Augustine uses the term *voluntas* for dispositional and occurrent forms of *hormê* of a rational being, *hormê* being the Stoic concept of ‘impulse’ toward action.¹ In what follows I shall first demonstrate this, using mainly books twelve and fourteen of the *De Civitate Dei*. There is need of such a demonstration, for although much ink has been spilt over the sense of “will” in Augustine’s texts, interpretations have varied greatly. Next I shall draw attention to a number of corroborating texts from works spanning thirty years of his writing career, highlighting how this Stoic concept, together with Stoic epistemology, makes sense of the uses of *voluntas* in book eight of the *Confessiones* and of ‘free will’ (*libera voluntas, liberum arbitrium voluntatis*) in the *De Libero Arbitrio*. I conclude with suggestions about specific texts and authors influencing Augustine’s usage.

Recent Interpretations

Gerard O’Daly has sometimes seemed very close to identifying Augustine’s *voluntas* with Stoic *hormê*, but has not actually done so. In *Augustine’s Philosophy of Mind*, he once calls will “impulse,”² but nowhere mentions the Stoic concept of “impulse” as a psychic prompt toward action. Moreover, he does

2. G. O’Daly, *Augustine’s Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987) 26. Again he comes close to identifying *appetitus* (which he identifies with “impulse,” p. 90) with *voluntas*: “Augustine speaks . . . of *appetitus* and *amor*, and he also talks in this connection [sc. in connection with the context of paying attention] of the *voluntas* and the *intentio* of the mind” (211).
not provide a clear statement of what he takes “will” to mean. Thus the same instance of “will” in one of Augustine’s texts is called both “impulse” and an “impulsive tendency,” he elsewhere refers to “the will as the motor of impulses,” and at other times seems to think of voluntas as a faculty of consent which generates impulse, or a capacity for impulse that is activated consequent to consent.

Others have asserted that Augustine’s voluntas owes much to Stoicism or to the notion of hormê. They have not, however, unreservedly identified voluntas as a translation for this Stoic concept, provided detailed textual demonstrations for their claims, or reserved it, in every case, for impulse which is rational. Thus Rist has said that Augustine was influenced by Seneca, who used voluntas for hormê, but, he continues, Augustine’s voluntas is a philosophical alternative to Stoic hormê because Augustine enriched the Stoic theory by introducing the Platonic element of erôs. Gauthier has asserted that of the traits of the “will” which are found in Augustine, all were already present in the Stoics; but Gauthier does not see voluntas as a term specifically for the hormê of a rational being.

Holte and Bochet are notable examples of scholars writing prior to the publication of Inwood’s 1985 book on Stoic action theory; apparently they did not have enough information about hormê to recognize it in Augustine. In 1962 Holte identified Augustine’s appetitus with Stoic hormê, which he defined simply as a natural tendency; he also made the separate observation that Augustine

3. O’Daly, 26.
4. Ibid. 53 n. 144.
5. Ibid. 25, 89.
8. See note 1.
used *voluntas* to refer to “conscious impulse giving rise to action.” Because he did not realize that Stoic *hormê*, as a tendency or disposition, tends toward action, nor that the Stoics spoke of an occurrent sense of *hormê* as well as a dispositional sense, he did not see that Augustine’s *voluntas* was the same as *hormê*. In 1982, Bochet similarly identified *appetitus* with *hormê*, but actually asserted that for the Stoic *hormê* is a natural tendency *without* a specific orientation toward action. Thus although she noticed both occurrent and dispositional uses of *voluntas* in Augustine, noticed that *voluntas* in Augustine pertains to action, and also noticed that *appetitus* had both a dispositional and occurrent sense, she failed to identify *voluntas* either with *appetitus* or with *hormê*.

A third group has asserted a vague connection between Augustine’s *voluntas* and inclination or action; but their statements have not attempted to grapple with the question of historical precedent for Augustine’s usage. Thus Augustine’s *voluntas* has been described as “a qualified tendency, mental attitude, lasting wish . . . an inclination of the will” and “a volition, a specific act of will,” a movement of the soul tending to acquire or reject some object, and a word “which cover[s] ‘choose,’ ‘want, ‘wish,’ and ‘be willing.’” More recently it has simply been noted that Augustine uses *voluntas* in connection with *facere*.

Least convincingly of all, it has been asserted that Augustine invented the modern notion of the will, which was not derived from earlier doctrines in philosophical psychology, or that Augustine began but did not complete the task of working out a Christian theory of the will that is in fundamental contrast to classical Greek thought. The texts do not bear this out.

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11. Ibid. 105–106.
12. Ibid. 150 n. 1.
17. Earlier doctrines including Stoic *hormê*; see A. Dihle, *The Theory of Will in Classical Antiquity*.
18. C. Kahn, “Discovering the Will: From Aristotle to Augustine,” in *The Question of “Eclecticism”*:
Some Texts

Augustine explicitly mentions the Stoic concept *hormê* in book nineteen of the *De Civitate Dei*, where he tentatively translates it by *impetus vel appetitus actionis*. We see that he understands it as an impulse which does not need reason in order to effect action, but which does reflect rationality in a healthy human who is beyond the age of reason: "the insane say or do many absurd things that are for the most part alien to their own aims and characters . . . *hormê* . . . is included among the primary goods of nature—is it not responsible for those pitiable movements and actions (*facta*) of the insane that shock us, when sensation is distraught and reason is asleep?"

