of toil and trouble.

Another reason why he thought this is important: there is a divine prohibition to stealing, written in everybody’s heart. He knew that what he was doing was bad, was wrong.

Socrates and plato had a more intellectual view of evil, you do something wrong, because you misunderstood something.

So he is saying, they are wrong.

I knew when i was doing it, that what i was doing was wrong, you can do something evil, in the full knowledge that you are doing something evil.

So that ancient tradition can’t be the entire story.

He is going to define another source of evil.

There is a third reason why this episode is so important.

It bothers him that he doesn’t understand why he did it.

He presents it as if he commited the crime, for the crime itself.

He didn’t want the pears, he has better pears.

He presents this episode as being a sin, committed in full knowledge that it is a sin, and because it is a sin.

That bothers him.

You never know where i twill stop, when you do a crime, for the crime itself.

There doesn’t seem to be any reason.

What about torturing a dog, or killing somebody, where does it stop, there is a slippery slope.

He doesn’t know where it will stop.

But even more importantly, he doesn’t see how he committed the crime for no reason.

He gives a very rudimentary theory.

Lines 21-25, p 48

Augustine: if there is an inquiry, you’re gonna be looking for a motivation for the crime:

Desire to gain something, or fear of losing something.

Very rudimentary action-theory.

The desire part and fear part are subjective motivations, the object (pear) is the objective motivation.

Augustine doesn’t see what the object is. The crime is not a thing, so what was it, that got him to do it in the first place?

Desire and fear are the only motivations for doing something, doing something for the sake of doing it doesn’t make sense.

He says that it was friendship, peer pressure, that made him do it. He feared losing friendship. But that is not really satisfying, it is the only thing he can come up with.

Why do we do bad things?

That’s augustines main question, related to that: how can we avoid unhappiness?

P 232:

Late antique anxiety, how do you cope with the big, hostile world, what kind of strategies to get by in life.

For Augustine, you are not gonna be happy if you’re successful, the fruits of your success can always be taken from you..

So you can’t be happy when you’re prosperous, and not when you are poor.

That ties in with the late antique anxiety.

But it’s made more puzzling by his suggestion that everyone wants to be happy.

Everyone wants to be happy, yet no one seems to be happy.

How can it be that the thing we most want, always elopes our grasp.

So this is what links those 3 questions, our free will.

Our will is free for Augustine.

The will can will in an ordered way, it’s willing what it should will, but the will can also will inordinately, out of order. If you will in the right way, you will be happy, otherwise you can’t.

What makes willing inordinate is when you will something that can be taken away from something, against your will. (money for example)

That’s the source of unhappiness, sin, etc.

Things that can be taken away from you against your will, that causes anxiety.

Objects beautiful to touch and sight, even friendship, are good things, of the lowest order.

So there is an order in Augustine’s worldview, having to do with hierarchy of being.

He sees being as a spectrum, without any breaks in it, not on or off, but having range. Plato thinks the same: the forms exist more than the things down here.

So plato has a gradualist ontology.

Augustine also has a gradualist ontology.

On top is God, there is no more existence then god has.

Then there are angels,

Human beings,

Animals (brute animals)

Plants

Inanimate objects.

So there are degrees of being.

God is also Truth.

God is beauty.

God is goodness.

The higher up the scale you are getting more being, but also more truth, goodness, etc.

So only god is perfect.

The fact that god exists is not universal.

There are some philosophers who deny that god exists, they say: god is beyond existence, you can’t really talk about god.

So here he rejects the neoplatonist view.

John scotus Eriugen agrees with the neoplatonists.

Augustine modifies it.

Second point:

Convertibility of the transcendental concepts.

Transcendental concepts can in principle be applied to all being.

It means the farther up you go, the more existence it has, the better it is, so the more existence something has, the better it is.

This is an important element of medieval philosophy.

That’s why he says there are goods from the lowest order.

Things like friendship are good, but they have the least amount of goodness.

There is also a causal dimension to it, things higher up are supposed to rule and govern things lower down, things lower down can’t and shouldn’t rule things higher up.

Sense perception seems to be an example where material objects affect your soul.

Augustine says no, it is affecting my body, and my soul takes notice, but it is not affected by things lower in on existential harmony.

Everything god created is good. Literally everything, there is not one thing that is not good, because god created everything. It’s not what you’re willing, but how you’re willing that can be evil.

God at the top, inanimate objects at the bottom.

Mind is one thing and body another, mind is soul, so anthropological dualism. Humans are a mixture of these two rather distinct items.

Soul is one thing, the body is another.

Mind is a substance, partaking in reason and fitted to rule over the body.

If that happens, then there is order, that is the way things ought to be.

That’s why p 86, lines 18 to 19, Augustine says, sins of selfindulgence are committed when the soul fails to govern impulses, that’s when you sin.

Things that are higher up are better, exist more, are stronger, so nothing can force a good spirit to will badly. If you will badly, it’s you, nothing else can make you will badly.

We freely choose to love things, to desire things that we can lose against our will.

You set an alarmclock volunratily, because you want to get up, that clock has no power over you, but you voluntarily give it power over you.

It has power because you have given it power.

That’s where unhappiness comes from, that’s where sin comes from.

Augustine is rather consistent, the body has no power over the soul, but we can will it to have power over us.

This is augustines solution to the late antique fear of the hostile world. What do you need to do: don’t get attached to worldly goods and don’t worry about death, that’s the same as the stoics, neoplatonists, etc.

Very selfconsistent sort of ethical system.

Augustine’s ideas are radically different from those of the manicheens and the neoplatonists.

Everything is good.

Then he needs to explain unhappiness and evil.

And he has to debunk the platonic, socratic idea that evil is done out of a lack of knowledge.

Happiness.

Last time we got 2 definitions from the ancient medieval world.

Knowledge is universal unchangeable necessary.

Soul is that virtue by which living thing is alive.

Happiness is not just drinking a lot of beer.

Happiness is a much more thought about item, it’s something that you can define and has something to do with rationality, it is not about fun, it is long term flourishing of the person.

It’s the happiness a mother talks about when she says he is not going to be happy that way.

Next week Augustine on insight and illumination, why you can’t learn from teachers.

------14-10-2014

John Searle, amerikaanse filosoof, Berkley: Chinese room argument.

Argument against thinking computers, he thinks computers can’t think, he wants to show that strong AI is impossible.

He tries to prove it by saying:

There is a room, closed of from the world, except for 2 slots, piece of paper comes trough one, can be dopisted on the other side.

Searle is locked in there, room is filled with Chinese translation books.

When he gets a piece of paper with Chinese characters, he can translate it into something else, without knowing what it means.

Looks like the room can communicate, it passes the türing test, but Searle doesn’t understand any Chinese, he just moves symbols around, that is not understanding, but that is what computers do.

Symbols, signs in themselves don’t give meaning.

Augustine was 1500 years ahead of him, because in this dialogue “on the teacher” he says the same.

Dialogue is between him and his son, from a mistress.

They are having a conversation about understanding, about symbols and signs and language.

Towards the end of his life he wrote a book called Retractiones in latin.

Not retractions, but reconsiderations, thinking things trough again, some things he does retract, but most he doesn’t.

About this work (on the teacher) he wrote: there is no other teacher to man other than god.

In the book itself he says: we don’t learn anything by the signs called words.

According to Augustine the professor can’t give you knowledge.

Augustines idea about what is true and what is knowledge is very strict.

Knowledge is about what is immutable, universal and necessary.

In order to know what true is, you have to know x, x has to be true, and yu have to have reason to believe x is true.

Augustine does say that teachers can help you to learn, they dcan present questions that you then ask yourself. The only understanding you get comes from you, that’s why the teacher can’t teach you.

All I can do is push you inside yourself.

In a funny sort of way, Searle is arguing the same thing.

Understanding consciousness is difficult.

Augustine argues that words can’t teach, they can only help you understand things.

Knowledge transfer model.

The knowledge transfer model is a very intuitive model, how does knowledge get transported?

Teacher has an idea in his head, knowledge in his mind, he can give body to that knowledge by putting it in words, he sends that word to the students. The word is heard, transferred back into an idea in your mind.

You have now got the same knowledge, same understanding as the teacher.

That is the intuitive theory. Knowledge->word->knowledge.

Augustine thinks it doesn’t work that way.

Words are insufficient, it can’t work htat way, there is a gap between my mind and yours, the words can’t cross it.

So the teacher is about understanding, how you come to knowledge, but also to language.

Why words are insufficient.

So it is about signs. (teken)

Augustine thought about this a lot, he has all these bible books, full of words, signs.

Out of his semiotic study he gets his theology.

Definition: a sign is a thing that of itself causes something else to enter into thought beyond the appearance it presents to the senses.

If a sign is a thing that of itself causes something else to get into thought we have to think about the relation between signs and things that are.

Universality of things, strictly speaking things are things that don’t make you think about other things than itselve.

All signs are also things, so a subcategory of the set of things is a set of signs.

Augustines example of the sheep is a sign of mercy.

Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, other times they can be symbolic.

What makes a thing into a sign is the special relationship that a sign has with the world.

What makes something into a sign is the realation of signifying what it is a sign of. (a significant)

There are things that are signs, that are only used as signs.

A subset of the category of signs: signs only used for signifying.

Augustines example are words, you only want to use them when you want to give meaning.

Words are an example of a type of sign that is only used for signifying, that is what the teacher is all about, he begins by asking: when we speak, what do we want to accomplish?

Adiodatus: to teach or to learn.

Augustine’s conclusion will be that no one can teach anyone anything that is true.

Teaching is just the example, words can’t lead to your understanding something.

That’s why most of the dialogue is devoted to language.

Some things, namely signs can be shown by signs.

Some things can be shown not using signs, signs aren’t necessary. Even: no thing can be shown by its sign.

The first part of the text is very long, very difficult.

For Augustine this establishes that signs can give you meaning of other signs. A sign gives you knowledge of another sign (2 languages).

Some things can be shown by signs, namely signs.

Augustine says that it is a closed system.

There is a gap between language and reality.

You are going to have to make the connection.

Second part of the dialogue is what we read for today.

Are signs a necessary condition for showing something? No they are not according to Augustine.

Adiodatus: you can’t teach without signs.

He brings up an example about walking.

I’m sitting down, what is walking? I start walking, how do you make sure that it isn’t perceived as exactly four meters, how to make sure they understand exactly what walking is, without words?

You have to use words.

Theory by Quine: “indeterminacy of translation”

Anthropologist comes in contact with a tribe.

Anthropologist doesn’t understand, tribe doesn’t understand him.

But he notices that when a rabbit runs past all tribesmen say Gavangai.

What does that mean?

Maybe it means rabbit? Maybe it means, I’m hungry, get me a spear. Or: bad luck. Or…

Adiodatus is making a similar point, without words, they might misunderstand you when you try to explain something.

Adiodatus: we have to use words.

Augustine sows seeds of doubt: are you certain? Can’t you think of an example?

Bird-catcher example. Very important point in the dialogue.

P 134.

No words, birdcatcher just caches birds, he teaches the man watching what that man wanted to know.

Some men can get to know some things without words.

Then: you don’t need signs at all.

Sometimes, some things you can learn without signs.

You need to have first-hand knowledge or acquaintance, and then you can understand everything there is to it.

This is a turning point in the dialogue.

In part 2b he wants to show, you don’t need signs at all.

Nothing is learned through its sign.

When a sign is given to me it teaches me nothing.

He is going back to Meno, platonic dialogue, most famous for the theory of recollection, anamnesis.

Recovering knowledge by oneself, that is in oneself. Idea of recollection is that soul has knowledge within itself, you can bring that knowledge out, you can’t learn anything.

There is also in there the paradox of inquiry or the meno-paradox.

Meno: how will you look for something when you don’t know what it is.

A man cannot try to discover what he knows, or what he does not know.

That’s the Meno paradox. If you know what you are looking for, you don’t go looking, If you don’t know you will not recognise it, you wouldn’t know it if you found it.

Important, interesting paradox.

Augustine didn’t know the meno directly, he knew about it through sources.

Augustine takes from the meno the notion of paradox, paradox of learning.

