

**Aquinas on the Respective Roles of Prudence and Aquinas on the Respective Roles of  
Prudence and Synderesis vis-à-vis the Ends of the Moral Virtues**

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## Abstract

This book investigates the relationship between the intellect and the will in the context of a life of virtue and authentic Christian freedom. The question that inspired it – and that comes up with increasing degrees of frequency throughout – is whether it is possible to reconcile two apparently conflicting texts of St. Thomas Aquinas, one of which says that synderesis (the habit of the first principles of the practical intellect) appoints the end to the moral virtues and another which says prudence does.<sup>1</sup> Answering this question will require us to carefully consider the very foundations of Thomistic ethical theory because the answer is not provided by Aquinas himself. As a result, the book can be considered as a kind of primer for understanding the nature of the moral virtues, prudence and synderesis in addition to other central figures of the moral life such as conscience, choice and free will.

Given that the moral virtues are located in the appetites (either in the rational appetite known as the will or in the sensitive appetite), an important question that arises in attempting to reconcile the conflicting texts is whether the end these virtues point an individual towards are antecedently cognized in virtue of some other habit or power or whether, on the contrary, they are responsible for all virtuous action independent of the intellect. Some renowned theologians have argued that the knowledge the virtuous man has regarding the ends he pursues comes about merely by inclination. There is, on this account, reasoning about means but little to no reasoning about ends themselves. One might think of certain New Natural Law theorists who think that prior to choice, there is no morally significant order of goods to be pursued (because such goods are incommensurable) or of the moral motivation theorists such as Keenan who maintain that "strivings" of the will are "antecedent to questions of intention and choice."<sup>2</sup> One of the reasons their theories are sometimes considered consistent with Aquinas is that he says the moral virtues, which are present in the appetitive part of the soul,<sup>3</sup> provide the ends to prudence, which uses those ends as the beginning of its deliberation.<sup>4</sup> What I intend to show, however, is that the

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<sup>1</sup> See I-II q. 66 a. 3 and II-II q. 47 a. 6 of the *Summa Theologiae*.

<sup>2</sup> Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa theologiae* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 142. See Sherwin's *By Knowledge and Love* for further explanation of this quote: (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 14.

<sup>3</sup> I-II q.60 a.1 s.c.: *Subjectum virtutum moralium est pars appetitiva animae*  
Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Editio altera Romana. (Romae: Forzani et Sodalis, 1894).

<sup>4</sup> II-II q. 47 a. 13 ad 2: *Principia prudentiae sunt fines operabilium de quibus aliquis habet rectam existimationem per habitus virtutum moralium, quae faciunt appetitum rectum*. See also, *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 10c.

notion the prudent man subjects everything he does solely to the inclinations of his appetites is not consonant with St. Thomas' view.<sup>5</sup> This is because in the final analysis, that which appoints (*praestituit*) the end to the moral virtues is, strictly speaking, a form of understanding or reason that is distinct from prudence.

After an initial chapter on the end in general and what it consists in, the second chapter explores the kind of causality exercised by the intellect while investigating the claim that Aquinas had a somewhat radical progression towards a more voluntarist attitude as he matured. The third chapter turns to the specific way in which synderesis and prudence exercise causality in regard to their appointing of the end and proposes a way of understanding Aquinas to be accurate both when he says in I-II, q. 66 that prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues *and* in II-II, q. 47 when he denies it does while insisting the natural reason (synderesis) does so instead. In that chapter, both faith and conscience will be discussed as other indispensable elements involved in the appointing of ends.

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<sup>5</sup> It is worth noting that the prudent man does, in fact, act in conformity with *right* appetite because prudence requires right appetite to be rightly related to the "principles, that is, the ends from which it reasons" (see, I-II, q. 58 a. 3 ad 2). However, even holy people have inordinate appetites that arise at times. For this reason and others, the prudent man would not subject himself to appetite *simpliciter*. As Thomas notes in his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, even though it is true that "the truth of the practical intellect is determined in comparison with upright appetite, rectitude of appetite is nevertheless determined by its conformity to true reason." Actually, an appetite is only "said to be right" when it "follows what true reason says." *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6 lectio 2 n. 8: *si veritas intellectus practici determinatur in comparatione ad appetitum rectum, appetitus autem rectitudo determinatur per hoc quod consonat rationi verae, ut prius dictum est, sequetur quaedam circulatio in dictis determinationibus. Et ideo dicendum est, quod appetitus est finis et eorum quae sunt ad finem: finis autem determinatus est homini a natura, ut supra in III habitum est. Ea autem quae sunt ad finem, non sunt nobis determinata a natura, sed per rationem investigantur; sic ergo manifestum est quod rectitudo appetitus per respectum ad finem est mensura veritatis in ratione practica... Et ideo secundum hoc dicitur appetitus rectus qui persequitur quae vera ratio dicit*. By speaking of the need for upright/correct appetite to be conformed to upright/correct reason and suggesting upright/correct reason is present in man thanks to nature, he is adverting to natural reason or synderesis.

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## Introduction

The ends of the moral virtues are essential guideposts for Christians who are striving to attain to what Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes* referred to as man's "most high calling;"<sup>6</sup> namely, eternal beatitude. They are so important, in fact, that prudence, though referred to as the "charioteer of the virtues,"<sup>7</sup> has to look to these ends as final causes of the activity it directs. Because the subject of the moral virtues is the appetitive part of the soul (the will or rational appetite being the subject of justice and the sensitive appetites being the subject of temperance and fortitude), appetites that are rectified by virtuous habits incline the prudent person towards the fitting end.<sup>8</sup> Appetites, for Aquinas, are "nothing other" than inclinations of the desiring person, which means that rectified appetites are *rightly* ordered inclinations of morally virtuous people.<sup>9</sup> Since order implies an order to *something*,<sup>10</sup> the appetites must be ordered to something both good and perfective if they are to be rightly ordered - and this comes about thanks to reason.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> "*altissimam eius vocationem*"; *Constitutio Pastoralis de Ecclesia in Mundo Huius Temporis, Gaudium et Spes*," in *Vatican II Documents (Latin)* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013), #22.

<sup>7</sup> See *Summa Theologiae*, Supplementum q.2 a.4 c.; II Sent., dist. 41 lectio 1 obj. 3; *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.35, *et passim*. It is specifically the charioteer or driver of the moral virtues: As *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 6c. says, prudence is both *perfectiva* of the moral virtues and "the cause of all the virtues of the appetitive part, which are called moral" (*causa omnium virtutum appetitivae partis, quae dicuntur morales*).

<sup>8</sup> Aquinas says justice is in the will, temperance in the concupiscible appetite, and fortitude in the irascible in I-II q.61 a.2 c. These appetites make up 'the appetitive part' of the soul. Moral virtue, therefore, "is in the appetitive part; accordingly, it implies a certain inclination for something desirable" (*Virtus enim moralis est in parte appetitiva. Unde importat quamdam inclinationem in aliquid appetibile*; Aquinas, *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, Lib. 2, Lect. 1 n. 3). To ensure that the object of desire is something truly good, moral virtue must rectify the appetites. As Reichenberg says, the moral virtues, "seated in different parts of the soul... rectify the will and sense appetites." Gregory M. Reichberg, "The Intellectual Virtues (Ia IIae, Qq. 57–58)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 140.

<sup>9</sup> I-II, q. 8 art. 1 c.: *Appetitus nihil aliud est, quam inclinatio appetentis in aliquid*. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Editio altera Romana. (Romae: Forzani et Sodalis, 1894). All quotes of the Latin of the *Summa* are from this source. The moral virtues, of course, rectify appetites (see, for instance, II-II, q. 47 a. 13 ad 3, I-II, q. 58 a. 2 c. and I-II, Q. 58 a. 3 c.).

<sup>10</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 42 a. 3 c.: *Ordo semper dicitur per comparisonem ad aliquod principium*.

<sup>11</sup> As II-II, q. 157 a. 2 c. says, the very *ratio* of moral virtue consists in the subordination of the appetite to reason: *ratio virtutis moralis consistit in hoc, quod appetitus rationi subdatur*.