When he wants to refer specifically to the *hormai* of rational beings, he uses *voluntates*. There is a heretofore overlooked “proof text” for this claim in *De Civitate Dei* 5.9, which clearly shows that by *voluntas* Augustine means efficient cause of action, and that he thinks its proper sense is restricted to rational beings, although it may be used for the *hormê/motus* of animals in an analogous sense. It runs as follows:

Human wills are the causes of human deeds . . . voluntary causes [in general] belong to God, or angels, or men, or animals—if those *motûs* of animals lacking reason, by which they do anything in accord with their nature, when they either pursue or avoid some thing, are nevertheless to be called *voluntates*.

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19. *De Civitate Dei* (Hereafter *civ.Dei*) 19.4.: “Impetus porro vel appetitus actionis, si hoc modo recte Latine appellatur ea quam Graeci vocant *hormên*.” The use of *impetus* or *appetitus* to translate *horm´* is Ciceronian.

20. *Civ.Dei* 19.4: “Phrenetici multa absurda . . . dicunt vel faciunt, plerunque a bono suo proposito et moribus aliena . . . *hormên* . . . primis naturae deputant [Stoici] bonis, none ipse est, quo geruntur etiam insanorum illi miserabiles motus et facta quae horremus, quando pervertitur sensus ratioque sopitur?” (For quotations from the *civ.Dei*, I have used but often adapted the translations in the Loeb. Adaptations are noted by reference to the name of the translator of the volume; here the translation is adapted from Greene.) Compare the Stoics per Inwood, *Ethics*, 112. Augustine refers to an age of reason in *civ.Dei* 22.24.

Moreover, as we are about to see, Augustine follows the Stoics in understanding impulse as having two forms: occurrent and dispositional.\(^{22}\) According to Augustine, each form has a corresponding object. An occurrent impulse is directed toward performing some particular action concerned with the attainment or avoidance of one intentional object. A dispositional impulse is directed toward the set of actions by which one pursues the members of a kind of object, that is, of an entire class of objects. Rational impulse comes in both of these forms.

There is also scattered evidence that Augustine knew and was influenced by the Stoics’ account of a particular kind of dispositional hormê—‘primary impulse’ toward self-preservation (protêhormê), which the Stoics asserted was present in all animals.\(^{23}\) We hear echoes of this in the De Civitate Dei, the De Libero Arbitrio, the In Epistolam Ioannis, and the Sermones, when Augustine speaks of the voluntas humana, an innate drive to preserve one’s own life, by which man naturally “wills to live” (vivere vult).\(^{24}\)

A thorough demonstration of Augustine’s indebtedness to the Stoic account of hormê, however, depends upon detailed textual work on three groups of texts: De Civitate Dei XII and XIV, Confessiones VIII, and the De Libero Arbitrio in conjunction with De Genesi ad Litteram IX and De Civitate Dei V.

1. The City of God XII and XIV

Books twelve and fourteen of the De Civitate Dei are of the utmost importance because, with the exception of sections of book eight of the Confessiones, no part of Augustine’s corpus is as thick with references to voluntas. Moreover, they provide the key to unlocking Augustine’s meaning in not only book eight of the Confessiones, but the rest of his corpus as well. We need not be concerned here with the ostensibly ‘theological’ context, which describes the original sins of the fallen angels and of Adam and Eve.\(^{25}\) For our purposes,

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\(^{24}\) Ep.Io.tr. 9.2.3, lib.arb. 3.6.18–3.7.21 (esse vis), civ.Dei 14.25, Sermo 299.8: “Amari mors non potest, tolerari potest... Natura ergo, non tantum homines, sed et omnes omnino animantes recusant mortem et formidant.”

\(^{25}\) For philosophical currents, including Stoic ones, in Augustine’s understanding of “fallen-ness,” compare Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos* (hereafter *En.Ps.*) 30.2.13 and Confessiones (hereafter *Conf.*) 8.9.21–22, 8.11.26 to Seneca *De Ira* 2.10.2, 2.10.6, 2.13.1, and see N. J. Torchia, *Plotinus, Tolma, and the Descent of Being* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993) 11–17.
the only important features of the context are that, as we have already seen, Augustine included angels as well as humans in the category “rational,” and that by “sin” (peccatum) he meant an evil (internal or external) act.

In book twelve Augustine tries to account for sinful occurring appetitus, which for the time being I shall transliterate as ‘appetite’ so as not to beg the question of whether it is indeed Stoic ‘impulse.’ He assumes that they must arise out of (ex eo esse) preceding states of the soul—either the soul’s nature or an affectio, an accidental state of the soul by which it happens to be qualified prior to the receipt of an impression (visum). Since the appetites in question are sinful, he reasons that they cannot have their source in the natures of souls as created (which must be good, since created by God). Their sources must be acquired dispositions. He calls these dispositional roots of occurrent appetite voluntates or cupiditates:

It is not permissible to doubt that the contrary appetitus of the good and bad angels arose not from differences in their original natures, since God, the good author and creator of all forms of being, created both classes, but from their respective voluntates and cupiditates.

Augustine here plays on the word voluntas as a translation of boulêsis, one of the constantiae/eupatheiai predicated of the Stoic sage, in order to heighten the contrast between the good and bad angels, emphasizing the depravity of the demons by means of the more lurid “cupiditas.” The voluntas of the good

26. As Holte (Béatitude 33, 201, 256, 283) and Bochet (Saint Augustin et le Désir 150 n. 1) have pointed out, Augustine does use appetitus for a tendency – by which I take them to mean a disposition of the soul to pursue certain things (for examples see Conf. 10.35.54, the unspecified appetite to know, and en.Ps. 118,11.6, where he explains pleonexia as a habit by which someone appetit more than is enough); at least in book twelve of civ.Dei, however, Augustine consistently uses it for occurrent appetites.


