MEDIEVAL AFFECTIVE PSYCHOLOGY

[1] The Challenge: How to integrate a (new) theory of affective psychology into the neo-Aristotelian synthesis, given that Aristotle said almost nothing about it?

[2] Augustine cast a long shadow over medieval affective psychology, its most profound influence. Prior to the High Middle Ages, Jean de la Rochelle, following on John Blund, was an important figure in the development of theories of the emotions, whereas Anselm of Canterbury was central in the history of the will.

Sensitive Appetite: Emotions

[3] For the most part, medieval theories of the emotions (passiones animae) are (a) cognitive and thereby allow for cognitive penetrability, (b) somatic, and (c) taxonomic. As for (a), I have in mind the view that cognition is essential to the emotions, which are objectual and therefore not merely feelings; they are capable of being influenced by and varying with changes in thought (humans), or beliefs and habits (humans and animals). As for (b), emotions are also essentially bound up with their physiological manifestations, which, even when associated with a particular organ, are more than the actuality of an organic faculty. As for (c), the project was to identify and isolate the essence of the emotions, which are then grouped into something like hierarchical genus/species trees (medical and confessional literature put the taxonomy into practice), which then allows for investigation into their causal interconnections. Under this broad conception of the emotions, disagreement could flourish, eventually settling into two main theories, one slowly eclipsing the other over time.

[4] Put aside two kinds of psychological phenomena that were thought to be largely or purely physiological, and hence not emotions even on the broad conception just outlined. First, what we now classify as drives or urges, such as hunger or sexual arousal, were thought to be at best ‘pre-emotions’ (propassiones): mere biological motivations for action lacking any intrinsic cognitive object. Second, moods were taken to be non-objectual somatic states, completely explicable as the result of an imbalance in bodily humours: depression (melancholia), for instance, is the pathological condition of having an excess of black bile.

[5] From Augustine the High Middle Ages inherited the Stoic fourfold classification of the emotions, in which the fundamental kinds of emotions are distinguished on the one hand by their objects, directed at something good or something evil, and on the other hand by their temporal orientation, directed at either a present object or a future object (De ciuitate Dei 14.5–6):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>present</th>
<th>future</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>good</td>
<td>delight</td>
<td>desire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evil</td>
<td>distress</td>
<td>fear</td>
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These emotions – delight (laetitia), desire (libido/cupiditas/appetitus), distress (aegritudo/dolor), and fear (metus) – are the basic types; all other emotions may be classified as subtypes of these. Despair, for example, is the emotional response to an unavoidable future evil, and hence is one of the varieties of fear. According to this typology, emotions are intrinsically objectual, bound up with a conception of their targets as good or evil. We are not merely distressed but distressed by (or ‘at’ or ‘over’) something. Furthermore, whatever is distressing must be something taken as a present evil; it literally makes no sense to speak of the object of distress in any other way. (Augustine also speaks of these each being a form of will(ing) [= voluntas] in 14.6.) However, Augustine prefers the tradition of ‘common wisdom’ stemming from Plato and Aristotle, declaring: “those philosophers who have come closer to the truth than others have acknowledged that anger and lust are the vice-ridden parts of the soul, in that they
are turbulent and disorderly emotions, inciting us to acts which reason forbids” (14.19). Anger (ira) and lust (libido/concupiscencia) make up the irrational part of the soul, providing an alternative classification of emotions – at least, of irrational emotions – into ‘irascible’ or ‘concupiscible’, a distinction stemming ultimately from Plato (Republic 436a–441c) and adopted by Aristotle (Nicomachean Ethics 1.13 and Rhetoric 1.10). Augustine does not try to reconcile this distinction among emotions with the Stoic fourfold division. The concupiscible/irascible division had been given additional support in the discussion of emotions in the work De natura hominis by Nemesius of Emesa (ca. 400), translated from Greek into Latin in the middle of the eleventh century; some of this material was used by John Damascene (676–749) in his De fide orthodoxa, likewise translated from Greek into Latin in the middle of the twelfth century. Forging a single coherent account from these materials was a challenge taken up in short order.

[6] John Blund, in his Tractatus de anima (ca. 1210), proposed a division of emotions based on their contrary objects. On this score, the basic distinction among emotions is that some are oriented toward good and others toward evil. Following a suggestion made earlier by Isaac of Stella, Blund aligns the distinction of contrary objects with the distinction between the concupiscible and the irascible, so that the concupiscible emotions of love, delight, and desire are directed at the good, and the irascible emotions of hate, distress, and aversion are directed at evils. Blund did not explain why we should classify opposed emotions (love/hate, delight/distress, desire/aversion) as belonging to fundamentally different kinds, a failing that perhaps explains why his proposal was not widely adopted.

