CHAPTER VII

THE CONATIVE

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The faculty of the will or the conative dimension is a distinct dimension of the *anthropos*. One of its earliest articulations was made in the Scholastic philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Many existentialist philosophers have also predicated the conative dimension. Huit and Cain say: “Conation is defined as the mental process that activates and/or directs behavior and action. Various terms used to represent some aspect of conation include intrinsic motivation, goal-orientation, volition, will, self-direction and self-regulation.”

The will or volition has been called one of the trilogies of the mind: cognition, conation and affect (Hilgar, 1980, pp. 107-117). We look at the will, the intellect, the process of cognition and the network of relationships among these entities to ultimately understand the conative dimension. We delineate aspects of the will and its role in the exercise of authority, enjoying freedom responsibly and decision-taking. The discussion ends with a view of the *anthropos* who develops from someone with an incipient, wishful will to somebody who has acquired conative mastery.

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139 Huit and Cain, in their 2005 paper, present a summary account of the conative element in educational context. Strategies to adopt for conative development of the child are suggested to parents and educators. See ‘An overview of the conative domain’ in *Educational Psychology Interactive*. See http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/brilstar/chapters/conative.pdf
### 7.1 THE INTELLECT

We draw upon the ideas of Aristotle, Saint Thomas Aquinas and Albertus Magnus, and formalize an understanding of the intellect. Accordingly, the intellect is the ability of the mind to arrive at the right conclusion about truth and reality. Intellect comes from the Latin word, *intellectus*, in verb form it is *intelligere*, and comes into English as *intelligence*. The intellect is the dimension of thought. Its principal functions include attention, conception, judgment, reasoning, reflection and self-consciousness (Laos, 2015, p. 52 and Watkins, 2012, p. 47). The intellect does not have its origin in the body as sensation does; it is of supra-organic dimension. The principal functions of the intellect are indicative of this transcendental character. The functions listed above involve elements different from sense-cognition. For example, conception forms ideas that are universal. These are different from phantasm and sensuous images in the mind’s eye. Sensible images are concrete and have a definiteness. Those images apply to a particular, unique object, whereas a concept has wider applicability to different objects of the same class. While sensuous or perceptual images change with time, the universal concepts or conceptual understanding have a certain fixity, order and structure. We had mentioned this in Chapter 4 under the Section 4.11, ‘The Mind and Body Indistinguishable’. The difference between conception and perception can be further delineated through the following example: birth applies to any living organism in the

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140 See elucidation of the intellect in Catholic Encyclopaedia, [www.newadvent.org/cathen/08066a.htm](http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08066a.htm)
universe but the birth of a child is particular to certain parents. A simile can be drawn from the geometrical entity of a hexagon. Whereas a hexagon can be applied to any specimen variously conceptualized, the image of a particular hexagon with size, color and embellishments applies to a particular instance. The act of cognition results in a concept with the essence of the object being withdrawn from its individualizing conditions. It may be understood as abstraction that leads to generalization of ideas.

We briefly consider three principal functions: (i) judgment, (ii) reasoning, and (iii) reflection, mentioned above. In the case of judgment, the mind is grappling with a pair of contraries of two discordant concepts. Such situations include making a choice between good and evil, right and wrong, perfect and imperfect (McCaul, 2011, p. 15). All these are pairs of contraries. Also, in a court of law, we see a case sharply divided between the prayers of the plaintiff and the accused. It is a divergent set of options before the judge, a ‘to be or not to be’, a la Shakespearean situation. Judgment renders a dispassionate decree in favor of one of the contraries.

The dimension of reason rests with the intellect. It may be ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’ reason. Theoretical reason looks retrospectively and prospectively at a situation and resolves it by processing, which is comparing and contrasting issues of facts and observations made. It is an empirically supported method that deals with hard data. It typically finds expression in the natural and social sciences. Practical reasoning, on the other hand, is a consideration and weighing of

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141 The Stanford encyclopaedia of philosophy draws a clear distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning. See http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/practical-reason/#PraTheRea
values. It deliberates about what ought to be done in a specific instance. It is typically the response to a predicament at the personal level.

In reflection or reflective thinking and self-consciousness, the mind achieves a correspondence between the knowing subject and the object which is known. Aristotle puts it thus, ‘to say that [either] that which is is not or that which is not is, is a falsehood; and to say that that which is is and that which is not is not, is true’\(^{142}\). In simple terms, this is to clearly state that white is white and black is black. Notice that it is a correspondence between what language has stated a thing to be and its actual metaphysical identity. Also, it may be considered a depiction of a correspondence of relations between objects and a statement of that relationship through language.

All of these functions however, are incompatible with sensible apprehension. We derive meaning when we apply universal terms to intelligible propositions. The thought through which meaning is derived in the mind is the universal idea. Rousseau emphasizes the precedence the senses over the mind (see block quote by Rousseau in section 4.6), Locke calls the mind essentially a ‘blank slate’ before the senses convey data to it, *Tabula Rasa*\(^{143}\), and Berkeley\(^{144}\) has famously articulated that all

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\(^{143}\) John Locke of the British empiricist school took the position that the mind is blank until material information is supplied to it via the gate of the senses. He called the mind ‘tabula rasa’ or ‘blank slate’ in Latin. See http://www.britannica.com/topic/tabula-rasa
reality is attributed to perception. By implication, all three philosophers above deny that the intellect can have universal ideas—truth is accessed through a particular instance as comprehended by the senses. The internalization of the truth is a completely inductive process at the origin of which are sense-interaction and the objective environment. These philosophers held on to the sense-based apprehension of knowledge. This is the perceptual way of intake of knowledge, where the body holds primacy, whereas, Descartes (cogito) and Kant\textsuperscript{145} hold that the intellect was of a higher order than the senses. Aquinas’ alternative scheme makes intellection a combinatorial process that employs both the senses and the intellect (see footnote in Section 7.3, ‘The Metaphysics and Operative Characteristics of the Will’ on ‘intellection’ by B. Joseph Francis, Scholastic philosophy of intellection).

The phenomenon of cognition works through the senses. According to this understanding, the mind cognizes what the sense perceives. Sensation is provided by the body and the intellect operates on sense information. The process of cognition proceeds thus: starting from the five senses, information enters the mind, where common sense, an

\textsuperscript{144} Bishop George Berkeley is famous for his coinage “to be is to be perceived”, another affirmation that the senses are the initial way to perceive the objective world. See http://www.britannica.com/topic/esse-est-percipi-doctrine

\textsuperscript{145} Immanuel Kant made the famous assertion on the primacy of reason over the senses: “All our knowledge begins with the senses, proceeds then to the understanding, and ends with reason. There is nothing higher than reason.” See Faye Brenner, \textit{Transforming student travel}, p. 18, 2015.
internal sense, working in tandem with information just received, creates a sense image. It happens both in the human and animal world. Animals respond to this sense image through instinct, whereas human beings are deliberate and exercise their intellects and their wills. The initial instinct of the new born child is to sense the temperature, pressure and humidity of the environment as it lets out the first pangs of birth. A repetition of certain sensations and their association with other sensations enable their apprehension more definitely and concretely. Many groups of sensations by virtue of contiguous association become united. The activity of one group fires up another. In this way, sense perception is constantly being refined. The higher powers of the intellect come into action, first almost imperceptibly and weakly. The mind takes objects as wholes and does not discriminate the parts. Attention is sharpened and augmented through repetition and variation of sense-perceptions. The process of abstraction is set into motion through the intellect which concentrates on entities of pleasure and pain experienced by the anthropos. Certain groups of sense perceptions are preferred and certain others are ignored or omitted. Critical discrimination and analytical comparison are called to play their role and conceptual elaboration proceeds accurately and fast.

