Lex Paulson

Libera uoluntas

The Political Origins of the Free Will Argument in Cicero's *De fato* and Augustine's *Confessions*

Augustine of Hippo is often credited with inventing the Western notion of free will.[1] Despite its deep roots in Christian and secular scholarship, this premise has begun to be reexamined. In his painstaking recent study, Michael Frede argues that all the key elements of Augustine's *uoluntas* are present in the works of Epictetus, three centuries before the conversion at Milan.[2] Frede marshals impressive evidence for his thesis, drawing from a wide range of Peripatetic, Stoic, and Neoplatonic texts. We are shown how Epictetus' *prohairesis* implies the same continuity as a power of mind, is shared by men and the divine, varies widely among individuals, and is generally abused.[3] The textual evidence suggests a strong, perhaps decisive, influence of Stoic ideas on Augustine's notion of the will. But did he get them from Epictetus?

The Stoa was defunct by the fourth century, and few of its seminal texts had been translated into Latin.[4] As Augustine himself admits in the Confessions, he did not enjoy Greek and never mastered it.[5] Frede concedes that it is not "fully clear through what channels the Stoicism reached Augustine", but offers the following idea: "in large part, of course, it came through Cicero, who, though he was an Academic skeptic, had espoused the kind of Philonean skepticism which allowed for the qualified adoption of philosophical views; these, for the most part, turned out to be Stoic, or inspired by Stoicism".[6] Indeed, Augustine

1 See, e. g., Arendt 1978, vol. 2, 84 (calling Augustine "the first philosopher of the Will"); Dihle 1982, 144 ("St. Augustine was, in fact, the inventor of our modern notion of will"); Kahn 1988, 255 – 259; King 2010, xxxi; Brann 2014, 23 – 37 (calling Augustine "discoverer of the will").

2 Frede 2011.

3 See especially Frede 2011, 31 – 48 and 66 – 88.

4 Cf. Gill 2003. Gill notes the 'Latin' Stoicism of Seneca and even a Stoic influence on Roman poetry, but Greek appears to have remained the school's predominant language in the period following Cicero (49 – 50, 57 – 58).

5 See, e. g., August. *Conf.* 1.13.20: "As for the reason why I hated the Greek literature in which I was steeped as a boy—for that I have still found no satisfactory explanation. I had fallen in love with Latin literature" (*Quid autem erat causae, cur graecas litteras oderam, quibus puerulus imbuebar, ne nunc quidem mihi satis exploratum est. Adamaueram enim latinas*); cf. also 1.14.23. Translations of the *Confessiones* are by Hammond 2014, partly adapted.

6 Frede 2011, 154. He continues: "[I]n Augustine's time the study of Cicero was perhaps the most crucial part of any higher education for Westerners, especially for a professional rhetorician, as

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is hardly bashful about his debts to Cicero. He credits the *Hortensius*, now lost, not only with inspiring in him a deep love of philosophy, but in "chang[ing] my prayers and turn[ing] them to you, O Lord" *(ille uero liber mutauit affectum meum, et ad te ipsum, domine, mutauit preces meas, Conf.* 3.4.7). In Cicero's philosophy, Augustine continues, there was one thing that he loved especially, namely "that his words aroused me and set me on fire not to be a lover of this or that sect, but of wisdom itself, whatever it may be" *(quod non illam aut illam sectam, sed ipsam quaecumque esset sapientiam ut diligerem,* 3.4.8). Though Augustine regrets that Cicero was not—indeed, could not have been—a follower of Christ,[7] he does not hesitate to cite him favorably in the course of his spiritual journey. Now bishop, he quotes lines from the *Tusculanae disputationes,*[8] *Academica,*[9] and *De natura deorum.*[10] He even refers to a gentlemanly debate *de finibus bonorum et malorum* with his friends Alypius and Nebridius at Milan (6.16.26). Indeed, Augustine's very first treatises, dialogues set at a countryside villa in summer 386, bear striking resemblance to those Cicero imagined at Tusculum four centuries before.[11] Regarding the great minds of Augustine's era in the Latin-speaking West, his recent biographer James O'Donnell observes:

> Greek was now Greek to them, so to speak, and Cicero their best philosopher. His philosophical writings had very little success or imitation between his death and the fourth century, but he came into his own as a philosopher—not just an orator—when the elites could

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Augustine was in his early career. But we also have to remember in this context that by his time Platonism had absorbed large doses of Stoicism". Cf. *Conf.* 5.6.11 on Faustus' shoddy knowledge of Cicero. See generally MacCormack 2013.

7 Augustine continues *ibid.:* "And there was one thing that damped my ardor, namely that the name of Christ was not in that book" (*Et hoc solum me in tanta flagrantia refrangebat, quod nomen Christi non erat ibi*). Cf. also 8.7.17.

8 See *Conf.* 1.16.25 (quoting Cic. *Tusc.* 1.65): regarding Jove the adulterous "Thunderer", Augustine observes: "'These things are all Homer's invention. He conferred upon the Gods attributes that are properly human; I would rather he had ascribed divine qualities to us men'. But it would be truer to say that Homer did indeed make up the stories he tells, but ascribed divine attributes to depraved humans" (*'Fingebat haec Homerus et humana ad deos transferebat; diuina mallem ad nos'. Sed uerius dicitur, quod fingebat haec quidem ille, sed hominibus flagitiosis diuina tribuendo*). We note not only the favorable treatment of Cicero's text, but the context is one of the nature of kinship between the human and divine.

9 See 6.10.18 (quoting Cic. *Luc.* 18, 31).

10 See 6.5.7 (quoting Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.3).

11 See O'Donnell 2015, 218. Cf. *Conf.* 5.14.25: "The views of the philosophers seemed to me much more plausible [...] (therefore) I followed what is believed to be the Academic practice; reserving judgment on all questions and wavering between all points of view" (*Multo probabiliora plerosque sensisse philosophos [*sc. *iudicabam] [...] itaque Academicorum more, sicut existamantur, dubitans de omnibus atque inter omnia fluctuans*).

> no longer read Greek, and the philosophical treasures of the Greeks were opaque to them. Arnobius, Lactantius, Ambrose, Augustine—these writers of the fourth century are the most sophisticated, interested, and interesting disciples of Cicero from all Antiquity.[12]

Next to Paul, whose impact on Augustine's works has been long and justly appreciated, Cicero was probably the greatest influence in his intellectual life. What role might he have played in Augustine's 'invention' of free will?

This chapter proposes that Augustine's notion of the will and its freedom owes an unrecognized debt to Cicero's writings in 44 BCE. While the Hellenistic schools had debated determinism and fate long before Cicero, the key term in their dispute had been ἐφ' ἡμῖν (what is "up to us"), not ἐλευθερία or freedom.[13] It is Cicero and Lucretius, not their Greek predecessors, who first introduce the notion of man's freedom from fate. In the fragmentary *De fato*, written shortly after the Ides of March 44,[14] Cicero makes a *libera uoluntas* the locus of public virtue, the justification of civic praise and honors (*Fat.* 40), and the power to extirpate natural vice. I propose that the notion of free will Cicero develops in 44 BCE is intended both to refute rival Epicurean ideas and to affirm civic responsibility at this turbulent moment for Rome. Further, Cicero's letters underscore the metapolitical stakes of his treatise on fate. The notion of *libera uoluntas* helps him advance three positions: that the Republic was not fated to fall; that his enemies bear full moral responsibility; and that a "righteous will" (*recta uoluntas*, *Fam.* 6.4.2) absolves his own failures.

Placed in dialogue with passages from the *Confessions*, I propose that Cicero's *uoluntas* decisively shapes Augustine's more famous notion of the will: a divine gift to mankind and the animating force—or hindering flaw—of moral progress. But whereas free will for Cicero is an instrument of civic glory, for Augustine it is only the reflection of God's grace. Augustine's theory of the will, undoubtedly richer and more systematic than Cicero's, is drained of the very purpose for which his intellectual hero had argued for it: a better politics, here and now.