Nothing is learned through its sign. (semantic version of th emeno paradox, not about inquiry, investigating, this is about meaning, semantic version)

If I don’t know what the sign signifies then the sign means nothing to me, it can teach me nothing. I know what the sign means: I don’t learn anything from it. I don’t know what it means: I don’t learn anything from it.

He makes a correspondence between the way you learn about birdcatching and mathematics etc.

So you need first-hand knowledge.

If you don’t know the significate then the sign is meaningless.

The sign can’t dsignify, unless you already know the significate.

I have to know what it is a sign of.

Adiodatus’example of walking.

Augustine is saying, you have to understand what walking is, before you understand what the word means.

Example 135, 136.

Sarabarae. We don’t know what it means. It is something put on your head. If you don’t know a sarabarae, you don’t have first-hand knowledge, the word doesn’t show you anything.

Sign is learned when a thing is known, not the thing is learned when the sign is given.

Augustine stresses first-hand knowledge. You have to have acquaintance before you can know the sign.

One possibility is pointing, what is the problem with that? Pointing is a convention, it is a sign. You must know that pointing means “look there”.

You already have to know what pointing means.

The person has to understand for himself what is the meaning of the term being used.

Page 137, we don’t learn anything by words.

Knowledge of words is made complete once things are known.

P 137 he didn’t teach me with words. I would know by looking at it. I trust my eyes, not the words.

------21-10-2014

We skip over a lot of philosophy, Boethius. Consolation of philosophy, classic of western literature.

John scotus Erigena. Translated greek texts.

But we will read them in maurer, we skip over 700 years and move on to:

# Anselm of Canterbury

Also known as anselm of Bec.

He was archbishop of Canterbury at the end of his life, before that abt of Bec monastery in france, but was born in Italy.

This shows something had changed.

Augustine lived in north Africa, there had been plagues, hunger etc.

So philosophy wasn’t as important in the time in between.

Anselm is an example of the philosophical speculation that arrives in western Europe in this period.

He is known as the father of scholasticism.

One of the reasons: attempt at making rigorous arguments.

Augustine isn’t as rigorous, anselm’s arguments can be mapped, very interesting.

Anselm’s motto was: faith seeking understanding.

By that he doesn’t mean that you have faith, want to get rid of it in favour of understanding.

Nor does he mean that you can’t understand without faith.

What he thinks: faith is a motivator for your investigating of reality.

His faith makes him seek understanding.

So much that he looks for necessary proofs. (gods existence for example)

Also proof of the trinity.

Proof that the incarnation was necessary.

He thought he could prove these things: very confident in the power of reason.

Anselm was an abbot in a monastery, he talked to his monks, they didn’t give him a hard time.

The student in the text also doesn’t create big problems for Anselm, that was probably what Anselm’s life was like.

The dialogue, we read a small part, last page is on Toledo separately, dialogue on truth.

It starts with the student claiming that we believe that God is truth.

Anseelm’s view of the world, we have seen this before in Augustine: god is goodness, beauty, truth.

Nevertheless, the student continues, truth is in many things.

Wherever truth is said to be is God there?

God is Truth with capital T.

We look around and see other types of truth.

What’s the relationship between Truth and all the other forms of truth?

How do they relate?

That’s what anselm wants to show with this dialogue.

Anselm first has to get clear what all the other forms of truths are.

What is truth in various other things.

Anselm begins his investigation with statements.

That’s what we think about first when we think about truth.

Property of statements, that’s his first step.

When is a statement true for Anselm?

Page 4, what is truth in a statement?

T: when is a statement true?

S: when what it states is the case. (it even states when it denies )

On p5 towards the middle of the page.

S: when a statement signifies that what is is then there is a statement in it, that is true.

Correspondence theory of truth.

Truth consists in a relation to reality.

A statement is true when what it states mirrors what is the case in reality.

There is a fact, state of affairs that corresponds with the statement.

(very interesting article in Stanford encyclopedia)

Correspondence theories of truth are very old.

Aristotle in his metaphysics.

What is is and what is not is not.

What-is is, correspondence between confirmative statement and the reality as described in that statement.

What-is-not (“there is not a tree outside the window”)

Anselm hints that the truth of a statement is what most of us think about as true.

Correspondence theory, most contemporary philosophers adhere to this theory. This is throughout history the major theory of truth.

Middle of page 5.

For what purpose is an affirmation made? For signifying that what-is is.

Do you agree with that statement?

Is not right, you can also lie. But as a more general thing: what purpose do they serve?

He is getting God in here.

It’s not true that every affirmation is used for this only, because people lie. God made affirmations for this purpose according to Anselm.

What-is is.

It ought to do that.

When it signifies that what-is is, it does what it ought to do.

Teleology, purpose. Oughts. Correctly. Purpose of a statement.

Truth is rectitude.

Argument itself: substitution according to Anselm.

Teleology: explanation of phenomena by appeal to purpose or goal.

Truth of statement is its correctness, rectitude.

Correctness and rectitude mean: they are doing what they ought to do.

Whenever you see ought you have to think teleology.

Statement is doing what it is supposed to be doing.

There are 2 levels of truth in this passage:

Correspondence level. What-is is.

Since statements are correspondence true, then they do what they ought to do, so truth is a type of correctness or rectitude. Teleological argument.

What does Anselm do with this?

Idea that truth is nog merely correspondence, but also doing the job it is supposed to do, leads to a problem.

“even when a statement signifies that what-is-not is, it signifies what it ought to”

It is doing a job that it ought to, because it is doing it.

So it has to be true (according to this theory) if it is signifying the false.

What does a sign do? Sign makes you think about something else. Not about the sign itself. What signification does: it brings something to mind. Signification is the relationship between the sign and the significant.

It brings something to mind.

Student: even in a false statement like:

George W Bush is president of US.

Is a false statement, but it has meaning, it gives you information.

It is doing some job.

That is what the student sees.

Even though the statement has falsity, on a teleological theory the statement has some kind of truth to it.

That is the toughest part of the dialogue.

How does Anselm answer this argument?

Rectitude: doing what it is supposed to do, fulfilling its purpose.

Teacher: it’s not customary calling a statement true when it says that what-is-not is.

But it is doing what it is supposed to in 1 way, whereas a statement that says what-is is, then it is doing what it is supposed to do in 2 ways.

There are 2 truths that a proposition can have.

Firstly correspondence.

On top of that a teleological theory.

If you want to take the teleological theory serious, then even false statements on the correspondence level, are going to have some kind of teleological truth.

Anselm: that’s right.

It signifies what it received power to signify.

He calls this weak truth.

All statements have this.

But on top of that there is a strong truth. When it signifies in keeping with the purpose with which it was made.

When a statement is true as correspondence it has both weak and small truth.

False statements are doing a little bit, they are signifying, so they have weak truth.

There are 2 truths to a proposition.

Example: “Shrub is president of the US”

Think about that statement. In 1980 it was false. In 2004 true. In 2013 false again.

Anselm recognizes that. So he says: all statements can have weak teleological truth, while some have strong truth.

Anselm needs this to get God into the mix. God is truth.

He talks about statements, opinions. Doing what it should be doing. According to what god made them.

So a relation between god as truth and all the other kinds of truth.

God gave statements that function.

Capter 10, on supreme truth.

Anselm: truth must be eternal.

How does god’s truth differ from all the other truths?

God gives all of the purposes to the statements, but he himself has no obligations, he just is rectitude, correctness.

God relates to truth of statements in 2 ways:

He gives the purpose.

God set up all the truth conditions that statements have to correspond to.

So statement: “snow is white”

Is a true statement.

God is the guarantee.

That seems to be what Anselm is suggesting.

Both the purpose and the conditions are given by God.

To do: can you map all these notions on different kinds of statements?

What are the characteristics of those statements.

Anselm’s ontological proof of God’s existence.

The most famous argument from the middle ages.

Ayers, professor in Oxford: everybody knows something is wrong with the argument, but nobody knows what.

Thomas, Kant, all said it doesn’t work.

Descartes and Leibniz: it does work.

Anselm didn’t call this the ontological or a priori argument.

Nr 1 on handout.

You who grant understanding to faith (Lord), grant that you exist.

We believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought.

The absolutely perfect object of your thinking.

Can it be that no such being exists?

Something than which nothing greater can be thought.

It exists in understanding, beyond doubt, even if it doesn’t exist in reality.

Something than which nothing greater can be thought exists at least in the understanding.

That than which a greater cannot be thought cannot exist only in the understanding, for it can be thought to exist in reality.

If you can understand that than which something greater cannot be thought, then it exists in your understanding. Then you know, something greater than that can be thought: the same thing, but with existence.

Starts off with simple definition of God.

2 questions:

How well does the fool have to understand it, in order for it to exist in his mind?

What does it mean that it exists in your mind? How does it exist in his mind?

Is it true that what exists extra mentally is better than what exists inside the mind?

Kant: problem is that anselm and others treat existence as a predicate.

Existence underlies all the other characteristics that you can assign an object.

Kant: you cannot just put it in a list of properties an object has. Existence is “deeper”.

Existence links a concept and a thing, but it isn’t a property of the thing itself.

---------28-10-2014

# Abelard

Peter Abelard, rock star of the 12th century.

Background on Abelard in maurer.

Abelard wrote lovesongs, women loved him, so rockstar.

Born in France, he was smart, (he died in 1142) time of the wandering scholars, early 12th century, there were no universities yet, so students went where there were good teachers.

If you read abelards autobiography (the history of my misfortunes, interesting work) he said he had to flee for his students.

Abelard went to paris where a group of high profile intellectuals were, he beat them all. He won in argumentation.

Word of his intelligence, charisma, etc. goes around.

Uncle of Heloise hired him to teach her.

Abelard became her tutor, she was smart, they fell in love. She became pregnant of his child when her uncle heard about it he hired thugs, they castrated him.

(Abelard left Heloise, she went to nunnery, 15 years later he had written his autobiography, Heloise wrote to him that he misrepresented their relation. Beautiful exchange of letters.) There is a movie about him: stealing heaven.

Depictions of disputations, how they argued. Not a great movie, but parts are okay.

Most important: first rate philosophical mind.

30 years ago they thought of him as very smart, good at poking holes in other peoples arguments. But not very interesting own positions.

Today it is completely different, he has very interesting, creative, challenging positions.

He is known in the universals discussion.

He was nominalist.

Today we will deal with his ethics.

Abelards ethics are multifaceted, takes elements of different ethical theories. So quite unusual. Challenges some of our own views.

Main concern: how do you evaluate the morality of an action.

How do you tell whether a human action is a good or a bad thing.

Most particularly he wants to sketch out an action theory, how you go from beginning desires (willing) to what he calls consent (strong form of willing, unless you are prevented from the outside, you are going to do it) to the deed (the action itself)

Where do you want to evaluate the morality of the action. How can you appraise the act.

(you can also look at consequentialism, for a consequentialist the place where you evaluate is the consequences of that action, how happy does it make people? Abelard disagrees, not the consequences, not even the act itself it is a point of consent. )

It has to be something psychological. Moment internal to you, when you are fully ready to do the deed. Doesn’t matter whether you do it or not, what matters is if you have given consent.

It has been called theory of intention.

He starts by talking about vice and virtue.

The work is called know thyself.

Words made most popular by Socrates, it is a socratic dictum.

Abelard is not the only one writing know yourself, his arch enemy also wrote a work know yourself, sint Bernard.

He begins the work by talking about vice and virtues.

Ockham will also talk about virtues.

Abelard: vices >< virtues.

Virtues are when something becomes second nature to you, something morally charged (Aristotle) mental reflex having to do with morality.

Virtue is a mental reflex where by second nature you are disposed to do the good.

Injustice><justice.

Just person acts justly in nearly all situations where there is an opportunity to act justly.

Virtues are mental habits, morally charged.

When a lame person is sitting down he is still lame. Same for just persons.

Page 2 paragraph 5.

Doesn’t matter if you have a bad memory or something like that.

You can however be bodily disposed to do bad things.

But being disposed to sin doesn’t make you a sinner.

Just the opposite: it is necessary for people to be challenged by their frail nature. The important thing is resisting.

This has been called a hero theory of ethics.

It is better to have to struggle and win, than easily being able to win. He says this multiple times.

This is different from ancient virtue ethics. A virtuous person there doesn’t have to struggle.

Greek term for virtue is excellence, you don’t need to struggle, no you just act well.