Most Aristotelians (Frank & Leaman, 1997, p. 308) make a sharp distinction between the universal and particular categories, “For most Aristotelians, genuine knowledge is of the universal, the necessary and the permanent in nature, and not of the concrete particular, the possible, or the transient. A knowledge that includes particulars would be inferior to one that does not…” These universal categories are knowable by all humans. And the only way that would be possible is if there is a central repository
where all these ideas reside, like in a main-frame computer (Kraemer, 2003, pp. 38-68). All knowledge, therefore, is drawn from the singular ‘universal mind’, the spectator and judge of all human actions (Low, 1810, p. 52). The active intellect is the universal, single mind that enlightens all human beings. Catholic philosophical literature along with Aquinas holds that all things (including the intellect) are completely dependent on God (Glick, Livesey & Wallis, 2014, pp. 37-38).

In ancient Greek thought, there were two aspects to the dimension of knowledge and the cognitive aspects of the mind – the one originates through the corporeal sense perceptions, whereas the other, originates in divinity.146 For Plato, there is sense-data (horaton) and intellectual-data (noeton).147 Sense merely provides imperfect knowledge, which is called pístis (belief) and eikasia (conjecture). Noeton, which is the channel to the intelligible world works with Nous or “intuitive reason,” and logos, which is the “discursive reason”. By its proper process (episteme),

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146 Of the two kinds of thoughts, lower, grosser and baser are the thoughts that originate in the embodied, corporeal person, whereas the other which is more refined and of a higher order comes from the divine order. See http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08066a.htm

147 Plato terms sense-data as horaton and intellectual data as noeton. Sense data theorists claim that the image formed by the mind of an object truly reflects the object, like a tomato in its entirety, whereas, other philosophers would contend the senses can sometimes deceive us, just like a spoon bent in water. See https://www.ewtn.com/library/HOMELIBR/08066A.TXT. Also, see http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/sense-data/
noueton attains to dianoia or conception. The world of ideas is the true and real world; the world of sense is for Plato a poor imitation.\textsuperscript{148}

Aristotle presents a theory of intellectual cognition divided into the active intellect or the \textit{nous poietikos}\textsuperscript{149} and the passive intellect or the \textit{nous pathetikos}.\textsuperscript{150} Aristotle teaches that the passive intellect receives all intelligible forms of things, but it is the active intellect that converts the potential knowledge into actual knowledge. This is somewhat like light, which has colors contained in it. As Newton’s theory of light predicts and high school students verify in experiments in physics, the prism exhibits the entire array of the spectrum of white light. The active intellect extracts meaning out of the image and the passive intellect compares, contrasts, analyses and synthesizes the meaning with reference to memory (Francis, 2005, p. 10).

Concluding our elucidation of the intellect, we have the author Celestine Bittle, in true Thomistic terms, combining the sensuous and the intellect in quite an interesting way. Bittle predicates thus, “The intellect penetrates the concrete appearances of things and cognizes the sensible in an abstract and universal manner, thereby arriving at knowledge of ‘what things are’” (Bittle, 1945, p. 352).

\textsuperscript{148} The world of senses was subject to changes and was therefore imperfect and inferior. See http://www.scandalon.co.uk/philosophy/plato_forms.htm
\textsuperscript{149} The \textit{Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy} distinguishes between the active and passive intellects. See http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-psychology/active-mind.html
\textsuperscript{150} Ibid
7.2 EXISTENCE OF THE WILL

There has been much debate on the existence of the will. There is also a question of whether the dimension of volition or will exists separately as a power, which is distinct from other mental functions mentioned under the previous section, ‘Intellect’. We shall present some views for and against the existence of the will. In history, among the first to profess it was Socrates (Phillips, 1962, p. 277) around 400 BC. His insight was that the human desires only the good (Phillips, 1962, p. 277). The corollary was that if the anthropos were to desire evil, it would be because of ignorance. There had to be an agent that desires this good, and that agent was the will for Socrates. Aristotle held that the human must be held responsible for his moral state (Phillips, 1962, p. 277). S/he is obliged to make a choice. The philosopher, Spinoza denied freedom and argued for intellectual determinism, which is of a mathematical inevitability that takes things to their logical ends. There was no will or freedom in Spinoza’s worldview. In the seventeenth century, Leibniz\textsuperscript{151} was advocating the idea of determinism, where things happen because of moral necessity. Leibniz also concluded that there was no room for the will; everything was automatically determined by monads. Kant in the world of ethics claimed that the will exists and is superior to reason.\textsuperscript{152}

\textsuperscript{151} The Internet encyclopaedia of philosophy reports: “Leibniz argues that things seem to cause one another because God ordained a pre-established harmony among everything in the universe.” See http://www.iep.utm.edu/leib-met/

\textsuperscript{152} Immanuel Kant clearly asserts the will. In \textit{Groundwork of the metaphysics of morals} in 1785, Kant said: “Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and
And early in the twentieth century, Hitler told his troops that he achieved German unity “merely with my fanatical willpower.”

The philosopher, Gilbert Ryle held that the will is an “artificial concept,” and Nietzsche called it “the most fateful falsification in psychology hitherto [that] was essentially invented for the sake of punishment” (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 402). Some others accepted it as legitimate but made reasons to obviate it. Many others saw it as an inevitable element in life – Hannah Arendt saw the will as impotent because it hinders itself, and wherever it does not hinder itself, as in Jesus Christ, it does not exist (Arendt, 1978, p. 70). All major religions avow the reality of the will. The word ‘Islam’ means ‘surrender to the will of God’. Saint Augustine has said: “Will is to grace as horse is to the rider,” implying that the rider (divine grace) decides where, when and how the horse (will) should go. And Jesus has said: “… not my will, but yours be done” in the Garden of Gethsemane prayer.

The will, according to scholastic philosophy, is spiritual or intellectual appetite. Bernard Lonergan, in Insight - A study of Human Understanding, says: “as capacity for sensitive hunger stands for sensible

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153 Hitler is credited with having said in his speech to the German army that he achieved German unity essentially by his fanatical will power. ‘Adolf Hitler: Proclamation on Assuming Direct Command to the German Army’ (21 Dec 1941). See https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/fuhrer.html

154 Gilbert Ryle vociferously negated the existence of the will. See http://www.informationphilosopher.com/solutions/philosophers/ryle/the_will.html

food, so the will stands to objects presented by intellect” (Lonergan, 1965, p. 598). Bittle similarly says: “Just as sensuous appetency is the counterpart of sense perception, so volition is the counterpart of intellection” (Bittle, 1945, p. 352).