This book will investigate what the ends of the moral virtues are, their importance in the moral life of the Christian, and what it is that appoints them in view of two texts in which Thomas apparently gives two conflicting opinions.<sup>12</sup> In the course of this investigation, I hope to demonstrate that the appetites are, in fact, able to point to an end that prudence pursues<sup>13</sup> even while prudence retains its contact with higher principles than those indicated by the appetites alone. Although prudence is "not only in the reason"<sup>14</sup> and is moved by the appetite,<sup>15</sup> Cajetan argues it also depends upon the rectitude of the intellectual virtues,<sup>16</sup> among which he includes synderesis.<sup>17</sup> If he is correct, prudence is not solely reduced to "feeling it out" when it comes to

<sup>12</sup> I-II, q. 66 a. 3 and II-II, q. 47 a. 6, in which he respectively says prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues and that the habit of the first principles of the practical intellect does but prudence does not.

<sup>13</sup> In *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 2 c.), Thomas argues *ratio* can only be *recta ratio* (i.e., prudence; see, II-II q.47, a.8 c.) inasmuch as *ratio* is conformed to upright ends (*rectos fines*). As a consequence, it can be said that prudence must look to the appetites it presupposes (which is indicated by II-II, q. 57 a. 4 c.: *prudentia ... respicit enim appetitum, tamquam praesupponens rectitudinem appetitus*). Thomas words this in a slightly different way in the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* when he says the appetites must be rightly ordered for the very principles of prudence to be preserved (see, bk. 6 lect. 4 n. 13). I-II, q. 65 a. 1 ad 3 says "the appetite moves the reason in some way" (*appetitus movet quodam modo rationem*) and this seems to especially pertain to the deliberation prudence - or any deliberation about means, whether 'prudential' or not.

<sup>14</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum* bk. 6, lect. 7 # 7, *prudentia non est in ratione solum, sed habet aliquid in appetitu*.

<sup>15</sup> *Sententia De Anima*, bk. 3 lect. 15 # 7: *Non est autem dicendum quod appetitus moveat sub specie intellectus, sed magis e converso; quia intellectus non invenitur movens sine appetitu; quia voluntas, secundum quam movet intellectus, est quidam appetitus*.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia, Tomus Sextus: Prima Secundae Summae Theologiae... cum Commentariis Thomae De Vio Caietani Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Romae: 1891), loc. cit (i.e., in the commentary on I-II, q. 65 a 1 # 10, p. 421):

*Prudentia non est in ratione solum, ut dicitur in VI Ethic. [ch. v. # 8, lectio 4 Sancti Thomae]: quia est in ratione ut mota ab appetitu... licet recta ratio agibilia pendeat ex utraque rectitudine circa fines, scilicet ex rectitudine partis apprehensivae, et appetitivae: quia tamen rectitudo apprehensivae non est propria prudentiae sed communis sibi et ceteris virtutibus intellectualibus circa conclusiones; et Auctoris divinum ingenium ex propriis consuevit doctrinam facere: ideo illam silentia praeterivit, et rectitudinem appetitus, quae est propria prudentiae... posuit principium prudentiae.* For a discussion of Cajetan's understanding of the relationship of prudence to synderesis and the appetites, see the tremendous work of Dominic Farrell (to whom I am indebted for having provided me with a digital copy of his work), *The Ends of the Moral Virtues and the First Principles of Practical Reason in Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012), 103 ff.

<sup>17</sup> Commenting on I-II, q. 66 a. 3, Cajetan says: *In mente nostra primo omnium est synderesis, qua non solum omne bonum prosequendum et malum fugiendum, felicitatem appetendam et miseriam fugiendam; sed bonum rationis prosequendum, et malum oppositum vitandum, iudicamus naturaliter. Et hinc in appetitu etiam naturaliter inest non solum inclinatio ad bonum prosequendum et malum vitandum, ad beatitudinem appetendam et miseriam fugiendam; sed imperfecta quaedam inclinatio ad vivendum*

discerning the right thing to do in any given situation; instead, one can also look to intellectual data provided by intellectual acts, habits, or virtues such as conscience, synderesis or faith (all of which, I will argue, can be said to appoint the end in some way).

The appetites or inclinations of the moral virtues are crucial because they enable a person to perceive fitting ends. In his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, St. Thomas says:

Two things are necessary in the work of virtue, one of which is that a man have a right intention of the end, which moral virtue brings about inasmuch as it inclines the appetite towards the fitting end. The other is that a man be well disposed in regard to the means: and prudence, which deliberates well about the means and judges and commands in regard to them, brings this about.<sup>18</sup>

From this quote, we might think that the appetites have a kind of priority because they relate to the end whereas prudence only relates to the means. This would seem especially reasonable since Aquinas even says in one place that "virtue principally consists in the inclination of the appetite."<sup>19</sup> If this is so, prudence must be subordinated to the moral virtues inasmuch as they ensure the right appetites that prudence looks towards and presupposes in its attempt to order the means.<sup>20</sup>

In the final chapter, we will see that Capreolus (d. 1444) wrestles with the related teaching found in the *Prima Secundae*, wherein Thomas says that "reason, inasmuch as it apprehends the end precedes the appetite for the end; but the appetite for the end precedes the

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*secundum rectam rationem. Et ... synderesis sit virtus, quia est intellectus principiorum.*

<sup>18</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6 lect. 10 # 13: *Duo enim sunt necessaria in opere virtutis, (scilicet) quorum unum est ut homo habeat rectam intentionem de fine; quod quidem facit virtus moralis, inquantum inclinat appetitum in debitum finem. Aliud autem est quod homo bene se habeat circa ea quae sunt ad finem: et hoc facit prudentia quae est bene consiliativa et iudicativa et praeceptiva eorum quae sunt ad finem.* Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own.

<sup>19</sup> *Virtus consistit principaliter in inclinatione appetitus: Liber I, Lectio 16, #4 of the Aquinas' Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (Sententia Libri Ethicorum).*

<sup>20</sup> II-II, q. 57 a. 4 c.: *prudencia ... respicit enim appetitum, tamquam praesupponens rectitudinem appetitus.*

reason reasoning (*rationcinantem*) for the sake of choosing those things that are for the end; which pertains to prudence."<sup>21</sup> For Capreolus and other early commentators, passages like this suggest there is some kind of reason that *precedes* the appetite for the end. Nevertheless, texts from the Thomistic corpus that indicate that upright appetites regarding fitting ends (which appetites are brought about by moral virtue) precede prudence (which is essentially right reason regarding practical means) have understandably led more recent authors such as Yves Simon to focus on the role of the appetites and inclinations. The latter argues that the judgment of prudence, "as reasoned as it may be, is ultimately determined *not by the intellect* but by the inclination of the will" (emphasis added).<sup>22</sup> Regardless of what Simon, who is generally extraordinarily perceptive, meant to definitively assert by saying this, some have taken him to be precluding the role of intellectual principles in the process of discerning the mean of virtue. Andrew Yuengert, for instance, comments on this quote by saying "disagreements about prudence cannot be resolved by appeal to a set of principles" because there are "no endpoints to which prudence is affixed; one is always in the middle of it, discovering and practicing it on the way."<sup>23</sup> As Simon himself

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<sup>21</sup> I-II, q. 58 a. 5 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitum finis: sed appetitus finis praecedit rationem rationcinantem ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam: sicut etiam in speculativis intellectus principiorum est principium rationis syllogizantis.* See section 3C below, "Capreolus on the *Scriptum*" and Johannis Capreoli Tholosani Ordinis Praedicatorum, Thomistarum Principis: *Defensiones Theologiae, De Novo Editae Cura Et Studio Paban et Pegues, Tomus V* (Turonibus: Cattier; 1904), Distinction 36, q. 1 p. 431.

