NEW PHILOSOPHY TO OLD STANDARDS

Voetius' Vindication of Divine Concurrence and Secondary Causality*

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It should be considered whether from here, once confronted with arguments and consequences, one will not more easily fall into this absurd opinion: «That there are no secondary causes fitted with a causality of their own, but only a first and universal cause that acts in the presence and [given a certain] disposition of the secondary causes.» For the absurdity of this opinion, see the Scholastics and the modern metaphysicians and theologians, where they discuss the question of providence and God’s concurrence with creation. The consequences with which they [i.e. the followers of the New Philosophy] may be confronted are the following: (1) That there would be no divine concurrence nor any movement of the prime mover which is accommodated to the natures and properties of secondary causes, whether these are necessary or contingent (...).¹

Being one of Descartes’ most ardent critics, Gisbertus Voetius (1589-1676) was also one of the first to list his objections to the New Philosophy in general. In addition, he had the unique opportunity to find these included in an official university document². His essay “On the Natures and Substantial Forms of Things” contains a wide range of subjects, all in one way or another relating to the rejection, by Des-

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¹ Gisbertus Voetius, “De rerum naturis et formis substantiâlibus”. This text first appeared as an appendix ad corollaria Theologico-Philosophica nuper disputationi de Jubileo Romano [etc.], an original copy of which may be found in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris. The academic disputation was held on 23 and 24 December 1641. Later, the text was incorporated into the Testimonium Academiae Utrœjectinae, et Narratio Historica qua defensa, qua exterminata nova Philosophia, Utrecht 1643, p.40. In the following, we will refer to this work as ‘Narratio’. See also: R. Descartes/M. Schoock, La Querelle d’Utrecht, Paris (Les impressions nouvelles) 1988, p.106. The Querelle contains a French translation of the Narratio, to which we will also refer when citing the latin text. Thirdly, the text of the Appendix may be found in G. Voetius, Selectarum Disputationum Pars Prima, Utrecht 1648 (hereafter to be referred to as Select. Disp.I), pp.870-881.
² Viz. the Narratio (see above, note 1), relating to the academic crisis in Utrecht over the years 1641-1643. See for historical details: Querelle, esp.the ‘Introduction’ by Th. Verbeek.
cartes and others\textsuperscript{3}, of the Scholastic notion of substantial forms. In the present paper, I shall concentrate on only one of these subjects: the question of secondary causality and divine concurrence. It occurs as one of several “doubts and preliminary judgments” in Thesis II of the essay and will prove an interesting example of the way in which the famous Calvinist theologian polemicized against the philosophical novelties of his day.

Among the various doubts voiced by Voetius we find some scarcely elaborated objections, which may at various points seem incoherent to the modern reader. Take the passage cited above. Voetius' suspicion concerning the rejection of secondary causality may seem to anticipate the later Malebranchean standpoint. Hence, Voetius would be quite right to associate (1) the rejection of secondary causality with (2) the postulate that there be only a single, all-embracing First Cause. His warning, in other words, of what an extreme mechanist standpoint may lead to, seems justified by the later occasionalist developments in Cartesianism.

At the same time, however, it is not at all clear in what way this would involve a contradiction with, rather than a reinforcement of, the idea of a divine concurrence. In other words, if we take the view that Voetius anticipated consequences later to be drawn from the standpoints of the New Philosophy, we still face the problem of how to appreciate his argument that a mechanical philosophy would leave no room for a divine concurrence in the realm of Nature. In fact, Descartes himself expressly stated that God lends his concurrence “to enable nature to operate as it normally does”\textsuperscript{4}. Now the interpretation

\textsuperscript{3} Although the Utrecht Crisis centred around disputes concerning Descartes and the “Cartesian” Henricus Regius, it is not only the Cartesians Voetius is addressing in his essay. Other anti-Aristotelians, such as Sebastian Basso, David Gorlée, Nicolaus Taurellus, Kepler and Galileo are also named.

\textsuperscript{4} “(...)pour agir ainsi qu'elle a de coutume”; Descartes, Discours V, Adam/ Tannery edition (hereafter to be referred to as AT, followed by volume and page number) VI, p.45/Alquié edition (hereafter to be referred to as ALQ, followed by volume and pagename) I, pp.617-618. I quote the English translation from: The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, translated by John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff and Douglas Murdoch, 2 vols, Cambridge (C.U.P.) 1984-1985, p.133. The statement is meant to diminish the apparent inconsistency of the Biblical view and Descartes’ “evolutionist” reconstruction of how the world came into being: “Mais il est certain, et c'est une opinion communément reçue entre les théologiens, que l'action, par laquelle maintenant il (i.e., God) le conserve (i.e., the world), est toute la même que celle par laquelle il l'a créé; de façon qu'encore qu'il ne lui aurait point donné, au commencement, d'autre forme que celle du chaos, pourvu qu'ayant établi les lois de la nature, il lui prêtât son concours, pour agir ainsi
of Descartes' use of the technical term *concours* is rather complicated and we must not let ourselves be deceived by a mere coincidence of terms. But even granted the fact that Descartes' view of divine concurrence differs from Voetius' view, the question remains why the qu'elle a de coutume, on peut croire, sans faire tort au miracle de la création, que par cela seul toutes les choses qui sont purement matérielles auraient pu, avec le temps, s'y rendre telles que nous les voyons à présent."

5 There are in fact great difficulties of interpretation with regard to Descartes' stray remarks concerning divine concurrence. Since Descartes stated that (as, according to him, all theologians agree) God's action of conservation (by which He guarantees the existence of the Universe from each moment to the next) is exactly similar to His initial action of creation, he is often rightly said to develop the Thomistic idea of a *creatio continua*. See: Émile Bréhier: *La philosophie et son passé*, Paris (Alcan/P.U.F.) 1940, pp.127-137; René Descartes/Étienne Gilson: *Discours de la méthode*, Paris (Vrin) 1976, pp.340-342. Hence, the *Encyclopédia Filosofica* e.g., does not name Descartes where it has a lengthy discussion of the *concorso divino*, but does group not only Descartes, but also Malebranche and Spinoza under the heading of *creazione continuata*, identifying the Cartesian idea of discrete moments in time however as "creazione iterata" rather than "continuata". In his *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie* on the other hand, André Lalande draws a comparison between Scholastic and Cartesian philosophy on this very point under the heading of «CONCOURS ordinaire de Dieu»: "On appelle ainsi, dans la scolastique et dans l'école cartésienne, l'opération par laquelle Dieu conserve le monde dans l'existence; l'indépendance admise par ces écoles entre les moments du temps, ayant cette conséquence que l'universe cesserait d'exister aussitôt que Dieu cesserait de vouloir actuellement en maintenir la réalité." This does not do justice to any of the Scholastic views on concurrence. However, the question remains whether Descartes' theory is to be seen as a reformulation of the Thomistic idea of a *creatio continua*, or, rather, as a modern version of the Scholastic *concursus*? It may be said firstly, that, in the *Discourse*, Descartes apparently does not use the term *concours* to refer to God's continuous action of conservation, but, on the contrary, "pourvu qu'ayant établi les lois de la nature", Nature is guided by a divine concurrence, *pour agir ainsi qu'elle a de coutume* (the emphasis is mine); for the citation, see above, note 4. Secondly, in hardly any of the other passages in which Descartes mentions the idea of discrete moments of time in connection with continuous creation (*Meditatio III*, AT VII, pp.48-49/*Principia I*, § 21, AT VIII-I, p.13/Responsiones Iæ, AT VII, pp.168-169; see Gilson, op.cit., p.340), does he make use of such terms as *concursus, concurrere* etc., whilst on the contrary he does make ample use of the terms *conservatio, conservare* etc. He uses *concurrisse* in the third *Meditation* (AT VII, p.50), but only in a rather non-technical sense. However, two passages in Descartes' correspondence clearly point to a Cartesian identification of both themes. In a letter to Mersenne (21 April 1641, n° 287, AT III, p.360), Descartes affirms his allegiance to the idea of a divine concurrence, referring however to the *Primæ Responsiones*, in which he speaks of divine conservation only (cf. AT VII, p.109). Moreover, in the letter *ad Hyperaspistem* (August 1641, n° 250, AT III, pp.429-430), he uses the term *concurris* five times in the context of explaining his theory of divine conservation, using the term *conservari* only once. (For the objections from Descartes' Gassendist adversary, see: n° 246, AT III, pp.405-406.) Hence the conclusion seems warranted that when mentioning a divine *concursus/concours*, Descartes is referring to his
latter chose to argue against the New Philosophy on the grounds that it would reinforce the role of the Prime Cause, whilst at the same time it would lead to a rejection of God's concurrence with secondary causes. In order to explain Voetius' position, we shall, in the following, first inquire into what Voetius has in mind when he makes use of the term *concursus divinus*. He discusses divine concurrence in the context of two related theological questions. One of these deals with divine foreknowledge and human free will, a point of great controversy which dominated Dutch religious, academic and even political life for most of the first part of the century. We shall discuss it in § II, below. The other is immediately related to the first and concerns the problem of whether or not man can have any influence on the duration of life, given the fact that, by force of the divine decree, his life is wholly predetermined. Voetius dealt with this latter question in a *Dissertatio Epistolica* of 1634, when he was still a minister in the little town of Heusden. It is to this early work that we shall turn next.

*Divine Concurrence and Man's Fixed Hour of Death*

In March 1634, Voetius received a letter from Johan van Beverwijk, a Dordrecht physician who was later to become an acquaintance of Descartes, but who was at the time corresponding with various theological theory of continuous creation.

6 For a detailed discussion of the interconnection of the philosophical, religious and political points concerned, see: Thomas Arthur McGahagan, *Cartesianism in the Netherlands, 1639-1667; The New Science and the Calvinist Counter-Reformation* (Ph.D. diss. Univ. of Pennsylvania), Ann Arbor and London (University Microfilms International) 1976, and: Theo Verbeek, *Descartes and the Dutch*, Carbondale, Ill. (Southern Illinois University Press) 1991, Introduction. Note that since Voetius was one of the leading spokesmen for the orthodox Contra-Remonstrant party throughout his long life, the struggle with the Arminian or 'Remonstrant' party continued to play an important role in Voetius' teaching and writings. He had been a pupil of the Leiden theologian Gomarus (1563-1641), whose disputes with Arminius (1560-1609) had started the debate in 1604. He also attended the Dordrecht Synod of 1618-1619, in which the Remonstrant party was overruled and Remonstrant theses were suppressed. Voetius himself considered that the Remonstrants had no place within the Reformed Church, for which see: C. Graafland, "Voetius als gereformeerd theoloog", in: J. van Oort/C. Graafland/A. de Groot/ O.J. de Jong (red.) *De Onbekende Voetius* (Voordrachten wetenschappelijk symposium Utrecht 3 maart 1989), Kampen (Kok) 1989, pp.15-17 esp. For further biographical details, see: A.C. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius*, (4 vols) Leiden 1897-1915; reprint Utrecht (J.J. Groen & Zn.) 1989.