If we were to deny that volition in its own right has a definite operation, we would have also to deny that the will exists as a distinct power of the *anthropos*. The author, T. V. Moore sums up the evidence for the existence of the will, which we have paraphrased as follows:¹⁵⁶

i. **Facts of Attention:** Human attention can manifest in two ways: the involuntary and the voluntary. In the former case, we are forced or summoned by situations to offer our attention when a stimulus is made to our sensible selves. Imagine a situation when we enter a dark room and suddenly have light shining directly into our eyes; or a situation when somebody on the road suddenly blares the horn at us; or visualize a situation where we are deliberately shoved in a crowd. In all these distasteful experiences, our body will recoil and we are forced to pay immediate attention to the stimulus. All of these are involuntary. It just happens to us. On the other hand, we have situations in which our attention is offered by our own deliberate act. We could, for instance, direct our attention on a particular, non-descript leaf on a tree; or perhaps mentally follow a particular face in the crowd at a railway station. These

¹⁵⁶T. V. Moore, Dynamic Psychology, Part VI, Chapter I – V. Also see http://www.researchgate.net/publication/31784144_DYNAMIC PSYCHOLOGY_AN_INTRODUCTION_TO_MODERN_PSYCHOLOGICAL_THEORY_AND_PRACTICE_THOMAS_VERNER_MOORE
are acts of attention, which we have employed voluntarily, when there is nothing really there to stimulate us. We have just chosen to concentrate on these sights purely through our will power.

ii. **Resolving on a task:** Imagine that someone has proposed a task to us; or perhaps that we have proposed one to ourselves. What follows is the act of accepting or refusing to take it up. If we have resolved to accomplish that task, we experience a certain determination to carry it out. This determination is very different from any sense image or feeling accompanying the process of deliberation. These feelings and images are sure to run out of strength for us, but the determination we have found helps us to stay the course. While the former is fleeting and peters out easily, the latter has a motive force; it sustains our interest and helps us to make progress.

iii. **Reaction-Time Experiment:** Psychologists tell us that in experiments measuring the time taken to make a choice in pursuing a particular course of action, they find that all subjects invariably took some time to prepare for the task and arrive at a state of readiness. However, it was found that the action itself would follow only after a distinct choice had been made and a fiat had been issued. This command or fiat was distinct from the various facts considered – it was a special element in the entire process of decision making and acting.

iv. **Control of Emotions:** In situations when we are emotionally stimulated, we have the option of focusing on the ‘cause of the emotion’ or the ‘emotion itself.’ So long as we do the former, we are agitated and deeply embroiled, but if we consider our emotion itself, anger for instance, we will find that it quickly evaporates away. It is precisely the
voluntary mental act of diverting our attention away from the cause of our emotion that restores our equanimity. We work against the natural progression of the consequences of our emotion to break free of it through the exercise of the will.

v. **Inhibition of Impulses and Desires:** In both animals and humans, desires and impulses are the springboard for actions. Instinctual action is the norm in the animal world. Humans also do it, but not always. The *anthropos* is set apart because s/he can exercise a power so that s/he need not succumb to instinct; instead s/he has the power to curb it and take an alternative trajectory for action. There is often a greater commitment or a deeper sense of duty underlying this behavior. This kind of action is rational and supra-sensory, and demands a dimension that is also rational and supra-sensory in the *anthropos*.

vi. **Readjustment of mode of life:** In the course of life, people sometimes face strong reverses like the death of a dear one, or the collapse of a business, or a debilitating illness. In response to such situations, one is forced to chart an entirely new course. The readjustment needed is agonizing and takes a toll on the person. There is very little to rely on, to hold on to. One is stripped down to one’s elements for mere survival, to the barest essentials to keep body and soul together. There are two options here: the first is shirking responsibility; one can follow the line of least resistance and avoid facing up to reality. On the other hand, one can face and accept the reality and follow the line of greatest resistance. One needs to make demanding sacrifices. We are wired naturally to avoid and shirk responsibility. Yet, it occurs not infrequently that people do take the difficult and narrow path. In so doing, people take
a momentous decision, an almost superhuman resolve in complete surrender to the great unknown, in opposition to one’s strongest desires and inclinations. The evidence of a distinct dimension is most evident in experiences of this kind.

These behaviors displayed by the *anthropos* cannot be accounted for by any kinesthetic sense-based feeling or complex mental image. It requires the presence of the volition and the will. It appears from the above that Moore presents a good argument for the existence of the will.

### 7.3 THE METAPHYSICS AND OPERATIVE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WILL

The will is defined as “the rational appetency or the power to strive for an intellectually perceived good and to shun an intellectually perceived evil” (Bittle, 1945, p. 354). Though we have used the words, ‘will’ and ‘volition’ interchangeably, the meaning of volition is ‘will in action,’ whereas ‘the will’ itself is ‘a capacity’ (Lonergan, 1965, p. 598) that functions as a distinct dimension, far removed from other functions of the mind. The word ‘conative’ is an adjective that comes from the noun ‘conatus,’ which the Webster’s dictionary defines as a wish, a natural tendency, a striving. The will is not a cognitive power but rather an appetitive power. Evidently, this natural tendency to strive is plainly manifest in all animals and humans. It is in the nature of an appetitive power to bring about a consummation between the striving subject and the object sought. This power of appetency is given to the *anthropos* in order to strive for the object desired, in a manner better than an animal by taking more data into consideration. At its most basic level, it is the *anthropos,*
who thinks and wills. The *anthropos* perceives a good in an object through his/her intellect and strives for it with his or her will; similarly, there is perception of evil by the intellect, and the will shuns it.

Among all appetencies, the appetency of the will is of a higher order. All sensible appetencies seek consummation through the senses; the object of desire being concrete, particular and material. Some of these goods are health, wealth, a holiday, food and sleep. However, the appetency of the will desires the ontologically true and the ontologically good. They go beyond the material, the particular and the concrete. Some of these may be esteem in society, deep knowledge, cultivation of a virtue like patience, and a relationship with God. All these affect human beings. Bittle predicates that anything that is a being has the nature of being true and good.157 The intellect is capable of knowing the truth and the will is capable of desiring the good.

We need to understand the terms ‘desire,’ ‘motive’ and ‘motivation’ more intricately before we proceed because the activity of the will is connected to these. According to Bittle, “Desire is a longing aroused by the conscious representation of an absent good” (Bittle, 1945, p. 361); whereas, “Motive is anything which prompts or excites the will to action” (Bittle, 1945, p. 362); and motivation is “the arousal of the will from a state of inaction into a state of action” (Bittle, 1945, p. 363). The object that is the good holds some attraction for the subject. The will then has a natural tendency to seek it. There are two factors for turning a desire into a motive: the goodness of the object and the subjective factor of intellectual knowledge. Without ‘goodness intrinsic in the object’ and

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157 C. N. Bittle, *Domain of being*, Chapter XV, 1939.
without the ‘intellectual knowledge that the object is good,’ the subject cannot desire it. The will is totally dependent on the intellect for an appeal to the goodness of the object. A lot depends on knowledge, moral training and general temperament of the individual for an object or experience to become a strong or weak motive. The good desired is thus a value. The intellectual presentation of value as a motive enables the act of willing.