<sup>22</sup> Yves Simon, *The Definition of Moral Virtue*, edited by Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 96-97: "To know what I should do here and now, I must rely on the judgment of practical wisdom [prudence]. And this judgment, reasoned as it may be, is ultimately determined not by the intellect but by the inclination of the will." In his work, *The Tradition of Natural Law*, similarly, he argues that *whenever* "specific situations and specific regulations are involved, there is absolutely no possibility of proceeding by logical connection" because the answer to such questions is "not obtained by logical connection with principles;" for him, the connection between "particular determinations" and universal norms "is not logical, it is prudential" (155-156). All of this seems to be at odds with what Thomas says in a text of *De Veritate* which indicates that when an agent "determines an end for itself," this comes about through the intellect: *ipsum agens determinat sibi finem, sicut est in omnibus agentibus per intellectum* (q. 3 a. 1 c.).

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Yuengert, *The Boundaries of Technique: Ordering Positive and Normative Concerns in Economic Research* (New York: Lexington Books, 2004), p. 99.



argues in the work cited, Søren Kierkegaard's assertion that "truth lies in subjectivity" is accurate when it comes to judgments of the practical intellect because the only knowledge that can be had there is "knowledge by inclination, subjectivity."<sup>24</sup> In explaining this latter principle regarding inclination (one he explicitly gets from Maritain in a section about Aquinas<sup>25</sup>), he suggests that in regard to basic moral principles such as the one regarding lying, one has to feel or sniff out the truth about their goodness or badness because "strict logic" does not apply.<sup>26</sup>

James Keenan, S.J. also emphasizes the role of the appetites in the moral life, though his approach is significantly more radical than Simon or Maritain<sup>27</sup> inasmuch as he tends to subject all cognition to appetite.<sup>28</sup> Keenan's name in particular will come up frequently in the chapters to follow due to how well versed and instrumental he is in regard to the contemporary debates over the role of the intellect in the moral life, his insightful analysis of certain points, his contemporary influence,<sup>29</sup> and his ability to poignantly express a moral outlook that, in my

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<sup>24</sup> Simon, *ibid.*, 110-111.

<sup>25</sup> Simon, *ibid.*, 108. He cites *Man and the State*, 84ff. Page 91 of that work lists a number of quotes from Aquinas to back up the claim that in Aquinas' account of practical knowledge, the foundation lies upon "moral regulations known through inclination" because "the very mode or manner in which human reason knows natural law is not rational knowledge, but knowledge through inclination" *Man and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), pp. 91 & 93.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 108-109. He says nearly the identical thing on page 155 of *The Tradition of Natural Law* (when he argues there is "no logical connection with principles" when it comes to particular "questions about the right and the wrong").

<sup>27</sup> Simon, of course, attributed his doctrine about "knowledge by inclination, subjectivity" to Maritain (See, *Definition of Moral Virtue*, edited by Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986; p 111) and Keenan quotes Maritain on page 43 to argue that Aquinas tended to emphasize the order of specification (which specification comes from the intellect) over the order of exercise (which is due to the will).

<sup>28</sup> He does occasionally advert to some role of the reason as when he says, "Thomas himself recognized that his treatise on the moral act occurs singularly under the will's movement *quantum ad specificationem* wherein the object gives intelligibility and species and is, in its turn, measured by its fittingness to reason," but by speaking of the will's priority both on the level of *exercitium* and specification, he makes the reason to be completely subordinated to the will in the final analysis. See, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae*, 82.

<sup>29</sup> He has especially been influential in regard to current debates over *Amoris Laetitia*. See, for instance, his *Theological Studies* Article, "Receiving Amoris" (Vol 78, Issue 1, pp. 193 - 212) and Crisis Magazine's May 25, 2017 article by Richard A. Spinello: "Debate Continues over *Amoris Laetitia*. He also wrote an influential article in *Theological Studies* (2015, Vol. 76 (1) 129-147) called "Redeeming

estimation, not only fails to properly evaluate the mutual complementarity of cognition and volition but also places an inordinate emphasis upon the role of the latter thus departing from the standard evaluation of the Thomistic commentatorial tradition.<sup>30</sup> In this way, his positions serve as a fitting foil for an account of morality that is more rooted in the guidance of the intellect and which I hope to defend as both accurate in itself and in keeping with the generally consistent teaching of Aquinas.

As Hibbs demonstrates, Keenan tends to view the doctrine of St. Thomas in a way that would "mark a decisive break from Aristotle's account of virtue as action in accord with right reason."<sup>31</sup> In Keenan's opinion, Aquinas eventually came to see the 'truth' that the will is not only "the mover of all powers, including itself and the intellect," but that its self-movement "takes precedence over all other movements."<sup>32</sup> On his account, then, reason as such (not only in regard to the means and thus the *recta ratio* that is prudence) seems somewhat insignificant because without the "antecedent willingness" of the will to move both itself and the reason, reason will be unable to "influence the will with its objects."<sup>33</sup>

Authors such as Keenan and Fuchs (whom Keenan considered himself privileged to study under<sup>34</sup>) are referred to by Sherwin as theologians of 'moral motivation.'<sup>35</sup> They tend, like Simon

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Conscience."

<sup>30</sup> See Daniel Westberg's: "Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?" in which Westberg observes that the more modern exegetical approach to Aquinas' writings regarding the relationship between the intellect and the will "is definitely not the standard, 'received' view of traditional scholastic commentators" (*The Thomist* 58, p. 51).

<sup>31</sup> Thomas S. Hibbs, "Interpretations of Aquinas's Ethics Since Vatican II," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 420.

<sup>32</sup> James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 45. For instance, though in *S.Th.*, I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 3 Thomas argues an intellectual apprehension precedes every motion of the will even though a motion of the will does not precede every apprehension, Keenan argues Thomas radically altered his position around the year 1270. I will endeavor to demonstrate he did not do so in chapter two.

<sup>33</sup> Keenan, 50.

<sup>34</sup> See *Goodness and Rightness*. xii.

<sup>35</sup> See Michael S. Sherwin, O.P. *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 6.

and Maritain (though to a far more radical extent), to highlight the role of motivation in ethical theory.<sup>36</sup> Josef Fuchs appropriated Karl Rahner's emphasis on human subjectivity and transcendence by putting forward concepts such as "basic freedom" and "fundamental option."<sup>37</sup> He also made a distinction between goodness and rightness<sup>38</sup> while claiming "that the influence of explicit Christian faith on morality is principally motivational"<sup>39</sup> because in the end, whether or not one is right about some intellectual *datum* is of little soteriological import.<sup>40</sup> Keenan, for his part, wrote a book on the distinction between goodness and rightness in which he emphasized a level of human freedom that is "transcendental" inasmuch as the decisive moral factor is a kind of "moral motivation or moral goodness" that is not limited or boxed in, as it were, by intellectual rightness. Holding to a "sphere of motivation, which is antecedent to intention,"<sup>41</sup> Keenan argues that moral goodness solely consists of exercising oneself according to a natural instinct and that it need not be aligned with rightness.<sup>42</sup> The goodness attendant upon the

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<sup>36</sup> See Sherwin, Chapter One. For a potential link back to Maritain in both of these thinkers, see the following footnote.

<sup>37</sup> Fuchs himself attributes these concepts and terms to Rahner, who Fuchs says borrowed ideas from Maritain. See, Josef Fuchs, "Good Acts and Good Persons," in *John Paul II and Moral Theology: Readings in Moral Theology No. 10*, edited by Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J. (New York: Paulist Press, 1998), 47. Cited by Sherwin on p. 6.

<sup>38</sup> See Mark Graham, *Josef Fuchs on Natural Law* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 70-74, 121-24, 137-39, 247. Keenan says, "Only one question, the question of moral motivation, concerns the fundamental, formal self-movement of the agent. This moral motivation gives moral significance to all right dispositions or actions, and it alone is the singular description of moral goodness." He cites Bruno Schüller, who "continually returns to this fundamental level of the person in which the moral self-determination of the person logically precedes all other acting. See, Bruno Schüller, "The Debate on the Specific Character of Christian Ethics," especially 214 and James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 7 & 14-15.

<sup>39</sup> Graham's *Joseph Fuchs on Natural Law*, 208.

<sup>40</sup> See page 243 of Graham's work. He more benignly says for Fuchs, rightness is not "the decisive soteriological issue," but the contexts suggest to me that its importance is practically null.

<sup>41</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 125.

<sup>42</sup> James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 55.