12 O'Donnell 2015, 235.

13 See Bobzien 1998a, 280; Lévy 2007, 26–27.

14 For the date, see *Eph. Tull. ad loc.*

De fato: freedom meets the will

A rare, if little-noticed, point of agreement in the debate over free will is that its most-cited classical antecedents say little of freedom.[15] The key terms in Aristotle's account of human agency are ἐκόν, whether an act is performed "of our own accord", and then whether a προαίρεσις or choice led to it.[16] The Hellenistic schools seem to have sparred over human autonomy, but evidence from later texts suggest their key term was ἐφ' ἡμῖν, what is "up to us".[17] Why not freedom? Michael Frede and Malcolm Schofield, among others, have observed that the Greek ἐλευθερία, like the Latin *libertas*, is unshakably political at its root. It connotes a civic status of non-domination: a free city makes laws for itself, and a free man is not enslaved to another.[18] With the death of the classical *polis* and the rise of Hellenistic empires, a demand may well have arisen for a notion of autonomy that did not depend on these categories. With regard to why freedom may not have figured in these debates, Frede observes:

> The lack of clarity about the relation between the political notion and this personal notion of freedom in part is due to a lack of clarity about the relation between the good life one is able to have when one is politically free and the good life one can live if one has personal freedom. The tendency among ancient philosophers, needless to say, is to claim that one can live a good life even under a tyrant or as a slave.[19]

In the Greek texts Cicero most likely read on this question, it was thus man's moral self-sufficiency, but not his 'freedom', that mattered.

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15 The sections on Cicero's *De fato* are partly based on Paulson 2017, esp. part 2, "La philosophie de la *voluntas*" (154–269, with an appendix on Augustine, as well).

16 For ἐκόν, see Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 3.1.2–27 (1110b18–1111a21); for προαίρεσις, see *Eth. Nic.* 3.2.2–6 (1148a9). Frede 2011, 19–30 argues convincingly that Aristotle's προαίρεσις and ἐκόν do not amount to a notion of "willing", and thus Aristotle has no notion of a will. On προαίρεσις, see generally Merker 2016.

17 See, e.g., Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 3.3.6–7 (1113a15–114b25); *Int.* 9; Epicurus, *Ep. Men.* (= Diog. Laert. 10.133): ἃ δὲ παρ' ἡμᾶς; Diogenianus in Euseb. *Praep. euang.* 6.8.25–29 (*SVF* 2.998); cf. Graver 2007, 81. The term ἐφ' ἡμῖν has itself been mistranslated as "free will"; cf. Bobzien 1998b, 135, and Kahn 1988, 241–242 (each noting this problem). For instances of this mistranslation, see, e.g., Huby 1967.

18 See generally Schofield 2014. As Schofield observes, the Greek and Latin terms for freedom do not map neatly onto one another; ἐλευθερία had specific historical connotations—including of παρρησία and ἰσηγορία, freedoms of the citizen to speak in public—that *libertas* did not necessarily have for Cicero.

19 Frede 2011, 9–10.

Cicero seems to have written the *De fato* in 44 BCE, in the months following the Ides of March and a little more than a year before his death. Ostensibly a dialogue between Cicero and Hirtius, consul designate for 43, the extant passages take the form of a continuous exposition by the author. In the skeptical manner, Cicero compares the views of Epicurus, Chrysippus, and Carneades to see which school best reconciles physical causality with moral responsibility. Reflecting the terms of his Greek predecessors, the Latin expressions *in nostra potestate* or *in nobis* feature nineteen times. But Cicero also uses *uoluntas* or *uoluntarius* eleven times, and *libertas* or its cognates seven times, beginning with the observation that the discussion took place on a day "freer than usual" (*liberiore quam solebat*, *Fat*. 2). The phrase is suggestive, not only of the seriousness of the burden on Cicero's shoulders after Caesar's death, but also of the implied kinship between his freedom to inquire and his duty to find political solutions.[20] In what remains of the dialogue, Cicero rejects the Epicureans, both vaunts and chides the Stoics, and tries to improve their view with help from Platonic doctrine and an orator's common sense. Throughout all this, the lodestar of *De fato* is *libertas*. Freedom is never dearer to Cicero than at the precipice of political ruin. As he wrote in *De re publica*, *uoluntas* and *libertas* once defined the *populus Romanus*;[21] amid tyranny and chaos, free will must now constitute the individual. In this technical treatise on fate, the political stakes of 44 BCE ring loudly.

Cicero is the first author we know definitively to have juxtaposed 'freedom' and 'will'. Its first extant occurrence comes in Cicero's second speech against Verres in 70 BCE. Arguing that he has not brought this case rashly, he gives the example of Lucius Crassus, great orator of the previous generation, who after a similar star-making turn "*had willings less free in all things*, knowing that his life was being watched by more eyes than he would wish" (*minus enim liberas omnium rerum uoluntates habebat, et uitam suam pluribus quam uellet obseruari oculis arbitrabatur*, *Verr.* 2.3.3). In Cicero's phrase, free will is not yet a constituent of the human subject. Earning fame, Crassus must suffer from

20 It is significant as well that whereas Pansa, the other consul-designate for 43, had declared for the 'liberators', Hirtius' allegiances remained, for Cicero, worryingly uncertain; see *Att*. 15.5.1. On the philosophical significance of Cicero's *prooemia* to the main arguments of his treatises, see generally Lévy 1992, 140–180 and *passim*; Baraz 2012, 151–186.

21 Cf. Cic. *Rep*. 1.51, 1.69, 2.39–40, 2.55–57. Cicero provides the first extant occurrences of the phrase *uoluntas populi*, the "will of the people"; the phrase or its variants appear 53 times in his corpus. For its importance to his conception of Roman politics, see, e.g., *Verr.* 1.1.2, 2.1.10–11, 2.3.7 (70 BCE); *Leg. Man*. 70 (66 BCE); *Cat*. 4.14 (63 BCE); *Flac*. 96 (59 BCE); *Att*. 2.21.5 (59 BCE); *Sest*. 38, 106, 124 (56 BCE); *Rep*. 1.63, 1.69 (53 BCE); *Leg*. 3.28, 3.39–40 (51 BCE); *Phil*. 1.36, 6.5 (44/43 BCE).

"willings less free"—specific episodes of volition, not an ongoing capacity to will. Further, this constraint on freedom is part of a citizen's *uoluntas uirtutis atque officii* (2.3.2), his "will for a life of duty and virtue". His negotiation of freedom and necessity happens in public, for a public cause, and is submitted to public judgment. Though admitting the force of *necessitas* in his life (2.3.2), Cicero enacts his autonomy by circumscribing it, limiting his future *libertas* for the Republic's sake.

Written two and a half eventful decades later, the extant passages of *De fato* return to this debate while bringing new intellectual resources to bear. Cicero's goal is to weigh in turn the accounts of fate and responsibility offered by the Hellenistic schools.[22] To the Epicureans, he offers less a critique than a direct frontal attack:

> Hanc Epicurus rationem induxit ob eam rem, quod ueritus est ne, si semper atomus grauitate ferretur naturali ac necessaria, nihil liberum nobis esset, cum ita moueretur animus, ut atomorum motu cogeretur.[23]
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> The reason why Epicurus introduces the *clinamen* [*sc.* the 'swerve' of atoms by which indeterminacy enters the universe] was his fear lest, if the atom were always carried along by the natural and necessary force of gravity, we should have no freedom whatever, since the movement of the mind was controlled by the movement of the atom.

Importantly, Cicero does not question the premise he ascribes to Epicurus—that total causal necessity would deprive humans of *libertas*. In fact, this part of his account is a nearly word-for-word paraphrase of the key passage from Lucretius, whose oeuvre Cicero had praised for its literary skill.[24] Nevertheless, he finds the

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22 Cicero, applying the methods of the Academic skeptic, passes back and forth among the arguments proposed by the Epicureans, the Stoics, and the "view of Carneades". In what follows, I group these arguments together and examine them in the order which best illuminates Cicero's position on free will.

23 Cic. *Fat*. 23. Translations from *De fato* are by Rackham 1942 throughout, partly adapted. Sedley 1983, 40 – 41 calls Cicero's reading of the doctrine, and its estimation of the mechanistic view Epicurus was trying to refute, "a thoroughly plausible explanation of the swerve".