28. E.g. see the discussion of visum and affectio at 12.6; Augustine uses affectio for a quality of the body or the soul (e.g. “eadem fuerat in utroque corporis et animi affection,” civ.Dei 12.6). Cf. Cicero Tusculanae Disputationes (hereafter TD) 4.29, 4.30, 4.34 and De Inventione 1.36, 2.30, wherein affectio is a more or less settled disposition, called habitus if more settled and weakness or sickness (morbus) if less settled.

29. Civ.Dei 12.1: “Angelorum bonorum et malorum inter se contrarios adpetitus non naturis principisquis diversis, cum Deus omnium substantiarum bonus acutor et conditor utroque creaverit, sed voluntatibus et cupiditatibus exstitisse fas non est.” Trans. adapted from Levine.

30. TD 4.6.11–14.

31. Cf. civ.Dei 14.7: “idiomatic usage has brought it about that if cupiditas and concupiscentia are used without any specification of their object, they can be taken only in a bad sense.” Cf. G.
angels is persistent, holy, and tranquil;\textsuperscript{32} the *cupiditas* of the demons is arrogant, deceitful, envious—in a word, it is “impure.”\textsuperscript{33} Yet the impure *cupiditas* of the demons is also persistent;\textsuperscript{34} it is a disposition.

In the surrounding text, however, this *cupiditas* also goes by the name of *voluntas*. He identifies the demons’ *cupiditas* with *voluntas perversa*,\textsuperscript{35} using *voluntas* for a vicious condition of the soul (e.g. *Civ.Dei* 11.17: *vitium malitiae . . . voluntas mala*).\textsuperscript{36} Elsewhere, too, *voluntas* is applied to bad, as well as good, dispositions from which occurrent appetites arise.\textsuperscript{37} Thus Augustine consistently retains the sense of disposition and constancy that the word *voluntas* has in Cicero’s use of it for Stoic *boulēsis*, but frequently drops the association with virtue, only capitalizing on that association when he wants to contrast the demons with the angels. The association is not a constant or even a typical feature of his use of the word *voluntas*.

Augustine describes these dispositional *voluntates* or *cupiditates* as orientations toward types of objects. The two societies of angels are mirrored in the two “cities” of men on earth; the bad human society is comprised of subgroups, with each group “pursuing the advantages and *cupiditates* peculiar to itself.”\textsuperscript{38} Thus we are dealing with *dispositions* to pursue *classes* of objects.

While occurrent appetites arise out of comparably stable states, these states themselves result from an interior act of the rational soul. In the case of the demons, Augustine calls this the act of “turning away” (*conversio*) from the

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34. Their having *cupiditas* is synonymous with their having acquired certain character traits: “superbi fallaces invidi effecti sunt,” a state comparable to *caecitas* (*Civ.Dei* 12.1).


36. Again Augustine’s *voluntas* is like Cicero’s *affectio*; for the identification of *affectiones* with *vitia*, *TD* 4.29, 4.34. Cf. *civ.Dei* 12.6: “voluntatem malam . . . ipsa quia facta est, adpetivit.”


object of their previous, good will.\footnote{Civ.Dei 12.6.} The first vicious disposition arose in these angels because they “sank,” by a “spontaneous lapse,” from their glorious state into a vitiated state; this lapse was a discrete psychic event in which they began to prefer a new class of goods.\footnote{“defluxerunt,” civ.Dei 12.1; “a bono sponte deficit,” civ.Dei 12.9.}

Similar to this account is the description of Adam and Eve’s original sin in book fourteen. In order to explain an occurrence (in this case, an external act rather than an \textit{appetitus}), Augustine again posits a preceding disposition. He assumes that there must have been a foregoing vicious state of soul, which he again calls a \textit{voluntas} (\textit{praecessisset voluntas mala}),\footnote{Civ.Dei 14.13.} in order to explain how Adam and Eve’s performance of the evil deed, eating from the forbidden tree, could have occurred. The contrast he invokes is clearly one between doing and being: “the evil act (\textit{opus}), i.e., the transgression involving their eating the forbidden fruit, was committed by those who were already bad. For only a bad tree [disposition] could have produced that evil fruit [the deed].”\footnote{Civ.Dei 14.13: “Non ergo malum opus factum est, id est illa transgressio ut cibo prohibito vescerentur, nisi ab eis qui iam mali erant. Neque enim fieret ille fructus malus nisi ab arbores mala.” Trans. adapted from Levine.} As in the case of the angels, this disposition is also said to have originated occurringly. The bad tree is a “\textit{voluntas} which had grown dark and cold,” a vitiation of the original nature of man.\footnote{Civ.Dei 14.13.} This \textit{voluntas mala} had its beginning (\textit{initium}) in an act of “defection” from or “desertion” of the good sought beforehand.\footnote{“deseruit,” civ.Dei 13.15; civ.Dei 14.11: “defectus ab opere Dei ad sua opera”; civ.Dei 14.13: “deficit homo.”} The defection was an \textit{appetitus} for self-exaltation.\footnote{Civ.Dei 14.13.}

It is clear throughout both of these books, and throughout his corpus, that Augustine thinks the original sins of the angels and humans were essentially the same: a turning away from God by rational creatures, through pride. Thus the “turning away” (\textit{conversio}) of the good angels who became bad is the same sort of psychic event as the “defection”—i.e., \textit{appetitus}—of the human pair who also fell away. Thus in both cases, an occurrent appetite preceded and caused a dispositional will (\textit{appetitus $\rightarrow$ voluntas}).
BYERS: VOLUNTAS IN AUGUSTINE