[7] The breakthrough came in the Summa de anima of Jean de la Rochelle (1235). Jean suggested, first, that distinction between the concupiscible and the irascible emotions could itself be understood as a matter of the distinct formal objects to which they are oriented, the former being directed at the pleasureable or painful, the latter at the difficult (2.107), a distinction that apparently originated in the 1220s and employed before Jean by Phillip the Chancellor (1160–1236). His reasoning seems to be that we may be either straightforwardly attracted or repelled by something, in the manner of simple ‘push/pull’ Lockean affective psychology, or our attraction and repulsion may involve some sort of effort on our part, and hence not be immediately explicable in terms of simple attraction and repulsion. Second, Jean suggested that emotions can be grouped in contrary pairs as part of their taxonomic classification. Under the generic heading of the concupiscible, for instance, we find conjugate pairs of contrary emotions such as love/hate, desire/avoidance, delight/distress, and three further pairs; under the irascible we find hope/despair, pride/humility, reverence/distem, two further pairs, and two that have no contrary, namely anger and generosity. In neither case are contrary emotions grouped into coordinate species which are exclusive and exhaustive, defined by opposite differentiae; instead, Jean puts forward a multiplicity of criteria, often physiological, that allow several pairs of contraries at the same level. Yet at a stroke Jean de la Rochelle laid out the basic elements of a solution to the challenges facing the construction of an Aristotelian taxonomic theory of the emotions. Bonaventure and Albert the Great, to name only two, adopted Jean’s suggestions and much of his positive account. Albert in particular tried to further systematize Jean’s classification of the emotions by compounding it with physiology and physics (Tractatus de bono 3.5).

[8] Aquinas, in his ‘treatise on the emotions’ (Summa Theologiae 1a2ae qq. 22–48) took the motley principles on which Jean de la Rochelle based his classification of the emotions and underwrote them with clear and careful argument. Aquinas identifies eleven essentially distinct types of emotions, sorted into two kinds and for the most part occurring in conjugate pairs, embodying the (metaphorical) “movement” each involves, as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concupiscible</th>
<th>Irascible</th>
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<tr>
<td>Love (amor)</td>
<td>Hope (spes)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desire (desiderium)</td>
<td>Confidence (audacia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy (gaudium)</td>
<td>Anger (ira)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hate (odium)</td>
<td>Despair (desperatio)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aversion (fuga)</td>
<td>Fear (timor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sorrow (tristitia)</td>
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The concupiscible emotions are directed at (sensible) good or evil, and the irascible emotions at (sensible) good or evil as arduous or difficult; the first row represents the simple tendency of the emotions, the second the movement to the object, and the last the repose in its attainment. The conjugate pairs are contrary either through their formal objects or by ‘approach’ / ‘withdrawal’ – which explains why anger has no contrary, since there is no withdrawal from an evil already present, and a good already present does not involve any difficulty. (See q. 23.2 for details.) Each type of emotion may include a variety of subtypes. For example, anger includes rage, wrath, annoyance, and vindictiveness; love is divided into friendly (amor amicitiae), which seeks the good of its object, and covetous (amor concupiscientiae), which seeks the object for one’s own good. In addition to his taxonomy, Aquinas investigates at length the causal interconnections among the emotions, and also the extent to which they are cognitively penetrable. For instance, he asks whether transport and jealousy (extasis and zelus) are effects of love (28.3-4), whether someone can hate himself (29.4), whether sympathy from friends can alleviate sadness (38.3), whether love is the cause of fear (43.1), and the like. You will doubtless be delighted to learn that youth and drunkenness are causes of hope (40.6) and that anger notably interferes with the ability to reason (48.3).