Conscious apprehension of value is the first step for motivation. The second step is that the motive should have sufficient strength of attraction to produce volition. There are several ways the strength can be enhanced. The modus operandi is first, to revisit the basic proposition and dwell on its various positive attributes until there is buy-in by the intellect. Second, one could contrast the proposition with its diametrical opposite, or evil. The motive thereafter is presented as greatly desirable. The more powerful the motive(s), the firmer will be the will, and the subject can move from indecision to decision. When there are conflicting motives, it is not the strongest motive that results in willing, but rather the independent person without any coercive influence on the self that makes the final decision. The will therefore is paramount, even if it be irrational. It is the subjective and regal prerogative of the will to pursue a particular course from among multiple options.

We have seen two distinct faculties of the \textit{anthropos}: the ‘intellect or the mind’ and the ‘will or the volition.’ Let us look at the interaction of the two. The mind is always ordained to reality and the process of apprehension proceeds from the subject to the object (logical truth). The logical truth is arrived at by the working of the mind (connections,
implications, causalities etc.) and is directed from the individual to the object. For example, to write an essay and furnish reasons for one’s intended action, one has to find the right words and articulate it as speech. Logical truth helps in doing that. There is also a process in the reverse direction, proceeding from the object to the subject (ontological truth). Ontological truth is the process, which the mind goes through when faced with a problem; s/he must face and decipher it. An example would be the reaction to a complicated problem posed. One has to understand exactly what is intended and therefore goes about asking questions. Ontological truth proceeds from the predicament faced to the subject facing it.

Here, there is a direct correspondence between reality and the intellect. In the normal course, the intellect examines all data including facts, principles, conjectures, logic and rationality to suggest a logical truth to the will for a decision to be made. This is business as usual for the intellect and the will. However, there are occasions of self-interest, haste and expediency in human life, when there is insufficient time and little opportunity for the intellect to assess a situation, and all data cannot be objectively considered and assimilated, but an action nevertheless is exigent. In such situations, the will overrules the intellect, and the intellect does not function normally. The will interferes with the intellect, which is wrongly informed. An error-prone decision and a faulty action ensue. According to Thomistic epistemology, intellection is fairly straightforward in its purpose: it seeks to apprehend reality, although the process of intellection is very complex.

Explicating scholastic philosophy of ‘Intellection’, B. Joseph Francis (2005, p. 10) articulates as follows: stimuli impinge on the bodily
self through sense organs. The activities of the sense faculties are
coordinated by the ‘common sense’. The various sense data produce a
sense image or sense phantasm. An automatic stimulus-response reaction
is produced. The spontaneous interaction of these changes give rise to
sensation. Animals share the experience up to this point. In human
beings, there is a conscious mind which transcends matter and is powerful
to extract what is adequate to its working.
Figure 3. An abstraction of the process of intellection according to Scholastic Philosophy.

The human mind is made of the active mind (active intellect) and the passive mind (passive intellect). The active intellect extracts from the sensible phantasm the intelligible elements leaving out the contingent or accidental elements, the grossness or crassness of the image, retaining only its intelligible elements. Now the active intellect impresses the intelligible elements on to the passive intellect. The passive intellect in its turn, taking over, compares and contrasts the intelligible impressions with what is stored in its memory. After such comparisons and contrasts, it
produces an internal phantasm or internal word. The internal word is referred back to the object. At this stage, the intellect gives its assent and makes a statement or judgment. A judgment is based on evidence from the object. An attitude to the object is adopted, the internal word becomes an external word, and a concept is born. It is thereafter stored in memory and knowledge has come into the subject. In conformance with Adler’s aphorism (Adler, 1942, p. 211), “the mind naturally supports knowledge as the earth naturally supports vegetation,” we could say that the mind easily wrests the truth.

There is a strong and highly developed system in place in the educational world to cater to the intellect. But the same cannot be said of the will, which is more vulnerable and in need of training and development. Along with the intellect then, education of the will has to be high on the agenda of human development.

7.4 DEVELOPING VOLITIONALLY

The conative dimension in humans needs to be seriously cultivated and developed. In its most incipient state, it is very uni-dimensional and desires only self-gratification and self-preservation. However, as the *anthropos* matures into a person with responsible roles in family, society, profession and government, the ‘mere wishing conative person’ must metamorphose into someone with a more developed, sophisticated will. The *anthropos* should own a ‘will that matures’ to the point of accepting sacrifices and suffering for greater good. Such a will has a more varied texture and works with deliberation, as opposed to being merely a wishful will.
There should be no doubt that the will needs to be educated, or to put it simply, to be ‘informed’. Educating the will develops the dimension of volition, and enables the appropriate use of personal intentions and how we decide to use our energies. Just as a student has to labor (Lonergan, 1965, p. 598) patiently for many years to gain mastery over a subject, one has also got to be exposed to situations to exercise the will. Surely, little children are not ideally placed to do this. Sometime after adolescence, when a person acquires some spiritual autonomy, s/he begins to assert the self and exercise one’s will. This kind of will is deliberate in that it takes into account the assessment of the intellect, but the will itself is a non-deliberative dimension. Attaining this state may be called ‘conative maturity’. However, there can be no age that can be thought of as the precise stage of conative maturity. A person who has not acquired the required mastery needs to be persuaded, cajoled and attracted to submit in willingness. Yet, when one does acquire mastery, one leaps into willing without the need for any persuasion (Lonergan, 1965, p. 598).

We find our wills in action many times in the course of a day. Beginning with getting out of bed when there is a tendency to sleep-in and continue slumbering, one is sometimes suddenly hit as by a thunderbolt to wake up and face the day. Further into the day, the anthropos may prefer driving to office or school, s/he may contemplate walking, and walk even though it may involve great effort. Once in the office, s/he may find an offensive message on the email. S/he may feel like letting out some

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explosive epithets but refuses to be reactive. S/he needs the job to take care of the family and decides to display charity that returns good for evil. These instances point to the exercise of the will. Emotions and impulses of the senses are at work, and so are the intellect and one’s moral nature. One is constantly debating whether or not to act. One weighs the various options and chooses between moral good and moral evil. There is the reality of influencing motives as also of freedom of choice and responsibility for action. The person can act on impulse or after deliberation. The intellect may suggest a particular course, but the person is free to ignore that proposition and make his / her own choice. Some of the verbs involved in willing are: resisting, pushing for, inspiring, playing, resolving, and organizing. In all these instances, there is a conscious preference towards the intellectually perceived good and conscious rejection of the intellectually perceived evil.