7 He was also to publish Descartes' correspondence with Plempius in the *Epistola questiones cum doctorum responsis*, Rotterdam 1644. For Van Beverwijk and his connections with Descartes, see: C.L. Thijssen-Schoute, *Nederlands Cartesianisme*;
gians, philosophers and men of medicine on the question of whether or not man is able to shorten or lengthen his life. Van Beverwijk also approached Voetius for a contribution, asking him in particular to explain his views on the significance of medical treatment in the light of divine predestination. Voetius replied with a lengthy *Dissertatio Epistolica de Termino Vitae*, in which he reduces the problem Van Beverwijk's confronted him with to a single question: whether the end of every single human life is "fixed, established, certain and immovable; and this because [it] is immutably (immutabiliter) determined by God." His answer is affirmative. But although God, "cause of all causes", thus pre-established man's hour of death, this does not mean, according to Voetius,

that [man] must rest, or look after his life in a more careless way, or neglect intermediaries (media), but [on the contrary, that he must] do what he is able to according to the prescription of the divine will. (...) For if God should think it fit to provide effects for the preservation of life, He will provide them by means of the intermediaries He Himself prescribed; if not, then will He do what is good in His eyes.


8 The first papers were collected in Van Beverwijk's 1634 Dordrecht publication *Joh. Beverovicii epistolica quœstio de vitœ termino, fatali, an mobili? cum doctorum responsis.* However, Voetius' contribution was only included in the second, Leiden edition of 1636, amongst those of such celebrous men as Marin Mersenne, André Rivet, Johannes Polyander and Simon Episcopius. In 1639, a third, wholly new set of papers was printed as *Joh. Beverovicii Epistolica Quœstio de Vitœ Termino [etc.] Pars tertia.* See for Van Beverwijk's contact with Voet: A.C. Duker, *Gisbertus Voetius, Utrecht* (J.J. Groen & Zn.) 1989 (= reprint ed. Leiden 1897), Vol. I, pp.388-392. See also D. Baumann: *Johan van Beverwijck, Dordrecht 1910* (Amsterdam dissertation 1909) and J. Lindeboom, *Dutch Medical Biography, Amsterdam* 1984, cols. 128-130. Van Beverwijk's discussions concerning the necessity of medicinal treatment and the study of medicine seems to have been incited by his reading of Michel de Montaigne. See Van Beverwijk's *Exegkomenos seu refutatio argumentorum quibus necessitatem [ ... ] medicinae impugnat Michel de Montaigne,* Dordrecht [without date] (Amst. 1634; German translation 1633, French translation 1730). Van Beverwijk also wrote a Dutch treatise on the plague: *Bericht van den Pest, Dordrecht* 1636, reprinted in 1654.

9 The *Dissertatio* first appeared in 1634 and was reprinted together with Voetius' *Dissertatio de Pestie* in Utrecht in 1641. In the following however, we shall refer to the text of fifth and last volume of the more widely known *Disputationes Theologica Selecta*, which appeared in 1669 and in which the *Dissertatio Epistolica* was reprinted.


11 *Op.cit.,* p.14. Voetius here defends his view by referring to Deuteronomy 29 vs. 29: "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are
Voetius compares the case to that of a soldier, who, unaware of the outcome of his strivings, is no less bound to fighting the enemy according to the orders of the supreme command.

Man's destiny may therefore be regarded as both mutable and immutable, depending on what view one takes. In respect of the "infallible prescience and unchangeable decree" of the Prime Cause, it is "wholly immutable and even necessary\textsuperscript{12}". In respect of the secondary, ordinary causes, however, i.e. in respect of those causes which are the "most proximate", man's fate must be regarded mutable. Voetius refers to Aquinas, amongst others, in order to see his views on fate and fortune affirmed.\textsuperscript{13} More important for our present purpose, is that in explaining the relation between prime and secondary causes, he touches on the subject of concurrence.

Man's life and end may be explained in respect of the efficacy of either of two (sets of) "total\textsuperscript{14}" causes. However, a complete explanation would involve the "concurrence" of both\textsuperscript{15}. Moreover, the relation between the two types of causes concurring to produce a certain effect, is one of subordination. In medical terms, this means that the production, conservation and cessation of life can and must be attributed to both God and Nature\textsuperscript{16}, i.e. to both prime and secondary causes. But compared to the first, the latter, organic and moral\textsuperscript{17} causes must be revealed belong unto us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.\textsuperscript{12} “By necessity of the effect, not logical necessity”, Voetius goes on to add. Op.cit., p.13. \textsuperscript{13} “Quomodo jampridem satis distinctè hoc enunciârunt Scholastici. Thomas I. quæst. 116. art. 3. Fatum, ut in secundis causis est mobile, ut autem à divinâ prœscientia est immobile, non necessitate absolutâ, sed conditionali.” \textsuperscript{14} Op.cit., p.12: “Procedit enim hic effectus à duabus causis totalibus (...)”. \textsuperscript{15} Op.cit., p.11: “(...) ita & vita hominis, atque adeo vitæ motus & terminus pendet à concursu duplicis cause, prima scilicet & secunda.”

\textsuperscript{16} As for the natural causes of the preservation or cessation of human life, we must, according to Voetius, distinguish between \textit{natura insita} and \textit{natura assita}. The \textit{natura insita} is "the initial warmth and humidity (in the equilibrium of which Aristotle saw [the cause of the conservation of] life) and the necessary proportion, power (vigor) and good quality (bonitas) of both; which kind of nature some call \textit{Balsamum Naturale.}\textsuperscript{17} Nature \textit{assita} stands for the "aliments and medicaments with which we are amply provided by the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds. On top of which come those that the physicians call \textit{Non-Naturalia.}" See: op.cit., p.12. Note that \textit{non-naturalia} stands for the six factors nourishment; retention and evacuation; air; sleeping and waking; exercise; and passions of the soul. All of these could, according to contemporary medical theory, influence the equilibrium of the bodily humours and hence cause a disease.\textsuperscript{17} Since in medical treatment natural processes are to be ministered and
garded as accessory and inferior. For as, in the example of the prolongation of life, the outcome of medical treatment is still dependent on God’s Will, so in every other action, do secondary causes only act in virtue of the First and Prime Cause, as His instruments.

Here also, Voetius refers to the authority of the great Aquinas: “ut passim tradit Scholasticorum princeps Thomas, & qui eum sequuntur”19. But in this particular case, the reference to the followers of the Angelic Doctor conceals an important controversy. Thomistic philosophers mostly held that in any secondary cause, be it a free agent or a natural object, it is necessary that the prime cause “concurs” with the secondary cause by a direct “physical predetermination” of the secondary causes. For example, if a fire is to heat a bowl of water, God has first to activate the virtues in the secondary cause, i.e. in the fire, in order for it to produce its action. In later Scholasticism however20, this theory, which had become known as the ‘theory of premotion’, was rivalled by theories denying any predetermination. According to the latter view, instead of acting upon secondary causes in order to produce some effect, God only acts simultaneously with a secondary cause.21

medicaments applied by man himself, Ars or Cura is also named besides Natura as being a moral and indirect secondary cause of the preservation of health, see: Voetius, op. cit., pp.11-12. 18 Voetius uses the Greek term ‘sunaitios’, which occurs in Plato, Timæus 46 c 7 and 76 d 7, in the sense of ‘being an auxiliary cause of’ (cf. the Lexique by Éduard des Places S.J.; Platon, Œuvres Complètes, Paris (Soc. d’Éd. »Les Belles Lettres») 1964, Tôme XIV, p.478). Aristotle uses the term inter alia in the sense of ‘concomitant cause’/’part-cause’ De Anima II, 4, 441a14, Ethica Nicomachea III, 7, 114b23; ‘extra cause’, De Generatione Animalium V, 3, 782a26, and ‘concomitant condition’, Metaphysica IV, 5, 1015a21, (Cf. further Bonitz, Index Aristotelicus Berlin 1870/reprint Graz (Academische Drücke und Verlagsanstalt) 1955, p.722), but nowhere does he use it to describe the relation between prime and secondary causes. 19 Op. cit., p.12. 20 See the next paragraph for historical details. 21 Schematically, the two positions on divine concurrence are roughly like this:

1) Premotionism

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Prime Cause} & \quad \text{c} \\
\text{Secondary Cause} & \quad \text{a} \\
\text{b} & \quad \text{Effect}
\end{align*}
\]

2) Non-premotionism, or “co-operationalism”

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Prime Cause} & \quad \text{c} \\
\text{Effect} & \quad \text{b} \\
\end{align*}
\]
Divine concurrence in this sense becomes an activity of co-operation with secondary causes — the prime cause guaranteeing the “independent” causal activity of the secondary cause, without producing any “physical predetermination”, or “previous motion” within the secondary cause itself.

Voetius clearly shows his allegiance to Aquinas in his use of the metaphor of secondary causes being “as it were” God’s instruments. Moreover, he identifies Aquinas’ theory and that of later Thomistic thinkers, who were generally held to be premotionists, and also counts himself amongst the followers of premotionism, stressing the fact that God also directs (influit in) the secondary causes themselves and not only their effects. With regard to medicine, this would
mean that God activates the natural powers of medicaments every time they are applied by man in order for them to produce the desired effect; whereas, according to the non-premotionist account, the result only depends on God's willingness to guarantee the coming-into-being of the effect; the effect itself, however, being produced by the natural power working of its own accord.

Voetius adopts the promotionist view. However, regarding the question of divine concurrence with secondary causes, Aquinas' own standpoint has for centuries been the object of great scholarly controversy and there certainly are reasons for disputing the claim that Aquinas' view was in fact promotionist. In this connection, we may point to the fact that Aquinas explains that God works intimately in all finite things by preserving the powers by which these act upon each other and by being the first cause in all causal chains, rather than by being the immediate cause of their action. It cannot here be our task to

conciliation itself.