The case of Adam and Eve now differs from that of the demons only insofar as it seems to jump from a dispositional voluntas to an external action (voluntas → opus), whereas the demons’ disposition was said to yield occurrent appetite (voluntas → appetitus). However, if Augustine holds that an occurrent appetite is necessary for the doing of any external deed, we will need to insert an appetitus between the humans’ disposition (voluntas) and act (opus). Then the psychological progression would be the same for the human pair as for the demons, up until the point of the opus which completes the series (appetitus → voluntas → appetitus → opus). In fact, there is every reason to think that Augustine would insert an appetitus here. He constantly describes action as effected by a preceding appetitus actionis.46 Thus the psychology of action operating in the human pair should indeed be described as:

appetitus → voluntas → appetitus → opus

occurent → disposition → occurrent → external act

What is most interesting, however, is that the first and third elements in this sequence also go by another name: voluntas. Augustine repeatedly refers to the efficient cause of an action (the third element) as a voluntas (most explicitly, mala voluntas causa efficiens est operis mali, civ.Dei 12.6) when speaking of the demons.47 He also refers to the initial turning away or defection (the first appetitus in the series) as a voluntas: “the first evil voluntas . . . was a falling away (defectus).”48 In other words, we find the following:

voluntas → voluntas → voluntas → opus

occurent → disposition → occurrent → external act

An orientation toward action runs through the whole of this psychological sequence. The third voluntas in the series is a causa efficiens operis, also known as appetitus actionis, as we have already seen. The first voluntas is as well, for Augustine says that this occurrent voluntas, the appetitus for perverse self-exaltation which was the defection, was “a falling away from the

47. Cf. civ.Dei 5.9: “humanae voluntates humanorum operum causae sunt,” civ.Dei 12.6.15: “quid est enim quod facit voluntatem malam, cum ipsa faciat opus malum?” In trin. 9.12.18 occurrent appetitus and voluntas are interchanged, as they are at trin. 15.26.47.
BYERS: VOLUNTAS IN AUGUSTINE

work (opere) of God to the will’s own works (opera).”49 And as shown earlier, the dispositional voluntas, or second item in the series, is a disposition toward pursuing (sectari) goods of the class toward which one is oriented. Thus oc-
current and dispositional voluntates are, for Augustine, occurrent and
dispositional forms of appetitus actionis.

Since Augustine translates the Greek hormê by appetitus actionis, and since
the Stoics spoke of both an active and a dispositional form of hormê, it is
quite reasonable to conclude that in these texts he is using voluntas as a trans-
lation for Stoic hormê.

2. Confessiones VIII

Turning to Confessiones book eight, we find confirmation of our theory,
and discover additional Stoic features of his usage. When he famously de-
scribes how he was divided between “voluntates,”50 also called “parts of
voluntas,” he relies on the concept of dispositional hormê. He recounts:

My two wills . . . were in conflict with one another, and their discord robbed
my soul of all concentration.51

So there are two wills. Neither of them is complete, and what is present in
the one is lacking to the other.52

A will half-wounded, struggling with one part rising up and another part
falling down . . . 53

These wills or ‘parts’ of will are dispositions to pursue distinct classes of
goods, and have been formed by habitual actions, as he says: “my two
voluntates, one old, the other new . . . were in conflict with one another. . . . I
was split between them. . . . But I was responsible for the fact that habit (con-
suetudo) had become so embattled against me.”54 One “will” tends toward a

49. Civ.dei 14.11. “Mala vero voluntas prima . . . defectus . . . fuit quidam ab opere Dei ad sua
opera.”
50. In addition to the following passages, see Conf. 8.10.24.
51. Conf. 8.5.10: “due voluntates meae . . . conflingebant inter se atque discordando dissipabant
animam meam.” For translations of the Confessions I have used but often adapted (as noted) H.
52. Conf. 8.9.21: “ideo sunt duae voluntates, quia una earum tota non est et hoc adest alteri, quod
deest alteri”
53. Conf 8.8.19: “Semisauciam . . . voluntatem parte adsurgente cum alia parte cadente luctantem”
Trans. adapted from Chadwick.
54. Conf. 8.5.10–11: “Ita duae voluntates meae, una vetus, alia nova . . . conflingebant inter se. . . .
Sed tamen consuetudo adversus me pugnacior ex me facta erat.”
sensual lifestyle and has been forged by his habitual relations with women;\(^{55}\) the other tends toward a celibate life and has been formed by repeated musing on the philosophical ideal of study and on biblical exhortations to the unmarried state, as well as by frequenting (\textit{frequentare}) the church.\(^{56}\)

\textit{Voluntates} are also occurrent impulses toward particular acts in this book. Augustine indicates that the repeated actions which had built up his dispositional \textit{voluntates} had each been preceded by the occurrent willing of individual actions: “I was responsible for the fact that habit (\textit{consuetudo}) had become so embattled against me, since it was [by] willing (\textit{volens}) that I had come to be where [i.e., in the state which] I did not [now] want [any longer].”\(^{57}\) Later, too, the assumption underlying his usage is that the efficient causes of individual actions are occurrent \textit{voluntates}. He explains that when one deliberates between going to the theater or going to church, there are “two wills quarrelling with one another.”\(^{58}\) Similarly,

both \textit{voluntates} are evil when one is deliberating whether to kill a person by poison or [to kill] by a dagger; whether to encroach on one estate belonging to someone else or [to encroach on] a different one . . . whether to buy pleasure by lechery or avariciously to keep his money; whether to go to the circus or [to go] to the theater . . . or . . . to steal . . . or . . . to commit adultery.\(^{59}\)

Again, the wills are good when one is deliberating whether “to take delight in a reading from the apostle . . . to take delight in a sober psalm . . . [or] to discourse upon the gospel.”\(^{60}\) Augustine makes explicit that these wills, or occurrent impulses to act, are each aimed at attaining one intentional object: “They tear the mind apart by their mutual incompatibility—four or more wills, according to the number of things desired.”\(^{61}\)

\textbf{3. De Libero Arbitrio, De Genesi ad Litteram IX, and De Civitate Dei V}

Finally, Stoic action theory and epistemology helps to clarify the meaning of Augustinian “free will,” the phrase often used to translate Augustine’s

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\(^{55}\) See \textit{Conf.} 6.15.25–6.16.26, 8.11.26; cf. 8.10.24 (\textit{familiaritate}).