Last preliminary, what is sin?

Paragraph 8: to sin is to scorn the creator.

When you do something and you know that it scorns god, then that is sinning.

But how do you know what god wants you to do?

He has been accused of subjectivism. Selfvalidating element. Church in those days was very uncomfortable with that.

At what point do you decide that a sin has been commited?

Is it the point at which you want to do the action. Anselm of Canterbury said that. “all sin is voluntary” all sin is will. Abelard brings this up on page 7 paragraph 31, he says: some people say every sin is voluntary.

Abelard thinks this is too loose.

It is the vice that makes us disposed to sin.

Paragraph 9: willing a bad deed is that it?

10: sometimes we sin without any bad will. So no.

He wants to draw distinction between willing and consent.

You can have good willing and bad consent, and bad willing and good consent.

Thought experiment master and slave.

Slave wants to live, consents to killing the master, because otherwise he won’t live.

So what he wills was fine (wanting to live) but his consent is wrong. He should have consented to being killed.

You can do things wrong while willing correctly.

Definition of consent, paragraph 29: we consent to what isn’t allowed when we don’t draw back from commiting it and are wholly ready to carry it out should the opportunity arise.

Abelard says to anselm: not true that all sin is voluntary.

What is true: all sin is consensual.

You are completely ready to do it. Then there is sin or a good deed.

Abelard gives the opposite view to anselm.

Page 9, paragraph 42

If someone forces someone in a religious order etc.

You can distinguish the willing from the consent.

Consent is the point of moral evaluation, page 10, paragraph 48.

Then arguments why the deed doesn’t count, makes no difference. Deed is morally indifferent. P20 paragraph 90.

P 6 paragraph 25

P8 pp35-36

Does getting pleasure from the deed (sex) add to the sin? No then even married couples would be sinning.

The deed doesn’t add any sin to the consent.

The deed is the same for a married couple as for an unmarried couple, so that can’t be the point of moral evaluation.

Same deed, done by same person is at one time good, at another time bad.

Problem: do you have only 1 intention? If you do a deed, do you do that with just 1 intention.

Abelard: yes, you either go to church out of devoutness, or to be seen. But we can have multiple intentions.

Big topic in contemporary ethics: moral luck.

Luck should play no role in the evaluation of an action.

Abelard was concerned about this, paragraph 97-98.

There are 2 people who want to build homes for the poor. One succeeds, the other has his money stolen and can’t build them.

Is one more acceptable to god than the other?

If so, then a richer person can be a better person than someone who is poor: this is nuts.

It’s good that we have vices, gives us credit if we resist it.

You can have sin without willing. It isn’t the deed.

So it must be the consent.

That determines the entire moral worth of every action we make.

That moment is interior to our soul.

What is distinction between intention and consent?

Abelard doesn’t tell us directly.

Seems that consent is a psychological moment. Point of no return for action.

What the action is going to be is the intention, seems to be the content of the consent.

P7 pp42

His theory is difficult to bring in harmony with the law, justice and courts.

Another problem:

If the jews who killed Christ were following their consciences then they weren’t doing anything wrong.

Church was not happy with these views of Abelard.

-----------4-11-2014

# Aristotelian philosophy

First hour introducing the Aristotelian vocabulary, second hour briefly Aristotelian physics and then Acquinas. Introducing the structure of Aquinas’s questions.

Until anselm at the beginning of 12th century medieval philosophy was neoplatonic (through Augustine) Platonism was easy to integrate in Christianity.

There was only a bit of Aristotle known, three treatises from his logical corpus.

12th century and on more became known, translated from the Arabic and later greek.

Translators went to spain to translate aristotelean texts.

This encounter enormously changed western philosophy. By the mid-13th century Aristotle is read in good translations in all great universities.

Scholastics found a compelling and coherent way of understanding the world.

We are not going to get an introduction in Aristotle, but in the aristotelean terms used by the scholastics. Especially concerning change and motion.

Also needs to be stressed, there is a difference between Aristotle and aristotelean terms used in the middle ages.

Aristotle was extremely interested in the phenomenon change. He is not interested in miraculous change, but the growing of a tree for example.

What philosophical principles are necessary to describe this.

Example, Aristotle analyses change. If a Belgian goes to the Mediterranean he gets a tan. What happened? He was white, not-brown, and he became brown. Under certain circumstances.

There are 3 features involved.

1. The person. there has to be a thing that undergoes change. Socrates persists in time throughout change. The same person before and after, that is fundamental. Identity over time. 2 characteristics:
2. Before the change: not-brown. (or white)
3. After the change: brown.

Not brown person becomes brown person.

Socrates, not-brownness, brownness.

Aristotle says that in every change you have some enduring subject, this remains the same throughout the change: matter. Enduring subject.

Person is the subject, or the matter, that underlies every change.

Before he goes to the Mediterranean he has not-brownness: he is white.

But it is possible for him to become brown.

Before he acquires brownness there is a lack of brownness: privation.

Because he is not actually brown.

Nonetheless, he can become brown. In the right circumstances.

So he is potentially brown, because he is the sort of thing that can become brown.

The characteristic that he gains is a form.

At a later moment in time Socrates has the form of brownness. Where previously he had not. He was white, he lacked brownness.

Important to recognize that the person remains the same, he is the underlying matter, going from the mere possibility of becoming brown tot actually becoming brown. The potentiality of being brown has been actualised.

The change not only requires the 3 elements (subject and 2 characteristics: privation and form).

The three principles are actuality, privation, and …

Again also important to realise that there is a distinction between privation and potentiality.

Privation is the lack, I have the privation of lacking wings, but I don’t have the potentiality of having wings.

Potentiality has an added element to it.

This analysis of change works for a large variety of changes:

You can use it to explain how you learn language.

Statue, you start with a bi block of granite/marble, which is the enduring subject, that doesn’t yet have the shape of the statue, yet it can be used, it has the potentiality of becoming the statue.

Accidental changes: that are happening to independent things.

Accidents exist in independent things. Accidents depent on those things.

I am an independent existing thing.

Accidents come and go without destroying the substance in which they prevail.

Subject maintains its identity over time.

Brownness is an accident.

The subject endures.

Aristotle identifies 9 types of accidents. (he only gives that list once)

Quality(being brown), quantity (being 2 meters tall), relation (father, son, cause, effect), action (doing, walking), passions (not emotions, but undergoing an action, burning for example happens to the wood, wood is being burned), place (being in the grote markt) time, posture or position (sitting), state (sometimes translated as possession, wearing armor)

9 types of accidents that have their existence from a substance.

When Socrates goes from being not-brown to brown he gains the accident of brownness (a quality)

So that’s accidental change.

But something that didn’t exist comes into existence.

Person A is born.

A exists on his own. Is a substance.

Special terminology to talk about substantial change. Generation-corruption is used of coming into being of a substance or disappearing of a substance.

His account of substantial change is analogous to his account of accidental change.

3 components.

1. Matter/subject
2. Lack/privation
3. Accident that subject acquires.

In substantial change:

1. Prime matter/unformed matter. Most basic type of matter, has no form. When a subject comes to be this matter gains form. When prime matter hits a form it becomes a subject. Prime matter has privation of the substantial form. When a substance ceases to exist prime matter loses its substantial form.

Hylemorphism.

You will never find on earth a form without matter or a matter without form. You will never see a lump of prime matter. Prime matter takes on 1 of the four elements, then the elements take on the forms (like mud).

House has different forms, from the prime matter, that took on the relevant elemental forms, that became mud, got turned into bricks, into a house.

Four main types of change:

1. substantial change:
   1. generation and corruption
2. accidental change:
   1. localmotion (movement)
   2. increase/decrease (quantitative change)
   3. alteration (qualitative change)

important to remember, movement is not necessarily moving from one place to another, that is just one type of the four.

This is how he talks about change on earth, it is different for the supra lunary realm.

Centre of the universe is the earth, surrounding it are different spheres. With orbs. They revolve.

Each of the orbs that circle the earth have their own movers. They are separate substances (immaterial) or intelligences. They don’t have matter, are pure form. Each move their own orb in a perfect circle.

Why do these celestial intelligences move?

Because they want to be like the prime mover, who sits on the edge of the universe, beyond which is notihng.

This first prime mover does not move itself: unmoved mover.

Everything that moves is moved by something else. But this has to start somewhere. No infinite regress, so there has to be a first mover that isn’t moved by anything else.

It explains that there is something that moves.

Aristotle calls this unmoved mover god.

Is pure form, does nothing except thinking itself. Has no privation, no lack, no possibility of becoming anything else. Perfect. It can’t change.

Because what changes must stand in potentiality to what it becomes.

He explains that the celestial intelligences move, because they love the unmoved mover, they desire to be as perfect as they can be: they move in circles.

Off course Aristotle is famous for positing four types of causes.

Every instance of change has these four causes.

The celestial intelligences love the unmoved mover as their final cause.

This is problematic for Christian thinkers who believe god created the earth.

Aristotle argued that the world was eternal. That all motion and change has allways existed in the universe. The spheres have been moving eternally in circular motions.

A Christian like Aquinas rejects this. There has to be a first motion that happens in creation.

Aquinas and any Christian is going to have difficulties with aristotles idea of change.

As we see in this article Aquinas comes up with another notion. He rejects one of the primary concepts, but keeps using aristotles own language. And he posits creation.

For Aristotle: something cannot come from nothing.

For Aquinas this is false.

Aristotle’s argument of physics VIII on creation.

1. Firstly he defines change, actualization of the changeable insofar as it is changeable.
2. Each kind of motion involves the presence of the things that are capable of that motion. (there has to be wood for a fire to get started)
3. Suppose a being that didn’t exist on a certain point of time (before he was born for example)
   1. A change to it. The first.
4. But before that there was another change, the one at which the being was created.
5. And that which created the being also changed.
6. Etc.
7. So there can’t be a first change, there is allways a change before that.
8. \* eternal being.
9. \* it undergoes a motion. Why would they wait 100.000 years for this first change?
10. \* Some earlier change than the supposed first change. (so a change, before a change, before a change, etc. )

this argument assumes what aquinas rejects.

# Aquinas

Mostly active in middle to late decades of 13th century. Very much influenced by Aristotle. Great thinker. Accommodating Christian theology to aristotelean doctrine.

How Aquinas reads Aristotle, he wants to use Aristotle, because he has a powerful insight, however, it cannot just be mapped on Christian doctrine, there have to be modifications.

What we are reading is Aquinas’ phd dissertation (sort of).

All the scholastic theologians had to write commentaries on this book, so did Aquinas.

He firstly gives opinions he rejects.

In Aristotle something pre-exists change. (the subject, prime matter)

Contrary to the view that nothing can be created:

Genesis tells us that God did.

This is typically Aquinas.

He gives you 2 reasons for resisting the negative response.

First one is: the bible says so.

But he also thinks it is demonstrable. Convincing on a rational basis.

God is characterized as pure actuality, no privation, never becomes what he is not already. He is actualised.

That seems to mean that god can create a thing in its entirety.

Every agent that initiates motion of change is not pure actuality.

Your parents did not create you out of nothing. What parents do is they produce children, from pre-existing matter, they do not create.

Our parents do play a role, but they use pre-existing matter.

Aquinas’ answer is positive: there is creation. Reason demonstrates it.

He will reiterate that creation is production of a thing in its entirety.

First argument.

If you think of different hot things as forming a category, the thing that has heat in a perfect way is hot, the rest is less hot. They acquire their heat from the thing that has heat in the most perfect way.

Same with being, all less perfect beings are created by most perfect being.

Second, more interesting argument.

Creation is from nothing, ex nihilo, nothing is presupposed to

There is no enduring or existent matter that endures.

In this way creation differs from other types of change.

Substantial change presupposes matter, prime matter. Creation does not presuppose this prime matter. In substantial change it is transformed.

Accidental change: a subject or accident endures, changes.

There is a thing that is brought from possibility to actuality. This underlies chage.

The creation however: nothing of the thing pre-exists its creation.

Secondly: non being is prior to being in the thing that is being created.

A priority of nature.

It is easy to think about it this way, but we should not: imagine god sitting around, and at a certain moment he decides to create the world: prior to T1 there was nothing, then there is a world.

We cannot proof that not being has temporal priority over being. (we have to believe this)

But we can establish that non being has priority in another field.