For Aquinas, then, emotions are complex psycho-physiological objectual states, which may stand in causal relations to one another, and which are at least broadly cognitively penetrable in their native character as passive potencies. His views immediately became the mainstream tradition, widely adopted in outline and often in detail. Yet there was a dissenting tradition, initiated by Scotus and Ockham, who, taking inspiration from Augustine’s classification of the emotions as types of will, identified emotions as features of appetite in general, sometimes passive (as in feeling pleasure or distress) as sensitive reactions, sometimes active (as in choosing to love someone) as intellective attitudes, as Scotus argues in Ord. 3 d. 33 q. 1. Ockham adopted Scotus’s view and argued further that ‘passive’ emotions are causal by-products of ‘active’ emotions unless explicitly suppressed. Scotus identifies the first active emotions of the will to be ‘taking a liking to’ (complacentia) or ‘taking a dislike to’ (displacentia), which are not quite choices but not mere reactions either. Scotus even argues that the formal object of the irascible emotions is “the offensive” (since its primary aim is to overcome or defeat what they are directed at). When adopted in the nominalist tradition, which rejected any but a mere conceptual distinction among the faculties of the soul, the impulse to keep the emotions confined to sensitive appetite as in Aquinas was greatly lessened. (There were other thinkers who followed neither Aquinas on the one hand nor Scotus and Ockham on the other, thinkers such as Adam Wodeham who put forward a thoroughly cognitivist theory of the emotions.) By the Late Scholastic period, even Suárez maintained that Aquinas’s taxonomy of the emotions was just one of several practically useful ways of grouping the emotions; indeed, since there was only a conceptual difference between the concupiscible and the irascible, not grounded in a difference of formal objects (De anima 5.4.3). The stage is thus set for the simplifications of the early modern period, from Descartes’s rejection of taxonomic classification in favor of a combinatorial theory, to Locke’s ‘push-pull’ account of psychology.

**Intelelctive Appetite: Will**

Augustine, who is sometimes said to have ‘invented’ the will (Dihle), used ‘voluntas’ systematically to describe a wide range of phenomena: impulse, whim, wish, want, choice, decision, election/selection, policy, resolve, commitment, sometimes as an act and sometimes as that which stands behind the act – it would be tempting to identify the latter as the ‘faculty’ of will (the will), were it not for all the others uses he makes of it. Nevertheless, Augustine does systematically associate voluntas with psychological phenomena tied in to willing in some fashion or other, making the point clear by the variety of problems associated with it, most notably freedom and responsibility, but also motivation, commitment, the explanation of action, and the like. Augustine also made use of the will in theological contexts to explain what the love of God consists in (and indeed to make some sense of
the Trinity itself). For our purposes, there are three key features of the will in Augustine: (a) the will is naturally directed to the good as its object; (b) the will is able to not pursue the good, either turning away or refraining from its pursuit; (c) the will is the ultimate ground and explanation of action, though it may not have any reason for its action.

[11] Anselm of Canterbury denied (a), argued in his De casu Diaboli that any moral agent must have at least a will-for-justice and a will-for-advantage (following Augustine’s broad use of ‘will’), for otherwise there would be no genuine agency involved, since there would be only one thing to pursue; he also rejects (b) as stated, since an agent acts either on one motive or the other. Anselm returns to his account in his De concordia 3.11, where he makes two crucial modifications. First, he draws a clear distinction between (a) the nature of an instrument; (b) what the instrument is suited for, its ‘dispositions’ [aptitudines]; (c) its actual deployed use. A hammer is an instrument constructed in a certain way, which makes it suitable to drive in nails, the use to which it is often put. The same threefold distinction applies in the case of psychological faculties:

Thus since all instruments have natures, their own dispositions, and their own uses, let us distinguish in the will (for the sake of which we are discussing these points) the instrument, its dispositions, and its uses. We can call these dispositions in the will ‘affections’, since the instrument for willing is affected by its dispositions...

Anselm argues that the faculty of the will, the (psychological) ‘instrument’ of choice, is a single unitary item [una sola], clearly the power behind its occurrent volitions or ‘uses’ – the first sharp picture of the will as a psychological faculty on the one hand, and its elicited acts of volition on the other. Second, he now speaks of a ‘disposition’ or ‘affection’, which he explains as follows:

An ‘affection’ of this instrument [=the will] is that by which the instrument itself is affected so as to will something, even when it is not thinking of what it wills — so that if it comes into the memory, it wills it either immediately or at the right time... The instrument of willing has two dispositions, which I call ‘affections’: one for willing the advantageous, the other for willing uprightness. In fact, the will qua instrument wills nothing but the advantageous or uprightness. For whatever else it wills, it wills either for the sake of the advantageous or for the sake of uprightness, and even if mistaken it thinks itself to relate whatever it wills to them. By the affection which is for willing the advantageous, a human being always wills happiness and to be happy; by the affection which is for willing uprightness, one wills uprightness and what is upright, that is, what is just.