Thomas, for his part, argues that what makes man distinct from animals is precisely that they are able to rise above inclination: *Aristoteles ... videtur philosophus tangere quoddam hominis proprium quo a caeteris animalibus differt. Alia enim animalia quodam naturali instinctu ad suos actus aguntur; homo autem rationis iudicio in suis actionibus dirigitur.*

cooperation with instinct, moreover, is "antecedent to and independent of practical reasoning" (to borrow Sherwin's words<sup>43</sup>) because of the "antecedent willingness" that necessarily precedes the reason<sup>44</sup> in a kind of "precognitive movement toward the good."<sup>45</sup>

This book is partially written for the sake of arguing that Aquinas was not what Hoffmann refers to as a "proto-Humean, subordinating reason to desire"<sup>46</sup> (which he would be had he thought the judgment of prudence to be in no way ultimately determined by the intellect and that moral ends are merely "posited by desire" rather than being determined by reason). At the same time, the positions of Simon and even the theologians of moral motivation can be defended by appealing to certain texts in Aquinas (though those texts would often have to be taken out of context, in my opinion). They are at least *prima facie* plausible because the ends of the moral virtues, which are habits in the appetites and not the intellect, are the "principles of prudence."<sup>47</sup> Worded differently, "the subject of prudence is the practical intellect as ordered to an upright will."<sup>48</sup> Actually, without being ordered towards the ends of the moral virtues in one's

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<sup>43</sup> Sherwin, 218.

<sup>44</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 50. On page seven of the same work, he argues that "in contemporary moral theology, goodness is not consequent to rightness, but antecedent to and distinct from rightness." He repeats this assertion on the page 15, he adds, "goodness describes striving and is antecedent to rightness." For him, "insofar as the will first exercises itself, it is not moved by an object" (p. 43).

<sup>45</sup> "There has been some recent controversy over whether for Aquinas the will has some sort of precognitive movement toward the good. But Aquinas frequently reiterates Augustine's statement that, "nothing is loved unless it is known." Thomas Osborne, "Practical Reasoning" in *Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, 279. He cites many places including I-II, q. 60 a.1 s.c. and I-II, q.3 a.4 ad 4.

<sup>46</sup> This quote from Hoffmann was made as a characterization of a false understanding of Aristotle's teaching in the sixth book of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Given that Aquinas essentially reproduces the Stagirite's teaching on this point, the quote works well as a characterization of a similarly false understanding of Aquinas' doctrine. See, Tobias Hoffman, "Prudence and practical principles." Chapter 10 of *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 165. The Humean reference can be explained by Cahalan's exposition of Hume's relevant thought: "Hume concluded that reason cannot dictate to desires about values since desires determine what things are values and what are not. When reason makes value judgments, it is a "slave" of desire; it only reports what desires do." See, John C. Cahalan, "Natural Obligation: How rationally known truth determines ethical good and evil" in *The Thomist* 66 (2002), 101.

<sup>47</sup> *Fines virtutum moralium sunt principia prudentiae* (II-II, q. 181, a. 2); *virtutes morales faciunt bene se habere ad quosdam fines, ex quibus procedit ratio prudentiae* (I-II q.65 a.2c.).

<sup>48</sup> I-II, q. 56 a. 3c.: *subjectum prudentiae est intellectus practicus in ordine ad voluntatem rectam*.

appetites, prudence (which is always about means to an end)<sup>49</sup> would not have an end to strive for that befits a rational creature. We read in one of the two<sup>50</sup> central articles of this work (viz., II-II, q. 47 a 6):

Moral virtue makes the intention of the end right; prudence, however, the means towards this end (*quae ad hunc*); therefore, it does not pertain to prudence to appoint (*praestituere*)<sup>51</sup> the end to the moral virtues, but only to arrange the means (*disponere de his quae sunt ad finem*).<sup>52</sup>

An upright end, then, will only begin to be sought after if one's appetites are pointing towards it. As Thomas says in the *Prima Secundae*, "prudence is right reason about things to be done, and the starting-point of reason is the end of the thing to be done to which end man is rightly disposed by moral virtue."<sup>53</sup> Among the appetites, the most noble one is the intellectual one known as the will so, as we might expect, it is most of all to it that prudence looks.

As Aquinas says in *De Virtutibus*, the end of prudence is determined by the will: "presupposing the end of the good that comes from the will, prudence searches for the ways by which this good

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<sup>49</sup> II-II q. 47 a. 1 ad 2: "*prudentia considerat ea, quibus pervenitur ad felicitatem: sed sapientia considerat ipsum objectum felicitatis.*" *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3. 35: "*Prudentia facit hominem bene se habere in his, quae sunt ad finem eligenda.*" Cf., I-II q. 58 a.5 ad 1, II-II q. 47 a 15 c., II-II q. 49 a 6 c., *et passim*.

<sup>50</sup> The other is I-II, q. 66 a. 3, which will be introduced below.

<sup>51</sup> This word has been translated very differently by various authors and although it seems to me that "set up in advance" might be the best translation, I have decided to render it "appoint" lest the translation of this word (one that will appear frequently) seem too wooden. Deferrari has "*to determine or appoint beforehand, prescribe.*" Roy J. Deferrari, Inviolata M. Barry, and Ignatius McGuiness, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas Based on the Summa Theologica and Selected Passages of His Other Works* (Baltimore, MD: Catholic University of America Press, 1948), 878.

<sup>52</sup> II-II q. 47 a 6 s.c.

<sup>53</sup> Though I find this translation from the Dominican translation (I-II, q.65 a.1 c. of *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.)) to be inexact, I decided to go with it instead of my own clunky translation; namely: "one is not able to have prudence unless he have the moral virtues since prudence is right reason about doable things, which proceeds, as from principles, from the ends of those things, to which one is rightly ordered by the moral virtues" (*cum prudentia sit recta ratio agibilium, quae sicut ex principiis procedit ex finibus agibilium, ad quos aliquis recte se habet per virtutes morales*).

might be perfected and preserved." Prudence is thus the habit of the intellect that "depends upon the will as that from which it accepts its principle; for the end in practical things (*operativis*) is the principle."<sup>54</sup> Moreover, even though prudence is seated in the intellect, it is dependent upon appetite on the level of exercise.<sup>55</sup> One might wonder, therefore, if the intellect is ultimately somewhat feckless in the process of pursuing moral goodness and, ultimately, eternal life.

The fact that prudence needs to look to the appetites (whether rational or sensitive) of the moral virtues to know the end calls to mind Maritain's reference to the "knowledge by connaturality" that results from listening "to the inner melody that the vibrating strings of abiding tendencies make present in the subject."<sup>56</sup> The image of there being a harmonious relationship between upright tendencies and the reason (with the latter being led forward by them in virtue of a kind of *manuductio*) is certainly not only striking but also likely to bring out an aspect of Aquinas' teaching regarding the role of affectivity that is sometimes overlooked.<sup>57</sup> For Thomas, in fact, prudence cannot even exist in an individual without upright tendencies because it looks to the appetites and presupposes their rectitude<sup>58</sup> - which can only exist thanks to the moral virtues. For this reason, Sherwin goes so far as to say there is a sense in which "the moral virtues provide

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<sup>54</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 7 c.: *non quidem ita quod ex voluntate determinetur obiectum prudentiae, sed solum finis; obiectum autem ipsa perquirat: praesupposito enim a voluntate fine boni, prudentia perquirat vias per quas hoc bonum et perficiatur et conservetur... Aliquis vero habitus intellectus dependet a voluntate sicut a qua accipit principium suum: nam finis in operativis principium est; et sic se habet prudentia.*

<sup>55</sup> I-II, q. 9 a.1 ad 3: *Voluntas movet intellectum quantum ad exercitium actus.*

<sup>56</sup> *Man and the State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 92.

<sup>57</sup> Kossel expresses well the value of being properly attuned to one's appetites: "Although reasons can be given for them, the final judgments of prudence cannot be demonstrated. This judgment is always about particular actions: this is the right time and place to eat, to preserve my life, or to risk my life for a friend or for the common good. If I have the virtues of temperance and fortitude, my reason will not be led astray by concupiscence or fear (IIa IIae, q. 47, a. 7). I can trust the inclination of virtue." Clifford G. Kossel, "Natural Law and Human Law (Ia IIae, Qq. 90–97)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 177.