25 A claim recently restated by William Lane Craig, who holds that "Aquinas interpreted the notion of divine concurrence to mean that God not only supplies and conserves the power of operation in every secondary cause, but that He acts on the secondary causes to produce their actual operations, a view that came to be known as the doctrine of premotion". See: The Problem of Divine Foreknowledge and Future Contingents From Aristotle to Suárez, Brill's Studies in Intellectual History Volume 7, Leiden (E.J. Brill) 1988, p.201.

26 Cf. Summa Theologica, quæst. 105, art. 5, and, in general: De Potentia quæst. 3 (cited above, note 23), Summa contra Gentiles Bk III, Chs 64-70 and Summa Theologica, quæst. 103 — quæst. 105. Aquinas does hold that, apart from giving secondary causes the forms by which they act, preserving them in their being, and being the final cause of their movement, God also bestows his concurrence upon created things by "somehow directing the forms of secondary causes to operate (applicando [...] ad operationes)", (Cf. Summa Theologica, quæst. 105, art. 5). But, again, since Aquinas nowhere argues that this is done by a physical predetermination of particular natural causes, but rather refers to the fact that inferior natural agents are incorporated into a causal chain ultimately depending on the unmoved mover (Cf. e.g. De Potentia, quæst. 3, art. 7, Resp."Tertio modo [etc.]", op.cit. (see above, note 23), p.58), it is not at all clear whether this should mean that Aquinas' account of divine concurrence was in fact promotionist. According to the Jesuit adversaries of those who interpreted Aquinas' theory in a promotionist manner, it certainly did not. In his De Concursu, Motione & Auxilio Dei (Liber I, C. VI of the Opera Omnia (Cf. above, note 22), Tôme XI, pp.47-51), Francisco Suárez for instance states that what Aquinas sometimes calls an applicatio ad operationem, sometimes however an auxilium Dei movendi is actually identical to the Suarezian immediatum influxum in ipsum effectum. Suárez even argues that Aquinas rejected the instrumental metaphor in his later works (Suárez, op.cit., p.50 and Disputatio Metaphysica XXII, "De Concursu Prima: Causa cum Secundis", § 52, Opera Omnia, vol. 25, p.824). See for a discussion of St. Thomas' theory against the background of his promotionist interpreters: B. Romeyer, "Libre arbitre et concours selon Molina", in: Gregorianum;
to discuss in detail whether or not Aquinas' theory was rightly interpreted as being a premotionist one. (Indeed, the matter has divided scholars within the Roman Catholic Church up to our own century.27) What matters is that Voetius saw no problems in interpreting Aquinas' standpoint as a premotionist one28 and was eager to present his own premotionist conception of divine concurrence as both orthodox and Thomistic. Such eagerness might well have been prompted by the fact that in Voetius' day, the question of premotionism had gained a great deal of importance and had become intricately linked to moral and religious debates concerning divine predestination and human free will. It is to these that we shall now turn.

Foreknowledge and Concurrence

Voetius' starting-point for dealing with divine concurrence and human free will was formed by Contra-Reformist debates concerning a divine scientia media, or "middle knowledge" of future contingents.

Commentarii de Re Theologica et Philosophica, 23 (1942), pp.169-201 and the Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Tôme III, col. 791-792. For a premotionist interpretation of Aquinas' doctrine however, see R. Garrigou-Lagrange's article «Prémotion Physique» in the same Dictionnaire, Tôme XIII-I, cols. 51-77. For the discussions between A. d'Alès and R. Garrigou-Lagrange of the 1920's in France and contemporary German debates between J. Stulfer, R. Schultes and R. Martin, see: Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique, Tôme X-II, cols. 2182-2183. In the same article, E. Vansteenberghe gives the following, conciliatory conclusion: "Malgré les efforts déployés de part et d'autre pour pénétrer la pensée de saint Thomas, il ne semble évidemment démontré, ni qu'il a été adversaire de la prédétermination physique, ni qu'il en a été partisan." (Op.cit., col. 2184.)

28 In the Summa Theologica, Aquinas had for instance stated that "nothing hinders the same action from proceeding from a primary and a secondary agent" (Cf. I, quæst. 105, art. 5, reply to the second objection) a statement which, in itself, does not seem to bear any premotionist consequences. (Hence Francisco Suárez e.g. sees no problem in citing Aquinas on this very point; Disputatio Metaphysica XXII, Opera Omnia vol. 25, p.826.) But when Voetius referred to this passage in a 1669 disputation on "subsequent grace", he evidently changed its meaning in order to see his premotionist view of concurrence confirmed. To the question "whether a [divine] predetermination is something distinct from the action of a secondary cause", Voetius answers: "[...] if you consider the predetermination as a virtually transcendent action of God, by which the secondary cause is determined and [by which it] acts, it does not differ from the action of the created object [itself]." (Select. Disp.V, p.739). Hence, the Holy Spirit and the converted believer operate "per actionem eandem numero", just as "in every concurrence of prime and secondary causes" (ibidem). Voetius here refers to Aquinas' text. But the numerical identity Aquinas introduced bears on the action of God and a secondary cause producing a certain effect, not however, as Voetius interpretes the passage, on God's predetermination of the secondary cause and its action.
In his dissertation *De Termino Vitae*, Voetius had already criticized the views of the Jesuit philosophers Luis de Molina, Francisco Suárez and Pedro da Fonseca, the last of whom seems to have been the first to introduce the notion of 'middle knowledge' in the context of solving theological dilemmas concerning divine foreknowledge and human free will. However, since it was the Spanish Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina (1535-1600) whose work incited the debate concerning middle knowledge within the Catholic Church, we will primarily discuss the Molinist standpoint.

Molina says that God has a *scientia simplicis intelligentiae*, or “knowledge by simple understanding” of whatsoever contingent facts may occur in any possible world. Secondly, God has a *scientia visionis*, or “visionary knowledge” of what will actually happen in the created universe once He has chosen to elect a specific collection from these possible states of affairs. So far, this is all in accordance with traditional Scholastic theory. But Molina goes further and, as a third type of knowledge, introduces “middle knowledge” to account for God’s inspection of the free choices men would make in any possible state of affairs. The idea is, that although human decisions are made freely, God can, as it were, “see through” a person’s will and know in advance how a finite being would choose to act by His simple understanding of the circumstances. Consequently, “the act of predestination is simply God’s creating one of the world orders known to him

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29 For Suárez, see also above, note 22. Pedro da Fonseca (or Fonesca) (1528-1599), “the Aristotle of Portugal” and a Jesuit theologian, was one of the famous philosophers of Coimbra, or “Conimbricenses”, who were otherwise often cited by Voetius with much approval. For Molina, see below, note 31.
31 In 1588, Molina published his *Concordia liberi arbitrii cum gratiae donis, divina pra-scientia, providentiae, prædestinatione et reprobatione*, the book that opened the debates within the Roman Catholic church on the question of middle knowledge. An elaborate and clear account of Molina’s theory may be found in Craig, *op.cit.*, pp.169-206. The dispute, in which Domingo Báñez (1528-1604) was the leading spokesman for the Dominican party, led to a Papal intervention by Clemens VIII and an eight year long congregation “De Auxiliis”, which ended undecided when, in 1607, Pope Paul V accepted both views. See: Craig, *op.cit.* (cf. above, note 25), p.170.
via his middle knowledge."32 Hence, by introducing middle knowledge, Molina offers an ingenious way of saving both human freedom and divine prescience.

In 1643 and 1644, Voetius presided over a series of four academic disputationes "De conditionata seu media in Deo scientia"33 in order to refute the Molinist idea — and, since 1607, accepted Catholic dogma — of a divine scientia media. Voetius questions the Molinist claim that there is a possible and knowable object of middle knowledge (which God, being omniscient, must indeed know), by demanding a proof for exactly the statement that there be such an object. He exclaims he is no Pythagorean nor, for that matter, a Papist, and is therefore unwilling to assume the existence of the objectum scibile on authority. Specifying his objection, he urges:

(...) let them [viz. those who believe there to be an object for divine middle knowledge] proffer us causes other than the divine decree, by the force and activity of which something merely possible may be elevated from its status of possibility to whatever sort of «futurition» (futuritio).34

What could this mean? In the Molinist view, a "futurition" — i.e. a determination of future states of affairs — by finite wills is possible only in the sense that finite wills may, by their free will, take any of various decisions. But since it depends on God's decree to bring about certain sets of circumstances and not others, the fact that finite wills will does not directly entail the elevation of a mere possibility to a definite futurition. God will only create one world-order. Hence, in the last analysis, the determination of future states of affairs depends on Him only. However, it is true that, in the Molinist view, the content of the object of divine middle knowledge as such is entirely beyond

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33 These were all disputationes sub praeside, a form of university education in which a text, for which the professor was responsible, was defended by a student. In this way the student prepared for his final disputatio pro gradu, for the text of which he would be responsible himself. In the case of the disputationes on middle knowledge, it is noteworthy that they were written and defended by Matthias Nethenus, who was to become Voetius' colleague in 1654, and who, in 1643 was praised by Voetius as an excellent student. Cf. Select. Disp.1, p.264: "(...) ut hinc constaret de eximio quorundam discipulorum nostrorum supra ætatem in rebus theologicis prefectu." See on Nethenus: Wilhelm Schneemelcher, Matthias Nethenus: Leben und Werk. Diss. Bochum 1972.
34 "[...] promant nobis causas præter decretum divinum, quarum vi atque efficacia aliquid merè possibile è statu sue possibilitatis ad qualemcunque futuritionem evehi possit", Voetius, Select. Disp.1, p.297.
God’s command. Hence, free choices do not themselves cause any future state of affairs, but they do cause God to know what will “naturally” happen, given the circumstances for free agents to decide upon. It is in this sense, then, that human volition may be said to “cause something to be more than merely possible”. Voetius will not accept that. He says that if God were to accommodate His concurrence to human volition, either in the case of the sick man whom He foresees take medicine, or in the case of a moral agent whom He foresees take a certain decision, one imagines Him as “preordaining what He already knows is going to happen.”

This view Voetius takes to be “totally absurd and contradictory”.