The two types of motivation canvassed in the De casu diaboli are here aligned with the unitary psychological faculty of the will as its ‘affections’: permanent dispositions to respond positively to their proper objects, namely justice (or uprightness) and advantage, which exhaust all motives for action. Hereafter the difference between the will and its acts, and the notion that the will might have some natural direction(s), would be part of the medieval concept of will.

[12] When the De anima inspired the neo-Aristotelian synthesis, the challenge was to understand how the faculty of will could be integrated into human psychological economy. (Angels are relevantly similar on this score but I’ll put them aside for now.) In particular, philosophers proposed various ways in which the will is (i) causally linked to other psychological faculties, especially, though not exclusively, the intellect; and (ii) a locus of agency, since it is unclear when and why the will can initiate, or at least inject, new items into the psychological nexus. These debates were often couched in other terms, notoriously as whether intellect or will is the “superior” faculty, but the fundamental point at stake is trying to forge a coherent account of volition. In some sense it must have worked, since – unlike the account of the emotions – the language of ‘will’ is entrenched in our culture. There is, I think, an overarching progress in developing an account of the will, starring Aquinas, Henry of Ghent, and Scotus, but there is much material besides; things are not as orderly as I’ll try to make

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them seem.

[13] Thomas Aquinas reasoned about the will’s standing as a psychological faculty as follows. We know that there is a faculty of will because we recognize that in addition to processing information, we also respond to it, and often our response runs counter to our desires (*i.e.* the promptings of sensitive appetite). The formal object of the will, then, is the good, which is to say that Aquinas adopts from Augustine a version of the guise-of-the-good thesis: nothing is chosen unless it is seen as good in some way (*nihil uolitum nisi praecognitum sub specie boni*). Furthermore, Aquinas holds that the will has a natural impulse towards what is seen as good. But to be ‘seen’ as good necessarily involves the intellect, the cognitive faculty that presents the will with its object. Hence the will responds to the promptings of the intellect, naturally pursuing what it takes to be the good. This process can be complex; the intellect may deliberate in fine-grained detail about courses of action, or take time in careful assessment and evaluation of a given object, or calculate the consequences of a choice, but in the end the intellect presents some object to the will as the ‘best’ (*whatever that may mean in context*). The will then responds by pursuing the object, eliciting volitions that direct the body, and perhaps the intellect or the rest of the soul, so as to attain the object. The will operates as a natural ‘pre-programmed’ faculty, given the (evaluated) input it receives. In a nutshell, Aquinas thinks that the will’s action is caused and indeed determined by the dictates of the intellect.

[14] Aquinas’s view has the tremendous advantage that it neatly integrates the will into human psychological economy, as a mental module triggered by action-evaluation. Yet it has the tremendous disadvantage that it seems to deprive the will of its essential attribute, namely freedom. Aquinas, to his credit, recognized the latter point and tried to avoid it in several ways. First, he denied that the intellect exercises efficient causality with respect to the will, instead formal or final causality; second, he maintained that the will need only be an internal principle of action, not the ultimate principle of action; third, he argued that the relevant issue is ‘free choice’ which is intrinsically bound up with intellect; fourth, he maintained that the will can direct the intellect in its deliberations and in how things appear. Yet at the end of the day, most philosophers found his view wanting.

[15] Some philosophers defended the general thesis that the intellect is ‘superior’ to the will, while trying to avoid the consequences of Aquinas’s position. Godfrey of Fontaines, for example, held that the intellect and the will are each free faculties, and that their freedom is a result of their being faculties rooted in an immaterial subject. Roughly, Godfrey maintains that even simple acts of the will were bound up in complex ways with acts of the intellect, involving multiple interactions before the two together would jointly cause an act (though with the intellect as the more important cause). But his attempt to find a generalized sense of freedom that would apply to intellect and will was not adopted by many, even as a friendly amendment to Aquinas.

[16] Henry of Ghent rejected Aquinas’s position (often coloured by his quodlibetal disputes with Godfrey). Instead, Henry argued that immateriality did not of itself entail any kind of freedom, but it did make possible something impossible in the physical world, namely self-motion. For Henry, the crucial feature of the will is that it is a self-mover. While the intellect does provide input to the will, the will is not thereby moved by the intellect, as Aquinas, Giles of Rome, and Godfrey of Fontaines held. Rather, according to Henry, the will moves *itself* to an object presented to it by the intellect. Henry therefore tries to avoid the unhappy result that the will’s movement is caused by the intellect by having the will initiate its own action (however that might be accomplished). However, there is still a sense in which the will’s action is determined. The will, as a natural faculty, has a tendency (*an Anselmian affectio*) toward the good. It therefore initiates its self-motion toward the good as presented to it by the intellect. Hence there is a sense in which the intellect determines the will’s uncaused self-motion — it is an occasion and a condition for the will’s action, a *sine qua non* ‘cause’, but that is still capable of preserving the will’s freedom. At least, so Henry maintains. There is one instance in which the will must of necessity act. When confronted with the Beatific Vision, since it lacks no kind

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of goodness at all, the will is simply ‘overcome’ and must love it.

