

Early Deliverable: Actual Grace and Temptation for Human Simulation

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1 How does this relate to the research question?

The primary aim of this dissertation is to attempt generating characters for narratives which behave in a more human manner than they do currently. To do this, we need a structure to human action which is founded on how human beings act in reality. My proposed answer is based around Neo-thomist views of Actual Grace and Temptation. This structure will provide the basic skeleton **on which to build the rest of the narrative.**

Within the Roman Catholic Tradition, all good things (thoughts, acts etc.) are said to begin and are sustained with the direct and active action of God. Likewise, all bad actions emerge from one of three sources : The World(Created things), The Flesh (Bodily Desires and Our Nature), and the Devil [1]. These bad actions are permitted by God to some other good end, such as the development of some virtue. To understand why this is the case, some philosophical digression is needed.

2 Why is this the case?

To understand how this operates exactly and why it is the case, it is important to understand who God is, as there is a common misunderstanding that God is simply an object in reality amongst other objects, such as a Teapot. Among the **vast majority of the philosophers and theologians in the Abrahamic Traditions,** this is not the case. The Divine Essence¹ is the

¹Which I define here to make it distinct from Christ's Human Essence, which is indeed an object

singular point where the existence of all things is determined. This is sometimes called absolute being or ultimate reality. If the alternative were true, and all things possessed their own existence in themselves, then all other beings would be determined to exist based on all other objects, since existence would be relative. However, if one of these objects were to cease to be, then all of the relations would with it, and you would have a contradiction where things would simultaneously possess existence and not exist due to the nullifying of the relation which would state that they do exist with the now destroyed object.

Therefore, there must be one single being which holds all others. This has some necessary results. Firstly, this means that a being which has all knowledge of things which are, since this point gives existence to all other things and so it must know them absolutely to do so. Additionally, it can do all things, as things possess existence, and by holding the unifying factor in all things all things can be done. Thirdly, is with all things insofar as he sustains these things, since he possesses their existence. Finally, he is personal, because to grant personality to things in existence, existence itself must have personality. These four things are some of the divine attributes which characterise God as considered in the Abrahamic traditions.

Good things[2] are described as those things which possess existence and therefore are not obtainable without God, as God as possessor of existence itself has to grant this first. However, evil things are always absence of something[2]. So, for example, a robbery is an absence of respect for personal property. Therefore, they must originate from a different source, even if said to achieve existence due to God's permission to some end which produces greater good. This is where the World, the Flesh and the Devil are introduced.

3 How does this work?

All good things, including our very existence, occur because of grace, which is God's help. Actual grace [3] is where God provides the beginning to some good action (including our own , and the reception of this is called Prevenient Grace. In this is contained a choice by the person to accept or reject the grace, which the person freely chooses. If the person chooses, the person receives a Concomitant Grace wherein the good end is obtained. If a person resists, they do not receive this Concomitant Grace. This means that God remains the primary origin of all Good, but also man is the secondary

origin of the good he does, as cooperating with God.

Under temptation, this works in a way almost polar opposite to this. One of the three objects of temptation provides a bad thought or inspiration, which the person can choose to accept to reject. God always provides a grace to flee from the temptation without committing an action contrary to a virtue (which is called a sin in the action, but a vice in habit). However, a person can consent to it, which constitutes resistance to God's grace.

4 How is this implemented?

In the prototype provided with this early deliverable, a very basic class of a character will be presented. Each character will have a Linked List containing event objects. This will be a template for two inheriting classes Actual Grace and Temptation. These classes will articulate the body of the action, the result of cooperating with grace to respective ends and the result for not doing so.

References

- [1] F. N. Nelson, *Father nick nelson: The sources of temptation — the flesh, the world, and the devil — diocese of duluth*, <https://www.dioceseduluth.org/blog/the-northern-cross/father-nick-nelson-the-sources-of-temptation-the-flesh-the-world-and-the-devil>, (Accessed on 06/23/2021).
- [2] A. of Hippo, *Confessions*. Oxford University Press, 400, p. 341, ISBN: 192833723.
- [3] R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *The Three Ages of the Interior Life*. Createspace Independent Pub, 2013, ISBN: 9781492390978. [Online]. Available: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=4qWEngEACAAJ>.