Absolute metaphysical dependency on the creator, without which there would be no being.

Creation is ex nihilo in 2 ways: not out of, creature is not from something pre-existing. Doesn’t come from anything that pre-exists it.

Secondly: there is a priority of non-being over being, this is not temporal, but existential.

Those are the features he sees in creation.

He has to reject some Aristotelian doctrine for that.

If something can be before it is, it has a form of being before its creation, that is not possible for Aquinas, so the being has no possibility before the creation.

If something comes to be it was possible for it to be for Aristotle.

Except for prime matter everything that is potentially brown pre-exists that change. There is always something that pre-exists the change with Aristotle.

Aquinas: Gods creative power is big enough to create a new substance entirely.

--------18-11-2014

(verschil tussen matter en privation? Matter is always what remains the same, what endures throughout change. Being deprived of brownness is privation, Socrates is matter, privation of brownness in Socrates is the lack of brownness.

Is there a difference between matter and prime matter? Yes. Prime matter is a form of matter.

Prime matter is the matter that underlies the most basic form of change: substantial change. When a substance comes into being or is corrupted. Generation is when a primary substance comes into being, corruption is when it goes away. At first there is privation: lack of the substantial form of Socrates, prime matter doesn’t have form of Socrates, but it has the potentiality for it. Prime matter is pure potentiality, can become everything.

Prime matter is most basic form of matter. Underlies change.

There is a big discussion in the later middle ages.

You will never find a lump of pure prime matter. For it to be something, it has to have a form.

Discussion about how much actuality prime matter has. Thomas: not even god could make a lump of prime matter for you to stumble over.

Fransiscans: it has some kind of actuality: being able to receive the form. So God could make it.

Substantiele vorm, there is always substantial form in a lump of prime matter. But when 1 goes away and antoher comes to it, there is a privation of that what comes in it.

Aristotle will say there is no secondary substance, universal, outside particulars.

Privation is the lack of something that can be there. )

Structure of Thomas text: begins with arguments for the position that he will not take.

Then, on the contrary. A yellow light, hold on, don’t get carried away, there may be good reasons for the opposite position.

Then he gives his respons, and answers all the other arguments.

That is the structure of 13th 14th 15th century philosophy texts.

This is a reflection of the teaching practices. One student argues in front of the view, another against, then the professor gives the determination.

So this is frozen teaching.

Thomas died in 1274, from 1268-1272 he wrote a lot of works. How many words a day did he write? 4000 words a day.

## The nature of good and evil

Are good and being the same in reality?

What is evil? Does it exist in the world?

Important questions in meta-ethics.

Difference with normative ethics, applied ethics and meta ethics, searching for the basic notions and concepts of ethics.

Big discussion, if you know what evil is, you will maybe be able to design a normative theory to avoid it.

Knowing what ontological status of evil is, can help you pinpoint the source of moral evil.

Big questions.

Two questions are linked, what is good, what is evil.

Popular answer in ancient world.

Manichees thought that there are 2 opposed and equal forces in the world, a source of light and of evil.

Source of evil is body, is matter, matter is bad, is evil.

Very attractive theory. Augustine found it attractive, he had a large sexual appetite: urges from his body, it was not his soul that was doing it.

The notion that matter is evil, a notion that plato also shares, is a popular answer to the question what is evil.

Christians have a problem with this.

Then god would have created evil. That is a tough pill to swallow. An all good, all powerful god won’t create evil.

In genesis 1:31 you can read: and god saw everything he had made and behold that it was good.

God thought that everything was very good. So there is a strong impulse for a Christian to reject that evil is any created thing.

Further there is a strong impulse to say that everything created is good.

What is evil if every created thing is good?

Aquinas has an answer to this.

Page 49 of the text, line 19.

Every being insofar as it is a being, is good. Those are the most important words.

Line 29: no being is said to be evil insofar as it is a being, but insofar it lacks being.

Evil is the absence of some good. Lack of some good.

2 theories, on the one hand there is a theory about the convertibility of being and goodness.

That’s a being, that’s good.

Second aspect: privation theory of evil, evil has no positive existence of its own, it is a privation of something that ought to be there.

This privation theory of evil has still defenders and attackers.

Convertibility of being and goodness was the default position that everybody held, from Plato to Leibniz.

The form of the good underlies all being. 2000 year tradition.

Privation theory of evil is also an old theory.

These positions seem to be counterintuitive today, but are still defended.

What does Aquinas mean “being is goodness and evil is absence of goodness”

One argument from Augustine, one from Aquinas.

Firstly Augustine. Text on the handout.

Deprived of all goodness: there is no existence left. If they would stil exist uncorruptible, then corruption would make things better.

Definition of corruption.

Corruption is harming something, making it worse. Corruption is making something worse.

If you accept this definition.

That means corruption means making something less good, then there has to be some goodness that has to be taken away.

Object A, we are going to corrupt it: take away goodness, finally we get to a point where there is no goodness left. What happens then? Option 1: you can’t take any more goodness away, so it becomes incorruptible. That is absurd. The only other option 2: it goes out of existence, it disappears.

Everything that exists, insofar it exists, has some goodness in it.

A knife: knifes are for cutting things. They have to be sharp. A good knife has to be sharp.

If it becomes duller it is not as good of a knife. When it has become so dull that it cannot be used as a knife anymore, then according to Augustine it has lost its existence as a knife.

That was Augustines argument, now Aquinas.

Remember the knife, as a knife, it doesn’t exist anymore. There is still a material object, but it is no longer a knife.

First text, p 45 lines 13-14

Good and being are identical in reality, they differ only conceptually.

Sense/reference distinction.

Frege: morning star, evening star.

They both refer to the same object, planet venus. But they have different senses, they approach the same object under a different point of view. Sense reference distinction. The same thing in reality, but there is a difference. Another example:

Shakespeare and the author of Hamlet.

That is what Aquinas thinks, good and being are the same in reality, but they differ in sense.

Being and goodness are coextensive. When you talk about 1 you talk about the other.

Being and goodness are transcendental terms, you will find these properties in all 10 of the categories is what that means.

Transcendental concept.

Aquinas arguments takes its point of departure in aristotelean philosophy.

P 45 lines 13 to 23.

Perfect means here complete, fulfilled.

This is mapped out on the handout.

1Good is what is desirable (Aristotle)

2What is desirable is desirable precisely because it is perfect or complete. Attained its end.

What you want is completion, the attaining of it.

What is desirable is what we are striving for, then we are striving to get it.

3What is perfect is perfect only insofar as it is actual.

4existence is the actuality of everything.

5

1 good = desirable.

2 desirable = perfect

3 perfect = actual

4 actual = existing.

5 good = existence.

They are the same.

Step 2 is problematic maybe.

What does it mean?

What you desire is the actuality of what you are desiring. Not the potentiality. What you see as good is the existence of that thing.

The thing that draws us is its actuality or existence.

All that goodness adds is a note or a tone of desirability. It is another way of describing the same thing. That is Aquinas argument.

Something that exists is good, only insofar as it exists.

Term good expresses something the term being does not: desirability. But they are the same thing. They differ in sense.

P 49 lines 19-23.

Response, good can be found in degrees, more or less, existence cannot.

Something exists or it does not.

Goodness is degrees. Something is better than something else.

How does Aquinas answer this?

Good and being are identical in reality, they differ conceptually.

Response 1, p 45-46

You get some basic being, just by being a member of a species. There is a gradation between the different beings. Stones-trees-dolphins-humans. Gradation in species. Every species has its own being. This is what Aquinas calls unqualified being.

Every member of a species gets some being. This is qualified goodness.

On or off type of goodness.

Human beings have more goodness then dolphins, just because they have more being.

If you exercise species specific functions, for example, you learn things, then you get more being. So you become better. Using rationality, becoming virtuous people, then you become better.

Species have functions, things in virtue of which they are the species they are.

For humans: reason, rationality, if you exercise that you become better, you gain existence.

To normative ethics, response to 3, 57-59.

You can actualize yourselves further by becoming more virtuous and gaining knowledge. Normative ethics, what we should do to become good people.

Let’s talk about evil.

Text 2 that was read for today.

You have the basics already.

Everything insofar as it exists is good, then what is evil?

Evil does not exist. Evil is the absence of some good. P 249-250

Thing fails in goodness.

There are 2 kinds of absences.

A negative absence, where something is not present, but it shouldn’t be there anyway. I can’t run as fast as a giraffe, but that is not evil. That is just the difference between me and a giraffe.

Then there are privative absences. For example blindness. Something that should have sight, does not have sight. That is what an evil is.

In things with eyes, blindness is an evil for Aquinas.

P 249-250: why is there evil in the world anyway?

God created a world. He did not create evil, okay, but why does he tolerate evil? Accept evil?

Perfection of the universe requires both incorruptible and corruptible beings. Then it follows that the corruptible sometimes do fail. There has to be a gradation of goodness.

What looks to be evil takes place because certain things have to happen for there to be this spectrum of goodness.

You can’t have the lion without the donkey being eaten.

Many good things would be taken away, if there was no evil.

God maximizes goodness, by allowing there to be evil in the world.

Absence of good, good is missing or lacking, god permits evil in the world.

First set of text p 48, wouldn’t it be better for judas never to have existed?

What you are desiring is not-existence. Non-existence of evil seems to say that evil has some kind of existence.

What you are really wishing is that something else happens.

“I wish I weren’t blind” then it is as if blindness exists. You have to say: I wish I was not, not able to see.

You can turn it around, what you are wishing for is something else.

Evil does not exist.

We think ebola is evil, earthquakes are evil.

Aquinas: no. there is no such thing as evil. Earthquakes are what they are. Evil does not exist.

You can say: he is blind. Then it seems blindness exists. But that is just language fooling you.

Consistent system. Interesting arguments for it.

------25-11-2014

## Sense and sensation

Today medieval cognitive theory, we already discussed Augustine on insight and illumination.

How do you get knowledge from the world.

2 questions of Aquinas summa theologiae, external and internal senses.

Picturein the reader.

Later medieval cognitive theory, after aristotele has been revived, the cognitive theory is governed by 2 basic principles.

1: strict distinction between the material and the immaterial.

In particular: the senses deal with materiality, whereas the intellect deals with the immaterial. Knowledge has to do with the universal, etc. (Plato)

Matter is the vehicle of particularity, individuality.

Aquino: what makes you individual is the matter that you have. Scotus disagrees.

Aquino: immaterial is abstradct, can be abstracted.

Senses are about what is material.

See picture: bubble, phantasm.

Everything to the left of that has to do with the senses, even if it isn’t material itself. Length, width and breadth, material characteristics, so what the senses deal with.

Everything to the right of the phantasm is immaterial.

2: empiricist principle. Aristotle said: what is your mind when you are born? Tabula rasa, empty. There is nothing in your intellect that was not before in your senses.

What that means: everything you know intellectualy you got trough acquaintance with senses.

These are the two principles.

Very important.

We look at the picture, start at left hand side: cognitive senses.

In ME view everything in the world is emiting species. It means: a representation. In this context, the species means a representation.

Every object is throwing of some representations, those hit sense organs.

Upon having sensory acquaintance, my senses produce a species of their own and they send it further to the internal senses.

The first internal sense is “common sense”. Because of common sense you know that milk is both white and sweet. Crossover sense modalities, it pulls in a composite image, enables you to judge about it.

This is the root of the expression common sense btw.

Common sense forms this composite image.

Common sense produces a species of its own, sends it on to the phantasia, or imagination.

Imagination is a storehouse, for all these sense images. Allows me to think back. Re-experiencing sense experiences.

It also allows us to manipulate those species, you can imagine golden mountains.

Phantasm.

Fantasm is the very last representation that represents material conditions: height and weight and…

Because imagination is still a sense, an internal sense.

Now is the great divide, moving to intellect. There is a gap there. Gap between material and intellect, immaterial. Intellect is in no part of you body, is linked to it, but how?

Fantasm has all the information about the things that are intelligible about the outside world.

Each one of us has a substantial form.

That makes you be what you are: a human being. It gives you a nature. A quiddity (whatness).

What makes you into the what you are.

Material stuff gets in the way of understanding substantial form.