Voetius’ line of argument is, however, rather troublesome and does not seem to do right to the Molinist viewpoint. Of course, once God has created the universe, He knows what any man will decide to do, just as well as He knows all the effects of such decisions. To say that He would preordain an effect on the basis of what He knows someone will decide, would indeed be nonsensical, since the effect itself depends upon the decision. However, Voetius clearly ignores the logical step introduced by middle knowledge, which makes God know free decisions beforehand. For whatever reasons God may have, He chooses to accommodate His concurrence to some of these decisions rather than to others. Though this may seem absurd to Voetius, it is certainly not in itself contradictory.

What lies behind Voetius’ derogation of the Molinist standpoint seems to be that, according to him, it is impossible that there is something to be known independently of God’s having preordained it. Accepting middle knowledge, a certain part of God’s knowledge would no longer be true because of His having decided such-and-such, but would depend on something which is entirely beyond His control, viz. human decisions. According to Voetius however, nothing that falls under divine providence can ever have existed in any way whatsoever prior to the divine decree. This point was of special importance since it had played a part in the controversies on Arminianism which had divided the Dutch Reformed Churches in the first decades of the seventeenth century. Though divided among them-

35 Cf. Craig, op.cit., p.176: “Since the content of divine middle knowledge thus depends on what creatures themselves would do, God cannot control what He knows by His middle knowledge.”
36 Cf. De Termino Vitœ, p.54: “[...] Deus fingitur destinare tanquam futurum, quod jam præsupponit futurum.”
selves on some questions, Contra-Remonstrant theologians generally held that pre-election is indifferent to human belief. According to them, faith and salvation are to be attributed exclusively to God’s merciful gift of grace. By contrast, the theory of middle knowledge (which was accepted by some of the leading Arminians) allows some room for human influence on the way in which God sways our destinies and secures our salvation. Thus, middle knowledge directly endangered the orthodox interpretation of pre-election and Contra-Remonstrant authors such as Voetius could not but reject it. In their view, the Almighty should not have to take things into consideration.

However, Voetius has more to say and brings forward a non-theological objection, which is based upon the supposition that knowledge must always be knowledge of causes. In the quotation we cited above, Voetius challenges his adversaries by demanding that they “proffer us causes, other than the divine decree”, which would determine the outcome of future contingents. The problem is, that even if one accepts some sort of determination by finite wills, one would still be unable to explain what causes this determination. Of course, the answer could be that such a determination is the result of free decisions, and, therefore, that there is no sufficient ground to explain it. But in that

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37 E.g. on the question of whether or not in the act of predestination God looked upon man as fallen. The so-called Supralapsarist theorists held that the Fall of Man is included in God’s initial decree. In other words, pre-election (logically) precedes Adam’s sin. Infralapsarism is the opposite view. Both views were accepted in the Reformed Church. For a detailed study of the history of discussions regarding pre-election and predestination within the Dutch Churches, see: C. Graafland, Van Calvijn tot Barth; Oorsprong en ontwikkeling van de leer der verkiezing in het Gereformeerde Protestantisme, ’s Gravenhage (Boekencentrum) 1987.

38 Cf. e.g. Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), Institutiones Theologicœ, Pars IV, Sectio II, Ch. XVII, XVIII and XIX, pp.299-304, in: Opera Theologica, Amsterdam 1650 and Conrad Vorstius (1569-1622), Tractatus Theologicus de Deo, Steinfurt 1610, disp.V, pp.41-53: “De omniscientia & sapientia Dei”. Both were mentioned by the Contra-Remonstrant theologian Johannes Maccovius (1588-1644); cf. Johannes Maccovius redivivus: sive, Manuscripta ejus typis excripta, Franeker 1647, p.102. In his (also posthumous) Loci communes theologici, Maccovius draws the following comparison between Jesuits and Arminians on this point: “Jesuitæ & eorum in eo sequaces Arminiani confinxerunt tertiam speciem Scientiæ divinæ, nimirum scientiam conditionatam, (...), op.cit., Franeker 1650, p.158.

39 This reflects Voetius’ earlier position in the dissertation, where he argued that there is no cause for God’s conditional decree. Cf. De Termino Vitœ, p.48: “Nova illa & chthês kai próën excogitata Scientia, Scripturæ, Patribus, & Scholasticis ignorata (quam mediam & conditionatam vocat naturalis pater ejus Molina & compatres Fonseca, Zwarezius, reliquique istius ordinis) nulla est, quia nulla est causa ejus, quam ponunt, decretum scilicet Dei conditionale pendens à creaturis.”
case, how does God know how an agent would choose to act? \(^{40}\)

Voetius urges Molina to introduce a determining factor (\textit{occasio}), which is required both for an indifferent will to act upon and for God's having knowledge of the outcome\(^{41}\). Now as we have seen, Molina holds that God simply "sees through" a person's will (the so-called 'doctrine of supercomprehension'). Voetius however rejects this doctrine, since it does not make clear why it is that God foresees what a human being would decide under certain circumstances, but does not have any middle knowledge of His own Will. The latter possibility was in fact ruled out by Molina\(^{42}\). But then so should the former, says Voetius, for God does not have a more exact knowledge of created wills than He has of His own\(^{43}\). Voetius was not the only one to be unimpressed by the doctrine of supercomprehension. Leading Jesuits as Suárez and Fonseca also rejected Molina's idea of God's seeing through a person's will. Instead they held that God knows the outcome of future contingents simply because (1) statements about the future are either true or false and (2) God's knowledge is infinite. To the Calvinist theologian however, this purely logical approach on the basis of determinate truth values is equally problematic. Voetius again stresses that knowledge is always knowledge of causes and their "habit" to produce certain effects. Hence, the Suárezian and Fonsecan views of God knowing future events independently of their — finite —

\(^{40}\) A similar point was traditionally brought forward by Thomistic writers, who argued that the acceptance of middle knowledge would lead to a "determinism of circumstances". See e.g. R. Garrigou-Langrange's article on premotion in the \textit{Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique}, Tôme XIII-I, col. 68: "Enfin, les thomistes rétorquent l'objection [viz. that the acceptance of premotionism would lead to a nullification of human liberty] en disant: c'est la théorie de la science moyenne qui détruit la liberté, car elle suppose que Dieu, antérieurement à tout décret divin, \textit{voit infaiblement} ce que choisirait le libre arbitre de tel homme, s'il était placé en telles circonstances. Comment, en effet, éviter alors le déterminisme des circonstances? Où Dieu peut-il \textit{voir infaiblement} la détermination à laquelle le libre arbitre créé s'arrêterait, sinon dans l'examen des circonstances, qui deviennent dès lors infaiblement déterminantes?" Voetius however, does not pursue the point in quite the same manner. His interests are not so much in accusing the Molinists of determinism, as in explaining the origin of divine middle knowledge.

\(^{41}\) Cf. \textit{Disp.Select.} I, p.300.

\(^{42}\) Molina regarded the possibility that God might have middle knowledge of His own decisions as a violation of divine freedom. For a discussion of Molina's theory of supercomprehension and of his denial of God's having middle knowledge of his own decisions, see Craig, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.179-183.

causes, on the sole ground that His knowledge is infinite, strikes Voetius as utterly unintelligible. Again, some or another determination of future effects is wanting and

since nothing can come to exist either in an absolute way or under a condition without God's willing to concur with it as its first cause,

there is, according to Voetius, no other possibility than to acknowledge the total dependency of all "futurition" on the divine decree.

Voetius doubts that proof of a divine middle knowledge of free human decisions will ever be given, yet Scriptural proof had in fact been put forward by Molina himself, who had quoted 1. Samuel 23:10-12, Mt. 11:21 and Wisdom 4:11, 14 in order to defend his position. Voetius and Nethenus discuss the Molinist use of such Biblical passages at length, denying however the validity of the Jesuit interpretation. It would lead too far to examine their exegesis in detail, but the following points are indeed noteworthy. Voetius declares that divine providence and prescience primarily concern things as can be expressed in simple propositions, and not those expressed in general ones. Hence Biblical verses in which conditionals are found must

44 Voetius, op.cit., pp.300-303. For Suárez' position see: Craig, op.cit., pp.207-233. Pedro da Fonseca presented an elaborate theory of middle knowledge in Vol. IV of his Commentarium in Libros Metaphysicorum Aristotelis Stagiritæ of 1612. See also De Termino Vite, p.48, where Voetius discusses the same point, deducing his view from the axiom "[decantatam] apud Philosophum, & ex eo apud Thomam & universam Scholam: Scientiam non posse esse necessitatem, nisi sub aliqua ratione, quâ attingiur, necessitatem habeat." However, his view that knowledge of future contingents can only be based upon knowledge of their causes, does not seem to be shared by Aquinas (See: Dictionnaire de théologique catholique, Tôme XIV-II, col. 1609).

45 Cf. Disp.Select. I, p.298. Voetius willingly borrows the quotation from one of his adversaries, "Petrus à S. Ioseph", or Petrus de S. Josepho (1594-1662), the author of a book entitled Suavis concordia humanae libertatis cum prædestinatione, which I have not been able to trace. Though, according to Voetius, Peter "sings the same old song as his Jesuit masters" in all the rest of his work, these "clear and obvious" words occurring in the opening passage are enough to undermine the whole Molinist undertaking.

46 "[...] non facient autem in æternum [...]", Voetius, Disp.I, p.297. See also above, note 39, where Voetius refers to middle knowledge as "that new scientia, invented only yesterday or the day before (chthēs kai próèn excogitata) and unknown to Scripture, to the Fathers and the Scholastics."

47 Craig, op.cit., p.183.

48 For Nethenus, see above, note 33.

not lead us to conclude that God only preordained general laws of the form “if A then B”. If, for example, we were to interpret the Biblical verses warning against marrying the daughters of other nations (Cf. Ex. 34:16, Deut. 7:3-4, and I Kings 11:2) as merely conditional statements, it would have to be accepted as a general law, that each and every time a son of Israel does in fact marry a foreign woman, he will be seduced “to go a whoring after her gods”. In that case, however, we should be forced to accept the “absurd and blasphemous” conclusion that divine prescience can be fallacious. For a single counter-example would be enough in order to prove the falsity of the general statement. Moreover, since Ruth, the ancestress of David, did not only abstain from misleading her husband, but was in fact herself converted to the faith, we even find a counter-example within Holy Writ itself.