24 Lucr. 2.251 – 260: *Denique si semper motus conectitur omnis | et uetere exoritur motu nouus ordine certo | nec declinando faciunt primordia motus | principium quoddam quod fati foedera rumpat, | ex infinito ne causam causa sequatur, | libera per terras unde haec animantibus exstat, | unde est haec, inquam, fatis auolsa uoluntas, | per quam progredimur quo ducit quemque uoluptas, | declinamus item motus nec tempore certo | nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens?* ("Again, if all motion is always one long chain, and new motion arises out of the old in order invariable, and if the first-beginnings do not make by swerving a beginning of motion such as to break the decrees of fate, that cause may not follow cause from infinity, whence comes this free will in living creatures all over the earth, whence I say is this will wrested from the

clinamen ridiculous on its face. Epicurus and his Roman followers entertain simultaneously "two utterly inexplicable propositions, one that something takes place without a cause [...] the other that when two atoms are travelling through empty space, one moves in a straight line and the other swerves" (*res duas inenodabiles, unam, ut sine causa fiat aliquid [...], alteram, ut, cum duo indiuidua per inanitatem ferantur, alterum e regione moueatur, alterum declinet, Fat*. 18).[25] The Epicureans are oriented toward the correct goal—the protection of *libertas*—but their idea fails the basic tenets of physics. When he returns to Epicurus at the end of the text we have, it is to reaffirm that "one should not seek assistance from atoms that roam and swerve out of their path" (*non ab atomis errantibus et de uia declinantibus petere praesidium*, *Fat*. 46).

Cicero's notion of free will emerges from the counterpoint of two Hellenistic innovators. The majority of the extant text concerns the Stoics, and more precisely the pioneering theories of Chrysippus regarding causality and assent. At several points where Chrysippus' ideas seem to fall short, they are contrasted with—or perhaps completed by—those of Carneades, leader of the skeptical New Academy. In particular, it is Carneades' notion of the self-moving human soul that Cicero finds most useful in establishing a robust foundation for free will.[26] The common adversary of Chrysippus and Carneades are those thinkers who argue that the universe operates through "an everlasting series of causes" (*causarum series sempiternam, Fat*. 20), i.e. the strict determinists.[27] One alleged proponent of this view is the logician Diodorus Cronus, who held that since any proposition is either true or false, a true statement that an event will happen is the same as saying it *must* happen. The consequence of this logical position, Cicero thinks, would be a chain that man is powerless to break (*Fat*. 12–13). He then explains why such a view would be unacceptable:

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fates by which we proceed whither pleasure leads each, swerving also our motions not at fixed times and fixed places, but just where our mind has taken us?", transl. Rouse 1924). Cicero, writing to Quintus in 54 BCE, declares that "Lucretius' poetry is as you say—sparkling with natural genius, but plenty of technical skill as well (*multis luminibus ingeni, multae tamen artis*)" (*QFr.* 2.10.3). See generally Rouse 1924, x–xi; Sedley/Long 1987, 110–112; Graver 2002, 112–113, 196–197.

25 Cf. also *Fin.* 1.19–20.

26 Attributed to the leader of the skeptical New Academy, the "view of Carneades" is understood not to represent a positive doctrine, but rather an argument developed in dialectical opposition to another position—here, as often, the Stoic view. Though Carneades would have been ready to accept the view ascribed to him as the most probable one, he would thus be equally free to trade it for another. Cf. Frede 2011, 91–92.

27 Among these "old philosophers" he includes Democritus, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and—oddly—Aristotle (*Fat*. 39), see below on *Fat*. 40 (p. 105).

> Nec ei qui dicunt inmutabilia esse quae futura sint nec posse uerum futurum conuertere in falsum, fati necessitatem confirmant, sed uerborum uim interpretantur. At qui introducunt causarum seriem sempiternam, ii *mentem hominis uoluntate libera spoliatam* necessitate fati deuinciunt.[28]
>
> Those who say that a true future event cannot be changed into a false one, are not asserting the necessity of fate but explaining the meaning of terms; whereas those who bring in an everlasting series of causes *rob the human mind of free will* and fetter it in the chains of a fated necessity.

Freedom arrives center-stage. In contrast to Cicero's earlier use of the phrase in the *Verrines*, *libera uoluntas* no longer signifies a "free willing", one desire among many, but a singular faculty of "the mind of man" (*mens hominis*). Suggestively, his antithesis to human freedom, "an everlasting series of causes", again corresponds to Lucretius' choice of words.[29] But where the Epicurean speaks equably of abridging fate's "decrees" (*fati foedera rumpat*, 2.254) and "plucking" will from it (*fatis auolsa uoluntas*, 2.257), Cicero reprises his role as legal advocate, charging theft and wrongful enslavement. As if to sharpen the importance of freedom, in this lengthy section on logic *libertas* is literally Cicero's final word: "reason itself will insist both that certain things are true from all eternity and that they are not involved in a nexus of eternal causes but are free from the necessity of fate" (*ratio ipsa coget et ex aeternitate quaedam esse uera, et ea non esse nexa causis aeternis et a fati necessitate esse libera*, *Fat*. 38).

Why does Cicero insist upon the will's freedom? He agrees with Lucretius that a fully determined world deprives man of *libertas*—an argument no Greek appears to have made. But Cicero's *libertas* is decidedly un-Epicurean. His own notion emerges in the demolition of *ignaua ratio*, the so-called 'Lazy Argument'. This apparently well-known critique of determinism held that there would be no need, for instance, to call a doctor when sick, because our living or dying becomes a matter of fate alone (*Fat*. 28–29). Chrysippus, according to Cicero, attempts a solution via the idea of "condestination" or "co-fatedness" (*confatalia*).[30] Cicero agrees with Chrysippus that the 'Lazy Argument' is no mere thought

28 *Fat*. 20.

29 Cf. Lucr. 2.255: *infinito ne causam causa sequatur*; *Fat*. 20: *qui introducunt causarum seriem sempiternam*.

30 The idea, which Cicero struggles to elucidate, is that certain events are "complex" (*copulata*), such that an act can be both fated *and* chosen by the actor (*Fat*. 11). Thus, the statement "you will recover whether you call in a doctor or do not," is captious, "for calling in a doctor is just as much fated as recovering. These connected events, as I said, are termed by Chrysippus 'condestinate'" ('*Siue tu adhibueris medicum siue non adhibueris, conualesces' captiosum; tam enim est fatale medicum adhibere quam conualescere. Haec, ut dixi, confatalia ille appellat, Fat*. 30).

experiment, but a question upon which turns "the entire abolition of action from life" (*quod eadem ratione omnis e uita tolletur actio*, *Fat*. 29). The Stoa's founders, "those old philosophers", had held that "assent is given perforce as the result of necessity" (*[adsensiones] ui effici et necessitate dicebant*, *Fat*. 40).[31] Under this framework, Cicero observes, neither assent nor action can truly be considered in our power. Why does this matter? The *ignaua ratio* would "abolish action" because if man is not the true cause of his actions, "there is no justice in either praise or blame, either honors or punishments" (*nec laudationes iustae sint nec uituperationes nec honores nec supplicia*, *Fat*. 40).[32] Praise and blame, honors and punishments: the same civic order from which the Epicureans want to secede,[33] Cicero wants desperately to preserve.