Agent intellect has activity: knocking out all the material conditions in the fantasm. Leaving you with the intelligible core. The universal human being for example. This is immaterial and can be used by the intellect.

Leaving only core intelligible content.

Only what is intelligible, in my intellect.

Now I can have a concept.

By the agent intellect depositing into the possible intellect, which can understand.

That’s how the medieval cognitive chain works.

External senses -> internal senses -> immaterial, intellect.

(agent intellect is also called active intellect, possible intellect is also the potential intellect. )

De anima III. 5 aristotle:

Every natural thing, for every passive power there is an active power.

Active intellect abstracts the intelligible content from the material information of the senses, according to medieval philosophy.

You understand by becoming the thing you are understanding.

When I have the concept human being, my possible intellect takes on the form of human being.

This will be very important.

We read 2 questions.

1 about the external senses.

2 about internal senses.

Both are incorrectly distinguished.

1: is it right that there are 5 and only 5 external senses.

Sight, hearing, smeel, touch, taste.

Is touch maybe several senses?

What is the object of sight? Colors.

Of touch? Hardness, softness, hot cold, ough and smooth, etc.

Very different things.

Avicenna: touch is several senses.

So are senses differentiated on basis of their organs?

Also today: can we distinguish on basis of organs?

Today: Bees have eyes, but they see in the ultraviolet as well as in the visible spectrum.

Is it possible that what the bees are doing is not sight? Even tough they are using their eyes?

And bats? Sound, like radar. Echolocation, is that hearing or seeing? Do they see with their ears?

Do humans have a sense for equilibrium?

Equilibrioception.

It allows you to know if you are moving, or upside down, or something like that. It is a sense according to scientists.

Procreoception.

Where your bodiliy parts are in relation to each other.

It is a set of receptors in your body.

Scientists are now distinguishing 17 senses.

So what is a sense?

Aquinas: there are only 5 senses, what is the principle that allows him to distinguish the senses, no overlap, completely distinct. Important question.

What senses are, Aquinas defines them as capacities.

Capacities are powers in your soul that allow you to exercise certain functions.

Aquinas: capacities are distinguished on the basis of their acts.

Acts are distinguished on the basis of their objects.

Text 1 on handout.

(acts don’t have to be intentional in the middle ages.

Color is the source of seeing. Colour is the object of sight, sense is passive, colour is workingon sight.

Capacity is defined on basis of the act, which is based on the object.

Why?

Text 2:

Aquinas teleology: capacities are ordered towards an end, an object, which functions as a final cause.

That’s why you can define the capacity by the object.

Aquinas sees 3 different kinds of objects for the senses

1. Per se object of a sense.

Terms on handout: per se object of sight is colour.

Per se object of hearing is sound.

Smell its odour,

Touch is weird.

Per se objects define the sense and only that sense.

Hearing only deals with sound, seeing only deals with colour.

In contemporary theory: proximal simuli. What specifically stimulates that sense.

1. Common sensibles, apply to several senses.

Common sensibles are siza, number, shape, motion, and rest.

Shape you can both see and feel.

Common sensibles are the features of the world that can be picked up by more than 1 sense modality.

Per se object, only 1 sense can pick up.

1. Per accidens object

You have to do processing to get per accidens object. Per accidens object is an object that you can recognise in virtue of the fact that you can see, or hear, or…

Distal stimuli in contemporary thought. Stimulus that is the source of the per se object, but you have cognitive acquaintance only in virtue of per se objects.

Capacities of senses are defined in terms of objects.

We saw that senses are passive capacities.

P 71. At the top.

P 72 line 81: theory, there is a certain type of quality, the 3rd, known as the affective quality. These qualities are forms, accidental forms, what’s important about cognition is that the form that is out there is actually that which you understand.

Conformality theory of cognition, form that is out there has to come into your senses, you take on that form in some way, that is what it is to sense. Part of this is that the effective quality has to make an impression, it has to affect you in some way.

Senses are passive for Aquinas.

P 74

P 71,

For Aristotle the way something turns white is that it gets the form whiteness. Takes it on. These sensory forms that take on qualities bring about sense activity. Aquinas has a realist theory of cognition. There are things out there in virtue of which the wall is white and in virtue of which I have a sensation of whiteness.

Species of the cognized is in the cognizer. One who cognises takes on the form of what is being cognised, it can take on the form of something else.

Therefore the external thing making the impression is what the senses perceive.

Sight, the per se object is colour, a quality of the 3rd kind.

Natural – spiritual impression.

There is a privation of a form and then a new form comes to the matter, that makes the matter be what the form is. If I paint the wall black, it takes on the form of blackness.

Second kind of impression is a spiritual form of impression. Spiritual existence, form of colour is received by the pupil, which does not become that colour.

Natural impression is how change takes place. Matter takes on characteristic of form. Socrates getting tanned: taking on the form brownness.

What a spiritual impression is. Spiritual impression is when a cognizer takes on a form without becoming that of which it is a form.

Natural impression: thing takes on a form, becomes characteristic. Spiritual impression: you get a form, but you don’t become that form. If I see red, my pupil doesn’t become red.

A map is a form of Germany in this case, a shape, colour codings, the form of Germany with all this information, you put it on a flat piece of paper. That is spiritual impression. I get information without everything the information is about. That is what also happens in sensing. You take on the form, without becoming it.

Line 55

Everytime you take on a new form is not cognition. A wall doesn’t see that it becomes white. Cognition is spiritual impression, even though it can be paired with natural impression.

We sense by taking on the form o the outside world, without becoming it. But there seem to be counterexamples. Sense of touch: you feel heat, your hand does get hot.

Sight is an entirely spiritual sense.

The other senses have some kind of natural change.

Hierarchy of senses.

Sight – hearing – smell – taste – touch

We have a passive sensory system.

Internal senses.

They seem to be incorrectly distinguished.

Aristotle had no conception of your brain being a center of thought, for him it all took place in your heart.

Avicenna saw the brain as an important organ, how you grasp and deal with the world.

Picture of medieval thought about the brain.

P 74, line 51. If you need it in order to live, you will get it, nature will provide.

Complete animal is n animal that has all senses.

Thngs like mussels and clams are no complete animals, so they don’t have internal senses. Dogs for example do have those.

We are talking about memory.

Necessary for memory is imagination, sense of past (estimative power).

So you need internal senses, otherwise you would only react to what is in front of you. Animals do more than that. (squirrel remembers where he put his nuts)

Power to receive and power to retain.

Common sense: power to receive.

Imagination retains the images.

Estimative sense gets extra sensory information, like hostility or friendliness. Animals can figure that out.

Memory stores the results of estimative senses.

Common sense, p76.

P 75, line 63: estimative senses. Sheep flees from wolf, not because its colours displease its senses, but because it is dangerous.

Agnosia: cognitive disorder in humans. They cannot put a category, concept to the particalur. They can see, without seeing as. They can’t categorise the world. That is what animals are for Aquinas. Sheep can’t recognise the wolf. Only way they know to run away from wolves is because of their estimative power.

Animals don’t have intellect, so to explain these things they must have estimative power.

---------2-12-2014

# Realists-nominalists

1 color, 2 letters share 1 colour. That is a realist line on the question of universals. There is an entitiy, whiteness, that is in both A’s. this one whiteness in 2 A’s.

Some might say: 2 colours, one whiteness in 1 A, one whiteness in another A. then there is no shared property.

For the nominalist the word whiteness is merely a term, a word, not something outside the mind. Nomen = name. res = thing.

Realist vs nominalist.

Question, when we use universal terms like whiteness, goodness, animalness, universal terms, do they correspond to real entities. Or do those real entities nog exist.

Contemporary: signs, words, tokens.

Tokens are two instances of the same type. Tokens are instances of a type. I am a token of the type human being.

What is the big deal, why should we worry about whether there is 1 wwhiteness or 2 whitenesses.

Often taken for granted that this is one of the most major issues of medieval philosophy and it is still discussed today in analytic philosophy.

Why so important?

What justifications do we have about objects that make up reality.

Any type of sentence

Basic predication:

Socrates is a human being.

True statement.

Question, what is ‘human being’ referring to?

We think we know something about the world and reality. But if we really do know something, then that means there is something real that corresponds to the term human being.

The argument: if there doesn’t exist something that corresponds to our universal terms, then we have no justification for saying Socrates is a human being.

For realists, language mirrors reality. Isomorphic fashion.

If not, how would you know that Socrates is a human being? And plato?

In general for realists there is a more or less strict analogy between language and reality.

Another way to look at this, is to ask if the term human being doesn’t pick out, how can I know that I am not simply making it up. Then it would be an arbitrary position to put Socrates and plato together.

That is not arbitrary, both are human beings.

That is why it is important to be a universalist.

Plato is a realist, he holds an extreme form of realism.

The universal exists more than the individuals, we experience it. So he thought he explained universals and immutable knowledge.

All human beings are rational: something about the universal includes being rational.

Realists are interested in saving knowledge about the world.

What is the problem of the nominalist?

Where is this universal? This universal human being?

And more importantly: how does the universal relate to the particular?

Is this universal separate? Is it in these particulars?

First case, what has the universal to do with particulars?

Secondly, in what sense is the universal 1 for the realist?

How can it be that there is 1 universal, and there are 6 billion human beings.

This is the motivation behind scotus’s less than numerical being.

Being 1 that is consistent with plurality.

So the nominalist has some primarily metaphysical grounds to question the realist.

Nominalist has to explain how we know that Socrates and Plato are human beings. How come we speak in general terms, if there are no universalists.

Nominalist: nothing exists except the particular.

The realist ends up with a complex ontology.

Nominalist ends up with difficult psychology and theory of language. Where does the concept come from if there is only experience of particulars.

Ockham is the most well-known nominalist. Ockham’s razor.

The medieval history of the problem starts with Porphyry.

He wrote an introduction on Aristotelian logic. Called introduction.

Aristotle talked about 10 categories, could be interpreted as terms or forms or being or…

Most importantly, he says early on in his introduction: he will not discuss 3 questions. That kickstarted this problem. He said they are too difficult, logical treatise is not the place.

1. Whether universals are real? Or are they only concepts in the mind?
2. If they are real, are they bodily? Corporeal.
3. Do they exist in bodies, or separate from them?

Genus and species are ultimately a categorisation.

Genus is property that makes a set (animal) species is more specific (dog).

Animal is a genus, has subgroups, cos, dog, human, etc.

What differentiates 2 species of the same genus is something called the differens.

That property that only members of a certain species share and no other species.

For example, rationality. Is the differens that differentiates humans from all other animals.

It narrows down a genus to a particular species.

Not completely clear what the status of the categories are.

Are they things? Or merely concepts and terms?

If you are a realist, animal is a general entity that exists in all animals.

Nominalist: there are individual animals.

After porphyry we get Boethius, he translated Porphyry and comments on it.

He has his own solution to the problem. He contributes to the terminology that is used.

The point that he brings home to the issue: universal has to be common to the particulars.

But we will move on to Abelard.

Boethius is a mild realist.

Abelard is the first defense of nominalism. He predates the university period of high scholasticism. He took strong exception to different theories of realism, he critiqued all the realist ideas so well, that for 50 years nobody takes it seriously.

One of the realist theories Abelard critiques is MER, not very sophisticated form of realism.

He raises a problem, that it looks as though scotus tries to refute that . scotus is a realist, but a sophisticated one.

Passage number 6. Abelard.

We all have the same material essence as humans. It is unified and the same in all of us.

The differences between plato and Socrates are the different sets of accidents.

Similarly, there is one essence animal, existing in all animals. This will be the source of abelards dismissal.

In material essence realism: a universal is numerically one and the same. In this sense, two A’s, two whitenesses, a realist wouldn’t deny that they are all numerically distinct.

But in MER, what individuates, what renders numerically distinct, are in fact in the case of human beings, accidents. In the case of the genus the material essence would be animal, and the differens.

This is a theory, abelard’s own teacher. Abelard says he convinced his teacher to nominalism.

Human being is essence animal + rationality.

Human being in Socrates and Plato is numerically the same.

One and the same material essence (genus animal) that exists is Socrates and donkey x.

Abelards response: philosophy of nature contradicts.

If the same thing were to exist in several singulars, this substance, thing, must be identical with these things.

Genus animal formed by rationality, is the same as that formed by irrationality.