It must therefore be concluded that these verses are of no relevance for questions of providence. But how, then, are they to be explained? Voetius deals with I Sam. 23:12 and Matth. 11:21 in particular, which were loci classici in both the discussions on middle knowledge and the disputes between orthodox Calvinists and Remonstrants. In the first of these verses, David asks the Lord whether or not the people of Keilah will deliver him up into the hands of Saul if he does not flee the city. The Lord said, “They will deliver thee up.” The second example, from the gospel of St. Matthew, relates of Christ’s addressing the cities of Chorazin and Bethsaida, whose populace have not mended their ways despite obvious “mighty works” done in their cities:

Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

In both of these texts, Molinists argue, God obviously refers to His middle knowledge of what people would have done, given some different circumstances from those that actually pertain, or are to be. Catholic and Calvinist adversaries of Molinism, however, said that, in the first example, God does not contemplate a future conditional, but something already present, viz. the actual mental disposition of Saul and of the Kehilite citizens. In other words, their decision was already made. As for the second example, Christ there only makes an exaggerated comparison, in order to point out the haughtiness of the Galileans.

expressas.”

51 The case is compared with Luke 19:40, where Christ answers the Pharisees: “I
Voetius is willing to endorse these interpretations himself, but rejects the tendency to explain away all conditional expressions occurring in the Scriptures\(^5\). In the end Voetius admits we cannot always re-formulate conditional statements into a single decree ordained by God\(^53\). However, although we may not be able to explain all conditional statements occurring in Holy Writ, yet "all Scriptural texts can be cleaned of the dirt of middle knowledge" and all conditionality of the divine decree evaded by referring to fact that, as even the most fervent of Molinists agree\(^54\), and as Samuel Rutherford has rightly said\(^55\), God's Will is never
tell you that, if these [i.e. the disciples] should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

\(^5\) In particular, the idea put forward by Diego Alvarez (Cf. his De auxiliis divinae gratiae et humani arbitrii viribus et libertate ac legitima eius cum efficacia eorumdem auxiliorum concordia Liber II, disp.4, n. 8; Lyon 1611, p.68) of introducing a divine decreatum conditionatum, is rejected because it either posits a total dependence upon secondary causes, "quod tamen nollet Thomista", or, if the outcome of the conditional decree is dependent upon Divine Volition, simply involves a multiplication of entities beyond necessity (Cf. Select. Disp.I, pp.288-290). Also, Voetius is not entirely satisfied with the explanation of I Sam. 23 by the English Calvinist theologian William Twisse (c. 1578-1646) and the Dutch theologian and poet Jacobus Revius (1586-1658), who ascribe to God a knowledge of natural human inclinations. This would in fact come close to accepting the Molinist idea of divine supercomprehension (Cf. Voetius, idem, pp.290-291). According to Voetius, the best explanation of I Sam. 23 is offered by the English Puritan and Franeker professor of theology William Ames, or Guilielmus Amiens. In his refutation of the Remonstrant minister Grevinchovius, Rescriptio Scholastica & brevis ad Nic. Grevinchovii Responsum illud prolixum, quod opposuit Dissertationi de Redemptione generali, & electione ex fide prævisa (Harderwijk 1645\(^2\), p.201), Amiens distinguishes between formally and explicitly ordained decrees on the one hand and implicit and 'virtual' ones on the other. The latter have a bearing on those future conditionals which will never actually pertain. For instance, God from all eternity decided, or 'formally decreed', to liberate David from the hands of the Kahileans. From this, it is legitimate to infer the following implicit condition: "if David would not flee, he would be handed over". (Cf. Voetius, Select. Disp.I, p.291.)

\(^53\) Cf. idem, p.292, where Voetius argues that, though useful for explaining God's response to David concerning what would happen if David were to stay in Keilah, Amiens' notion of implicit decrees is not helpful in all cases. For, according to Voetius, we cannot always reconstruct God's formal decrees. What are we to say, for instance, when confronted with the conditional statements occurring in II Kings 13:19 and Matth. 26:53? We are quite at a loss to deduce formal decrees from these.


\(^55\) Cf. ibidem: "Tandem lectus inter alios etiam Rhatorfortis noster visus est respondisse omnium accuratissimè (...)". Samuel Rutherford (c. 1600-1661) was a
indetermined, doubtful, or deferred, or displaying the potentiality, postponement [or] privation of a secondary act, such as occurs in a created will, but is, (...) because of the eminent character of its act, determined from eternity with respect to all beings.

According to Voetius, the fixed character of divine volition implies that there can only be two 'states' in any object of divine knowledge, either of possibility, or of futurition. To conclude: Voetius' exegesis of Biblical sources leads to a reaffirmation of (1) God's absolute foreknowledge of simple contingent facts, and (2) the absolute freedom of the divine will. Hence there is only a scientia simplicis intelligentia, or a scientia visionis. There can be no middle knowledge, nor do any Biblical texts refer to it.

But what about divine concurrence? The answer is simple: Voetius saw a logical connection between the acceptance of middle knowledge on the one hand and the acceptance of a non-premotionist theory of divine concurrence on the other. Thus, Molina had incorporated a non-premotionist, or "co-operationalist" theory of concurrence into the doctrine of middle knowledge. He argued that, as in the case of natural causes, likewise in the case of moral causes, does God only "concur" along with the secondary cause. In other words, once a free human decision is made and God has decided to concur with it, He concurs along with the will and never works directly upon the will.

Scottish professor of theology at St. Andrews, whose Exercitationes apologeticas pro divina gratia were printed in Amsterdam (1636) and Franeker (1651).

56 The quotation is from Rutherford (Cf. Voetius, op.cit. p.292) and includes a reference to Scotus: "ut in 2. dist. 27. q. 1. Scotus ait". However, although the 27th distinctio of Scotus' Quœstiones in librum secundum sententiarum (Cf. Opera omnia, Paris (Louis Vivès) 1893/reprint Westmead (Gregg) 1969, Tôme XIII, pp.243-250) may be read as a plea for the Contra-Remonstrant cause in that it emphasizes that man's salvation is wholly dependent on divine grace, I have found no reference to the question of the determinate character of the divine will in the same passage.

57 Though there can be three momenta. Voetius is willing to concede to a differentiation of two momenta possibilitatis: one in which God sees what can be done by him without contradiction, the other "quando omnium fieri possibilium modos, connexiones & concatenationes apud se decreto absoluto praefinitiv, id est, quid causa, quid effectum, quid medium, quid finis, quid prius, quid simul, quid posteriorius forset aut non forset; sed cum hac cautione, si vellet eas futuras" (Cf. Voetius, Select. Disp., I, p.293).

58 Cf. Select. Disp.I, p.293 and idem, p.299, where Voetius resumes: "[scriptura loca], que citare hic solent Hypothetici, illa Deus cognoscit post decretum suum, per scientiam visionis, quia nihil merum possibile potest ullo modo esse futurum, nisi per decretum Dei (...)".
itself. Accordingly, Molina compares this co-operation of prime and secondary causes with that of two men pulling a vessel.59

Voetius on the other hand, rejecting middle knowledge, at the same time elaborates the premotionist position he had taken before in his dissertation De Termino Vita. He literally states that the idea of secondary causality being in itself independent from divine will and concurrence, is only a dubious proof meant to explain away the thesis of middle knowledge.60 Voetius does not elaborate the point, but we may easily see why the co-operative version of divine concurrence could be brought forward as an argument in favour of middle knowledge. In fact, in the Molinist or Suárezian views of concurrence, God's co-operation would be dependent on a “provocation”, so to speak, by a secondary cause — either by the action of a natural agent, or, as in our case, by a human decision.61 The co-operative theory of divine concurrence would hence lead to accepting the view that God must have known the factors “provoking” his co-operation beforehand, i.e. before He decided to create the particular world order He has chosen to create. Consequently, some sort of middle knowledge would have to be accepted.

As we saw, Voetius fully rejected the latter. But his argument against the co-operative idea of divine concurrence as such reveals the profundity of his discontent with this view. According to Voetius, saying that divine concurrence only works in effectum would involve doing

God's Greatest Majesty the greatest of injustices, [making] man, in acting, not subordinate and secondary to God, but His equal and companion.

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59 Molina, Concordia IV, 53, 3; cited in Craig, op.cit., pp.201-202. See also: Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, Tôme X-II, cols. 2109-2112. I have not been able to find a copy of Molina's text myself.
61 Cf. e.g. Rainer Specht's formulation of the Suárezian standpoint: "ist [die Entscheidung des menschlichen Willens für das eine oder das andere] gefallen, so steht dem Menschen Gottes Mitwirkung zu jedem frei gewählten Vorhaben zur Verfügung, und zwar mit gesetzmäßiger Sicherheit." See his "Zur Bezeichnung unzureichender Zweitursachen bei Francisco Suarez", in: Philosophisches Jahrbuch 68(1959), p.392. I borrow the expression of "human decisions provoking divine co-operation" from the same source; cf. p.393: "Wenn aber eine Zweitursache keine echte Kausalität auf die Erstursache ausüben kann, bleibt ihr occasional-mäßige Kausalität: die menschliche Entscheidung wird zur Occasio der gesetz-
mäßigen Mitwirkung; sie provoziert die Mitwirkung des an die von ihm selber geschaffene hypothetische Notwendigkeit gebundenen Gottes und affiziert ihn, damit er wirkt."
It is on this point that, according to Voetius, co-operativeism and Molinist blasphemy coincide. In exactly the same manner Voetius rejects the general idea of trying to find a compromise, or, as Molina would say, a *concordia* of divine grace and human free will:

We do not go for such a concord, which subjects God to man, creator to creation (...)\(^6^3\)

Here and elsewhere, theological motivation prevails and Contra-Re-monstrant dogma regarding divine providence is at the base of Voetius' pre-motionist opinion\(^6^4\).

In general, then, we may say that Voetius reduces rather than affirms the autonomy of secondary causes. God's Majesty and the freedom of His Will are directly called in question by any non-pre-motionist theory. This argument is certainly in keeping with the general tendency of Calvinist teaching of stressing the separation of creator and creation\(^6^5\) — an idea that may even be traced back to Calvin himself\(^6^6\). However, Voetius' devaluation of secondary causes being well founded in the tradition of the Reformed Churches, his criticism of the New Philosophy at the same time becomes even more unintelligible. The logical consequence of his theological theory would ultimately be the abolition of secondary causality, or at least its reduction. As we have seen however, in attacking the New Philosophy, Voetius in fact deplored the eventual loss of secondary causation, whilst at the same time he warned against accepting only a first and universal cause.