<sup>58</sup> I-II, q. 57 a. 4: *prudentia... respicit enim appetitum, tamquam praesupponens rectitudinem appetitus.*

the ends of practical reasoning,"<sup>59</sup> and Thomas himself indicates as much by saying the ends we are ordered to by the moral virtues are "that from which the reasoning of prudence proceeds."<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, as important as the moral virtues and the rectified appetites necessarily associated with them are, it is not the case that they are themselves the charioteers (*aurigae*) of virtue.

Prudence, which "directs all the moral virtues,"<sup>61</sup> is their *auriga* and cannot, as a consequence, ever be left out of an account of moral virtue; indeed, as he says in the *Summa*, it is "placed in the definition of the moral virtues" precisely because "the moral virtues depend upon prudence."<sup>62</sup> Or, as he explains it in the *Scriptum Super Sententiis* (hereafter simply 'the *Scriptum*'), it is found in that definition because prudence "perfects the *ratio* of virtue in all the moral virtues" and is the "common rule of all the virtues."<sup>63</sup> Prudence, considered as an intellectual virtue (which it is, strictly speaking<sup>64</sup>) is superior to the moral virtues and makes the moral virtues to *be* virtues because it is rational *per essentiam* whereas the moral virtues are only

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<sup>59</sup> Sherwin, 112.

<sup>60</sup> I-II, q. 65 a. 2c.: *prudentia autem non potest esse sine virtutibus moralibus, inquantum virtutes morales faciunt bene se habere ad quosdam fines, ex quibus procedit ratio prudentiae.*

<sup>61</sup> I-II q. 58, a. 2 ad 4.

<sup>62</sup> *Prudentia ponitur in definitione virtutum moralium, ut patet in 2. Eth. (cap. 6.) et in 6. (cap. ult.), eo quod virtutes morales dependent a prudentia* (II-II q.23 a.4 ad 2).

<sup>63</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 27 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 2 ad 1: ... *prudentia ... perficit rationem virtutis in omnibus virtutibus moralibus: et ideo ratio recta, quae ad prudentiam pertinet, ponitur in definitione virtutis, ut patet 2 Ethic.: virtus est habitus electivus in mediocritate consistens determinata ratione, prout sapiens determinabit. Nec ex hoc habetur quod prudentia non sit specialis virtus, sed quod est generalis regula omnium virtutum.*

<sup>64</sup> Although this is certainly the case since its subject is the practical intellect, Kwasniewski points out that "it is often grouped with moral virtues because of its inseparable connection to them, both in that it stands in need of them, and in that they stand in need of it. Cf. *ST* I-II, q. 58, a. 2, ad 4, and aa. 3–5; q. 65, aa. 1–2; II-II, q. 47." Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, trans. Peter A. Kwasniewski, Thomas Bolin, and Joseph Bolin (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 156 n.260.

so *per participationem*.<sup>65</sup> Virtue, of course, is a good quality of the mind<sup>66</sup> that is determined by reason as a wise man would determine it<sup>67</sup> (understanding 'wise man' as referring to a prudent man).<sup>68</sup> In other words, since it is ordered to the individual's own good,<sup>69</sup> it must be instantiated in an individual prudent person, who ensures his appetites are conformed to reason in virtue of prudence.

Prudence is so vital that Aquinas insists in I-II, q. 66 (the other text that stands at the center of this book) that prudence "does not only direct the moral virtues in choosing the means (*ea quae sunt ad finem*), but also in appointing (*praestituendo*) the end."<sup>70</sup> St. Thomas, therefore, both said that prudence does not appoint the end but merely pursues the ends pointed out by the moral virtues (in the text from II-II, q. 47 we encountered above) *and* that prudence does, in fact, appoint the end. In the latter text, he added that "natural reason, which is called synderesis" is that which "appoints (*praestituit*) the end to the moral virtues, the consequence of which is that it "moves prudence, just as understanding (*intellectus*) moves [the virtue of] knowledge (*scientiam*)."<sup>71</sup>

The most famous commentator of Aquinas, Thomas Cardinal Cajetan (1469-1534), suggested that the two texts appear to be "repugnant" to each other and added that the question of

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<sup>65</sup> See, I-II q.66 a.3 s.c. Similarly, he says in II-II, q. 47 a.5 ad1 that the definition of moral virtue includes the intellectual virtue of prudence because the moral virtues are virtues inasmuch as they participate in intellectual virtue (*illa definitio non datur de virtute in communi, sed de virtute morali; in cuius definitione convenienter ponitur virtus intellectualis, communicans in materia cum ipsa, scilicet prudentia: quia sicut virtutis moralis subjectum est aliquid participans rationem, ita virtus moralis habet rationem virtutis, inquantum participat virtutem intellectualem*).

<sup>66</sup> This comes from Augustine's definition that is found in I-II, q. 55 a. 4.

<sup>67</sup> I-II q.59 a.1 c.: *determinata ratione, prout sapiens determinabit*

<sup>68</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 1 d. 46 q. 1 a. 4 expositio: *accipitur sapiens pro prudente, sicut etiam in definitione virtutis, quae ponitur in 2 Ethic., ubi dicitur: prout sapiens determinabit.*

<sup>69</sup> II-II q.47 a.11 c.: *prudentia simpliciter dicta, ... ordinatur ad bonum proprium*

<sup>70</sup> I-II q.66 a.3 ad 3: *Prudentia non solum dirigit virtutes morales in eligendo ea quae sunt ad finem, sed etiam in praestituendo finem.*

<sup>71</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1: *virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis. ad 2: synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam.*



how to resolve the tension that occurs when trying to reconcile them is a "challenging question."<sup>72</sup> Bradley observed that Aquinas gets the notion that prudence is always solely about means from Aristotle and that he often reiterates that teaching.<sup>73</sup> As a consequence, he suggests the text from I-II q. 66 a.3 asserting prudence appoints the end is an exception to the norm as it would appear to widen the berth of prudence and attribute to it an ability to deliberate about the ends themselves and not only about means. We will revisit this interpretation in chapter three. The question of how to save the appearances, as it were, and reconcile these two passages is so challenging to resolve that we will wait until that chapter to propose a definitive solution. For now, we can simply state the obvious: natural synderesis, prudence, and the moral virtues are all essential in the endeavor of attaining virtue.

Whether or not prudence can be said to pertain to no more than means (and that it is consequently unable to appoint the end to the moral virtues), prudence and the moral virtues certainly presuppose each other. As Ralph McInerney says,

As has often been pointed out, there is a virtuous circle here. The moral virtues presuppose prudence, prudence presupposes the moral virtues. At the least, this means that they are acquired simultaneously. As to their interaction, the following picture is urged upon us. The moral virtues ensure an appetitive ordination to particular ends constitutive of the ultimate end. Prudence or practical wisdom determines how the moral ideal can be realized here and now; that is, thanks to prudence, we deliberate, judge and command as to the means of realizing the end. It is here that the notion of practical truth makes its appearance. The judgment of prudence as to the means of realizing the end is

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<sup>72</sup> "*dubium arduum occurrit in via Auctoris, et simpliciter: quomodo scilicet sit verum prudentiam dirigere morales virtutes etiam in praestituendo finem... hoc repugnare videtur* [to what was said] ... *in II-II loco allegato.*" Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia, Tomus Sextus: Prima Secundae Summae Theologiae... cum Commentariis Thomae De Vio Caietani Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Romae: 1891), loc. cit (I-II, q. 66 a 6, p. 433).