One and the same substance has to take on opposing properties.

It cannot be the case that there exists 1 unified essence, that can have contrary properties at one and the same time.

This is a big problem that the realist would have to address.

One thing is rational in Socrates, and irrational in the donkey. Contrary.

Abelard doesn’t think accidents are sufficient to explain this. Accidents aren’t up to the task tu individuate Socrates from Plato, there is something more.

1 essence would have to have multiple properties at once.

Much more complex ofcourse.

Abelard dismissed this type of realism that was so prevalent in that time.

This is what abelard’s problem is in a nutshell.

If any universal would be one, then contrary properties would be attributed to that one universal.

One universal can exist in a plurality, without becoming a plurality? That’s what the realist has to prove.

Second problem: we all have the universal at the same time. It doesn’t travel around or something like that.

Third feature: universals constitute the very substance of their particulars.

Being a human being is an essential component of our being, not just an accidental.

MER is the view that a universal is a real unified, material essence, that exists in multiple beings at the same time.

Very strong form of realism. Material Essence Realism.

Being human is being a rational animal. Rational is not an accident, because it is a foundational component of being human. They are not accidents, because an accident cn come and go.

## Scotus

Scotus is difficult.

He died in 1308 in cologne, he was English, but studied there and in paris.

His nickname was the subtle doctor ( Aquinas was the angelic doctor).

Making nuances, distinctions, etc.

We won’t discuss the whole text.

What is his response to the problem of universals?

The way he argues and this is one of his most important doctrines.

This text, 6 questions about individuation is actually about angels.

Angels were very interesting to medieval philosophers, who assumed they existed.

They were interesting because they are purely immaterial substances, they are created, but incorporeal, pure minds, pure intellects.

How do they know? How do thye communicate? Exercise free will?

You can also see them as a thought experiment.

One of the questions, how are they differentiated from one another?

He asks: is a material substance individual or singular from itself. Are you a singular human being, because that is what you are? Or is there another reason?

What is it that makes 1 human being an individual, what makes one animal distinct?

What makes you a primary substance different from me?

Ockham: nothing. Looking for a principle of individuation is wrong. Every thing is individual. Each human being is an individual, they don’t share anything.

There is no principle that I need to posit to explain why you are a distinct human being.

Nominalist has to explain how we come up with generalities, universalities, how do we come to sentences that appear as if there are universals.

Ockham: everything outside the soul is singular of and by itself.

The realist answer to the question what makes you a different human being is that there is some type of relationship between human being and concrete human beings.

This is scotus’s question, this is what is meant with ‘a principle of individuation’.

This is a problem for the realist, not for the nominalist, for him all things are already individuals.

The nominalist has to explain how 2 different individuals are in fact rendered numerically distinct.

First thing scotus does is to present the nominalist view, which he rejects.

57-58.

In paragraph 5. And 6, they are recapitulations of a generic nominalist view: a nature is simply singular of itself, one doesn’t have to look for the cause of singularity, it simply is singular.

Paragraph 6: universality is not something that belongs to a thing in and of itself, except insofar it is thought. Universality is a product of mind.

In paragraph 6 scotus alludes to this.

Only when we think about human beings in general is it that we come up with universal terms, what exists in reality are only singulars.

Scotus will present 2 arguments against this nominalist view.

1. Against the content of paragraph 6, notion that universality comes to be through tought.
2. He introduces notion of less than numerical unity.

Before getting into that. Paragraph 7.

Essentially what scotus is saying in paragraph 7, an object is naturally prior to thinking.

For a nominalist this pen exists as an individual pen.

I can think of pens in general.

In this prior state the object, the pen, is of itself singular.

Therefore the intellect which can understand the pen understands it to a universal concept this concept is then opposed to how the pen actually is.

If there are only singulars, every time we see the species human being, we would be conceiving incorrectly, in fact, the opposite of reality.

This raises a problem for knowledge.

There has to be something in the world that answers to universality, otherwise we can’t have knowledge of it.

For scotus: if the world is singular, then the generality we produce through thought is problematic and probably false.

That argument is not an argument for realism, it is an argument against a particular nominalist theory.

Scotus: in some extramental sense there has to exist something universal.

He will call these common natures.

They are also called real essences.

Examples:

Animality.

Humanity.

Bovinity. (cowness)

Equinity. (horseness)

These are common natures, they have 2 major characteristics.

Material essence realism. He uses them against mer.

Abelards problem was that really existing common natures cannot be numerically one. There can’t be numerically one humanness in me and Socrates and plato etc.

What scotus does, he posits, the first feature of these common natures is ‘less-than-numerical-unity’.

This is a type of unity that one thing has, but many things have.

You and I are human beings, human being we share equally, simultaneously, foundationally, but it is less than numerical.

Type of distributed unity, a weak form of unity.

Opposed to stronger form of unity.

This is a different type of unity.

Second feature that these common natures have, which we will get back to is that:

In themselves they are neither universal nor particular.

So if you conceive of animality in itself, it is neither universal nor particular, even though it is present in a particular animal.

This is a foundational.

Common nature is indifferent to universality and particularity.

So for scotus there are really existing common natures that are neither universal, nor singular.

This is all contained in the second argument he gives, paragraph 8, 9 and 10.

This is where we get a sense of his realist position. His positive doctrine:

Anything with a real proper unity less than numerical is not itself one.

He posits this strange feature of less than numerical, to be able to suggest in paragraph 9 that there are 2 types ofunity. Lesser and weaker.

The problem, how can you have 1 individual, he wants to argue, if you have this lesser type of unity a universal can consistenly appear in many individuals, without it being compromised.

This less than numerical unity is consistent with plurality. Can exist in multiple human beings at the same time, without becoming multiple human beingnesses.

This is the case is his next argument.

7 arguments for this notion, there can be something that is real but a less than numerical unity.

One of the arguments, to give some plausibility to this notion. Why should we accept this? He takes it very seriously. One of the arguments in paragraph 19 on page 61:

For one real opposition there are 2 streams. Contrarity is an opposition.

Hot and cold are contrary. When a substance gets hot it cancels the coldness.

Fact of aristotelean physics.

Each primary extreme is real, but not a numerical unity.

If it were the case that the opposition between white and black were a distinction between this white thing and that black thing.

We cannot explain why this is lawlike if we are not realists.

World works orderly and predictable, because objects have common natures.

Lawlike structure about behaviour of water and warmth for example. To explain that you have to grasp common natures. We have to accept this instance of less-than-numerical-unity.

Because hot and cold work this way, we can explain.

Nominalist: you still don’t have to posit common natures that have less than numerical unity.

You can say: all those who have a similar structure behave in this way under these circumstances.

You can provide a nominalist scientific theory.

Another argument he gives is on 62, the sixth argument. He wants to say: we recognise Socrates and plato are more distinct then Socrates and a lion, or cow.

If we put them together, as a nominalist we don’t necessarily do this non-arbitrarily.

Page 63: a material substance is not a radical singular or individual. There is some real unity in the thing, less than numerical, this lesser unity belongs to common nature in and of itself.

Common natures are indifferent to universality and particularity.

The use of this or that is a sort of rhetorical devise to accentuate the notion of numerical distinctness.

Common nature is not a this or that, but has this type of thin, weak unity.

Socrates plato and Aristotle are numerically distinct.

If a common nature manifests itself, it becomes universality, than it exsists in particulars, that means you won’t ever encounter a common nature as such.

We think of them or we encounter them as the ontological or metaphysical constituents of particular beings.

So a common nature is understood as a universality, has feature of universal, is particularised in things in the world, but is actually prior to both universality and the thing in the world.

What makes you you and me me?

We share a whole set of common natures: humanity, animality, corporality, substantiality.

All of us have all of these common natures. A pressing concern: what makes us numerical unities, distinct from one another.

Scotus will posit a new component that is radically distinct for each of us.

He will use the model of difference.

He is going to posit an individual difference. Rather than rational as specific (species) difference. But something that differentiates individuals:

Haecceitas.

Term that does not exist in latin, scotus invented it, it means individual diference.

I have my own haecceitas. So do you. That makes us the individual human beings that we are.

Socrates is distinct from all other human beings. So Socrates has at the very least common natures just like Plato. Common natures have less than numerical unity, so they cannot underlie the distinct Socrates.

What is it: socreitas, socrates’ individual difference.

What he shares with other humans + his individual differnence = Socrates.

P 101-102

Plato and Socrates differ, yet they are also the same, individuated from one another by some primarily diverse element in their metaphysical make up.

Individuals in the same species differ because they are diverse beings that are somehow the same.

Besides the nature that is the same there are some primarily diverse items by which this or that differ.

These differences are positive entities, they are part of metaphysical constitution and they determine, contract, a species to the numerically distinct individual.

These individual differences complete individual entities.

He provides some counterarguments, but he continues the discussion by comparing individual and specific differences.

Individual differences are foundational to what individuals are and they are primarily diverse.

2 problems for Scotus.

1. A nominalist reply: what is a less-than-numerical-unity. Where are these common natures? T
2. If individuals are individual because they have a difference then that seems to be for scotus something we have to accept. Not a better explanation, but something we must accept. Potentially begging the question?

This is probably one of the most complex issues in the middle ages.

---------9-12-2014

We cancelled scotus on natural cognition, that is not for the exam. (!)

When I say Socrates is a human being, plato is a human being. There is a universal in there. 2 individuals, easy to identify, but what is ‘human being’. 2 individuals labelled as part of a set.

There should be a reason in Socrates or Plato to say they are human beings. Then you have to start explaining, what could that be?

Then you get the really weird theories, like material essence theory: there is one and the same human being in both, numerically the same.

Abelard: that makes no sense. 1 animal with contradictory properties.

Scotus: how can I figure out (he is a realist, there has to be something in plato or Socrates that makes them human beings). I can’t say they are one and the same human being. But human being has less than numerical unity.

If there is no human being in Plato or Socrates, then Socrates has as much in common with plato as he has with a line. Then our dividing up of the world is arbitrary.

A realist wants to guarantee the accuracy of our knowledge claims, but by doing that he has to introduce less than numerical unity.

But then Ockham: what is that? Less than numerical unity?

2 different ways of using species.

Species in Aquinas means a cognitive representation.

With Aquinas we talked about medieval picture of cognitive process.

Objects emit species. Species are representations of the object itself. It’s latin, species, representation. Look upon it as a picture.

Last week we talked about species as natural kinds, the way biologists talk about species.

There can be some confusion between the two.

Species as representation.

Or

Species as a subdivision of genus, natural kinds. That is a little confusing. Same word used in different ways.

# Ockham

The guy who criticised scotus.

William Ockham.

We are gonna talk about ethical theory, Abelard and Aquinas.

While we deal with William of Ockham about virtue ethics.

Virtues were the minds’ best habits.

Mental reflexes.

Inclination to do the right thing.

There were a number of important virtues.

Intellectual virtue of prudence or practical reason, right reason. That is an intellectual virtue.

Then philosophical virtues:

* Justice
* Temperance (moderation)
* courage

3 theological virtues (faith, love and charity)

There are more virtues, but these 7 are the most important in the middle ages.

We will talk about virtue ethics as part of an Aristotelian framework. What it is to live a happy life.

And then ockham’s ethical theories.

Then the text. A very nuanced way of looking at virtue ethics.

Virtue ethics stresses that goodness, the goodness in a deed, comes from the character you are trying to build for yourself.

You do the right thing, because of the kind of person you are.

The big issue is the ‘connection of the virtues’.

Can you have 1 virtue and be a lousy person in other ways?

Ockham inherits from Aristotle, the one who really developed virtue ethics. Nicomachean ethics is about happiness, geluk. Funny translation of the word eudaimonia.

Lot of people say that it shouldn’t be translated as happiness.

Happiness in English is something in the here and now, a personal, subjective feeling of wellbeing.

Aristotle is talking about much more objective notion of happiness. Which you can be wrong about yourself.

For Aristotle you can think you are happy, but be wrong about it.

There have to be some objective criteria.

Flourishing or thriving, maybe better translation?

You are living to the best of your potential, that is the idea of eudaimonia.

Eudaimonia is what we are talking about.

Augustine: everybody wants to be happy. That is endpoint of questioning.

How do we figure out what this happiness is?

Aristotle tries to find that out. Is money happiness? No. health, in and of itself? Physical pleasure? No.