Let us close this section with a particularly thorny aspect of conative maturity by drawing an analogy to 5th Century BC Sparta. This paragraph draws upon Martha Nussbaum’s work on the classical defense of reform in liberal education, Cultivating Humanity (1997, p. 54). Spartans of the 5 Century BC were a highly-disciplined race steeped in military traditions. However, they did not practice democracy as did the Athenians of their time. They conceived of good citizens as obedient followers of traditions, who preferred uncritical acceptance of Athenian public argument and debate. Spartans preferred authoritarian politics to democracy. The historian, Thucydides depicts Spartans of the 5th century as a wayward people when they were outside the narrow confines of law and rule-imposition. It was noted that once the Spartans were abroad and
unencumbered by the confines of rule and law, they often behaved poorly. This was because they had worked well under supervision, but never knew how to handle freedom. Freedom forces the *anthropos* to make choices for the self. “Man is condemned to be free; because once thrown into the world, he is responsible for everything he does,” said Sartre (Burnett, 2006, p. 236). Owing to this lack of conative maturity, Spartans of the time were ill-equipped for freedom, exercising their volition incompetently, and living irresponsibly when not under watch.

This has a grave implication for education: an important aspect of education is that it fosters genuine choice and exposes one to the discipline of decision-making. Students must learn how to handle freedom. Later in life they are expected to understand their roles in an environment that fosters independence. Good education enables an active enquiry, part of which is critically asking questions and contrasting alternatives. This leads the *anthropos* to reach conative maturity and take decisions responsibly. S/he monitors and regulates the self and does not need external directives like the 5th century Spartans mentioned. They use their power of volition in a mature way and take good decisions and stand by the commitments those decisions entail. In the name of discipline, therefore, let not educators clamp down on critical enquiry by students, but engage with them in Socratic interchange and allow them to generate alternatives and make conscious, reasoned choices in the quest to developing volitionally. Socratic interchange means dialoguing and helping students reason about their beliefs (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 19). It is a kind of philosophical engagement that requires the ability to reason, and not the ability to apply specialized knowledge (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 45).
Nussbaum essentially sees philosophy here as ‘method’ rather than ‘a body of knowledge’ just like Wittgenstein. This view implies mastering the ability to arrive at the truth by employing reason rather than expertise. The former is applicable universally in all epistemic problems, whereas the latter has got its own bounds in a particular knowledge area.

7.5 ENJOYING FREEDOM RESPONSIBLY

Only a free person can be held responsible, and only a responsible person can be free (Pettit, 2001, pp. 1-2). To enjoy true human freedom, one does not look for an absence of encumbrances. Freedom is a deeply spiritual value and requires a mature will that is deliberate in reflection and skillful in action. In the following few paragraphs, we see how the will is connected to freedom, how it can be lost and how it is best exercised through maturity.

Volition or will is closely connected to the spirit, which is the energy of our lives, the life-force that keeps us active and dynamic. Freedom is the capacity to do good. Let us look at the principle by which the anthropos routinely indulges in the exact opposite, i.e., evil. A human person cannot will evil for the self, knowing that it is evil, because that way the person would be striving for his or her own destruction, which would be preposterous. How then do we account for evil admittedly stirred up by the anthropos? People willingly eat and drink in excess, while knowing that it may be harmful to health; and they seek illicit sex pleasure knowing that it is immoral. All these erode the will and diminish freedom. How do we explain the role of the will, which we have understood as striving only toward the good? Let us remember that the
will acts in close association with the intellect. The will itself is blind and relies on the intellect to know if something is good or evil. Intellect, however, is not infallible, and often makes errors of judgment by considering things as desirable, when not always so. Therefore, when the will is striving for something that is evil, it does so solely under the aspect of a good.

The psychologist, Gerald May conceives of the will in terms of two diametrically opposed notions – ‘Willingness’ and ‘Willfulness’ (May, 1982, p. 5) Willingness and willfulness are modes of engagement with the world. The only other option is to avoid engagement entirely, which may be called will-lessness:

Willingness has to do with surrender to the other’s will. Willingness implies a surrendering of one’s self-separateness, an entering into, an immersion into the deepest process of life itself. It is a realization that one already is part of some ultimate cosmic process and it is a commitment to participation in that process. In contrast, willfulness is setting oneself apart from the fundamental essence of life in an attempt to master, direct, control or otherwise manipulate existence. More simply, willingness is saying yes to the mystery of being alive in each moment. Willfulness is saying no, or perhaps more commonly, ‘Yes, but….’ (May, 1982, p. 6)

Both the attitude of willingness and will-fulness, need to be properly developed in the anthropos. There are times when we must surrender ourselves, just as there are times when we must assert ourselves. The wisdom is to know when to use either mode of engaging, and that has to be a subject for education. A correct understanding and practice of
willingness, enhances human freedom as it expands one’s horizon and ability to play, work and live with others.

The aggressive avatar of will-fulness manifests in the insistence of the autarchic self-will that recognizes no authority but one’s own. This is an aberration, and can be seen in most people including infants, who throw tantrums to get their way. The will is prone to self-exaltation and seeks to gratify itself at any cost. Nature builds itself into this mode of living and expression – it is perhaps one’s instinctual need for self-preservation that makes this happen. Extreme will-fulness may be seen as having absolute freedom. However, it merely makes one a prisoner of one’s own self-indulgent whims.

The third kind of manifestation of the will is will-lessness. This may be seen in the case of some administrative functionaries under politicians’ influence. S/he understands the imperatives and knows the consequences but does not act due to pressure from political bosses. Here is a situation when one is a rational knower but not a rational doer. This is what gives birth to will-lessness. Will-lessness may also be due to a ‘loss of volition,’ which is a psychiatric condition, where the will seems to be completely absent and one cannot summon the grit to take a stand or act on a decision. Human freedom is destroyed because the person refuses to engage and retreats into a comfortable cocoon.

We have seen three modes in which the will manifests itself with its impact on human freedom. In what follows, we shall see some of the internal challenges the *anthropos* faces in exercising his/her will. The challenges are conceptualized as those negating a consummation of intellect and will.
The anthropos is not only a knower but also a doer. Rational consciousness and intelligence that grounds knowing (intellect) and doing (the will in action) are intimately connected. However, the two need not always proceed in tandem. There can be a huge chasm between knowing and doing, which is nevertheless subject to an exigency for self-consistency. Human nature often dodges this exigency. Lonergan admits three reasons for it: avoiding self-consciousness, rationalization and moral renunciation (Lonergan, 1965, pp. 599-600).

Avoiding self-consciousness is avoiding involvement, which is a widespread affliction. The person will pass the buck because s/he has very little at stake. What is seen is that one will be there to claim a share of the rewards, but will offer ruse after ruse to remain non-committal and uninvolved in all that went before. Also, the emotions of such a person are better balanced – s/he has (almost!) nothing to lose. Only a person who is deeply involved will explode in emotional outburst, when there is dishonesty in the details. This leads into the idea of responsibility. Responsibility is the ability to respond, but doing so while believing that God is an agent in the process. Richard Niebuhr gives a comprehensive view on responsibility: “Responsibility affirms: ‘God is acting in all actions upon you. So, respond to all actions upon you as to respond to his action’” (Neibuhr, 1963, p. 126). Niebuhr further affirms that with respect to the other, “our action is responsible when it is a response to action upon us in a continuing discourse” (Schweiker, 1999, p. 101). This implies that one has to be sincere in approach to take a discourse to its logical conclusion, and not abandon it mid-way saying: “it is not my baby”.