To defeat the 'Lazy Argument', Chrysippus reframed the Stoic position: there are not one but two kinds of causality. He suggested the image of a cylinder rolling across a room: the "auxiliary and proximate" cause of the cylinder's motion is the push given to it from outside, but the "perfect and principal" cause is its own round shape (*Fat*. 43). Accordingly, while the Stoic *phantasiai* are the auxiliary and proximate causes of action, human nature—our "shape", wise or foolish —is the perfect and primary cause (*Fat*. 41–42). For Chrysippus, our actions are thus *in nostra potestate* because, like the roller, we move by our own *uis et natura* (*Fat*. 43). In distinguishing these two types of causation, Chrysippus ingeniously managed "to escape necessity and to retain fate" (*ut et necessitatem effugiat et retineat fatum*, *Fat*. 41).[34] But why does Cicero, defender of *libertas*, care about "retaining fate"? By preserving the logic of causality, Chrysippus assists Cicero in dispatching the Epicureans while leaving room for prophecies and divination—institutions precious to Rome and to Cicero's career.[35]

Yet Cicero is not quite content with the Stoic account. There is both a surface objection, I believe, and a deeper one. As he did in *De finibus* and the *Tuscu-*

31 Cf. Chrysippus' departure from his teacher Cleanthes on an issue of formal logic, *Fat*. 14.
32 Cf. *Luc*. 38 – 39: *Vbi igitur uirtus, si nihil situm est in ipsis nobis?* ("Where is virtue, if nothing is up to us?"); cf. *Off*. 1.28: an action is just only on condition that it is voluntary (*uoluntarius*).
33 Cf., e. g., Lucr. 2.37 – 61, 3.59 – 93, 5.1105 – 1160. This is not to say that the Epicureans thought no acts were worthy of praise or blame, but rather that from their point of view most societies, Rome included, praise and blame the wrong things. Tellingly, Lucretius does not invoke this argument with regard to Rome, giving Cicero his opening. I am grateful to David Sedley for this observation.
34 Cf. Sedley/Long 1987, 61 – 62.
35 Cf. *Diu*. 1.7 – 9. *De diuinatione*, structured as a dialogue, spares Cicero—himself a member of the college of augurs—the unpleasant task of having to side with skepticism over tradition or vice versa. His aim is clearly to retain the institution in some form, see *Leg*. 2. Cf. Lévy 2020.

lans,[36] Cicero reproaches the Stoics for their second-rate style. Using "formulae peculiar to himself", Chrysippus has undermined the will "against his will" (*inuitus*), handing ammunition to his intellectual opponents (*Fat*. 39–40).[37] Graver still, according to the Stoic doctrine of assent all human action must be preceded by an external force (*ui extrinsecus*, *Fat*. 42). We are, they insist, co-authors of our actions—though these are triggered from outside us and, following Chrysippus, determined by our "shape". In contrast, Plato's doctrine of the self-moving soul allows that the operations of our will are not only "up to us" (*in nostra potestate*), but ascribable *only* to us.[38] We remember that for Plato, "every act of your soul is an act of yours".[39] This apparently stronger view of autonomy offers an attractive remedy to the Stoics' dependence on past conditioning and external stimuli. Carneades lets Cicero develop a notion of will based instead on independent choice and present effort: free will manifesting a self-moving soul.

A trained Stoic would undoubtedly object that Cicero has done violence to their position, and that their account of fate is similarly robust and more coherent.[40] But Cicero's objection to the Stoics has never been a lack of coherence. Rather, they have failed to align their theories with the lived experience of their listeners. In an early passage, he takes aim at Chrysippus' view that the dif-

36 Cf. *Fin*. 3.3, 3.19, 4.5–7, 4.22–23, 4.52; *Tusc*. 2.29, 2.42.

37 He also teases Chrysippus for trying to correct the syntax of Chaldean diviners (*Fat*. 15–16). After his analysis of the Stoic's doctrine of "condestination", he adds that Carneades achieves the same result "but did not employ any trickery" (*nec ullam adhibebat calumniam*, *Fat*. 31).

38 In allowing "the possibility of some voluntary movement of the mind" (*quendam animi motum uoluntarium*), the Academics "could easily have withstood Chrysippus, for in admitting that no motion is uncaused they would not have been admitting that all events are due to antecedent causes, as they would have said that there are *no external and antecedent causes of our will*" (*facile Chrysippo possent resistere, cum enim concessissent motum nullum esse sine causa, non concederent omnia, quae fierent, fieri causis antecedentibus; uoluntatis enim nostrae non esse causas externas et antecedentes*, *Fat*. 23). Cicero makes an analogy from physics: the laws of nature allow atoms to move through the void by their own gravity and weight, with no additional external force required (*Fat*. 24). "Voluntary motion possesses the intrinsic property of being in our power and of obeying us, and its obedience is not uncaused, for its nature is itself the cause of this" (*Motus enim uoluntarius eam naturam in se ipse continet, ut sit in nostra potestate nobisque pareat, nec id sine causa; eius rei enim causa ipsa natura est*, *Fat*. 25). Cf. Frede 2011, 16, arguing that in earlier Antiquity explanations from "natural causes" still left room for the world to "remain in our sense causally undetermined, leaving enough space for us to live our life as we see fit".

39 Cf. *Tusc*. 1.52: *ab animo tuo quidquid agitur, id agitur a te*.

40 See, e. g., Frede 2011, 91, who argues that the notions of freedom introduced by opponents of the Stoics are "much weaker than the corresponding, incredibly strong, Stoic notions". On p. 93, Frede dismisses Cicero's use of the phrase *motus uoluntarii* as irrelevant to later notions of free will, but does not once mention his phrase *libera uoluntas*.

ferences between men are explained by varieties of climate or the positions of heavenly bodies (*Fat*. 7).[41] "All the same," Cicero ripostes, "the rarefied air of Athens will not enable a student to choose among the lectures of Zeno, Arcesilas and Theophrastus" (*[*sc. *Athenis] tamen neque illud tenue caelum efficiet, ut aut Zenonem quis aut Arcesilam aut Theophrastum audiat*, *Fat*. 7). Differences of climate, however keenly observed, do not determine where we choose to walk on a certain day, or in which friend's company (*Fat*. 9). For Cicero, the simplest daily choices—strolling here, sitting there—are common-sense, irreducible evidence of human freedom. As Woolf observes, "the upholding of common sense is, I think, one reason why he emphasizes his role as orator [in *De fato*, LP], and the connection of oratory with the scepticism of the New Academy. The orator needs to take seriously ordinary ways of thinking; and the Academic sceptic is primed to look critically at philosophical doctrine".[42] Cicero encourages his readers to adopt a common-sense understanding, instead of a strict construction, of "willing something without cause": we mean not that our volition is uncaused but that we ourselves are causing it.[43] As compared to the Stoics, the Academic "will" seems intuitively more free.[44]

Here we can surmise why Chrysippus' "two causes" may be insufficient for Cicero. The "perfect and primary" cause of the cylinder's motion is its *natura*, not its *uoluntas*. A cylinder does not strive to roll through a room. Chrysippus' position, his answer to the 'Lazy Argument', is that simply moving by *uis et natura*

41 Cicero is equally critical of divine omens as he is of 'climatic' determinism: Posidonius' arguments for destiny of omens over simple natural explanations, or even mere chance, are *absurda* (*Fat*. 7–8).

42 Woolf 2015, 87; cf. *Fat*. 3: "There is a close alliance between the orator and the philosophical system of which I am a follower" (*Nam cum hoc genere philosophiae, quod nos sequimur, magnam habet orator societatem*), where the latter's subtlety adds to, and is made more persuasive by, the former's style.

43 The Carnadean position appears to have some resonance in contemporary physics. See Rovelli 2015, 73: "When we say that we are free, and it's true that we can be, this means that how we behave is determined by what happens within us, within the brain, and not by external factors. To be free doesn't mean that our behavior is not determined by the laws of nature. It means that it is determined by the laws of nature acting in our brains".

44 Cicero finds Carneades' position "rigidly conclusive" that "if everything takes place with antecedent causes [...] all things are caused by necessity; if this is true, nothing is in our power. But *something is in our power*" (*Si omnia antecedentibus causis fiunt [...], omnia necessitas efficit; id si uerum est, nihil est in nostra potestate; est autem aliquid in nostra potestate*, *Fat*. 31). In other words, our lived experience, the self-evident sensation shared by philosopher and layman alike, is evidence too convincing to be disregarded. Strolling the agora, attending lectures, resisting temptations—these are *uoluntatis*, matters of will. If we feel free, then in some very important sense, we are.