\(^6^2\) "(...) sed habent sibi suavem illam suam *concordiam*, quam ipsos docuit spiritus carnis, propriæ excellentiæ persuasione intumescans, non Spiritus Dei humilitatis verba, in intimam fidelis animæ amiculam insonans." Select. Disp I, p.306.

\(^6^3\) Cf. op.cit., p.306.

\(^6^4\) Note that, concerning the question of grace, Voetius willingly mentions Aquinas, who, though Papist in other respects, is orthodox in this regard: "Ecce ante tot annos monstrevit eam intentis digitis in medio papatu *Thomas Aquinas*, cætera Papista, hic Orthodoxus (...)", op.cit., p.301.


How then is his strictly premotionist standpoint in the discussion on divine concurrence to be combined with the stand he took against Descartes and other Anti-Aristotelians? Before trying to answer this question, we shall, in the next section, return to the passage we originally started with and examine the background of Voetius' argument from secondary causality somewhat further.

Secondary Causality and the Substantial Form

"[...] 2. That there is no intrinsic motor in created substances, or substantial principle of motion which is internal and proper [to the thing in question]: for the disposition of the moveable to move in virtue of its quantity, shape, position, is neither an activity nor a causality of an efficient cause, but only a necessary condition and a causa sine quâ non. 3. As a consequence, since no potentially moveable thing can actually move itself or determine itself to move, some external motor remains to be sought which turns the potency into act. What will they have to offer? the Platonic-Vergilian world-soul; or intelligences, or God, or atoms, or heavenly globules. Something ought at least to be named here."67

Voetius' objections to those who argue against the forms, are again suggestive of modern viewpoints. Indeed, did not Descartes meet the demand for a genuine principle of action by postulating God as the effective external motor, imparting motion upon the clockwork of nature, which, left to itself and to its mechanical principles of motion (viz. quantity, shape, position and the like) would be inert? This is in any case what Henricus Regius, the Utrecht Professor of Medicine and Botany on whose work Voetius' idea of Cartesianism was primarily based, answered to Voetius' objections in his Responsio68.

But did Voetius really know what it was all about? His way of grouping arguments and classifying his opponents' views points in a different direction and shows us that the argument cited above, concerning the inertia of created being, derives from the same Scholastic sources as those on which he based his theory of concurrence. Again, we may refer to Aquinas, whom Voetius, in De Termino Vita, had most ostentatiously designated "Scholasticorum princeps"69. Aquinas closely links the question of divine concurrence to the refutation of those philosophies in which a denial of the action of secondary causes led to

67 Narratio, p.40 / Querelle, p.106.
the acceptance of spiritual or other means of transmitting bodily action. Examples of such discussions by Aquinas may be found in both Summae and in the Quaestiones Disputatae De Potentia, and occur in the context of passages which were often cited in the controversy on middle knowledge. Let us therefore take a closer look at these texts.

Aquinas defends the activity of corporeal nature primarily against the Islamic Kalâm, against Plato, against the “Platonists” Avicebron and Avicenna, and, finally, against the atomists, all of whom in some way or another err regarding the question of the action of natural bodies. The Islamic theologians, or Mutakallimûm go furthest in doing so, arguing that there is actually no action of corporeal substances at all, but that every action stems directly from God. It is their view that, since all “natural forms” are accidental and since an accident cannot ‘step over’ (transire) into another subject, it is impossible that any natural thing could ‘induce’ its form into another. The argu-

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70 See: Summa Theologica I, qu. 115; Summa contra Gentiles III, Ch. 69 and De Potentia quœst. 3, art. 7. The defence of secondary causality against animistic and/or atomist ideas is mostly ignored in later discussions regarding Molinism. Aquinas however always introduces such defences in the context of questiones and chapters in which he discusses divine concurrence. In their attempts to see in Aquinas a genuine predecessor of either premotionism or its counterpart, Molinists and anti-Molinists alike quoted from De Potentia quœst. 3, art. 7, Summa contra Gentiles III, Ch. 70 and Summa Theologia I, quœst. 105. See e.g. the references by the Dominican Báñez in his attack on Molina (Cf. op.cit. pp.295, 297, 303; 303 resp.) and by Suárez (op.cit., pp.47, 50; 47, 50, 51; 47, 49 resp.); both claiming Thomistic orthodoxy.

71 Aquinas speaks of the “loquentes in lege Maurorum” (‘Kalâm’ being Arabic for ‘speech’) and refers to Maimonides for their views. See: De Potentia, quœst. 5, art. 7; ed. Marietti Vol. V-II, p.56. See on Thomas’ discussions of not only the Kalâm, but also Avicebron and Avicenna: Étienne Gilson, “Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué saint Augustin”, in: Archives d’Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age 1(1926), pp.6-127.

72 The Mutakallimûm also taught a kind of atomism of non-extended elementary particles. Some of the Mutakallimûm were not atomists, but all in any case believed that accidents have to be created perpetually by God from each moment to the next. Cf. William Lane Craig: The Kalâm Cosmological Argument, London (The Macmillan Press) 1979, p.5. A discussion of Mutakallimûm atomism may also be found in: Kurdo Lasswitz, Geschichte der Atomistik vom Mittelalter bis Newton, Hamburg und Leipzig (Leopold Voss) 1890/ reprint Hildesheim (Georg Olms) 1963 and 1984, Ier Band “Die Erneuerung der Korpuskular-theorie”, pp.134-150. In the work Aquinas refers to when commenting on these Islamic writers, viz. Maimonides’ Guide for the Perplexed (Book I, Ch. 75; pp.375-419 in S. Munk’s French edition «Guide des Égarés», Paris 1856/ reprint (Maison-neuve) 1960), the atomism of the Mutakallimûm is offered a lengthy discussion, in which the aspect of God’s continuous creation is also mentioned. See for a detailed discussion not only of Aquinas’ writings concerning the Mutakallimûm,
ment seems to be based upon the consideration that accidents cannot change subject. If, for instance, the fire is hot, then heat is an accidental property of the fire which stays with it and therefore cannot leave the fire in order to be an accident of something else. Hence, if something is heated it is God Who creates heat in whatever object comes in the presence of fire.

Aquinas' objections to this ancient type of "occasionalism" are threefold. First, he says, the theory is manifestly at odds with what experience teaches us. For if the species of heat was transmitted to our sense organs by a different agent from the fire, then the heat we feel would not be the heat of the fire, nor would we feel that the fire is hot, although the judgement of our senses, which is infallible, nevertheless teaches us these things. Secondly, Aquinas objects, if God were to produce all natural action, the forms and virtues would be assigned to nature in vain, nor would the 'apposition' of fire and wood be needed, if God burned the wood without the fire. Finally, the view that creation is considered similar to its Creator with respect to being only, but not with respect to acting, is an insult to divine goodness. Hence the idea of God operating in every natural act is to be rejected. But in any case, it is based on unsound suppositions. For although one could but also of those concerning Avicebron and Avicenna Étienne Gilson's article "Pourquoi saint Thomas a critiqué saint Augustin", in: Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age 1 (1926), pp.6-127.

73 Martial Gueroult, in his Malebranche, Tôme II, "Les Cinq Abîmes de la Providence", argues against seeing the Mutakallímúm or any other thinkers preceding the era of Cartesianism as forerunners to Malebranche (Cf. Lasswitz, op.cit.; p.145 and Gilson, op.cit., p.12; R. Garrigou-Lagrange, Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique Tôme XIII, col. 53, where these writers compare the theory of the Mutakallímúm with later occasionalism): "Mais à l'irrationalisme naïf de ces doctrines rudimentaires Malebranche échappe par deux notions essentielles qui leur font défaut: celle d'occasion et celle de loi." (Cf. op.cit., p.109.) However this may be, his argument that Malebranche did not share the idea of the Mutakallímúm that all action must be attributed solely to Divine Will, is in any case of interest in the context of evaluating Voetius' standpoint — a question to which we shall return in our Conclusions. Cf. Gueroult, op.cit., pp.109-110: "A la question: «Pourquoi le feu sèche-t-il le ligne» il refuse d'accord avec saint Thomas de répondre: «Parce que Dieu le veut.» Il s'oppose radicalement à leur affirmation que tout découle de la simple volonté de Dieu «sans aucune autre raison.»

74 The objection would seem rather irrelevant to an adversary. The core of the argument is that, if God directly causes all natural action, we would be deceived by our judgement of sense — an argument which may strike us because of its obvious Cartesian ring. It offers an interesting example of Aristotelian reliance on the truthfulness of common sense experience, which is of great relevance for the appreciation of the later Cartesian "détachement des sens". See also below, note 83.
say that an accident is not transferable to another subject, this is only numerically so. The same heat cannot be at once in the fire and in the heated object. However, by virtue of its accident, the fire can and does produce its specific like in other subjects, which is in fact what all natural action amounts to. Hence may Aquinas conclude that although God concurs in all natural operations, this is no reason to deny the efficacy of secondary causality and to say, as the Mutakallîmûm do, that it is God who acts in the presence of what we regard as natural causes.

Close to the view of the Mutakallîmûm comes that of Avicebron, who, in his *Fons Vite*, taught that all bodies act by force of a spiritual power that penetrates them. Aquinas presents three reasons in favour of this view. First, that every agent but God needs some material subject in which to act. But since nothing material is subjected to corporeal substances, these cannot perform any action. Second, quantity hinders movement. But corporeal substance is bedded (*implicita*) in quantity. Hence it cannot act. Third, corporeal substance stands last among created things, most remote from the First Agent. But the First Agent is pure act. Hence corporeal substance is purely patient and does not act at all. Aquinas discusses all three of these arguments in *De Potentia*, but what he generally objects to in Avicebron’s view, is that the latter overlooks the fact that created substances are composites of matter and form, and that this prevents them from being purely passive. The substantial form being active, and matter being passive, all composites of matter and form are both.

Thus, Aquinas sees in Avicebron’s view a misjudgement of the composite character of natural bodies, as accepted in all Aristotelian philosophy. Moreover, he identifies Avicebron’s theory as Platonic, since it depends on the supposition that “incorporeal substances are participated, determined and limited (*contractas*) by matter” — an imprisonment that seems to preclude the individual form from being active. Aquinas rejects this particular argument in favor of a universal force on the ground that it

does not prove that the corporeal form is not an agent, but [only] that it is not a universal agent.