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Second, we have the situation of rationalization, where there is a tendency to trump up excuses, allege extenuating circumstances, deny facts, misrepresent principles and falsely apply myths and philosophies, all in the bid to widen the chasm between knowing and doing.

In the final case of moral renunciation, the person’s intellect has apprehended meaning and realized the imperative to act, but does not care. It is like confessing to a wrong but not being interested to amend one’s ways. These are some of the ways that there is a non-conformation between knowing and doing, for as we have seen, it is one thing to know exactly what is to be done, and quite another to get down to doing it! What stands between the Intellect and the Will are an avoidance of self-consciousness, rationalization and moral renunciation.

We have seen a class of three modes in which the will manifests in life, and another class of three modes which works in opposition to consummation of the Intellect and Will. We could say that human life finds itself in an environment of constant threat to freedom by weakening the dimension of volition.

To enjoy freedom responsibly then, the anthropos must locate his / her will somewhere at the centroid of these three, viz., willfullness, willingness and will-lessness. This is what we shall call the ‘authentic will,’\(^{159}\) which the student must learn to exercise. The student should be trained to bring about a consummation of knowing and doing, to own an authentic will, which is totally open to reality, to face it and affirm it without prejudgment or a lack of engagement, but to collect all

\(^{159}\) In existentialism, ‘authenticity’ is the degree to which one is true to one's own personality, spirit, or character, despite external pressures.
spontaneous moods, feelings and inclinations of the life situation and respond to it in a totally free manner (Van Kaam, 1983a, pp. 295–297). This is the way the *anthropos* can responsibly enjoy his/her freedom. This coincides with the meaning of *educere*,¹⁶⁰ the Latin root of the English word, education, which is to lead the individual out and enable him/her to respond and make meaningful human choices in life, to mature and to enjoy freedom. Guthrie relates how the process of education proceeds according to the Platonic model in *Meno*. In the dialog between Socrates and Meno’s slave, a completely uneducated boy, we see how the boy learns geometry simply from the questions Socrates asks and the reasoning the boy makes. Guthrie thus shows that Plato’s method is very close to the ideal of *educere*, which ‘draws out’ what is already in us (Guthrie, 1961, pp. 365–370). We could also take the other meaning of leading out as ‘strengthening the person from within’—the coming out of the self, discovering reality and being in harmony with it.

### 7.6 EXERCISING AUTHORITY

As the *anthropos* advances in life and takes up greater responsibility in society, s/he is also vested with greater authority. By its very nature, authority is exercised over others. Many individuals crave it, whereas for some, exercising authority is a big challenge. In this section, we shall see how authority can be taken away or lost through circumstances. We shall also see what authority really is and an alternate way of exercising it.

¹⁶⁰ The Latin for education is *educere*, which etymologically means ‘drawing out,’ or ‘leading out.’
Let us do a thought experiment—imagine a situation where the anthropos, who is in authority as a company’s owner is faced with a major organizational change—a change that directly impacts authority. This can happen because of changed macro-economic circumstances among other reasons. Let’s consider the situation in the early 20th century when the invention of the internal combustion engine had set off the automobile revolution. The vast majority of public transport for short-distances until then had been horse-drawn carriages or the buggy. As a consequence of this far-reaching change, the owner of a buggy rider company, our anthropos, is suddenly faced with the prospect of folding up business. Let us suppose that the government enters the scenario and announces that all buggy rider companies so affected will receive financial aid as a way of assuaging their troubles. There is the important caveat that authority to hire and fire the riders thereafter will reside with the government, and not the owner. All the buggy riders who were under the authority of the owner now do not consider him/her their boss.

There are structural changes to the owner’s cherished professional role, where s/he had enjoyed great authority and power. Due to the changed circumstances, the owner’s powers are now drastically curtailed. The prospect of working with reduced powers among people whom our anthropos had wielded authority becomes a cause for intense agony and takes the wind out of his/her sails. The administrative tools the owner most needs are taken away. S/he loses his/her fighting spirit and becomes socially tentative and inadequate. S/he is psychologically devastated. There appears no meaning in life anymore and s/he can hardly produce results. This is because s/he loses his/her entire dimension of volition, the
will is taken away. This renders him/her incapable of taking decisions. Grasped by pincers, s/he feels like a creature, unable to move—no way out, but suffer. By all counts, the owner may have done well professionally, where people under his/her authority were happy to work hard. The buggy rider company may have been a very industrious place with high ethical standards. But for the owner, these were the just desserts for a job well done brought by the cataclysmic automobile revolution.

There is now a clash of wills between the owner and the riders. The riders no longer owe their loyalty to the owner but to the government; confrontation and conflict in the organization are the order of the day. How does the owner of the buggy rider company do without administrative power, so necessary to function professionally? Administrative power now transforms into something beautiful, having to do with the practice of ‘poverty of spirit’, which is best pictured in a situation of conflict. To practice poverty of spirit, the owner proceeds defenselessly, goes about his/her duties as always and gently confronts the ‘hostile other’ with human reason alone. Allegations, misinformation and ridicule may fly around, but s/he does not become reactive. Neither does s/he give in to the temptation of threatening or manipulating the other. On the contrary, by being truthful in act and speech, and acknowledging that we do not have all the answers, s/he meets and engages with the workers in charity. That may appear like a weak and laughable option. However, “power is made perfect in weakness,”\textsuperscript{161} says, Jesus Christ to Saint Paul. This powerlessness seems to be a blessing—there is a divine

\textsuperscript{161} 2 Corinthians 12:9, NRSV Bible.
compensation. One is put through the crucible of intense suffering, but one emerges strengthened and reinforced in will. The will metamorphoses from a brittle, uni-dimensional one to flexible volitional ability. Through the discipline of suffering, endured for no reason other than love of God, the owner transforms into a person with a mature and dexterous will. Now that our anthropos has been through the fire, s/he will not wither in the sun.

Drawing lessons from the above, we could say that when stripped of authority in the conventional sense, administrative decisions can be implemented through poverty of spirit. This involves relinquishing the use of all powers and exercising faith in God, besides reason with the adversary, as one meets situations of conflict. There is a great force retarding this resolve – one is apprehensive about being insulted when going to engage with the adversary. However, one need not agonize over insult that may be meted out. One allows insult of one’s own volition. That is what Jesus meant when he said: “No one takes my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord.”

When the anthropos has ceased to rely on the power structures of the world, s/he is compensated for by the mysterious power of God.

A similar approach is to be taken while parting with knowledge. Knowledge is one of the most precious possessions we have. To part with it is difficult at times. One needs to exercise faith to do that graciously. When one imagines the scarcities of the world and is dependent on the self alone, one is limited. Instead, if one is deeply connected in faith to God, one will know that one’s source of knowledge is inexhaustible.