\(^{57}\) \textit{Conf.} 8.5.11: see the later part of note 52, “quoniam volens quo nollem perveneram.”

\(^{58}\) \textit{Conf.} 8.10.23: “Si ergo quisquam . . . altercantibus duabus voluntatibus fluctuet, utrum ad theatrum perget an ad ecclesiam nostram.”

\(^{59}\) \textit{Conf.} 8.10.24.

\(^{60}\) \textit{Conf.} 8.10.24. Trans. adapted from Chadwick.

\(^{61}\) \textit{Conf.} 8.10.24: “discrepent enim animum sibimet adversantibus quattuor voluntatibus vel etiam pluribus in tanta copia rerum, quae appetuntur.” Trans. adapted from Chadwick.
*arbitrium voluntatis, liberum arbitrium voluntatis, and libera volunta*. It is evident that he does not mean by these terms to refer to a faculty of uncaused willing, since he agrees with the Stoics that every event has an efficient cause. And he does not usually use them to refer to a faculty, although there are occasions when *libera volunta* and *volunta* are described as a faculty, as we shall see.

a. (Liberum) Arbitrium Voluntas

We begin with the phrase *arbitrium volunta*. The Stoics asserted that human impulse is preceded by assent to a passively received hormetic impression. They contrasted this with the case of non-rational animals, which lack the power of assent; in these, impulse simply follows such impressions. If Augustine is deeply indebted to Stoicism for his notion of *volunta*, we would expect that when he uses the phrase *arbitrium volunta* he is being somewhat redundant, using *arbitrium* to stipulate in what way *volunta* is specifically rational *hormê*—namely that it is *hormê* which follows on assent (choice, *arbitrium*). Augustine might feel the need to spell this out, given that we have seen him allowing the term *volunta* to be used of irrational impulse in an extended, non-technical sense.

*Voluntas*, then, would be an objective genitive stipulating that the kind of assent in question is assent to a hormetic impression, which yields impulse. In this sense, one's having a will is one's own responsibility and is chosen, though not directly so, since the object of assent is the impression.

Our expectation is met in a number of texts. In *De Genesi ad Litteram* 9.14.25, while making epistemological claims that clearly show his debt to Stoicism, Augustine interchanges *arbitrium* with *iudicium* and associates these with *volunta* in order to distinguish the impulse of rational beings from that of any living creature, which he calls *appetitus*.

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62. See e.g. *civ.Dei* 5.9, where he argues against Cicero: “The concession that Cicero makes, that nothing happens unless preceded by an efficient cause (*causa efficiens*), is enough to refute him in this debate [with the Stoics]. . . . It is enough when he admits that everything that happens, happens only by virtue of a preceding cause (*causa praecedente)*.”

63. See Inwood, *Ethics*, 55

64. See Inwood, *Ethics*, 44.


66. Similarly C. Kirwan, although without reference to the Stoic background and without stipulation that *arbitrium* understood as assent is the real locus of this ‘freedom’: “When he [i.e. Augustine] does say that the human will is free (e.g. *De Duabus Animis* 12.15), he usually means, I think, that men are free *whether or not* to exercise their wills – to engage in the activity of willing” (*Augustine*, 86).
For every living soul, not only rational, as in men, but also irrational, as in beasts and birds and fish, is moved by impressions. But the rational soul either consents to the impressions or does not consent, by a choice which generates impulse: but the irrational [soul] does not have this judgment; nevertheless in accordance with its nature it is propelled once having been affected by some impression. And it is not in the power of any soul which impressions come to it, whether [they come to it] in the bodily sense or in the interior spirit itself [i.e., the imagination]: [but in all cases it is true that] by such impressions the impulse of any animal is activated.67

Since the judgment (iudicium) referred to is identified as consent (consentire) or refusal of consent to an impression, we know that the “choice” (arbitrium) which is given as its synonym is a choice between the options of mentally asserting that the impression is accurate, or asserting that it is false.

This phrase arbitrium voluntatis also occurs in De Civitate Dei 5 when Augustine argues for the Stoics, against Cicero, that God’s foreknowledge is compatible with what he calls arbitrium voluntatis; and it again shows Augustine’s Stoic patrimony. He summarizes the philosophical challenge posed by Cicero in the De Fato68 thus:

If all future events are foreknown . . . the order of causes is fixed (certus est ordo causarum). . . . If this is the case, there is nothing really in our power, and there is no rational impulse (nihil est in nostra potestate nullumque est arbitrium voluntatis). And if we grant this, says Cicero, the whole basis of human life is overthrown: it is in vain that laws are made, that men employ reprimands and praise. . . and there is no justice in a system of rewards for the good and punishment for the bad.69

The phrase arbitrium voluntatis is Augustine’s addition to Cicero’s text; he gives it as a synonym for Cicero’s phrase in nostra potestate (eph’hêmin). It becomes clear that Augustine understands the voluntas in this phrase to