What we are looking for is ultimate happiness, ultimate eudaimonia.

3 criteria:

1. desirable for itself, you want it for itself, and not necessarily for something else.
2. Not desirable for something else. You are not getting this, just to go further. (health is 1, but you want it for something else, so not second criterium)
3. All other good things are desirable for it.

Ultimate happiness is desirable for itself, you don’t want it in virtue of anything further on, and anything else you want, you want it for this.

These are the criteria ultimate happiness has to meet.

For Aristotle and the medieval tradition, ultimate happiness is going to be a metaphysical form of happiness: what makes us human.

What makes us what we are. Happiness is going to have to do with that.

Ultimate happiness is gonna have to have to do with that.

Number 1 on handout: function argument.

Highest good is happiness will appear to be a platitude…

We human beings share with plants that we grow and need nutrition, what we share with animals is that we sens. What is most properly human: reason and rationality.

So leading a life in which we express this, that is what makes us happy, makes us flourish.

So happiness or living well, has to do with acting in such a way that you express what is most you. Rationality.

Becoming the most perfect human is what it means to have a happy life.

We need to actualise that side of us. That is what leads us to have a good life.

We have seen something like this before.

Aquinas has an argument about the convertibility of being and goodness, they are the same in reality, only different in conception.

Argument: everything seeks the good, good is perfection or completion, that is actuality, that is existence. So goodness is existence. Number 2 on handout.

Core of the argument: we become good by actualising ourselves. How do we become good? By actualising these.

The knife has a function: to cut things. If the knife is sharp, it is a good knife. The duller it gets, the less good, until it isn’t a knife anymore.

Our function is rationality, by exercising it, that is how we become good, that is how we become happy.

Aquinas, number 3 on handout: something is more or less good because of…

You can become better, get more being, by actualising yourself, by becoming virtuous. Why virtues? Virtues are one of the things you need to successfully negotiate life.

You have to develop your virtues.

If you were a complete coward, no virtue at all, you wouldn’t do anything. If you had no courage at all, you could not negotiate the world. For an active life, you have tohave some courage.

If you are intemperate, then you will do all the drugs, all the alcohol, you can’t have a successful life.

So you need those virtues.

Successful living .

Virtues are habits, mental reflexes. You learn them. Through society. No one is born a virtuous person.

No child is virtuous, you have to learn those virtues.

Ockham talks about this, page 83 p 143.

Moral virtue is evident, because … moral virtue.

We learn virtues by doing them. By behaving courageously, we will behave courageously further on.

It all starts with an act. The first time you stood up against a school bully, that took courage.

That first act of courage plants a seed in you soul, that seed is a habit.

The next time you are in a situation where courage is called for, it is easier to have another act of courage.

The more you do it, the easier it becomes to do it, the more you do it, the easier it becomes, etc.

Builds a habit, a feedback loop.

Finally this is the end game for virtue: it becomes part of us. Second nature, you don’t even have to think about it anymore. Habitual part of you. That is how virtues are supposed to work.

Same goes with temperance, moderation or justice. We are all potential just, but we have to do it to actualise it.

Doctrine of the mean.

Courage isn’t being cowardly, but it also isn’t being rash, stupidly overconfident.

There is 2 extremes. In the middle is courage. There is no 1 size fits all in ethics.

Ethics is on a spectrum. You have to figure out where your reaction should be. On the rash side? Or should you run away?

Courageous person is looking for somewhere in between cowardness or rashness.

For that he needs prudence. If you are in a dangerous situation, sometimes it is a good thing to rush in and attack, other times it is better to run away. Your prudence tells you what you should do. That is doctrine of the mean. Comes from Aristotle.

It works for courage, also for temperance. Self indulgence – selfdenial. And moderation in between.

In ancient world (stoics): virtues are a unity. To be a virtuous person you have to have all of them a 100%.

Just as much as you can drown if you are in 1 cm of water or if you are under 100m of water, so you need to have all the virtues 100%.

You need all of the virtues to support eachother.

Think of a judge, has a super sense of the virtue of justice, but she is a coward. As soon as the mafia threathens her, she throws justice out of the window.

Idea is that if you have 1 virtue to an extremely high degree, but no courage, your justice virtue will be compromised.

The weakest will compromise all the others at some point in your life.

This is called the connection of the virtues.

That is what Ockham is talking about.

Virtues, function argument, how do you become a happy person?

William of Ockham. You can read about him in Mauer, he had a pretty exciting life.

2 of his ethical views are interesting.

Number 4 on handout.

Doing the deed adds nothing to the moral evaluation of your act. Same as Abelard!

There is no moral goodness in doing the deed itself.

Number 5 on handout, Ockham believes in what we call ‘libertarian free will’

All things being equal, I have the power in my will to choose x or not-x. everything in the universe can be exactly the same, I can choose either one. Principle of alternate possibilities.

Ockham holds that free will is like this.

Today a lot of people are compatibilists, Ockham disagrees.

Text is a rather special form.

Reportatio.

Student notes.

2 students were chosen to take notes, their notes were very good. They had better memories than we do.

They used stenography, abbreviations. 2 people were making notes, Ockham would go through them, and edit them, but all we have for this text are the notes, they were not edited by him.

Foundation of Ockhams view is in the very beginning: five degrees of virtue.

Let’s look briefly at these 5 degrees. There is a list in the handout.

Degrees:

1. Willing the performance of a work, in conformity with right reason, precisely this work, for the sake of the worthiness of this work. (you do the right thing, but you have no great commitment to the virtue you are exercising. Most ancient philosophers, Aristotle, wouldn’t call this a virtue. Ockham is opening a room for reality. Most people don’t have justice in a deep down sense, or temperance, Ockham is mapping that into this degree 1)
2. This is the same as 1, only now there is a hypothetical element that comes in: imagine you want to honour your father, and someone wants to stop you, punish you if you do. And you would still want to do it, then there is an extra commitment. Even if you were to suffer adversity for the virtue you would do it.
3. Philosophers virtue, you are virtuous because you are convinced of it. You are a temperate person. on degree 3 it is prudence that guides you to behave in this virtuous way. Virtue as a whole.
4. Degree 4 is the same thing, but only for Christians. With God as goal.
5. Heroic virtue. Supererogatory virtue. Supererogatory virtues are above and beyond the call of duty. No one could expect you to act like this. This goes beyond what is expected. It corresponds to degree 2. This is no longer a hypothetical, but a formal situation. He is looking at people like the Christian martyrs, or Gandhi, or Martin Luther King.

Theories of injection of the virtues, first theory is by Aquinas. Paragraph 9: there is a unity or connection of the virtues. If you have one of them, you will have all of them. The virtues we were talking about before, justice, prudence, temperance, they are connected.

But other virtues, that require a lot of money, like magnificence or magnanimity

Magnificence is the rich persons hospitality.

Magnanimity is the rich persons generosity.

P 93: it is possible that someone encounters the subject matter for temperance, in the absence of subject matter of courage.

So what is so special about magnificence and magnanimity?

Someone who never gets threatened doesn’t need courage.

So all virtues require that you need a certain opportunity.

‘independence of act opportunity principle.’

Habits are caused by corresponding acts, while acts require relevant opportunity.

What happens if you never have a situation in which you need to be courageous? If you never have the opportunity, you will never have the act, you will never develop the virtue.

Once you have a virtue to a certain degree, that makes it more likely that you develop another virtue if the situation occurs.

Henry of Ghent, very important philosopher of the later middle ages. Big influence on Scotus.

Henry has a more subtle theory than Aquinas.

Paragraph 45

Henry of Ghent: once you get to a certain level of virtue, you have to have them all, otherwise the lack of 1 of them is gonna compromise the rest.

Ockham is gonna use Henry’s theory of degrees of virtues. But he says that we never have necessarily all the virtues, even if we have 1 to an extremely high degree.

All of this is based on the independence of act/opportunity.

Habits, virtues, come from acts. You only act when there is a relevant opportunity to do so.

P 97 paragraph …

This opinion errs because the subject matter of one virtue can occur where another never does.

Page 99

Many saints or confessors …

Ockham is thinking about a nun. A nun sitting in her cell, never comes outside her monastery, she sows, knits, she doesn’t have the opportunity to display courage.

That nun may be a super temperate person. but because she sits in her monastery she doesn’t develop courage.

That is the independence of act-opportunity principle.

Situation may not have arisen in your life, so there cannot be a strict unity of the virtues.

Ockhams own theory, page 99

He talks about a very weak sense in which you could say there is a connection of virtues.

If you have any virtue in any degree, then you have general moral principles. But that is so weak it doesn’t have practical relevance.

But having 1 virtue to a high enough degree, then as soon as you come to the right situation, you will do right.

Page 101

One virtue can make the will act in the way of the second virtue.

Say you have justice to the third degree. You are just. You are completely commited. Why? Right reason tells you to be just. You are virtuous for the sake of being virtuous.

Because you are virtuous for the sake of being virtuous, every time another virtue comes along, you will also act virtuous, because prudence tells you to be virtuous.

Because you are committed to 1 virtue, you are gonna be commited to any virtue that you have the ability to exercise. You are commited to exercising every virtue.

3 and 4th degree virtue inclines you to acting virtuously according to another virtue.

You can see also, page 107. Paragraph 276. When something is willed, because it is something of a kind, nothing…

if you love your dog, because it is a dog. Because you love it because it is a dog, you are gonna love all dogs.

The same thing happens when you act virtuously after you have reached degree 3. Or 4.

3rd or 4th degree virtue inclines you to beign to develop another virtue.

What about less degrees of virtue.

Second degree virtue. Hypothetical. That kind of commitment might lead you in other cases to develop a virtue.

Because the justice you are committed to is threathened, you will have your first act of courage, because you have 2nd degree justice.

First degree virtue doesn’t r mean commitment to virtue as such, so won’t help you develop other virtues.

A very fingrained theory and it takes into account normal people.

We see people who are virtuous in one way and lousy in another, Ockham takes that into account.

Next time we will see how Ockham tries to save free will.

And ofcourse the reading.

-------------16-12-2014

Last week we looked at Ockham on virtues.

Ancient background of virtue and virtue ethics.

Function argument: the good for some individual of a species, the highest good is to exercise what is particular to the species.

Exercising reason, you are becoming as good as you possibly can be. Exercising you rationality. Part of that is the virtues. Characteristics that you need to exercise your reason.

Virtues have a feedback loop. Act 🡪 makes it easier to make those kind of acts later on🡪 another act 🡪 strengthens virtue 🡪 more acts …. Etc.

That is theory of virtues in ancient world.

Then specific issue, unity, connection of the virtues.

Mostly associated with the stoics.

Moral progress.

How do you get to be a better person?

According to this there is no progressing to becoming a virtuous person.

Many answers to this question.

Problem of the judge. Highly virtuous, but cowardly.

We talked about aquinas’ view and henry of Ghent. Both of them have in their own way a connection of the virtue.

Ockham learns from Aquinas a really important principle: independence of act opportunity principle.

Which says, that if you don’t have the opportunity to act in a virtuous way, you will never have the virtue.

Ockham says: it is never necessary that you have all virtues, because you might never be in the situation where that virtue is called for. The nun cannot build up the virtue of courage.

On the other hand Ockham has 5 grades of virtue, which allow him to have a nuanced theory of moral progress.

From level 1 virtue, ordinary people, most of us are fairly nice, virtuous if we have the time, the opportunity. So Aristotle wouldn’t even call this a virtue. One swallow doesn’t make a summer.

Level 2 virtue, ethical virtue, where you would honour your father, honour your mother.

Level 3 is philosophers virtue, Aristotle would call this a virtue. You are committed to the virtue for the virtue’s sake.

Level 4 christian commitment.

Level 5 supererogatory virtue. Gandhi, martin luther king, etc.

On this basis, Ockham can build up a nuanced view of virtue. You can go down as well as up on these levels.

Ockham is going to make a theory that shwos how these are related.

If you look at the perfect virtues, 3rd and 4th degree virtues.

You are commited because it is a virtue, because it is the virtuous thing to do.

If you have one of the virtues, Ockham says that when presented with the opportunity to act along another virtue, you are gonna do it, because you are commited to the virtue, because it is a virtue.