162 John 10:18, NRSV Bible.
Opening out to God and humanity requires one to give of the little that one has to others. This too calls for practice of poverty of spirit. We experience poverty in the human economy but plenty in the divine economy. The *anthropos*’ need for knowledge need not be lined with anxiety – what helps is believing that the supply of knowledge is inexhaustible and comes one day at a time. The prayer that Jesus taught the disciples reveals the metaphysics of human provision. The first petition in it is to give our daily bread. “The daily bread” may be extended beyond just material needs to the need for knowledge, which the disciple prays for daily. The petition mentioned here harks back to the provision of Manna to the Israelites journeying to the promised-land. They were instructed to collect all they need for one day and no more. The next day would bring its bounty anew.

Human that we are, with our many fallibilities and insecurities, we have the tendency of employing the deceptive, coercive powers of the world to get our way, or we have the option of opening out in simplicity before God and humanity, and accepting His better judgment. By opting for the latter, we are poor in human spirit but rich in the Spirit of God. This divergence can be visualized through a great truth of nature: “It is from a small seed that a big tree emerges.” Poverty of Spirit therefore is the means to let God’s power manifest through us.

It is interesting to contrast what we have articulated above with the claim of Machiavelli, who has spoken insightfully about power and its use: “All armed Prophets have been victorious, and all unarmed Prophets have been destroyed.”\(^{163}\) Instead of Machiavellian human power, which

\(^{163}\) Nicolo Machiavelli, *The prince*, See http://www.constitution.org/mac/prince06.htm
can be treacherous and brutal, the *anthropos* now has the solemn power of God, which is the gentle, kind, but resolute way that appears weak and vulnerable. It does require a leap of faith to practice poverty of spirit, but one who has been through the crucible and has had the will metamorphose, will find it second nature. One will be able to handle transactions of power and knowledge gracefully if poverty of spirit is practiced. It is perhaps an alternate way to exercise authority.

7.7 DECISIONS DONE

Let us consider the act of decision making by the *anthropos*. A decision is, by its very nature, an act of willing. As Lonergan puts it, a decision possesses the internal alternatives of consenting or refusing a proposition. It may also involve external alternatives when various courses of action are contemplated simultaneously. Consenting to one of them and refusing all the rest then constitutes a choice. The basic nature of a decision can be understood by comparing and contrasting it with a judgment (Lonergan, 1965, p. 613).

The act of making a decision resembles the act of making a judgment in that both of them are faced with a pair of contraries. Whereas judgment either affirms or denies, a decision either consents or refuses. Both decision and judgment concern actualities but are perceived in different ways: whereas in judgment, there is a need to appropriate knowledge about an actuality that already exists; in decision, actuality is conferred upon a course of action that would otherwise not exist. Both decision and judgment are rational processes and occur by a reflective grasp of reason and are apprehended by insight. However, there are
important differences between judgment and decision (Lonergan, 1965, pp. 612-613). First, judgment is an act of ratiocination, whereas decision is an act of rational self-consciousness. And, second, there is an element of the self in knowing and doing in the decision, whereas a judgment is a disinterested desire to decree.

The will must be healthy to take good decisions—health implies psychiatric and spiritual well-being. A person in psychiatric illness is not competent to take decisions because s/he cannot be held to account by law for the consequences of the decision. Similarly, a person who is spiritually ill suffers from guilt and is prone to self-recrimination or bias in all things. Such a person can seldom be objective.

Sometimes decision-making is culturally conditioned. A pattern can be discerned in its operation. In the traditional joint family system in India, it is the patriarch of the family who decides matters – from the use of economic resources to personal decisions like marriage and setting up home, the elders in the family decide everything. To fall out of line with the patriarch is to invite boycott, persecution and even death. It is prevalent even to this day in certain villages of India, most dramatically and recently demonstrated by khap panchayats. In such cases the individual will does not exist! For better or for worse, this practice of not letting the anthropos exercise his or her will has resulted in habitual relinquishing of the will.

Let us see two common examples in the Indian context. First, consider a commonplace domestic situation, where a visitor to the home is asked what s/he will have for a drink. And the most common reply of the guest is: “Whatever you have.” Although this may seem like an all-too
friendly response that ostensibly does not want to impose one’s taste on
the host, it represents the deeply ingrained habit of letting someone else
decide. There is an abdication of the will. A second example may be
cited among students who are contemplating getting into college. For
example, when they are asked, “Why have you chosen mechanical
engineering at the undergraduate level?” The answer most commonly
heard is: “Because my father said so.” The student has not reached
conative maturity (see Section 7.4, ‘Developing Volitionally’, in the
current chapter). Here is conative conditioning by prevalent cultural
practices. In the short term, this kind of abdication of responsibility ends
in half-hearted effort in study, and in the long run, it does not beget great
leaders. Most are ‘passengers’ with very little involvement, doing things
perfunctorily. It may not be wrong to state that in India, for many,
conative maturity is reached relatively slowly, perhaps after marriage and
arrival of one’s children. The same can be said of other patriarchal
societies.

This may be contrasted with the western penchant for taking
decisions. In a familiar situation in a European home where guests are
visiting, the same question is posed in a very direct manner: “What will
you drink?” and elicits a pointed response like, “I’ll have apple cider.”
Young children in the western world are deliberately encouraged to make
choices and face their consequences. Conative activity is a creature of
culture, with the norm in the western world sitting awkwardly in an
eastern setting. Alluding to the second example above, in the United
States, students entering college are quite certain that they want to pursue
a particular academic program. They chase loans and scholarships and
narrow down their choice for colleges and campuses with a great deal of interest and involvement. It is a self-motivated enquiry celebrating the libertarian spirit of individual sovereignty of John Locke and Jean Paul Sartre. Here is the *anthropos*, who has greater self-knowledge; s/he knows what they want, and where and how to get it. Very often in the eastern world, on the other hand, we find utter dependence on elders for decision making.

The solution to underdeveloped volition is that children should be encouraged to take decisions in small things early in life. They should know what it is to be objective, how to consider various options and make considered choices. They should learn early that they cannot pass the buck or have the cake and eat it too, and how to make compromises and trade-offs; they will have a sense for costs and benefits of their decisions and the long and short term effects they will face. Taking decisions in small things in such manner will go a long way in helping the *anthropos* attain conative maturity early.

Another volitional ability the *anthropos* has to cultivate is the manner of taking decisions while in a position of leadership. Many individuals in authority like to lord it over others and make their power felt. They put their person into a decree or order they issue and take it as a personal affront when it is not carried out. This is a widespread malaise. However, an alternate way of taking decisions is to let the decision emerge through discussion in a group and let the force of truth operate without bias. Voluntarily giving up the power to be the sole decision maker and at the same time being unwilling to meekly surrender to the other, the leader is subservient to God – instead of being a person whose
word is law and who issues orders, the leader becomes one who facilitates a fair discussion, moderating extreme viewpoints, skirting irrelevancies and eliciting suggestions from all members in the group including the predominantly quiet ones. The leader, being bipartisan, has no axe to grind and is a seeker after the truth that manifests in the right decision to bring long term peace and prosperity. When the consultative process is carried out in the manner above, it leads to a robust decision. In the end, it is not a particular individual’s decision, but the force of truth operating for the greatest good. In such a process, there is no pandering to petty political considerations or to someone’s personal whim, but culminating in a just and equitable decision without abusing authority.