[17] John Duns Scotus builds on Henry’s account in developing his theory of the will. He argues that self-motion is a necessary but not sufficient condition of free will. Unlike Henry, Scotus maintains that self-motion is possible in both material and immaterial cases; he offers a detailed account of modality to show just how one and the same thing can be agent and patient simultaneously (Quaest. in Met. 9.14). For Scotus, the will is both self-moving and self-determining (or self-regulating). The intellect presents the will with some object or objects as good; the will, as a natural faculty, responds to the goodness of each proposed object – but then simply opts for one object rather than another, regardless of how good it may be in comparison to the others. That is to say, for Scotus the will determines an object for itself. The presentation of the intellect may be a sine qua non condition, but the will can reject greater good in favor of lesser good, as it pleases. Scotus carefully distinguishes three kinds of ‘output states’ of the will: (i) willing [uelle]; (ii) niling [nolle]; and (iii) not-willing or refraining [non uelle]. Even when confronted with the Beatific Vision, Scotus holds that the will is not necessitated to love it; even though no good can be found outside the Beatific Vision (so to speak), the will can refrain from eliciting any act. Freedom, for Scotus, turns on the fact that the will can act as it pleases, no matter the object presented by the intellect – in psychological terms, the will receives input from the intellect but is the source of its output.

[18] Perhaps Surprisingly, Scotus presents his account of the self-regulating will in discussing Anselm, laid out most fully in his late Paris lectures. In his Reportatio IIA d. 6 q. 2, Scotus asserts:

The affection-for-advantage and the affection-for-justice do not stem from free will as though they were something added on to it. Instead, the affection-for-justice is (so to speak) its ultimate differentia, such that just as human being is animate substance and animal, yet these are not attributes of the essence but rather belong per se to the understanding of human being, so too appetite can be conceived first, then [conceiving of it as] intellective and cognitive [appetite] while not yet conceiving the affection-for-advantage and the affection-for-justice – and if there were an angel that had a cognitive appetite without an affection-for-justice, it would lack justice, and would not be a free appetite; accordingly, an intellective [appetite], if it were to lack the affection-for-justice, would then naturally pursue what is suitable to the intellect the way that sensitive appetite [pursues] what is suitable to sense, and it would be no more free than sensitive appetite – and so the affection-for-justice is the ultimate specific differentia of free appetite. And although it could be understood more generally, not understanding the specific [nature], these affections are nevertheless not really distinct from the will itself.

The syntax is tangled but Scotus’s point is clear. The affection-for-justice, he declares, is “the ultimate specific differentia” of free will. Neither the affection-for-advantage nor the affection-for-justice is “added on” [superaddita] to the will, outside its essence. Rather, each affection is intrinsic to it, though in different ways. On the one hand, the affection-for-advantage is constitutive of the kind of thing the will is, namely an appetite. Every appetite is, after all, an appetite for something; in the case of the will, the appetite is naturally aimed at advantage – broadly speaking, at the agent’s well-being. On the other hand, the affection-for-justice is what sets free will, found in humans and angels, apart from unfree will, found in cats and weasels. The affection-for-justice is to intellective appetite as rationality is to animate substance: the differentia that sets it off from other things of the same generic kind. Rationality sets humans apart from other animals, with which they are otherwise generically similar. Likewise, the affection-for-justice sets free wills apart from other wills, with which they are otherwise generically similar. Yet as such, the affection-for-justice is not an attribute of the essence of will; there are non-free wills, after all. Rather, the affection-for-justice is the metaphysical feature that makes one kind of will the kind of will it is, namely free. We can conceive of free wills “more generally” by not thinking of the affection-for-justice, just as we can conceive of human beings generically as animals by not thinking of rationality, but when we do so we are deliberately leaving out of consideration features
that are intrinsic to these kinds of things being the very kinds of things they are. Thus the affection-for-advantage constitutes the generic nature of an appetite, the affection-for-justice its specific differentia — as different as chalk and cheese, though each is intrinsic to the species they jointly constitute, namely free intellective appetite. That is why they are “not really distinct” from the will itself, as Scotus asserts; together they are the will, just as rationality and animal nature together are the human being.