(*Fat.* 43) puts these movements *in nostra potestate*. For Cicero, by contrast, our *uoluntas* is manifest—is in a sense "at its most free"—where it does not merely reflect our *natura* but overcomes it. Though born with a predilection for liquor and women, Stilpo the Megarian strives fiercely to "master and suppress his vicious nature by study" (*uitiosam [...] naturam ab eo sic edomitam et compressam esse doctrina*, *Fat.* 10). Though nature gave him certain traits, he is not doomed by these defects. Freedom is not the sole province of the Stoic sage, but lies in the "will, effort, and training" (*uoluntate studio disciplina*, *Fat*. 11) practicable by all. This is Cicero's way of knowing: not in pristine logic but in present action, friction, the contest of forces. Only by overcoming our inborn flaws, as Stilpo did, do we repay the gift of a *libera uoluntas*; only in struggle does freedom become real.

Free will and the forum

As pioneers of Latin philosophy, Lucretius and Cicero each deserve mention as the godfathers of free will. It must be added that sharing this accolade with the Epicurean would be, for Cicero, a nasty shock. Whatever warmth he may have felt for Lucretius personally, *De fato,* like the entire philosophical production of Cicero, reveals a vehement dislike of his school. The partisans of the *clinamen* "stand in terror of fate and seek protection against it from the atoms" (*Epicurus fatum extimescat et ab atomis petat praesidium*, *Fat*. 18). Their theories are motivated by fear (*ueretur*, *Fat*. 21 and 23) and wishful thinking (*optare*, *Fat*. 47); their incapacity for logic is "shameful" (*impudens*, *Fat*. 37). In the treatise's closing lines he concludes, "no one did more to abolish the voluntary movements of soul, than has the philosopher who confesses that he has been unable to withstand fate in any other way than by taking refuge in these fictitious swerves" (*nec uero quisquam magis confirmasse mihi uidetur [...] sustulisseque motus animi uoluntarios, quam hic, qui aliter obsistere fato fatetur se non potuisse, nisi ad has commenticias declinationes confugisset, Fat*. 48). In other words, the Epicurean position is not merely wrong, it is dishonorable. Strictly speaking, isn't this beside the point?

Not at all. The manliness of the Epicurean position matters because in 44 BCE, the Republic's integrity is at stake. Whereas the Garden preaches quiet extrication from politics, the 'Lazy Argument' must be opposed because it leads "to the entire abolition of action from life" (*Fat.* 29). If we are not the true authors of our actions, "there is no justice in either praise or blame, either honors or punishments" (*ut nec laudationes iustae sint nec uituperationes nec honores nec supplicia*, *Fat.* 40). For the Epicureans, *uoluntas* is the force by which all creatures,

human or beast, seek *uoluptas*, including the fulfillment of sexual desire.[45] For Cicero, *uoluntas* is embodied instead in the specifically human self-mastery of Stilpo and in the heroism of Regulus, who suffers for the Republic *sua uoluntate*.[46] The apparently esoteric debate of *De fato* thus has urgent and present consequence for its author, the augur and ex-consul. A cosmology with no room for honor is a grave threat to society: strip these from Roman life and nothing remains.[47]

In this sense, one can see why Cicero might have wanted to bring freedom into the heart of this debate. He perceives in Epicureanism a grave threat to Roman values. Lucretius' *libertas* is a freedom expressed in detachment, a 'freedom from' social convention and public duties. The *libertas* of *De fato* and the *Verrines*, on the other hand, is a freedom of adhesion, a 'freedom to' correct one's faults, win the praise of fellow citizens, and show patriotism in sacrifice.[48] Against the tyrants, Cicero wields the skeptical Academy to redeem the *populus Romanus*. "Let everyone defend his views", he declares in the *Tusculans*, "for judgment is free" (*Sed defendat, quod quisque sentit; sunt enim iudicia libera, Tusc.* 4.7)".[49] This venerable debate can no longer be simply about "antecedent causes" or what is "up to us"; the citizen must regain in his soul what he has lost in the Republic. Freedom from fate makes virtue possible; free will is the force to realize it. Though civil war rages and tyrants may rule, in this inner battlefield we can still prevail.

His notion of free will helps Cicero advance three claims critical to the action of 44 BCE. First, against the necessity of fate he stresses the contingency of politics. The setting of *De fato* is a conversation with the consul-designate Hirtius

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45 Lucr. 2.258, 4.1045–1046.

46 See *Fat.* 10; *Sest.* 127, *Fin.* 2.65, *Off.* 3.105. Cf. Leach 2014 for a recent treatment of Regulus' exemplarity.

47 Cf. *Fin.* 1.23–25, 2.73 (the example of Roman heroes refutes Epicurean ethics); 2.67–68 (no mention of Greek heroes in the school of Epicurus); 2.74 (a Roman orator could not endorse Epicurus in public), 2.76 (Roman values that Torquatus should respect). On the linkage of virtue to civic duty, cf. *Nat. D.* 1.110, *Off.* 1.19; see also Powell 2012, 18.

48 This is not to say that Lucretius lacks a notion of moral self-improvement. See, e.g., 3.320–322: *Vsque adeo naturarum uestigia linqui | paruola quae nequeat ratio depellere, | ut nil impediat dignam dis degere uitam* ("so trivial are the traces of different natures that remain, beyond reason's power to expel, that nothing hinders our living a life worthy of gods", transl. Rouse 1924). Whether or not Cicero is responding directly (or fairly) to Lucretius, the anti-political views of the Garden are in evidence throughout his poem; cf. Lucr. 2.37–61, 3.59–93, 5.1105–1160.

49 Cf. *ibid.* 5.33: "I live from day to day, I say anything that strikes me as probable, and so I alone am free" (*nos in diem uiuimus; quodcumque nostros animos probabilitate percussit, id dicimus, itaque soli sumus liberi*). Transl. King 1927. On skeptical *libertas,* cf. *Luc.* 8–9, 105; *Tusc.* 5.83.

just after the Ides, when "it had seemed as if a search was being made for every possible means of causing fresh upheavals, and we thought that resistance must be offered to these tendencies" (*cum enim omnes post interitum Caesaris nouarum perturbationum causae quaeri uiderentur eisque esse occurrendum putaremus, Fat.* 2). Political urgency thus launches their examination of fate—and as Cicero frets to Atticus, Hirtius' will is hesitating between Caesarians and liberators.[50] The course of history, as he writes to Varro in 46, depends not on fate but on the characters of those in power:

> Non enim est idem ferre si quid ferendum est et probare si quid non probandum est. Etsi <ne> quid non probem quidem iam scio, *praeter initia rerum; nam haec in uoluntate fuerunt*. Vidi enim (nam tu aberas) nostros amicos cupere bellum, hunc autem non tam cupere quam non timere. Ergo haec consili fuerunt, reliqua necessaria. Vincere autem aut hos aut illos necesse erat.[51]
>
> It is one thing to put up with what has to be put up with, another to approve what ought to be disapproved—though for my part I don't any longer know what to disapprove of, except *the beginnings of it all, which were a matter of will.* I saw (you were away) that our friends were desirous of war, whereas the person we are expecting [*sc.* Caesar] was not so much desirous as unafraid of it. That then came within the scope of design, all else followed inevitably. And victory had to fall to one side or the other.

The laws of causality were clearly operative in the clash of Caesar and Pompey, but behind the apparent necessity of events lay an incipient *uoluntas* for war. Though allied to reason, Cicero's *uoluntas* is morally bivalent, potentially *honesta* or *inhonesta*.[52] What will determine the course of the Republic, he insists, is not climate or prophecy[53] but the integrity of Rome's leaders.[54] If they ally their wills to reason, the Republic can last forever.[55] Conversely, if the Republic fails, no external force is to blame. Already in 63 BCE, he had asserted:

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50 *Att.* 14.20.4; see Lévy 2007, 20 – 21.

51 *Fam.* 9.6.2, transl. Shackleton Bailey 2001.