68. Attributed to the veteres. See De Fato (hereafter DF) 40.

69. Civ.Dei 5.9: “Si praescita sunt omnia futura . . . certus est ordo causarum. . . . Wuod si ita est, nihil est in nostra potestate nullumque est in arbitrium voluntatis; quod si concedimus, inquit, omnis humana vita subvertitur, frustra leges dantur, frustra obiurgationes laudes . . . nequw ulla iustitia bonis praemia et malis supplicia constituta sunt.” Trans. adapted from Green.
mean hormê/appetitus, and that arbitrium is a reference to assent, when we consider the original passage from De Fato 40 which he is summarizing. It says: If an impression received from the outside is the cause of impulse (appetitus), assent (assensio) or action (actio), then these are not in our power (in nostra potestate), in which case there is no justice in rewards and punishments.70 Thus Augustine intends to sum up in one phrase (nihil est in nostra potestate nullumque est arbitrium voluntatis) the linkage between concepts (appetitus, assensio, and in nostra potestate) that Cicero establishes over the course of two sentences.

In the following paragraphs of De Civitate Dei 5.9, Augustine repeatedly interchanges this voluntatis arbitrium with other phrases. One of these is liberum voluntatis arbitrium, where liberum seems to be applied for emphasis, the idea being that since assent is by definition a choice between options (to approve or not approve an impression), it is therefore necessarily ‘free.’ 71 Augustine goes on to describe voluntas itself as “in our power” rather than “necessary”—i.e., to assert that it is free: “If the term ‘necessity’ should be used of what is not in our power (non est in nostra potestate), but accomplishes its end even against our will (etiamsi nolimus), for example, the necessity of death, then it is clear that our wills (voluntates nostras), by which we live rightly or wrongly, are not under such necessity.” 72 The basis for this truism is the fact that arbitrium precedes human impulse;73 it makes human impulse by definition “free” or “in our power.”

When Augustine defends the justice of God’s punishments in the De Libero Arbitrio, he also associates voluntas with liberum arbitrium, and again Stoic epistemology and action-theory are at work. Voluntas is said to be a necessary condition for acts to be evaluated morally—“no action would be either a sin or a good deed which was not done voluntate”74—and it is interchanged with in libero arbitrio. Thus we find:

70. DF 27.40.
71. See also lib.arb. 1.16.34–35 for the interchange of eligere and liberum arbitrium: “quid autem quisque sectandum et aplectandum eligat in voluntate esse positum constitit . . . id faciamus ex libero arbitrio . . . liberum arbitrium, quo peccandi facultatem habere convincimus.”
73. Thus he asserts that it is necessary (by definition) that “when we will, we will by free choice” (“dicimus necesse esse, ut cum volumus, libero velimus arbitrio” (civ.Dei 5.10). This is the reason why at civ.Dei 5.10 we hear that voluntas cannot exist, except as the voluntas of the one who wills, and not of another person (nec alterius, sed eius); will by definition belongs to the one who wills. For other texts asserting that one cannot be compelled to will, see Rist, Augustine, 134 and 186.
74. Lib.arb. 2.1.3.
The first man could have sinned even if he were created wise; and since that sin would have been a matter of free choice (quod peccatum cum esset in libero arbitrio), it would have been justly punished in accordance with divine law. . . . The transitions between wisdom and folly never take place except through will (numquam nisi per voluntate), and for this reason they are followed by just retribution.\textsuperscript{75}

Augustine goes on to explain why he has interchanged these two. Voluntas is impulse rooted in the rational capacity of assent to impressions:

But since nothing incites will toward action except some impression,\textsuperscript{76} but whether someone either affirms or rejects [it] is in his power, but there is no power [for him over whether] he is touched by this impression, it must be acknowledged that the rational soul is affected by both superior and inferior [kinds of] impressions, with the result that the rational substance chooses from either class what it wills, and by virtue of its choosing either misery or happiness follows. For example, in the Garden of Eden . . . man had no control over what the Lord commanded or what the devil suggested. But it was in his power not to yield to the impressions of inferior pleasure.\textsuperscript{77}

\textsuperscript{75}Lib.arb. 3.24.72–73: “Etiam si sapiens primus homo factus est potuisse tamen seduci, quod peccatum cum esset in libero arbitrio, iustam divina lege poenam consecutam. . . . Ila autem numquam nisi per voluntatem, unde iustissimae retributions consecuntur.” The “illa” here is a reference to the first man’s fall from the pinnacle of wisdom to foolishness (ex arce sapientiae ut ad stultitiam primus homo transire). Augustine adopts the plural neuter to mean “the former kind of action,” which he contrasts with passing from sleep to wakefulness and vice versa, which he says is involuntary (sine voluntate) and calls “ista.” Trans. adapted from Williams, \textit{op. cit.} For synonymous use of \textit{libera voluntas} and \textit{liberum voluntatis arbitrium} in the \textit{lib.arb.}, see e.g. 2.18.47.

\textsuperscript{76}On the necessity of foregoing impression, cf. \textit{lib.arb.} 3.25.75: “But from what source did the devil himself receive the suggestion to desire the impiety (suggestum appetendae impietatis) by which he fell from heaven? For if he were not affected by any impression, he would not have chosen to do what he did, for if something had not come to him, into his mind, in no way would his attention have shifted toward wickedness. . . . For he who wills, clearly wills something, which is either brought to one’s attention from the outside through a bodily sense, or comes into the mind in some obscure way; otherwise one cannot will (velle non potest).” My trans.; emphasis added. Compare the Stoics, cited and discussed by Inwood, \textit{Ethics}, 54.