Finally, in understanding conative maturity, let us consider personal dilemmas, where the anthropos is torn between two conflicting extremes, with far-reaching, divergent consequences and no obvious solution at hand. A decision, however, is exigent. A possible solution in such a situation is perhaps to employ the Jesuit spiritual discipline of discernment. It consists of collecting all the data and writing out the consequences and listing them in two contiguous columns – one column for and the other against a particular course of action. Having done the above, the anthropos is required to weigh each column mentally and take them in prayer before God. One must hold both options this way without bias, practicing total openness in prayer. During the course of sustained prayer, of about a half-hour every day of the week, it does happen that dwelling on one of the alternatives is a cause for great incongruence, creating unease and throwing the anthropos into discomfiture, whereas consideration of the other option produces deep interior peace. The latter
is the right decision. That is why it is affirmed that great decisions are not taken by us, they are done in us! This is a manifestation of conative mastery.

7.8 CLOSING REMARKS

We have seen the metaphysics of the will and expounded on it based on the views of several authorities; we saw its various guises, its application in education, and finally, its crucial role in attaining conative mastery. We close by mentioning a few connected ideas, principally from John Dewey, the educational philosopher, who holds some strong views on the will.

Taking the cue from Aquinas, Dewey contends that the role of the intellect is first to comprehend reality, and then to clarify ends. The ends are not set in stone but are dynamic and flexible. If not understood in this spirit, they are constricting instead of being balanced and freedom-giving. The preparation for a remote future due to a misunderstanding of the metaphysics of aims renders the educational process non-substantive (Dewey, 2009, p. 92). Aims or ends need to be clarified and intellectually thought out. The student with conative maturity is not one who aimlessly goes along, but one who ponders his/her ends and who clarifies the idea of the results of his/her actions as clearly and fully as possible (Dewey, 2009, p. 107). And then, claims Dewey, the will can energetically engage itself.

The notion of ‘interest’ is important for Dewey—it is the mean between what is foreseen and the force laying a deep hold of oneself. This interest is the depth of the grip, which the foreseen end has upon one
in moving him/her to act for its realization (Dewey, 2009, p. 108). Clearly, there are two aspects to the will according to Dewey: (a) the interest, and (b) the pursuit. A prospective employee who applies for a job has to demonstrate interest in the post advertised for to be taken seriously, just as a plaintiff in court has to convince the judge that the matter being adjudicated is of real interest to him/her, that it affects him/her materially. So much for the first aspect of interest! The sustained and hot pursuit of a goal is possible only when the *anthropos* has intellectually clarified the ends. Between the interest and the consummation of the end, there is a difficult phase demanding continuity, attention and endurance. Some would call it ‘tough love.’ An interesting question would be: What accounts for the difference in performance between students who have the same teacher and the same textbooks (Dewey, 2009, p. 108). Dewey would point to interest. Such students realize that they have something at stake (Dewey, 2009, p. 110). This transformational bridge between interest and an end is presented by Dewey as a complete theory of interest [will] in education (Dewey, 2009, p. 112).

Speculating on Dewey’s line of thinking, there could be situations where the will plays a decisive role. Poor educational infrastructure or dearth of resources drive many students against the wall. Through sheer grit, some students summon all their conative resources to teach themselves; many do exceedingly well. Famous people like India’s former Presidents, K. R. Narayanan and Abdul Kalaam, are good examples of outstanding scholarship under dire deprivation. We posit that it was their conative dimension that saved them.
Dewey makes a subtle but important observation on the use of drill in education. Drill has the character of achieving through coercion, a certain set of activities that are repeated. They may be substantially corporeal or substantially intellectual. It almost becomes mechanical/utilitarian/instrumental in character. Drill is opposed to intelligent exercise of the intellect because the former falls into an automatic/reflex exercise without much use of the mind (Dewey, 2009, p. 114). Even doing mathematics and science (Dewey, 2009, p. 119) through repetition of procedures can degenerate into mere routine calculation without real strategizing toward a solution. The student knows how to calculate but fails to realize when and where to apply it. Another aspect that negates coercion is the suggestion by Corno (1992, pp. 69-83) that to develop the conative dimension of the child, it must be allowed to engage in interesting activities without formal evaluation. This would inculcate responsibility for learning. Deci and Ryan (1985, p. 11) predicate that external rewards to encourage higher-level thinking may not succeed due to emotional stress. Huitt and Cain conclude that intrinsic motivation was promoted when students get the opportunity to choose to participate in activities that develop competence.\footnote{Huitt and Cain, in their 2005 paper, present a summary account of the conative element in the educational context. See ‘An overview of the conative domain’ in \textit{Educational Psychology Interactive}. See http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/brilstat/chapters/conative.pdf} All of the above suggest that the will works best when it is free of external enforcement.

To summarize, the student in exercising his/her will, must work with the intellect, keep the aims and ends in sight, but remain flexible to

\footnote{Huitt and Cain, in their 2005 paper, present a summary account of the conative element in the educational context. See ‘An overview of the conative domain’ in \textit{Educational Psychology Interactive}. See http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/brilstat/chapters/conative.pdf}
reconfigure and reassess his/her moves in the light of new changes. Besides an epistemic role, which we have seen for the most part above, there is a role for the will in moral development. The task of educating the child is not just the duty of the school or college, but the family and parents have an important role to play. Pope Francis calls it ‘education in hope’\textsuperscript{165}. Through practice of delayed gratification and detachment from impulses, students can be taught self-mastery through familial situations. Francis also mentions growth in freedom, maturity, overall discipline and real autonomy\textsuperscript{166}. Students must be given opportunities to take decisions while the parent remains vigilant in the background, allowing the child to exercise his/her fledgling will. Families also are irreplaceable for moral formation of children. It entails forming good habits in a healthy environment of socialization, which a family can provide. The child acquires a natural inclination to goodness. The development of the will takes place most effectively if approached inductively rather than through imposition of values as absolute, unquestionable truths\textsuperscript{167}. The American Pediatrist Kenneth Ginsburg makes the important statement, “[Parents should be] beacons of light on a stable shoreline from which children can safely navigate the world. We must make certain that they don’t crash against the rocks, but trust they have the capacity to learn to ride the waves on their own” (Ginsburg, 2015, p. xix). Here is another avenue for

\textsuperscript{165} Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation, \textit{Amoris Laetitia},

\textsuperscript{166} Ibid, p.198

\textsuperscript{167} Ibid, p. 200
conative maturity of the *Anthropos*. The will is a delicate and tenuous entity that needs to be developed carefully, and the role of family and teachers is not trivial. Ralph Waldo Emerson, the American poet, advises a balanced approach:

Respect the child. Be not too much his parent. Trespass not on his solitude… The two points in a boy’s training are… to keep his naturel, but stop off his uproar, fooling, and horse-play; keep his nature and arm it with knowledge in the very direction in which it points…Respect him to the end, but also respect yourself… [the task of educating] involves at once, immense claims on the time, the thought, on the life of the teacher. It requires time, use, insight, event, all the great lessons and assistances of God; and only to think of using it implies character and profoundness (Dewey, 2009, p. 46).