52 See *Tusc.* 4.34.

53 Cf. *Fam.* 6.1.5 (46 BCE) to Torquatus regarding the civil war: "When I foretold what has come about, I had no prophetic vision: perceiving what *could* happen, and would be disastrous if it did, I feared it" (*Neque ego, ea, quae facta sunt, fore cum dicebam, diuinabam futura, sed, quod et fieri posse et exitiosum fore, si euenisset, uidebam, id ne accideret timebam*).

54 See Ferrary 1995, 56: "for Cicero the death of a city is never due to natural causes"; Powell 2012, 25: "even though Rome has had and still has a constitution of the best possible kind, it is at risk precisely because of great faults in the rulers"; cf. also Powell 1994, 27.

55 *Rep.* 3.34. Cf. Cicero's assurance to Marcellus: "I believe there is nothing except lack of will to hinder you from the enjoyment of all that is yours" (*Nihil tibi deesse arbitrer ad tuas fortunas omnis obtinendas praeter uoluntatem*, *Fam.* 4.7.3).

> Nullus est reliquus rex, nulla gens, nulla natio quam pertimescatis; nullum aduenticium, nullum extraneum malum est qu<od insi>nuare in han<c rem publicam pos>sit. Si immorta<lem> hanc ciuitate<m esse> uoltis [...] *nobis a nostris* <cupi>ditatibus, a tu<rbulen>tis hominibus <atque no>uarum rerum <cupidis, ab intestinis malis>, a domesticis co<nsiliis> est cauendum.[56]
>
> No king is left, no nation, no tribe to cause you fear; there is no evil from outside, of other's causing, that can make its way into our country; if you desire that country to be immortal [...] it is against *our own* passions that we must be on our guard, against men of violence and revolutionaries, against evils from within, against plots devised at home.

No "everlasting chain" precipitated Rome's disaster; the Romans did.[57]

Secondly, free will sharpens the moral responsibility of Cicero's enemies. Throughout his career, he uses *uoluntas* to describe how wicked men put themselves above the law: the corrupt Verres had foregone the lawful exercise of power by his *uoluntas* and *auaritia*;[58] the agrarian decemvirs betray the state by selling land *ex sua uoluntate*;[59] and though nature made Catiline prone to madness, his *uoluntas exercuit*.[60] And yet by the force of his invective, the orator risks dehumanizing his opponents. Are such monsters truly free to act otherwise?[61] Employing the Stoic doctrine of "willing disturbance", Cicero emphasizes in the *Tusculans* that no matter how unhinged a man like Antony may seem, he is still responsible for his acts.[62] All crimes against the state are willing, and thus fully deserving of blame. In arguing that their wills are free—that they abuse a faculty common to all men—Cicero intensifies their guilt.

Finally, a free will lets Cicero retain his own honor. In *De finibus*, he presents the Stoic view that actions should be judged not by results alone but also by the *uoluntas* behind them.[63] Despite his exclusion from the conspiracy against Caesar, he partakes of its glory: "All decent men killed Caesar so far as it was in them to do so: some lacked design, some courage, some opportunity; none lacked the will" (*Etenim omnes boni, quantum in ipsis fuit, Caesarem occiderunt; aliis consilium, aliis animus, aliis occasio defuit; uoluntas nemini, Phil.* 2.29, transl.

56 *Rab. perd.* 33–34, transl. Grose Hodge 1927.
57 Cf. *Rep.* 1.47: "Every State is such as its ruler's character and will make it" (*Et talis est quaeque res publica, qualis eius aut natura aut uoluntas qui illam regit*), transl. Keyes 1928.
58 *Verr.* 2.3.220.
59 *Leg. agr.* 2.64.
60 *Cat.* 1.25.
61 See generally Lévy 1998.
62 See *Tusc.* 4.60, 4.65, 4.83.
63 *Fin.* 3.22, 3.32.

Shackleton Bailey/Ramsey/Manuwald 2010).[64] And despite his failure to prevent the Republic's destruction, in the one matter truly "up to him", the statesman can hold his head high. In the same year as *De fato*, Cicero writes to Torquatus, a fellow Republican lamenting Caesar's rise to power:

> Fateor me communium malorum consolationem nullam inuenire praeter illam, quae tamen, si possis eam suscipere, maxima est quaque ego cottidie magis utor, *conscientiam rectae uoluntatis maximam consolationem esse rerum incommodarum* nec esse ullum magnum malum praeter culpam. A qua quoniam tantum absumus ut etiam optime senserimus euentusque magis nostri consili quam consilium reprehendatur.[65]
>
> I must admit that I find no consolation for our common calamities, save one; but that one, if we can make it ours, is sovereign, and I myself have recourse to it more and more every day. I mean that *the consciousness of a righteous will is the greatest consolation in adversity*, and that there is no great calamity apart from guilt. We are free of that. On the contrary our hearts have always been in the right place, and the outcome of our course of action is deplored rather than the course itself.

If philosophy cannot save the *res publica*, it can help reconcile Cicero to his failures. *De fato* helps him demonstrate that Romans are not prisoners of necessity, nor will their careers be measured solely by their defeats. "I shall never regret my will", he writes to Atticus, "merely the course I adopted" (*uoluntatis me meae numquam paenitebit, consili paenitet*, *Att*. 11.6.2, 48 BCE). In the ashes of the Republic, a *recta uoluntas* is all Cicero is left with, and philosophy shows him it is enough.

Augustine: a Ciceronian free will?

Like Cicero, Augustine's battle is a struggle for insight, a quest for truths safe from political tumult. The *Confessions* can be read as an extended inquiry into free will, sparked not by a tyrant's murder but by an adolescent lapse of self-control.[66] The young Augustine could not follow the commands of his own mind:

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64 Cf. *Vat*. 26, the whole world had repudiated Cicero's opponents "not merely in thought but in open reproaches" (*non uoluntate sed conuicio*).

65 *Fam*. 6.4.2, transl. Shackleton Bailey 2001. See also *Fam*. 5.21.2 (46 BCE), Cicero takes refuge in *conscientia etiam consiliorum meorum*.

66 Without pretending to give a comprehensive overview of the literature on Augustine's *Confessions*, the following references are central for this section: Brown 1967; O'Donnell 1992; Wetzel 1992, esp. 197–206 and 219–235 (with summary of the previous debate); Clark 1993 and 1995; Rist 1994; Burton 2001; Stump 2006; Matthews 2009; Catapano 2018; Toom 2020.

> Vnde hoc monstrum? Et quare istuc? Imperat animus corpori, et paretur statim: imperat animus sibi, et resistitur. Imperat animus, ut moueatur manus, et tanta est facilitas, ut uix a seruitio discernatur imperium: et animus animus est, manus autem corpus est. *Imperat animus, ut uelit animus, nec alter est nec facit tamen*. Vnde hoc monstrum? Et quare istuc?[67]
>
> Whence is this strange situation? And why is it so? The mind orders the body, and the body obeys; the mind orders itself, and it resists. The mind orders a hand to be moved, and this is accomplished with such ease that its authority can scarcely be discerned from that of a master over his slave. And the mind is of the mind, but the hands are of the body. *The mind orders the mind to will; it is only one mind, but it does not do as ordered*. Whence is this strange situation? And why is it so?

Augustine's dramatic conversion at Milan is sparked by a passage from Saint Paul, his decisive spiritual influence. In the Apostle he finds a kindred struggle for godliness against the temptations of the flesh. But whereas Paul pits a divine spirit against a corrupted body,[68] Augustine's battleground is within the soul itself:

> Itaque aciem mentis de profundo educere conatus, mergebar iterum, et saepe conatus mergebar iterum atque iterum. Subleuabat enim me in lucem tuam, quod *tam sciebam me habere uoluntatem quam me uiuere*. Itaque cum aliquid uellem aut nollem, non alium quam me uelle ac nolle certissimus eram, et ibi esse causam peccati mei iam iamque aduertebam.[69]
>
> [A]s I endeavoured to raise my mental sight from the depths, I was drawn down again; and often as I tried, I was drawn down again and again. What raised me up towards your light was the fact that *I knew that I had a will just as much as I knew I was alive*. Thus, when I willed or did not will something, I was wholly certain that it was I and no one else who was willing it or not willing it; and I was now on the point of perceiving that therein lay the reason for my own sin.