\textsuperscript{77}\textit{Lib.arb.} 3.25.74: “Sed quia voluntatem non allicit ad faciendum quodlibet nisi aliquod visum, quid autem quisque vel sumat vel respuat est in potestate, sed quo viso tangatur nulla potestas est, fatendum est et ex superioribus et ex inferioribus visis animum tangi ut rationalis substancia ex utroque sumat quod voluerit et ex merito sumendi vel miseria vel beatitas subsequatur. Velut in paradiso . . . neque quid sibi praeciperetur a domino neque quid a serpente suggretur fuit in homine potestate. Quam sit autem . . . non cedere visis inferioris illecebrae.” My trans., except the second to last sentence, which is Williams’.
Plainly *voluntas* is here a rational being’s impulse toward action, and to be rational is to have the capacity to yield or not yield to impressions. As was the case in the *De Civitate Dei*, this capacity is what prevents humans from being necessitated; and by it God’s justice in punishing human actions is saved. The voluntary movement of soul (*motus animi*) by which all sin occurs is in our power because it includes rejection or approbation of impressions; and so God does not cause everything he foreknows—rather, human beings are responsible for their acts.

**b. Libera Voluntas**

Thus far we have seen that Augustine calls both *arbitrium voluntatis* and *voluntas* “in our power,” and also makes the former synonymous with *liberum arbitrium voluntatis* in the *De Civitate Dei*. We have observed, moreover, that he interchanges *in libero arbitrio* with *voluntate* in the *De Libero Arbitrio*. It comes as no surprise, then, that elsewhere in the *De Civitate Dei* he substitutes *arbitrium voluntatis* for *voluntate facere*, for *in nostra voluntate*, and, occasionally, for *libera voluntas*. Moreover, when summarizing Cicero, he uses *in nostra voluntate* to stand in for Cicero’s phrase *in nostra potestate*. Apparently he considers it enough to say “in our impulse” (*in nostra voluntate*) or “to do by [rational] impulse” (*voluntate facere*) to indicate that an act is in our power, given that assent has preceded. Thus *libera voluntas*, *arbitrium voluntatis*, and *liberum arbitrium vountatis* are synonymous, meaning ‘rational impulse which is by definition free.’

When *libera voluntas* occurs in the *De Libero Arbitrio*, it is sometimes interchanged with *voluntas*; both have a clear connection to action and are

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78. See also the passages on consent in *De Mendacio* 9.12–14 and *De Sermo Domini in Monte* 1.12.34; these are discussed by C. Kirwan (without much use of the Stoic epistemology) in “Avoiding Sin: Augustine and Consequentialism” in *The Augustinian Tradition*, 183–194; see 186, 190.

79. *Lib.arb.* 3.1.2–3.1.3 and 3.4.11.


81. See *Civ.Dei* 5.9, when summarizing what he takes to be the Ciceronian objection.

82. Similarly Rist, *Augustine*, 186 n. 91: “The phrase ‘free will’ (*libera voluntas*) occurs rarely, if at all, before Augustine, who might seem to use it merely as an alternative for *liberum arbitrium voluntatis* (*lib.arb.* 3.1.1).”

83. *Libera voluntas* is “of asking, of seeking, of striving” (“liberam voluntatem petendi et quarendi et conandi non abstulit [Creator],” *lib.arb.* 3.20.), is oriented toward doing (*ad faciendum*) and is acted “through” (“Video enim ex hoc quod incertum est, utrum ad recte faciendum voluntas libera data sit, cum per illam etiam peccare possimus, fieri etiam illud incertum, utrum dari

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linked to recognizable Latin terms for *hormē*: *voluntas libera* “has motus,”84 *voluntas* is “turned by motus,”85 and when people turn *libera voluntas* toward inferior things, they *appetunt* those inferior things.86 Given that *voluntas* and *libera voluntas* are interchanged, the *libera* again seems to have been employed for emphasis.

What is distinctive and non-Stoic about the phrase *libera voluntas* in the *De Libero Arbitrio* is that it is sometimes used for a faculty (*facultas*) or power (*potentia*) of the rational soul (*animi*)87—something given to man by the creator,88 which remains in us89 regardless of whether we use it well or badly.90 Occasionally this capacity is also simply called *voluntas*. Thus we find:

*Libera voluntas* is a good, since no one can live rightly without it. . . . The powers of the soul, without which one cannot live rightly, are intermediate goods. . . . *Voluntas* itself is only an intermediate good. But when *voluntas* turns away from the unchangeable and common good toward its own private good, or toward external or inferior things, it sins. . . . Hence the goods that are discussed below are intermediate goods. . . .

84. “Si ita data est voluntas libera ut naturalem habeat ilium motum.” (*lib.arb.* 3.1.1). (The question here is whether *voluntas libera* by necessity has a sinful *motus*.) This translation and those following, unless otherwise noted, are (often adapted) from T. Williams, *On Free Choice of the Will* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

85. *Lib.arb.* 3.1.1 “Cupio per te cognoscere unde ille motus existat quo ipsa voluntas avertitur a communi atque incommutabili bono.”

86. *Lib.arb.* 2.19.53: “Ita fit ut neque illa bona quae a peccantibus appetuntur ullo modo mala sint neque ipsa voluntas libera . . . sed malum sit aversio eius ab incommutabili et conversio ad mutabilia bona.”

87. “Debet autem, si accept voluntatem liberam et sufficientissimam facultatem” (*lib.arb.* 3.16.45, “he is a debtor to God if he has received [from Him] free will and sufficient power [to will good]”); “voluntas libera tibi videbitur nullum bonum, sine qua recte nemo vivit? . . . potengiae vero animi, sine quibus recte vivi non potest, media bona sunt” (*lib.arb.* 2.18.49–2.19.19.50).