<sup>73</sup> Denis J.M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 206-207.

said to be true, not by conformity with the way things are, but by conformity with the presupposed ordination to the end by moral virtue.<sup>74</sup>

Once one enters into the realm of the practical, the role of the appetites takes center stage and so if prudence is going to make a true judgment it needs to not only be conformed to objective reality considered in abstraction from the individual, but to subjective inclinations as well. Virtue is always *quoad nos* in some way. Just as it would likely be foolhardy for a wounded man to rush into battle in the same manner as the ideally disposed soldier, any individual moral act must take individual dispositions into account<sup>75</sup> and, in a sense, be conformed to them. In McInerny's last line, which speaks of practical truth, he likely had I-II, q. 57 in mind:

Truth is not the same for the practical, as for the speculative intellect. Because the truth of the speculative intellect depends on conformity between the intellect and the thing. And since the intellect cannot infallibly be in conformity with things in contingent matters, but only in necessary matters, no speculative habit about contingent things is an intellectual virtue, but only such as is about necessary things. On the other hand, the truth of the practical intellect depends on conformity with a right appetite. This conformity has no place in necessary matters, which are not affected by the human will but only in contingent matters which can be effected by us, whether they be matters of interior action or of the products of external work. Hence it is only about contingent matters that an

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<sup>74</sup> Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 107. The virtuous circle teaching has its origin in Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, 1144b36). Naus also refers to it as a virtuous circle in John E. Naus, *The Nature of the Practical Intellect according to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Dell' Universita Gregoriana, 1959), 157.

<sup>75</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 2 lect. 7 # 5: *Et quia oportet actum determinari per obiectum, ideo tertio ponit obiectum sive terminum actionis, in hoc quod dicit existens in medietate quae ad nos; ostensum est enim supra, quod virtus inquirat et operatur medium non rei, sed quoad nos. Dictum est autem supra quod virtus moralis est in appetitu, qui participat rationem. Et ideo oportuit quartam particulam apponi, quae tangit causam bonitatis in virtute, cum dicit determinata ratione.*

intellectual virtue is assigned to the practical intellect, viz., art, as regards things made, and prudence, as regards things done.<sup>76</sup>

In contingent matters, then, there really must be some kind of conformity to appetite. If those appetites have been habituated in the right direction through virtuous acts, prudent action will ensue through conformity to them. In any event, prudence is not only dependent upon right appetite, but vice versa. We have seen how McInerny described the virtuous circle. Aquinas also speaks about this *circulatio* that follows upon the fact that "the truth of the practical intellect is determined in comparison to upright appetite, while the rectitude of the appetite is determined by its consonance with true reason." In this passage (which comes from his commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*), however, he proposes a way out of that circle by locating its foundation in something more primary. He says:

A certain circular course (*circulatio*) follows upon these [two kinds] of determinations just mentioned. It should, therefore, be said that appetite both pertains to the end and to those things that are for the end [the means]. The end, though, is determined for man by nature, as was related above in book three. Those things that are for the end, however, are not determined for us by nature. Rather, they are investigated by reason; it is manifest, therefore, that the rectitude of the appetite with respect to the end is the measure of the truth in the practical reason. And consequent upon this, the truth of the practical reason is in accordance with (lit., 'towards') upright appetite. The truth of the practical reason itself,

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<sup>76</sup> I-II q.57 a.5 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod verum intellectus practici aliter accipitur, quam verum intellectus speculativi, ut dicitur in 6. Ethic. (cap. 2.): nam verum intellectus speculativi accipitur per conformitatem intellectus ad rem; et quia intellectus non potest infallibiliter conformari in rebus contingentibus, sed solum in necessariis, ideo nullus habitus speculativus contingentium est intellectualis virtus, sed solum est circa necessaria: verum autem intellectus practici accipitur per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum; quae quidem conformitas in necessariis locum non habet, quae voluntate humana non fiunt; sed solum in contingentibus, quae possunt a nobis fieri, sive sint agibilia interiora, sive factibilia exteriora; et ideo circa sola contingentia ponitur virtus intellectus practici; circa factibilia quidem ars, circa agibilia vero prudentia.* Translation from *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.).

however, is the rule of the rectitude of the appetite about those things that are for the end. And in this way, upright appetite is said to pursue whatever true reason says it should.<sup>77</sup>

There remains a striking *circulatio* in Aquinas' explanation, but this circular course really pertains to means and thus implicitly follows upon intention of the end, which is necessarily preceded by former knowledge because, as Steven Long argues, "every practical ordering presupposes a prior *speculum*, like the bit of matter around which a pearl forms."<sup>78</sup> In other words, knowledge pertaining to some truth that is considered in a speculative mode may or not find its way into the order of means (regarding things like deliberation and consent) or into the fully practical realm of execution of what has been chosen as the appropriate means.

If that which is pondered becomes a matter of pursuit, any action that results is like a pearl that has been formed around a bit of matter; the 'matter' need not have developed into a pearl, but once it does, the measure of the pearl's veracity, as it were, is the rectitude of the appetite (again, because the *rectitudo appetitus per respectum ad finem est mensura veritatis in ratione practica*).<sup>79</sup> At the same time, prudence arranges the action, presupposing the end that has been determined naturally. The way Cajetan explains this is that prudence "depends upon the rectitude of both ends; namely, the rectitude of the apprehensive part and of the appetitive part" but since

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<sup>77</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6 lect. 2 # 8: *Videtur autem hic esse quoddam dubium. Nam si veritas intellectus practici determinatur in comparatione ad appetitum rectum, appetitus autem rectitudo determinatur per hoc quod consonat rationi verae, ut prius dictum est, sequetur quaedam circulatio in dictis determinationibus. Et ideo dicendum est, quod appetitus est finis et eorum quae sunt ad finem: finis autem determinatus est homini a natura, ut supra in III habitum est. Ea autem quae sunt ad finem, non sunt nobis determinata a natura, sed per rationem investigantur; sic ergo manifestum est quod rectitudo appetitus per respectum ad finem est mensura veritatis in ratione practica. Et secundum hoc determinatur veritas rationis practicae secundum concordiam ad appetitum rectum. Ipsa autem veritas rationis practicae est regula rectitudinis appetitus, circa ea quae sunt ad finem. Et ideo secundum hoc dicitur appetitus rectus qui persequitur quae vera ratio dicit.*

<sup>78</sup> Steven Long, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act, Second Edition* (Naples, Florida: Sapientia Press, 2015), 76.

<sup>79</sup> That is, "the rectitude of the appetite in respect to the end is the measure of the truth in the practical reason." *Super Ethicorum (Commentary on the Ethics)*, Bk. 6, lect. 2, # 1131.

the former "is not proper to prudence, but common to itself and the other intellectual virtues," Aquinas sometimes neglects to mention it.<sup>80</sup>

I-II q.58 a.4 is one of those texts where he does not neglect to mention the need for rectitude in the apprehensive part as a *sine qua non* for moral virtue (and thus also for prudence, which requires moral virtue<sup>81</sup>). He says moral virtue requires *intellectus* about first principles in addition to prudence:

Moral virtue can indeed be without any of the intellectual virtues such as wisdom, knowledge and art; but it cannot be without understanding and prudence. Indeed, without prudence there is not able to be moral virtue because moral virtue is an elective habit; that is, one making a good choice. Now for choice to be good, two things are required: first, a fitting (*debitum*) intention of the end (and this comes about through moral virtue which inclines the appetitive power towards the good befitting reason, which is the fitting end); second, that a man rightly grasp those things that are for the end. And this is not able to be except by means of the reason rightly deliberating, judging and commanding, which pertains to prudence and the virtues annexed to it, as was said [I-II q. 57, aa. 4-6]. Accordingly, moral virtue is not able to be without prudence. And consequently, neither [is it able to be] without understanding (*intellectus*): for principles that are known naturally are known through the intellect as much as in speculative things as in practical (*operativus*) ones: accordingly, as right reason in speculative things presupposes the understanding of the principles inasmuch as it proceeds from naturally known principles,