What is the *uoluntas* of which Augustine is so sure?

In his own retelling, Cicero played a fundamental role in Augustine's intellectual life.[70] Less well recognized is the debt he owes Cicero in his theory of

67 August. *Conf.* 8.9.21.

68 See, e. g., Rm. 7:25: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin". Cf. 8:9 – 10: "But yet are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness".

69 *Conf.* 7.3.4.

70 See pp. 97 – 99 above.

the will and its freedom. The qualities of *uoluntas* proposed by Augustine are striking in their similarities to Cicero and illuminating in their departures.

First, the similarities. As for Cicero, Augustine's *uoluntas* is not merely an "instance of willing" but a continuous capacity or power of mind.[71] As for Cicero, *uoluntas* is a capacity or quality that man shares with the gods: in *De natura deorum*, Cotta asserts that if the Stoics are correct, the gods could create a just world as effortlessly as humans move their limbs, "by their own mind and will" (*mente ipsa ac uoluntate*, *Nat. D.* 3.92, transl. Rackham 1933).[72] As for Cicero, *uoluntas* for Augustine is the critical locus of human responsibility. The *persona* which "sets forth from our will" (*a nostra uoluntate proficiscitur*) is the one by which we choose our value system and path through life.[73] Nature has "placed" the cardinal virtues in our will,[74] justifying both our legal liability and freedom from fate.[75] For both Cicero and Augustine, one person's capacity of will does not necessarily resemble another's, and it may be directed to better or worse ends.[76] What is most striking is how emphatically Augustine describes his *uoluntas*, like Cicero's, as a dynamic and measurable force. Like the consul-designate Hirtius, Augustine's will can *inclinare* to one side or another, an image Cicero develops in his oratory.[77] It can shift from one type to another, as when Ponticianus'

71 See, e. g., *Conf.* 7.3.4, 7.16.22, 7.21.27, 8.5.10, 8.8.19 – 20, 8.9.21, 8.10.23 – 24.

72 Cotta, as skeptic, is not endorsing the Stoic view. Nevertheless, the evocation of will on the human and divine plane is present in both sets of arguments; cf.: "he believed that the motion of all living bodies is due to one of three causes, nature, force, or will" (*omnia quae mouentur aut natura moueri censuit aut ui aut uoluntate*, 2.44). See also *Rosc. Am.* 136: "I am aware that all these results are due to the will of the gods, the zeal of the Roman people, and the wisdom, power, and good fortune of Sulla" (*eaque omnia deorum uoluntate, studio populi Romani, consilio et imperio et felicitate L. Sullae gesta esse intellego*, transl. Frese 1930); *Leg.* 1.24: "hence we are justified in saying that there is a blood relationship between ourselves and the celestial beings; or we may call it a common ancestry or origin" (*ex quo uere uel agnatio nobis cum caelestibus uel genus uel stirps appellari potest*, transl. Keyes 1928); *Tusc.* 5.38: "the soul of man, derived as it is from the divine mind, can be compared with nothing else, if it is right to say so, save God alone" (*humanus autem animus decerptus ex mente diuina cum alio nullo nisi cum ipso deo, si hoc fas est dictu, comparari potest*, transl. King 1927).

73 *Off.* 1.115.

74 *Fin.* 5.36.

75 See, e. g., *Top.* 64: while "throwing a weapon is an act of the will, hitting someone unintentionally is an act of fortune" (*nam iacere telum uoluntatis est, ferire quem nolueris fortunae*, transl. Hubbell 1949); *Fat.* 20.

76 See, e. g., *Conf.* 7.3.4, 7.16.22, 7.21.27, 9.2.4; cf. *Tusc.* 4.11, 4.34; *Part. or.* 49.

77 See *Conf.* 2.3.6, like his father's joy at noticing Augustine's pubescence, so too is mankind "drunk on the invisible wine of its own will, perverse as it is and bent on lower things" (*de uino inuisibili peruersae atque inclinatae in ima uoluntatis suae*); cf. 2.5.10. For "inclination" of the will in Cicero, see *Cat.* 4.6, *Mur.* 53, and *De or.* 2.129.

friends, fresh converts to a monastic life, "told them of their resolve and purpose, and how such a will as this had arisen and been confirmed in them" (*at illi narrato placito et proposito suo quoque modo in eis talis uoluntas orta esset atque firmata*, *Conf.* 8.6.15). And of course, the will can be perverse, literally "turned around" from good to evil, to which Augustine adds the imagery of "casting forth its innermost part" (*proicientis intima sua*) and "swelling outwards" (*tumescentis foras*).[78] If it was Paul whose words healed Augustine's will, the will he healed was remarkably Ciceronian.

Yet Augustine carries the semantics of will beyond anything in Cicero's corpus. Where Cicero centered the struggle of *uoluntas* upon civic virtues—the freedom to excel in patriotic service, unshackled from an eternal causal chain—Augustine takes the struggle inward to the civil war in his soul. Twelve years after Cicero's *Hortensius* kindled his search for wisdom, at thirty-one Augustine is certain of Christian truth. But this apparently does not suffice: "My soul resisted. She refused, and did not excuse herself; all her arguments were used up and shown to be false" (*Et renitebatur, recusabat et non se execusabat. Consumpta erant et conuicta argumenta omnia*, *Conf.* 8.7.18). This, the ancient *akrasia* problem of Socrates—knowing the good and failing to do it—Augustine frames anew. His is a will divided against itself, its salvation dependent on God's grace alone. Cicero's semantics of struggle lead Augustine to a new argument in Western thought: the will to follow Christ is not the only will within him. His agony is the experience of a combat between one "iron will" (*ferrea uoluntas*, *Conf.* 8.5.10), "weighed down by its habit" toward worldly appetites; and another "will to progress," not yet "strong and whole throughout" (*uelle fortiter et integre*, *Conf.* 8.8.19). Thus divided, his *uoluntas* is "twisted and tossed around, wounded in part, caught in a struggle between rising and falling factions" (*semisauciam hac atque hac uersare et iactare uoluntatem, parte adsurgente cum alia parte cadente luctantem*, *ibid.*). A vivid combat of wills, painted in Ciceronian colors by the onetime professor of rhetoric at Milan.

Like Cicero with the Epicureans, Augustine seeks to re-appropriate terms that could be misused by his opponents. Anticipating the criticism of Manicheans, Augustine clarifies that these "two wills" do not represent "two Principles", one subject to God, the other outside his power.[79] Though Augustine is caught between an "upward" and "downward" will, it is possible for multiple evil and good wills to compete (*Conf.* 8.10.23). In the latter case, such as when

78 *Conf.* 7.16.22; 7.3.4. Cf. 10.22.32: "their will is not averse at least to some image of joy" (*ab aliqua tamen imagine gaudii uoluntas eorum non auertitur*).

79 *Conf.* 8.10.22; cf. 3.6.10 – 11.20.

a Christian hesitates between reading the Apostle, singing a psalm, or proclaiming the Gospel,

> et omnes bonae sunt et certant secum, *donec eligatur unum, quo feriatur tota uoluntas una, quae in plures diuidebatur.* Ita etiam, cum aeternitas delectat superius et temporalis boni uoluptas retentat inferius, eadem anima est non tota uoluntate illud aut hoc uolens; et ideo discerpitur graui molestia, dum illud ueritate praeponit, hoc familiaritate non ponit.[80]

> all these wills are good, and yet they strive against each other, *until one course of action is chosen, and the whole will, which had been divided into several wills, is channeled into it.* So too, although eternity has a delight that draws us upwards, and pleasure in temporal good draws us back downwards, there is no one soul that wills with all its will either one or the other. It is torn in two by the weight of its troubles, as long as it prefers the former for truth's sake, but for familiarity's sake does not put aside the latter.