[19] There seems to be an obvious and powerful objection to Scotus’s theory of the self-regulating will. If human (free) will is essentially an appetite that is directed at its own well-being — if the only motivational structure a human agent possesses is the affection-for-advantage, that is — why would even a free agent ever be motivated to act in any way but for his advantage? It’s all very well to insist that free will essentially has the capacity to regulate itself. But why would it? What would motivate a free agent to actually regulate its behaviour, since it is only ever motivated by its own advantage?

[20] Scotus replies as follows. Right reason, by its nature, is capable of recognizing the moral principles that obtain in a given choice situation. More exactly, right reason can recognize what appropriate conformity to the Divine Will dictates in a given situation. Yet the mere recognition by right reason of the moral norms that apply to a set of circumstances does not, by itself, count as a motive for abiding by those norms, much less be part of a standing motivation for the will. Right reason may dictate behaviour in accordance with moral norms, but that is not enough for an occurrent or dispositional tendency of the will towards doing the right thing — that is: intellectual recognition of moral norms is not the same as a motivating tendency of the will, an affection-for-justice in Anselm’s sense. For all that, Scotus is careful to point out, the will is capable of following the dictates of right reason. It can do so through its radical freedom, through the very feature that makes it capable of blameworthy evil, namely through perversity: the will can opt for a given course of action without having any dispositional or occurrent motive to do so — indeed, without even having any reason, or in the teeth of reasons to the contrary. The will can choose to follow the dictates of right reason, precisely because they are the dictates of right reason, without (a) being determined to do so, or (b) having any dispositional or occurrent motive for doing so. The agent, of course, has a reason — a good reason — to follow the dictates of right reason, namely because they are the dictates of right reason. But that neither requires nor entails that the agent has any kind of motive to do so. On that score, Scotus is an externalist about reasons: agents can have reasons for action that do not correspond to any internal desire or motive. Our native freedom of the will guarantees that we can act on such external reasons. Moral agents can act in conformity with the dictates of right reason precisely because they are the dictates of right reason. When they take the latter course, they are morally praiseworthy, regulating their motivated action for the sake of their advantage freely in accordance with right reason. Thus self-regulation of the will, Scotus holds, does not in the end depend on the prior existence of a motive for justice. The affection-for-justice, or in Scotus’s terms the self-regulation of the will, has no motivational force whatsoever. It does provide the agent with reasons, but they are external reasons, not in themselves motivating. Instead, the agent must do the right thing not because the intellect determines it to do so, but because it freely chooses to follow the dictates of the intellect, precisely because these dictates are prescribed by right reason; the agent self-regulates his behaviour in pursuit of his well-being in this light.

[21] Scotus’s account of the will came to be the dominant conception, though there was plenty of disagreement. The real drawback from the psychological point of view is that it made free choice ultimately inexplicable — put in terms of the neo-Aristotelian synthesis, it allowed the will to output actions that were not a function of its antecedent inputs. According to Scotus, that’s just the way the will is, but there were many who thought that its very inexplicability was reason to seek a different account. As far as I know, none was forthcoming.
Further Reading

Medieval affective psychology is dealt with in the standard reference works: *The Cambridge History of Medieval Philosophy*, the *Encyclopedia of Medieval Philosophy*, the *Oxford Handbook to Medieval Philosophy*, the several Cambridge Companion volumes dedicated to medieval philosophers, and various articles in the on-line *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

The one-stop shopping reference for medieval theories of the emotions is Knuutila [2004]; an article-length overview I personally rather like is in King [2010], and there are specialized studies covering medieval and early modern philosophy in Lagerlund & Yrjönsuuri [2002] as well as Pickavé & Shapiro [2012]. The period immediately before the High Middle Ages is extensively covered in Lottin [1943] (though mingled with moral matters). The development of Aquinas’s view in light of Albert is covered in Vecchio [2006]. Aquinas’s own account of the emotions is treated in King [1998] and [2011], and at length in Miner [2009]. Scotus is dealt with in Perriah [1998]. Ockham’s view is set out in Etzkorn [1990], and discussed at length in Hirvonen [2004].

The literature on the will is vast, but mostly concerned with its moral aspect rather than its purely psychological character. I suggest starting with the standard reference works and following references as needed.

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