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<sup>80</sup> I cited this passage in another context in footnote 12. He is saying this in reference to I-II, q. 65 a. 1 c., which ends by saying, "*prudentia sit recta ratio agibilium, quae sicut ex principiis procedit ex finibus agibilium, ad quos aliquis recte se habet per virtutes morales: unde sicut scientia speculativa non potest haberi sine intellectu principiorum; ita nec prudentia sine virtutibus moralibus; ex quo manifeste sequitur, virtutes morales esse connexas.*" The same principle of Cajetan, however, can be applied to other texts. Here are Cajetan's words: *Prudentia non est in ratione solum, ut dicitur in VI Ethic. [ch. v. # 8, lectio 4 Sancti Thomae]: quia est in ratione ut mota ab appetitu... licet recta ratio agibilium pendeat ex utraque rectitudine circa fines, scilicet ex rectitudine partis apprehensivae, et appetitivae: quia tamen rectitudo apprehensivae non est propria prudentiae sed communis sibi et ceteris virtutibus intellectualibus circa conclusiones; et Auctoris divinum ingenium ex propriis consuevit doctrinam facere: ideo illam silentia praeterivit, et rectitudinem appetitus, quae est propria prudentiae... posuit principium prudentiae. Opera Omnia, Tomus Sextus: Prima Secundae Summae Theologiae... cum Commentariis Thomae De Vio Caietani Ordinis Praedicatorum (Romae: 1891), loc. cit (I-II, q. 65 a 1 # 10, p. 421):*

<sup>81</sup> *S.Th.*, q. 22 a. 1 ad 3: *praesupponit et prudentia virtutes morales, per quas appetitus se habet ad bonum.*

so also does prudence, which is right reason about doable<sup>82</sup> things (*recta ratio agibilium*).<sup>83</sup>

Clearly, prudence and the moral virtues must have a kind of symbiotic relationship according to which each is dependent upon the other. So there is a subjective element requiring that prudence be informed by appetites. At the same time, if those appetites are to be consistently upright, they need to be informed and guided by prudence. Interestingly, though, understanding (*intellectus*) stands at the beginning of the circle and is presupposed to it.

By declaring that the moral virtues need *intellectus* / understanding in addition to prudence, Aquinas seems to be saying understanding provides the more remote ends (albeit not exclusively these), which are actually more foundational ones in the realm of morality. As Kobusch notes, "in the realm of moral being, the final end assumes the scientific-theoretical status proper to first principles in speculative philosophy."<sup>84</sup> This is so because in moral matters, the end is the first thing to be intended even if it is the last thing to be carried out.<sup>85</sup> The *final* end, therefore, must take on particular importance. It is the ultimate principle or *telos* at which one

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<sup>82</sup> "*Agibilium*" This word is often found in this context (*recta ratio agibilium*). The most frequent translation is "right reason about things to be done." Because that may be taken as if there were a hortatory or jussive sense though *agibilia* merely implies possibility I translate it as I have here despite the clunkiness of the phraseology.

<sup>83</sup> I-II q.58 a.4 c.: *Virtus moralis potest quidem esse sine quibusdam intellectualibus virtutibus, sicut sine sapientia, scientia, et arte; non autem potest esse sine intellectu, et prudentia. Sine prudentia quidem esse non potest moralis virtus; quia moralis virtus est habitus electivus, idest faciens bonam electionem. Ad hoc autem quod electio sit bona, duo requiruntur: primo, ut sit debita intentio finis: et hoc fit per virtutem moralem, quae vim appetitivam inclinatur ad bonum conveniens rationi, quod est finis debitus: secundo, ut homo recte accipiat ea, quae sunt ad finem: et hoc non potest esse, nisi per rationem recte consilientem, judicantem, et praecipientem; quod pertinet ad prudentiam, et ad virtutes sibi annexas, ut supra dictum est (q. 57. art. 4. 5. et 6.); unde virtus moralis sine prudentia esse non potest. Et per consequens nec sine intellectu: per intellectum enim cognoscuntur principia naturaliter nota, tam in speculativis, quam in operativis: unde sicut recta ratio in speculativis, in quantum procedit ex principiis naturaliter cognitis, praesupponit intellectum principiorum; ita etiam prudentia, quae est recta ratio agibilium.*

<sup>84</sup> He cites I-II, q. 72, a. 5, which says, *Principium autem totius ordinis in moralibus est finis ultimus, quia ita se habet in operativis, sicut principium indemonstrabile in speculativis...* See Theo Kobusch, "Grace (Ia IIae, Qq. 109–114)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, trans. Grant Kaplan and Frederick G. Lawrence, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 210.

<sup>85</sup> I-II, q. 1 a.1 ad 1: *Quod finis etsi sit postremus in executione, est tamen primus in intentione agentis.* See also, I-II q. 18, a. 7 ad 2; q. 20, a.1 ad 2; q. 25 a. 2 and q. 84 a. 2 and Kobusch, 208.

aims. So if there are *principia* provided by *intellectus* that are more remote than the particular ends the moral virtues appetitively point to, the more remote ones must be more foundational. As Gallagher explains,

In the order of intention, what is first is the last end, and the higher an end is on the chain of ends, the more priority it has. In the order of execution, by contrast, what is lower is what is first accomplished and only at the end of the activity is the ultimate goal achieved.<sup>86</sup>

Because general precepts pertaining to the natural law seem to have greater priority as foundational ends, Cessario describes the activity of prudence as *enacting* the legislation previously appointed to it by the natural law,<sup>87</sup> which is intimately related to synderesis or *intellectus*. For Thomas, "there is a certain natural habit of the first principles of doable things, which are the natural principles of the natural law, which habit pertains to synderesis."<sup>88</sup> Synderesis, he says, names the habit of the principles of the natural law whereas the natural law itself names the "universal principles of law."<sup>89</sup>

Among the habits required for virtue, we have thus far encountered moral virtue (present in the appetites), prudence (strictly an intellectual virtue), and understanding. The task in the pages ahead is to delineate more clearly that which is distinctive to each of them and the way they exercise causality in appointing ends. Before moving into chapter one, in which we will

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<sup>86</sup> David M. Gallagher, "The Will and Its Acts (Ia IIae, Qq. 6–17)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 80.

<sup>87</sup> Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, Revised Edition (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 2013), 130.

<sup>88</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 16, a. 1: *est quidam habitus naturalis primorum principiorum operabilium, quae sunt naturalia principia iuris naturalis; qui quidem habitus ad synderesim pertinet.*

<sup>89</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 4 c.: *Et secundum hunc modum patet, qualiter differant synderesis, lex naturalis, et conscientia: quia lex naturalis nominat ipsa universalia principia juris, synderesis vero nominat habitum eorum, seu potentiam cum habitu; conscientia vero nominat applicationem quamdam legis naturalis ad aliquid faciendum per modum conclusionis cujusdam.*

consider the broader context of this question by looking to the significance of the end in general, what the pertinent ends are and what they consist of, further explanation of the terms *intellectus* and *synderesis* are in order in addition to an explanation of what it means to appoint (*praestituere*) an end. These will be considered in turn.

### The Meaning of *Intellectus* and *Synderesis*

*Intellectus* (understanding) is as ubiquitous in the Thomistic *corpus* as it is equivocal - as evinced by the fact that DeFerrari's *Lexicon of Saint Thomas* proffers ten definitions of the word<sup>90</sup> and De Bergomo's index of Saint Thomas' works dedicates twenty-four columns spanning thirteen finely printed pages to explain its different uses.<sup>91</sup> Nevertheless, in the realm of moral matters, it seems to come down to two basic meanings explained by Aquinas in II-II, q.49 a. 2c.:

The reasoning of prudence proceeds from a twofold understanding, *one of which is cognizant of universals*, which pertains to the understanding which is considered (*ponitur*) an intellectual virtue by means of which not only universal speculative principles are made known to us but also practical ones such as, 'one should do evil to no one' ... *the other is the understanding which*, as is said in the sixth book of the Ethics, *is cognizant of an extreme*; that is, of some first singular or contingent principle of a practical proposition - namely, the minor, which is necessarily singular in the syllogism of prudence, as was said [in q. 47 aa. 3 & 6]. Also, this singular principle is some singular end, as was said in that same place. Accordingly, the understanding which is considered a part of prudence is a certain right estimation of some particular end [emphasis added]."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>90</sup> See Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 576.

<sup>91</sup> See F. Petri De Bergomo, *In Opera Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Index Seu Tabula Aurea Eximii Doctoris F. Petri De Bergomo* (New York: Editiones Paulinae, n.d.), 512-525.