A third account of bodily action rejected by Aquinas is Plato’s. As

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75 *De Potentia*, idem, p.57. See also: *Summa contra Gentiles*, L. III, C. 69, where Aquinas also mentions the Mutakallîmûm.

against Avicebron’s type of Platonism, Aquinas says that Plato himself only held that the substantial forms were separated from the material world and that they can therefore not be regarded as causing material bodies to act. Now instead of introducing a spiritual power to account for the obvious fact that corporeal agents do act, Plato, and, following him, Avicenna, attribute this action to the *accidental* forms of corporeal creatures, such as “the great and the small”, which “dispose matter to the substantial form”. The perfection of created objects however, is, according to these thinkers, caused by “an immaterial principle”\(^{77}\), viz. the separated forms, or “species siue [idea]”\(^{78}\). Aquinas’ account of the Platonic view is rather vague, but what he seems to have in mind is that Plato, like Avicenna, regarded the action of natural bodies to lie in a material re-arrangement of the accidents (i.e. figure and shape) of the patient, which thereby becomes fit to receive the influence of the separated forms, or Platonic ideas\(^{79}\).

However, according to Aquinas, the idea of separate forms is to be rejected on quite the same grounds as was Avicenna’s universal intelligence. Indeed, against all “Platonist” accounts, Aquinas generally alleges that they exhibit a pre-Aristotelian oversight of (1) the notion of potentiality and (2) the composite character of natural objects. Once the view is accepted that substantial forms may be potentially existent in matter, various problems are solved. Since the forms are “concreted” with matter, there is no need of supposing a creation of forms in every single instance of natural action (which, according to Aquinas, the Platonic view amounts to); nor of supposing the forms of material bodies to be dependent on separate intelligences; nor, finally, of re-


\(^{78}\) Cf. *Summa Theologica* I, quest. 79, art. 3.

\(^{79}\) The interpretation seems primarily to be based on Avicenna, who, in Book IX, Ch. V of his *Metaphysics*, elaborated the view that the heavenly spheres influence corporeal bodies in such a way that they become materially disposed to receive a certain form *de intelligentis separatis*. As the Latin translation reads: “Evenit igitur quod, cum haec res appropriaverit aliam de impressionibus caelestibus, absque mediante corpore elementari, vel mediante ita ut ponat illud secundum aptitudinem propriam post communionem quæ erit in sua substantia, tunc ab hoc separato fluet forma propria et describetur in illa materia.” See: Avicenna Latinus, *Liber de Philosophia Prima sive Scientia Divina*, Édition critique de la traduction latine médiévale par S. van Riet, Louvain/Leiden (Peeters/Brill) 1980, Tome II, p.489 (A 411). Avicenna’s description in fact occurs as part of his theory of emanation. However, as Gilson rightly states (op.cit., p.38), “(...) le problème posé par les opérations des causes secondes en général (...) n’est qu’un cas du problème universel de la production des êtres”.

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ducing natural action to an activity of the accidental forms. Against the latter idea in particular, it may be said that, since in any action the cause must be at least as powerful \((\text{potis})\) as the effect, accidents cannot by themselves be the cause of anything substantial. Now be it true, Aquinas says, that an active quality, say heat, is an accident, it nevertheless acts "in virtue of the substantial form" \((\text{sc. of the fire})\), whence there is no contradiction in saying that it is able to, as it were, "awaken" a \(\text{(second) substantial form which was potentially existent in the body acted upon. There is therefore no need to regard accidents as being themselves the cause of action.}

Finally, the fourth account of bodily action contested by Aquinas is that of the atomists. His interpretation is based upon that of Aristotle, and amounts to the view that the atomists define corporeal action as an emission of atoms. Passivity would, on the other hand, be regarded as consisting of the reception of atoms in the pores of material bodies. Aquinas' refutation is brief. A passive body would not be passive as a whole (since only its pores would suffer action) and the quantity of an active body would diminish as a result of its action \((\text{viz. the emission of atoms})\). Both of these consequences are, according to Aquinas, manifestly false.

Aquinas' account of non-Aristotelian explanations of corporeal

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80 Cf. Summa Theologica I, quaest. 45, art. 8; quaest. 65, art. 4 and quaest. 115, art. 1 respectively.
82 It must be noted that despite the apparent lucidity of the argument, it is not entirely clear what is meant here. Aquinas refers to Aristotle as a source for his refutation of atomism: "Quam opinionem improbat Aristoteles in I de Generat. Sequeretur enim [etc.]") (Aquinas, ibidem). In Aristotle's account, cf. De Generatione I, c. 8, 326b6-326b28, the question is stated in the following way: if the agent does not work upon the patient through contact, then neither will it produce an effect by passing through its pores. On the other hand, if action is made by contact, then the pores are superfluous, since they might as well be filled. For what it is worth, the argument would imply that the pores-hypothesis is unnecessary for explaining the passivity of the whole body. This is not the same as saying that a whole cannot suffer action by way of an influence on its pores alone. The second of Aquinas' arguments, viz. that the quantity of the agent would diminish as a result of the emission of atoms, is a rather unexpected one. In 327b23-327b25, Aristotle in fact denies the possibility of growth and diminution by way of 'apposition' alone. As Albertus Magnus interpreted the passage, this means that when "active parts" enter the "passive pores" of bodies, the bodies themselves will not in any way have become greater. \(\text{(Cf. his commentary on De Generatione in the Opera Omnia, ed. Hossfeld, Münster (Aschendorff) 1980, vol. V-II, p.169.) Presumably, the same would hold for the emission of atoms. However, Aquinas does not explain his position.} \)
action either depends on Aristotle's own criticism of his philosophical predecessors, or, in case of later writers, conveys a tendency to identify new theories as reformulations of those already criticized by Aristotle. Accordingly, Aquinas is of the opinion that all problematic aspects of theories which, in one way or another, favour the idea that natural objects are inactive, may be eluded by accepting individual substantial forms. The alternative 'dead matter' conception of natural objects would lead to (1) the attribution of all corporeal action to God as its unique and direct cause; or (2) the introduction of separate intelligences, either as direct causes of corporeal action (Avicenon's view), or as causing the perfection of material bodies (Plato, Avicenna); or, finally, to (3) the acceptance of atomism.

In Voetius day, listing alternative explanations of bodily action in the manner of Aquinas was very common, especially in commentaries on Aristotle's Physics. The "loquentes in lege Maurorum" which Aquinas had spoken of were no longer recognized as the Mutakallimûm. Instead, reference was mostly made to the German nominalist Gabriel Biel (1425-1495), who, regarding the efficacy of the sacraments, had said that

\[ (...) \text{ just as God has ordained that fire produces heat in a proximate patient, so could He ordain that fire produced heat [but] not in the patient or subject. For there is no contradiction involved. That is to say, the former decree was purely contingent; thus it could have been and can be changed}^{83} \]

It was this argument which replaced the Mutakallimûm doctrine to become the prime example of a theory holding that God acted without any intervention of subsidiary causes. But apart from that, the examples were still the same and Avicebron, Avicenna and the atomists remained to be cited.

\[ 83 \text{ "(...) sicut Deus ordinavit quod ignis producit calorem in passo approximato, ita potest ordinaire quod ignis producteret calorem non in passo seu subjecto. Nullam enim includit contradictionem. Nam prima ordinatio fuit mere contingens; ergo potuit et potest mutari";} \text{ Cf. Gabriel Biel, Collectorium circa quattuor libros Sentantiarum ed. Wilfried Werbeck/Udo Hofmann, Tübingen (J.C.B. Mohr/Paul Siebeck) 1975, L. IV, dist. 1, quæst. 1, art. 5, p.30. Note that Biel rejects the argument from sense-perception which Aquinas put forward against the Mutakallimûm, arguing that one cannot judge from the senses whether heat arises from the action of the fire or directly from God: "Præterea: Ad sensum apparet quod ad præsentiam ignis incipit calor. Et hoc non negatur. Sed an ille calor incipiat per actionem ignis vel solius Dei, non appareat ad sensum. Et per hoc negans actionem ignis nihil negat apparens ad sensum";} \text{ Cf. idem, p.31.} \]
There can be little doubt that Voetius' text is to be placed in the same tradition. Indeed, when Voetius enumerates the alternatives which the adherents of the New Philosophy are expected to offer in order to make good their rejection of the substantial form, his enumeration is identical to that of Aquinas. Arguing that accidental properties are simply not enough for explaining any activity, he presumes that the followers of the New Philosophy will come up with either God, spiritual forces, or atoms. Hence his reference to the Platonic-Virgilian World Soul, or intelligences, or God, or atoms, or heavenly particles, all of which are external principles supposedly required to activate the universe of natural objects deprived of their substantial forms.

In attacking the New Philosophy on the question of secondary causality, Voetius does not refer to Aquinas, nor any other writer for that matter. Hence it would be a difficult task to prove that Aquinas rather than any contemporary writer is Voetius' direct source with regard to the question of secondary causality. Two sources which must have been known to Voetius are Antonio Rubio's commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (1605) and the commentary by the philosophers of Coimbra, or "Conimbricenses". Rubio (or Ruvius, 1548-1615) was a Jesuit theologian whom Voetius elsewhere honours with the title of "a subtle writer on questions of physics". His discussion of divine concurrence, which occurs in the context of his explanation of efficient causality, includes a step by step exegesis of St. Thomas' texts on the Arabic Platonists. He refers to the "three positions against an efficacy of created things" and names Avicebron's view as the second and Avicenna's as the third. Instead of referring to the Mutakallimûm, he mentions Gabriel Biel as an example of the first type of theorists rejecting corporeal action. The Conimbricenses likewise comment on those who "deprive secondary causes of their actions", discussing the position of Biel (amongst others) as an example of the Mutakallimûm-argument and further of Avicebron and the "Democritians", i.e. the atomists. However, the fact that Voetius bases his views con-

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84 I.e., in Voetius' case: the mechanical principles which the Cartesians introduce.  
cerning divine concurrence on those of orthodox Thomists to which Ruvius and the Conimbricenses were opposed, might suggest other sources as well. There is every reason to believe that when Voetius refers to "the Scholastics and the modern metaphysicians and theologians"\(^88\), he is referring to a specific tradition of premotionist thinkers following Aquinas, such as the philosophers of Alcalá de Henares, or "Complutenses"\(^89\). These however, though generally discussing the views of the Angelic Doctor rather than those of the Philosopher himself, do not mention Aquinas' list of alternative theories of bodily action\(^90\). Finally, there is the example of Voetius' colleague Arnoldus Senguerdus (1610-1668), who had been teaching metaphysics in Utrecht since 1635. In the second edition of his *Collegium Metaphysicum* of 1640, we find him mentioning the "old opinion (...) that created things do not operate at all" and referring directly to Aquinas' texts\(^91\). In Utrecht itself, therefore, the question had been discussed in a public disputation in which both *Summaria* were referred to. There can hardly be any doubt that Voetius, who was himself well acquainted with these works\(^92\), must also have known the passages concerned.