88. *Lib.arb.* 2.1.1: “Debet igitur deus dare homini liberam voluntatem;” Book Two assumes that *libera voluntas* is a thing in the soul; the question is whether to count it as a good thing, e.g.: “utrum in bonis numeranda sit voluntas libera” (*lib.arb.* 2.3.7), “utrum expediri possit: inter bona esse numerandum liberam voluntatem” (*lib.arb.* 2.18.47).

89. “Non nego ita nescesse esse . . . ita eum [Deum] praescire ut maneat tamen nobis voluntas libera atque in nostra posita potestate” (*lib.arb.* 3.3.8).

90. The intermediate goods, the powers of the soul, can be used either well or badly (mediis . . . non solum bene sed etiam male quisque uti potest” (*lib.arb.* 2.19.50)).
pursued by sinners are in no way evil things, and neither is \textit{libera voluntas} itself, which we found is to be counted among the intermediate goods.\footnote{Lib.arb. 2.18.50–2.19.53.}

This usage of \textit{voluntas libera} for a faculty is not common in Augustine’s corpus, though it is repeated as late as the \textit{De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio} (in 426): “We always have free will, but it is not always good. . . . Our ability [to will] is useful when we will [rightly].”\footnote{15.31: “semper est autem in nobis voluntas libera, sed non semper est bona. . . . Utile est posse, cum volumus.”} The use of \textit{voluntas} alone for this faculty is even rarer; it is limited, I believe, to the passage just cited from \textit{De Libero Arbitrio}, where it is interchanged with \textit{libera voluntas}. In such cases, he is using \textit{voluntas} and \textit{voluntas libera} as shorthand ways of referring to the capacity for having impulse that follows on assent; this reduces to the capacity for assent, since assent is the distinguishing characteristic. Thus we are not dealing with a ‘voluntarist’ faculty, in the sense of a capacity for a-rational action, but a rational faculty of judgment or assent to impressions.

The Question of Augustine’s Sources

As we have seen, by \textit{voluntas} Augustine does not mean the virtuous person’s ‘good emotion’ of reasonable desire (desire for real goods, viz. the virtues), despite the fact that Cicero uses the word as a translation for this Stoic \textit{eupatheia} in the \textit{Tusculanae}. Augustine uses \textit{voluntas} for human \textit{horm} generally, and considered apart from affective feelings. Who, then, was Augustine’s historical source for this usage?

Certainly another text of Cicero, the \textit{De Fato}, is important. \textit{Voluntas} is clearly used for impulse in \textit{De Fato} 5.9, when it is paired with \textit{appetitio}, and associated with action: “to sit and to walk and to do something.”\footnote{“. . . nostrarum voluntatum atque appetitionum . . . putat ne ut sedeamus quidem aut ambulemus voluntatis esse . . . sedere atque ambulare et rem agere aliquam.”} Later (when summarizing Carneades\footnote{On the fact that the Antiochian summaries of Stoic doctrine sometimes used by Cicero are likely to be influenced by the sceptical Academy, see G. Striker, “Academics Fighting Academics” in \textit{Assent and Argument}, edd. B. Inwood and J. Mansfeld (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill: 1997): 257–276, 258. On the use e.g. of Antiochus’ \textit{Sosus} for the presentation of Stoic epistemology in the \textit{Academica}, see J. Glucker, \textit{Antiochus and the Late Academy} (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1978) 58 n. 4 and 419, as well as “\textit{Probabile, Veri Simile, and Related Terms}” in \textit{Cicero the Philosopher}, ed. J. G. F. Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995): 115–143, 133 n. 74.}) Cicero exchanges the word \textit{voluntas} for
“voluntary impulse of the rational soul” (motus animi voluntarius);\(^95\) thus again we see that he intends this word to refer to a specific kind of impulse—rational impulse. Cicero also speaks of libera voluntas. He indicates that this freedom is due to man’s rational capacity to assent, contrasting it with necessitas fati and appropriating it to the mind (mens).\(^96\) Moreover he presents the question of whether any action is “of will” (voluntatis) as identical to the questions (a) whether anything is in our power (in nostra potestate), and (b) whether assent (assensio) is in our power.\(^97\) The association of these concepts is precisely what we found in Augustine.

Seneca is another likely source. If Rist is correct that Seneca used the word voluntas for hormê, then the suggestion that Augustine’s notion of “will” was influenced by Seneca must also be right;\(^98\) for it is clear that Augustine knew Seneca’s moral treatises well and used at least some of them throughout his life.\(^99\)

Other possible sources, unverifiable because inextant, include the first book of the De Fato, which was devoted to assent,\(^100\) handbooks of Greek philosophical texts (in Latin translation) which Augustine is believed to have owned,\(^101\) and Varro’s De Philosophia, which Augustine is summarizing just prior to mentioning hormê in the De Civitate Dei.\(^102\)

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95. *DF* 11.23 and 11.25.
98. See note 6 above.
99. See ibid.
100. See *DF* 27.40.
101. See P. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and their Greek Sources*, trans. H. Wedeck (Cambridge: Harvard U. Press, 1969 (Original work published 1943)), 192–194: Augustine had a six-volume compendium of extracts from Greek philosophers (in a Latin translation). There has been debate about its author; Courcelle argues that it was Celsinus, son-in-law of Julian the Apostate (n. 201), despite the fact that Augustine calls him Celsus in the *De Haeresibus* (Courcelle suggests that this is a memory lapse due to old age, n. 202).
102. See 19.1, 19.4