In a choice between rites of faith, a struggle of wills can conduce to virtue; conversely, only a strong will can overcome temptation, as exemplified by Socrates and Stilpo.[81] To this new dimension of complexity—multiple wills within a single soul—Augustine adds another, the passage of time. In numberless daily choices, our acts of volition accrue and harden, ultimately moving us with the force of necessity.[82] Though such an "iron will" does not excuse us from responsibility, it does not spare us from feeling powerless to do what we 'really' want.[83] This thoroughly Stoic view of responsibility is the one Cicero had followed in the *Tusculan Disputations*, applying these strictures to a Platonic divided soul and advancing a fully Roman notion of 'willpower'.[84] Augustine's innovation appears to be a will that can mature, divide and reintegrate. His quest is to live a Chris-

80 *Conf.* 8.10.24.

81 *Fat.* 10–11.

82 See *Conf.* 8.7.17. Cf. 4.7.12, 8.5.10–11, 8.7.17, 8.9.21.

83 See *Conf.* 8.5.11: "From my own experience I realized that what I had read was true in myself: the flesh lusted against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. I was in both the flesh and the spirit, but I was more myself in that which I approved in myself, than in that which I disapproved in myself. By now it was rather not I who was in the flesh, since for the most part I was an unwilling sufferer rather than a willing doer. But it was my own doing that habit gripped me so fiercely, since I had arrived willingly at a place to which I had no wish to come" (*Sic intellegebam me ipso experimento id quod legeram, quomodo caro concupisceret aduersus spiritum et spiritus aduersus carnem. Ego quidem in utroque, sed magis ego in eo, quod in me approbabam, quam in eo, quod in me improbabam. Ibi enim magis iam non ego, quia ex magna parte id patiebar inuitus quam faciebam uolens. Sed tamen consuetudo aduersus me pugnacior ex me facta erat, quoniam uolens quo nollem perueneram*).

84 See *Tusc.* 2.28–29, 2.39–41, 2.47, 2.54–55, 2.62, 3.25, 4.31, 4.62; cf. Galen, *PHP* 4.6.43–45; Stobaeus, *Ecl.* 2.7.9 (86W) (on ὁρμαί); Gell. *NA* 7.2.6–7. See generally Graver 2007, 24–34, 61–63; Frede 2011, 32–33; on Augustine's notion of responsibility, cf. Stump 2006, 167–168.

tian life with a "full will" (*plena uoluntas*, *Conf.* 8.9.21, 9.2.4), "strong and whole throughout" (*fortiter et integre*, *Conf.* 8.8.19).[85]

Using Cicero's semantics of struggle and competition, the bishop of Hippo arrives at a most un-Ciceronian conclusion. Though despairing of Rome's moral decline, Cicero clearly believed man capable of improvement without divine intervention. "We will be healed if we will it" (*Sanabimur si uolemus, Tusc.* 2.62), Cicero writes in the *Tusculans*. Not so for Augustine's notion of the will. What separates him most sharply from Cicero is his rejection of worldly affairs and pessimism for mankind. The *Confessions* poignantly trace the path to this conclusion: Augustine acknowledged the truths of God; he willed to follow them; and with all his gifts, time and again, he failed.

His conclusion is that no *uoluntas* becomes "strong and whole" on its own. Though the model for human will, God's will is different in two critical respects. First, its power is eternal and limitless. Borrowing from Plotinus, Augustine places God's will on a higher plane of causality: "The Word, that is God, was born not of the blood nor of the will of man nor of the will of the flesh, but of God" (*Verbum, deus, non ex carne, non ex sanguine, neque ex uoluntate uiri, neque ex uoluntate carnis, sed ex deo natus est*, *Conf.* 7.9.14).[86] In comparison to man's *uoluntas*, *uoluntas dei* is untouched by time, "incorruptible and unchangeable, sufficient in itself for itself" (*incorruptibilis et incommutabilis uoluntas tua, ipsa in se sibi sufficiens*).[87] Why then does God not allow our wills to achieve their ends? Since His nature is just, our weak and corrupted wills must be a deserved punishment for earlier abuse of His gifts. This leads Augustine to the doctrine of original sin—that Adam's initial misuse of a free will effectively enslaved his descendants.[88] As Frede points out, many Christians—including Augustine's archrival, Pelagius—disagreed with this view of man's helplessness. But against these fellow Christians, and against Cicero, Augustine is adamant: no man can perfect himself by reason. Human will can be freed and made whole only by the greater force of God's will, and his grace to apply it in our favor.[89] And it

85 Cf. *Conf.* 10.21.31: "Everyone wishes to be blessed; and if we did not know it with such sure knowledge, we would not will it with such sure will" (*Beati prorsus omnes esse uolumus*; *quod nisi certa notitia nossemus, non tam certa uoluntate uellemus*).

86 He quotes Plotinus favorably here, though adds, "but as for the fact that the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, that I did not read" (*sed quia uerbum caro factus est et habitauit in nobis, non ibi legi*, *Conf.* 7.9.14).

87 *Conf.* 13.4.5; cf. 11.10.12; 12.15.18; 12.28.38.

88 Cf. Stump 2006, 170 – 171.

89 Cf. Stump 2006, 167; Fox (intr. in Burton 2001), xxvii. Even for the "saved", divine grace is necessary to guard our wills against corruption. *Conf.* 10.37.60: "I am tested by these temptations every day, O Lord; I am tempted incessantly [...] You bid us be continent in respect of this sort of

is Augustine's idea of divine grace, ultimately, which becomes orthodox in Latin Christendom.

Augustine's break from Cicero is most emphatic, finally, in his politics. Cicero's core commitment was the care of the Republic. He adapted Plato to argue that Rome had been led to perfection by its extraordinary *maiores*, men who strove and sacrificed for their fellow citizens.[90] By Augustine's time, however, republicanism was a distant memory. In its place was the organizing principle of an emperor's absolute, if all-too-human, will. "Can we have any greater hope at Court," he asks, "than that of becoming Friends of the Emperor? And if we do, what will we then have that is not frail and beset with perils? How many perils must we endure to arrive at a greater peril?" (*Maiorne esse poterit spes nostra in palatio, quam ut amici imperatoris simus? Et ibi quid non fragile plenumque periculis? Et per quot pericula peruenitur ad grandius periculum?*, 8.6.15). To the perpetual insecurity of imperial politics—already familiar to Seneca, and an immutable fact by the fourth century—there could be only one release: "If I will to become a friend of God, behold, I can become one now!" (*Amicus autem dei, si uoluero, ecce nunc fio*, *ibid.*)

In his dialogue *De re publica*, Cicero had made clear his view that a Republic without *libertas* was no Republic at all.[91] In the *City of God*, Augustine uses the strictness of Cicero's reasoning to argue against his hero:

> Quocirca ubi non est uera iustitia, iuris consensu sociatus coetus hominum non potest esse et *ideo nec populus iuxta illam Scipionis uel Ciceronis definitionem*; et si non populus, nec res populi, sed qualiscumque multitudinis, quae populi nomine digna non est. Ac per hoc, si res publica res est populi [...], procul dubio colligitur, ubi iustitia non est, non esse rem publicam.[92]
>
> Thus, where there is no true justice there can be no human gathering brought together by a common sense of right and wrong, and therefore *there can be no people, as defined by Scipio or Cicero*; and if there is no people, then there is no common business of a people but only of some promiscuous multitude unworthy of the name of people. Consequently, if the Republic is the people's common business [...] then most certainly it follows that there is no Republic where there is no justice.

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temptation also; give what you command and command what you will" (*Temptamur his temptationibus cotidie, domine, sine cessatione temptamur. [...] Imperas nobis et in hoc genere continentiam; da quod iubes et iube quod uis*).

90 See *Rep.* 3.41, the Republic "might live on forever if the principles and customs of our ancestors were maintained" (*quae poterat esse perpetua, si patriis uiueretur institutis et moribus*); cf. 2.55–56, 3.7, 3.33–34.

91 *Rep.* 3.43.

92 *De ciu. D.* 19.21, transl. McCracken 1957. Here Augustine rejoins the question he poses at *De ciu. D.* 2.21–24; on the critique of Cicero's politics, cf. O'Donnell 2015, 231.

In other words, the disastrous failure of man to achieve justice is proof that the only city worthy of our adherence is God's. In the twilight of Antiquity, divine will is ascendant; the will of the people, defunct.