So much for sources. The main question is this: if we are to interpret Voetius' remarks regarding the New Philosophy against the background of the Thomistic discussion of animistic\(^93\) and atomist philo-

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\(^88\) See our first quotation from Voetius' essay, above.

\(^89\) The following passage from Voetius' 1644 disputation *De Potentia Dei* is of great significance in this respect. Discussing a related topic, Voetius there says: "(...) by the same sort of trifle one will be able to say that a created thing can operate without divine concurrence and predetermination (against which the Thomists dispute constantly and truthfully, as can be seen in [the works of] the Thomistic Theologians Cumel, Rispolis, Bañez, Alvarez, Sylvius etc., and the Philosophers John of St. Thomas and the Complutenses in their Thomistic Philosophy)". For the reference and original text, see above, note 24.

\(^90\) At least not, as it seems, in their *Disputationes in octo libros Physicorum Aristotelis*, which were published in Frankfurt (1629) and Lyon (1637).

\(^91\) "(...) Quare rejicienda est vetus opinio que, ut ex Thoma. 3. Contra Gentes c. 69 & I. p.103 art. 5. habemus, statuit, res creatas nihil omnino operari, sed Deum omnino ad earum tantum praesentiam efficere, ita ut non ignem, sed Deum calcare ad ignis praesentiam; ut & sententia Avicembron qui ponebat, nullum corpus esse activum, sed virtutem substantiae spiritualis per transeuntem per corpora exercere operationes, quae a corporibus provenire videntur; improbandus etiam est Avicennae error, qui volbeat, res corporeas posse efficere accidentia solum, non autem substantias." Cf. *Collegium Metaphysicum*, Utrecht 1640.

\(^92\) Cf. e.g. his references to Aquinas in notes 13 and 28, above.

\(^93\) Of course, Voetius' reference to the "Platonic-Vergilian World Soul" is not itself of Thomistic origin. Voetius is here referring to the idea, occurring in the sixth book of Vergil's *Æneidos*, of a spirit "moving matter" and a "fire of heavenly
sophies, then what have we got? To begin with, we may then say that when Voetius presumes that the followers of the New Philosophy would reject secondary causality and accept only a First Cause "that acts in the presence and at the disposition of secondary causes", it is highly probable that he is not anticipating any sort of Cartesian occasionalism. His remarks are rather a warning that a rejection of the substantial form could lead to ideas such as those of the Mutakallimûm or of Gabriel Biel, viz. of God creating effects "in the presence" of what we — albeit mistakenly — regard as a natural cause.

Second, in our introduction, we drew attention to a problem which may now be resolved, viz. Voetius' at first sight somewhat paradoxical combination of (1) a reaffirmation of divine concurrence, and (2) a rejection of the idea of accepting only a first cause to guarantee the activity of natural objects. What, according to Voetius, is here to be rejected, is the Mutakallimûm kind of a divine interference in the course of Nature. Hence, like Aquinas, Voetius argues both for a dependence of secondary causality on the Prime Cause, and for a rejection of theories which would not make use of the concept of individual, active forms of corporeal bodies.

origin", bringing life "as long as harmful bodies do not hinder, and earthly limbs and mortal members blunt it" (Cf. P. Vergili Maronis Æneidos Liber Sextus, lines 724-752, pp.24-25 of R.G. Austins edition, Oxford (Clarendon) 1977, with a commentary on pp.220-232. See also: Eduard Norden, P. Vergilius Maro Æneis Buch VI, Stuttgart (B.G. Teubner) 19574, pp.92-95, Latin text and German translation, and 310-316, commentary). Moreover, the particular portée of the Vergilian passage reminds us of the subject-matter of Voetius' De Termino Vite and it is therefore no surprise to find both the anima mundi Platonica (but, this time, also 'Paracelsica') and the Spiritus (...) universi & communis motor Stoicorum, mentioned and rejected by Voetius amongst a host of other world-governing principles in the Dissertatio. (Cf. Dissertatio epistolica de termino vita, Select. Disp., p.47.) These references — to trace the origins of which would in itself need much further research, not only regarding the general revival of Stoic thought and its influence on Calvinism, starting with Calvin himself, but also regarding developments in contemporary discussions of natural philosophy by anti-Aristotelians such as Sebastiano Basso, whom Voetius mentions as having reduced the Stoic spiritus to the World-Soul of Platonism; Cf. Voetius, ibidem — do not really bring into question the Thomistic origin of Voetius' argument against the New Philosophy. On the contrary, the very fact that reference is made only to the Platonici (be it also a "Vergilian") World-Soul in the essay against the New Philosophy, prompts us to believe that Voetius was only thinking of an anti-Platonist argument, such as we find in the works of St. Thomas and not of the various other chemical, astrological and Hermetic theories which occur in the Dissertatio.

94 Cf. above, p.58.
Conclusions

Voetius does not cite Descartes on the question of a divine concurrence, nor could he, in 1641, have had a very precise knowledge of Cartesian philosophy. It is therefore of no avail to pursue the point of interpreting the Discours-passage in which Descartes speaks of a concours divin any further than we have already done. However, what is important is that, once incorporated into a corpuscular philosophy, the theory of divine concurrence would necessarily undergo as profound a transformation as did the theory of continuous creation when incorporated into Cartesianism. The heart of the matter is that in a corpuscular theory no substantial form is left as the object of either divine concurrence or divine conservation.

This may partly explain Voetius’ reaction. Affirming the idea of a divine concurrence, he at once affirms the concept of the substantial form with everything it entails. Yet there are some intrinsic difficulties with Voetius’ position. As we have seen, Voetius’ standpoint against Molinism, both in its theological and in its more philosophical formulations, was founded in the absolute freedom of the divine will and in God’s predetermination of singular contingent facts. Thus, Voetius comes rather close to the position of the Mutakallimûm, whose ultimate aim was to guarantee God’s absolute freedom, and of Gabriel Biel, who generally emphasized the independence of divine volition. Voetius’ reference, therefore, to the argument in favour of secondary causality, though it may be traced back to Aquinas, is still a paradoxical one. There seems to be a genuine incoherence in the fact that, on an issue concerning divine sovereignty, the Calvinist theologian takes it upon himself to defend the independence of secondary causes, be it even a minimal one, rather than to postulate a single

95 See above, note 5.
96 For the differences between the Thomistic and the Cartesian ideas of continuous creation see the works of Bréhier and Gilson, as referred to in note 5, above.
97 This is also reflects Aquinas’ general objection to the Mutakallimûm, Cf. Summa contra Gentiles III, Ch. 87: “Per prædicta autem excluditur error quorundam dicentium omnia procedere a Deo secundum simplicem voluntatem: ut de nullo oporteat rationem reddere nisi quia Deus vult”, cited in Gilson, op. cit., p.9. See also Gueroult as cited in note 73, above.
98 Cf. e.g. Dictionnaire de théologie catholique, Tôme II, Paris (Letouzey et Ané) 1910, cols 819: “Mais la thèse la plus importante de la théologie de Biel, c’est son affirmation de l’indépendance totale et absolue du vouloir divin.” See also above, note 75.
cause\textsuperscript{99}. Later Calvinists, whether they were Cartesians or not, saw the abolition of natural forces and powers rather as one of the advantages of mechanist theory\textsuperscript{100}. Voetius does not elaborate his views on this point and we should not try and fill in the answers for him. We can, however, draw some conclusions from what we have seen thus far.

The seventeenth century was to see a whole range of physico-theological consequences of Cartesian theory. Of these, the occasionalist theories of Geulincx and Malebranche, Henry More's re-introduction of the idea of a World Soul, Spinoza's determinism and Leibniz' theory of perception, are only some of the most well-known. At the same time, they are all related in one way or another to the questions raised by Voetius. Voetius' own standpoint was straightforwardly Aristotelian. It was also a very definite and, to his eyes, a very orthodox one. As a Minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, Voetius had defended predestination against the Pelagian views of the Jesuits in his 1634 \textit{Dissertatio}. In 1641, now a University Professor, he addresses the New Philosophy by taking what he regards as the same, Thomistic, standpoint. For all his apparent anticipation of later developments, this makes his reaction to the New Philosophy a reflexive, rather than reflective one. Voetius' answer to Descartes and to other modernists neither involves a discussion of physical theory as did Martin Schoock's\textsuperscript{101}, nor does it aim to interpret the metaphysical and theological consequences of the mechanical philosophy in any creative sort of way. Everything points to the fact that Voetius regards the Thomistic argumentation concerning secondary causality as a stan-

\textsuperscript{99} Cf. J.E. McQuire, who, in his article on "Boyle's Conception of Nature", has even argued that there is a direct link between voluntarist theories of Divine causation on the one hand and the acceptance of nominalism and mechanical philosophy on the other. Cf. \textit{Journal of the History of Ideas} 33(1972), pp.523-542.

\textsuperscript{100} Pierre Bayle, for example, held that all action attributed to other than intelligent forces should be rejected precisely because it makes superfluous the existence of God. The point was brought forward by Bayle with respect to the question of whether or not to ascribe biological functions to mechanist principles. Bayle rejected the view of the Cambridge Platonist Cudworth, who held that there existed some organising force, or 'nature plastique' in living organisms. See for Bayle's standpoint regarding mechanist philosophy in general: E. Labrousse, \textit{Pierre Bayle; Hétérodoxie et Rigorisme}, Thèse principale pour le doctorat ès lettres présentée à la Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université de Paris, The Hague (Nijhoff) 1964, pp.219-247 esp.

\textsuperscript{101} See his \textit{Admiranda Methodus Nova Philosophiae Renati des Cartes}, Utrecht 1643, of which a French translation may be found in: \textit{Querelle}, pp.153-320.
A standard philosophical reply to those who do not make use of the concept of individual substantial forms. Accordingly, he sees the New Philosophy essentially as a revival of old errors.