Someone who is 3rd degree just. Let’s say that person has never been tempted. Now there is temptation of a chocolate cake. He will be able to resist that temptation and develop the virtue of temperance or moderation. That will necessarily happen, because temperance is a virtue and he is committed to virtue.

Only if the opportunity arises can you develop a virtue. So it is not necessary to have all virtues.

2nd degree virtue is when you have a hypothetical commitment to 1 virtue, not insofar as it is a virtue. If that 1 virtue is threathened, that will give you the opportunity to have the first act of courage.

If you have 3rd or 4th degree virtue you cannot develop a vice.

2 ethical views of Ockham.

He also has aa very abelardian view of how much the external act counts for the moral worth of what you do.

If you go to church for the love or god, or as a vain act, that makes a difference. So it is the intention that counts.

2nd: libertarian view of free will.

All things in the universe being equal, the will can will x or not will x. that’s what free will is for Ockham. An example of what we call the principle of alternate possibilities. Freedom always requires principle of alternate possibilities. Will being able to have choices.

Not everybody thinks that is a requirement. There are also compatibilists.

2 places in the text where he mentions this.

If you consider ockhams theory, we talk about habits, at the 3rd or 4th level you will be strongly inclined to behave in a certain way.

Once you have another situation, you are necessarily going to develop that virtue. It seems as though this system of habits and acts freezes the will. Would get in the way of the wills freedom.

Page 129-131 of the text. About freedom of will.

614. will confirms to reason, will or not will necessarily.

Ockham says that it seems, because right reason tells you to behave a certain way, as tough that compromises the will.

Ockham takes up Aquinas on this.

Aquinas says: if you have to make a decision, the intellect figures out, it makes a list, evaluates the options. What the will should choose is: eat the chocolate cake. If that doesn’t work: walk the dog. If that doesn’t work: go to the fitness.

According to Aquinas this ranking makes the will choose to eat the chocolate cake.

The will is still free, because there are various choices. The intellect has freedom to rank them.

But maybe you don’t think that isn’t a lot of freedom.

Aquinas: will can impede judgement of reason.

The will can say to intellect to ignore the chocolate cake, go to fitness instead.

Ockham: you say that will can tell intellect to focus on 1 of these possibilities, to the exclusion of the others, but how come the will knows to focus on this?

Either because the will is told by the intellect 🡪 not free.

Or because it has libertarian free will.

If the intellect is not dictating, then the will can dictate contrary to reason, so Aquinas is wrong. Either there is no freedom, or the will can say no to the intellect. Ockham: will can always choose otherwise.

But then the system becomes a problem.

In this text you find a nice example of medieval debate on free will.

Ockham: free will requires choice.

Aquinas, if the will has no choice, it is still free, only time when it is not free, is when it is forced to do something.

Ockham: will must have possibility to choose what to do.

How does this work with virtues?

Situation.

You have third degree justice. Third degree justice mens you are commited insofar as it is a virtue. When an opportunity comes up, you will do the virtue.

Ockham says, that means the first time you are tempted, necessarily you are going to have you first act of temperance, of moderation, because it is a virtue, you are commited to virtue.

Necessarily, doesn’t that compromise the free will?

Shouldn’t there be a choice?

Paragraph 287.

As long as right reason remains, and the first act of will.

You have a first order act of will, that is in this case ‘be just because it’s virtuous’ that act is free.

From that follows necessarily that you will act virtuously in another situation.

So there are 2 acts of will.

The first one is free, the 2nd is necessary, so to not have the second, you must reconsider the first.

2 orders of willing, first is free, 2nd is necessary after the first.

Ockham goes out of his way, to implement free will. He is really concerned about that. Ockham needs to build it in there. You can always reevaluate the first order act and no longer be virtuous.

Someone can fall from grace. Go down in the degrees.

## Mental language

Ockham is most famous for having come up with what we call the language of thought. Mental language. This is been reborn by Jerry Fodor. He didn’t know Ockham had already done this.

On the handout today, what the language of thought hypothesis is, there are basic units of representation. These are manipulated in thought. According to some kind of syntax. Some kind of grammar. Before you have spoken language, you have language of thought. It is very different, but shares that there is a grammar and there are units. Language of thought hypothesis, is notion of compositionality.

In spoken or written language we have words, we can put them together. Compositionality is one of the features of language that they share.

The rules of logic, of inference, another characteristic of language use that the hypothesis explains is the generativity of language.

With a small number of units, you can create an infinite variety of larger units. Few words 🡪 infinite amount of sentences.

Ockham was there first. He was interested in explaining how we think and how we reason through postulating mental language. He got this, he received pointers from the ancient world.

Mental words, mental propositions.

Text 2, Aristotle de interpretation. Hierarchy: written – spoken – affections of the soul (we will call them concepts)

Ockham calls them intentions, intellect, mental terms, etc.

Affections of the soul are the same for all according to Aristotle.

Concepts, are the same for everybody. My concept for tree is the same as yours, even though I say tree and you say boom.

Beginnings of a notion that may lead to a mental language idea. Concepts are the same for everybody. Those are most important in aristotles’ sheme.

Boethius as well.

Augustine is trying to explain the beginning of john’s gospel: in the beginning there was the word. Logos.

Augustine links logos with the son, with ‘concept’

Human mind knows all these things and keeps them in his memory. From them a true word is begotten, when we say wht we know. But the word is anterior to every sound. Word is more like thing that is known.

Augustine tries to explain what is that word from the gospel.

One piece of knowledge, a menal word, word of the heart, that word is prior to all spoken and written words. It is a concept in you mind.

A real, Ockham has some resources available, how do we put them together? Ockham is a logician, really interested in this.

This is all from summae logicae.

Teaching novices logic.

What does Ockham say about all this. First he will tell you about terms. Units that go into propositions, sentences.

He talks about Aristotle, Boethius, after distuingishing between written, spoken and conceptual.

Conceptual terms.

Mental terms are signs. What is a sign? Remember Augustine. Something that brings to mind something other than what you see.

Page 50, sign is anything which when apprehended brings something else to mind. That’s how all signs function. Crucial for signs is the relation of signification. Signification is a causal or psychological relation. Relation that a sign has when it brings to mind something other than itself. What is a sign? Tree. The word T R E E. this word causes you to think of those big things outside. These terms in mental language and spoken and written, are signs. They make you think of something else.

Different types of signification. These conceptual terms are the mental words that belong to language.

Ockham: concept signifies something, spoken word signifies the same thing secondarily. Spoken and written words are subordinated to concepts. Smoke naturally signifies fire.

Ockham thinks that even if you have no experience with smoke and fire, you would still think of fire when you see smoke. It is natural, cannot be changed.

Your concept of tree, and my concept of tree, is the same in the sense that it functions in the same way, by latching onto trees.

Spoken and written words sort of inherit that natural signification, without naturally signifying them.

Spoken and written words signify conventionally. It is an agreement among language speakers.

We have agreed that words in dutch mean certain things. Because you have an agreement on that, those words have a link.

Same for English. Is also a conventional language. Spoken and written words signify secondarily, and conventionaly.

Ockham want to explain synonymity. How can there be synonyms.

For example ‘tree’ and ‘boom’. How is it that tree and boom mean the same thing? Because voth of these words are subordinated to the same concept. That concept is in English-speakers, dutchspeakers, frenchspeakers, etc.

Different spoken and written words, subordinated to 1 concept. That explains synonyms.

Equivocity.

Bank. Financial institution or riverbank.

One word that is subordinate to two different concepts.

Natural signification, they make you think of something and that is fixed.

Ockham then wants to say that you can take these concepts, put them together in sentences. You put them together. That is how the mind works. Just like speaking and writing works.

But there are some differences. Page 52 and 54. Correspondence between spoken words and concepts.

Names are nouns and adjectives. Intentions of the soul have functions like words.

Participles, Socrates is running.

Is ‘is running’ different from saying ‘socrates runs’ ?

For the participle of the verb is the same. Ockham thinks these are synonymous. Language doesn’t gain anything important out of this.

Ockham is looking for an idealised mental language. All of this embelishments, are not necessary for mental language. Mental language has to be only concerned with meaning. So what he is going to do is looking at characteristics of latin and checking if they are necessary for mental language.

Case? Yes. Otherwise you couldn’t express things like ron hit marla, know what the direct or indirect object is.

Same with number. Number affects truth value. So you need to have number in mental language. Men is the animals is false. Man is an animal is true.

Gender doesnot matter according to Ockham. Various other parts are also not necessary.

All the rest is for poets, not for philosophers.

Ockham defines what it is to have an idealized mental language.

Categorimatic and syncategorematic.

P 55.

Categorematic terms have a definite and determinate signification. A categorematic term you can understand all on its own. The word tree. You can understand.

Syncategorematic. Functions or quantifiers. None of these expressions have a definite meaning. They have to be put together with other terms. Some tdoesn’t mean anything. Some men does. So some is a syncategorematic term.

Most terms he deals with are categorematic.

P 69-71.

What categorematic terms are.

Two types: absolute terms and connotative terms.

Absolute terms are easy, they signify things that really exist in the world. So the term human being signifies all and only human beings. Cow all and only cows. Signifies them equally and exclusivily.

Connotative terms are different. He uses this to deal with his nominalism. He wants to cut out everything someone like scotus wants to pull into his ontology. Ontological realist thinks there is a correspondence between words and realities. Lots of things that we talk about don’t exist for Ockham.

That is what connotative terms do. They primarily signify one thing, but also something else.

These terms are a way of talking about the world with things that don’t actually exist.

Interesting idea.

If you ask Aquinas, what maks Hillary Clinton a mother? A relation of motherhood, that points to Chelsea Clinton, who is in a relation of daughterhood to her.

Ockham thinks relations don’t exist.

For him mother is a connotative term, it is a description, without there being anything in the world that fits it. There is nothing in Hilary Clinton that makes her a mother.

When you think mother, you think about women of a childbearing age.

Secondly you are gonna think about their children.

There is no motherhood in Hilary Clinton.

Mother makes you think of Hilary, and secondarily to her daughter.

By using connotative terms, primary-secondary signification, Ockham can say there are a lot of things we talk about that don’t really exist. This explains that.

You can talk about the vacuum. It is the absence of anything. It is a connotative term. It makes you think about stuff. And secondarily makes you think about absence. Connotative term accounts for the fact that we talk about things that don’t exist.

Only things that exist can be signified by an absolute term.

In a way Ockham is trying to get to a much more austere ontology than someone like scotus.

We all know Ockham’s razor, he uses it in his philosophy.

Supposition part is interesting, but is not discussed here, so you don’t have to learn it.

# Mauer

Metaphysics of light.

Works much the same way as Aquinas theory on sense data.

It is a propagation through the medium.

Works a lot like the species. Aquinas on sense and sensation, everything emits species (as representation) those species are propagated. Multiplied. Through the medium between you and me.

Medium diaphanons medium.

Species are multiplied, one part of the medium at a time.

Discussion: is light propagated simultaneously, or is there some time.

Light metaphysics and creation.

# Examen

3 vragen op het vlak van 1 lezing.

Je krijgt een beetje tekst, dat je al gezien hebt. Het is goed idee om tekst nogmaals te lezen voor het examen. Je krijgt een vraag over tekst, over de lazing. 3 verschillende teksten.

Daarboven 2 mauer vragen.

Je hebt een idee wat je kan zeggen over alle mauer vragen, het zijn80 vragen, daarom heb je een keuze.

Nooit: je moet deze vraag van mauer beantwoorden. Je moet 1 van de 2 of 3 vragen beantworoden, je hebt een keuze. Je mag antwoorden in het nederlands of engels, of een combinatie, maakt niet uit. Niet belangrijkj welke taal.

Schriftelijk examen. 3 uur de tijd.

Remember, it is not an oral exam. On an oral exam the teacher can ask for clarification, in a written exam you can’t do that. So write a little bit more than you would normally say. (not too much ofcourse)

3 hour written exam, 2 questions from mauer, you can choose those.

3 questions from class.

Schriftelijk examen, not an oral exam.

Bring student id, pen (or 2).

You can bring dictionaries dutch – English or English – dutch. You can answer in English or dutch, or both. Not a problem.

Also don’t forget the teacher evaluation. Please fill out those forms. Your evaluation counts. We need to get to 50%.