<sup>92</sup> II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1: *...qui est cognoscitivus universalium; quod pertinet ad intellectum, qui ponitur virtus intellectualis, qua naturaliter nobis cognita sunt non solum universalia principia speculativa, sed etiam practica; sicut: Nulli esse malefaciendum... alius autem intellectus est, qui, ut dicitur in 6. Ethic. (cap. 11.), est cognoscitivus extremi, idest alicujus primi singularis, seu principii contingentis operabilis propositionis, scilicet minoris, quam oportet esse singularem in syllogismo prudentiae, ut dictum est (q.*



We see from this, again, that prudence proceeds from both of these kinds of understanding (namely, the one pertaining to final ends / universal principles and the other pertaining to a singular or proximate end). This latter is "a quasi-integral part' of prudence"<sup>93</sup> which the same article clarifies to be "a right evaluation (*aestimatio*) of a particular end" that is also known as "the interior sense, by which we make a judgment about a particular."<sup>94</sup> If prudence only had the second kind of understanding to go on (i.e., the quasi-integral part of prudence), the standpoint of

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47. art. 3. et 6.): *hoc autem principium singulare est aliquis singularis finis, ut dicitur ibidem; unde intellectus, qui ponitur pars prudentiae, est quaedam recta aestimatio de aliquo particulari fine.* As explained in *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6 lectio 7 # 21, prudence perfects the particular reason for rightly estimating about singular practical actions (*pertinet prudentia, per quam perficitur ratio particularis ad recte aestimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilium*) and adds that it is called a natural estimative power in animals.

<sup>93</sup> That it is a quasi-integral part is evident by looking to the title for question 49: *De singulis prudentiae partibus quasi integralibus, in octo articulos divisa*

<sup>94</sup> II-II, q. 49 a.2 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod ipsa recta aestimatio de fine particulari, et intellectus dicitur, inquantum est alicujus principii, et sensus, inquantum est particularis: et hoc est quod Philos. dicit in 6. Ethicor. (cap. 11.): « Horum, scilicet singularium, oportet habere sensum: hic autem est intellectus »; non autem hoc est intelligendum de sensu particulari, quo cognoscimus propria sensibilia, sed de sensu interiori, quo de particulari judicamus.* The commentary on the *Ethics* (librum 6 lectio 9 # 15): *Et quia singularia proprie cognoscuntur per sensum, oportet quod homo horum singularium, quae dicimus esse principia et extrema, habeat sensum non solum exteriorem sed etiam interiorem, cuius supra dixit esse prudentiam, scilicet vim cogitativam sive aestimativam, quae dicitur ratio particularis. Unde hic sensus vocatur intellectus qui est circa singularia. Et hunc Philosophus vocat in tertio de anima intellectum passivum, qui est corruptibilis.* Lectio 1 adds that it pertains to contingent things as opposed to *universalia speculabilia*. The estimative power is one of the five interior senses spoken of in *S.Th.* I, q. 78 a. 4c. It pertains, he says, to the apprehension of intentions that have not been received through the senses and is properly called the cogitative power in man since it discovers intentions by some kind of comparison (*collatio*).

*Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 60 explains: "the intellect which Aristotle calls *passive* ... is the same as the *cogitative power* that is proper to man, in place of which other animals have a certain *natural estimative power*. And it belongs to this cogitative power to distinguish individual intentions and to compare them with one another: just as the intellect which is *separate* and *unmixed* compares and distinguishes universal intentions" (*Dominican Fathers translation*, 151).

*De Veritate*, q. 10 a. 5 c.: *singularibus se immiscet mediante ratione particulari, quae est potentia quaedam sensitivae partis componens et dividens intentiones individuales quae alio nomine dicitur cogitativa, et habet determinatum organum in corpore, scilicet mediam cellulam capitis.*

See also, *S.Th.*, I q. 79 a. 2 ad 2 and q. 79 a.4 c., which also says it is in an organ "in the middle part of the head."

thinkers such as Simon and Keenan that in practical actions, one can do nothing else than feel out the end would be unassailable, but the first kind of understanding should not be overlooked.

The terminology can be somewhat confusing because we now have two kinds of 'understanding' that are radically different with the first kind being identified sometimes with 'natural reason' and other times with synderesis. A careful study, however, bears out the fact that it is only the second kind of understanding that, worded differently, performs the role of discriminating or judging well about singulars and contingent practical ends.<sup>95</sup> Interestingly, its ends "are principles in the manner of a final cause (*ad modum causae finalis*)."<sup>96</sup> Though its principles act as final causes, they seem to be subordinated to higher causes. Despite the fact that Aquinas clearly says the understanding pertaining to the universal principles (i.e., synderesis) is the one that provides the major premise in practical syllogisms whereas the other understanding provides the minor term,<sup>97</sup> the former is often overlooked. For this reason, I nearly entitled this

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<sup>95</sup> Liber 6, Lectio 9 #19 of Aquinas' Commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (*Sententia Libri Ethicorum*): *intellectus, qui est bene discretivus singularium in practicis, non solum se habet sicut principium, sicut in speculativis, sed etiam sicut finis. In speculativis enim demonstrationes procedunt ex principiis quorum est intellectus; non tamen demonstrationes dantur de eis. Sed in operativis, demonstrationes et procedunt ex his scilicet singularibus, et dantur de his scilicet singularibus.* Remarkably, as we will discuss below, he is suggesting that practical affairs begin with a particular as providing the end and yet that one can reason from higher principles (i.e., from the understanding of principles that is called *qua* being the habit of the principles of practical actions) to ensure that these ends are able to be demonstrated as concordant with the higher principles.

<sup>96</sup> Liber 6, Lectio 9 #14: *Quare autem huiusmodi extremi dicatur intellectus, patet per hoc, quod intellectus est principiorum; haec autem singularia, quorum dicimus esse intellectum huiusmodi, principia eius sunt quod est cuius gratia, id est sunt principia ad modum causae finalis.* In this way, it seems to be like the *intellectus* pertaining to universals.

<sup>97</sup> See II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1 above. Also, *Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 50 q. 1 a. 3 ad s. c. 3 says: *intellectus practicus ad hoc quod de singularibus disponat, ut dicitur in 3 de anima, indiget ratione particulari, qua mediante, opinio quae est universalis (quae est in intellectu) ad particulare opus applicetur: ut sic quidem fiat syllogismus, cuius major est universalis, quae est opinio intellectus practici; minor vero singularis, quae est aestimatio rationis particularis, quae alio nomine dicitur cogitativa: conclusio vero consistit in electione operis.* An example of a practical syllogism is given in *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 4 c.: *Verbi gratia, synderesis hanc proponit: omne malum est vitandum: ratio superior hanc assumit: adulterium est malum, quia lege Dei prohibitum: sive ratio inferior assumeret illam, quia ei est malum, quia injustum, sive inhonestum: conclusio autem, quae est, adulterium hoc esse vitandum, ad conscientiam pertinet, et indifferenter, sive sit de praesenti vel de praeterito vel futuro.*

book "On the Loss of Understanding" because it seems that the loss of objectivity has largely resulted from failing to recognize the indispensably preceptive role of the principles found in the first kind of understanding. Without them, we will neither have a complete picture of the moral life nor be able, on a personal level, to ever know that what Maritain would refer to as our "knowledge by inclination" is actually only a true species of knowledge when it is not only conformed to appetite but also to the ends appointed to it by the natural habit of higher principles. For Thomas, regardless of the kinds of ends we are referring to, they must be cognized rationally because "the truth of the practical intellect is the good, which is the end of an operation" and this kind of good does not move the appetite except inasmuch as it is apprehended."<sup>98</sup>

Fr. Sherwin helps us further grasp the meaning of the understanding (*intellectus*) that is "cognizant of universals" in II-II q. 49:

He here refers to this natural habit as *intellectus*. Elsewhere in his mature treatment of prudence he describes it as "*ratio naturalis*" or "*synderesis*." Yet, no matter what term he employs, his meaning is clear. On the cognitive level, the foundation of the acquired human virtues is a natural virtue of the mind that contains the primary principles of practical reasoning.<sup>99</sup>

The natural reason or synderesis is, then, a natural virtue. In the *Scriptum*, Thomas explains "there is no acquired or infused habit about ends that are innate principles of demonstration that are connatural to man in the practical reason." For this reason, synderesis is a natural habit.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 6 ad 5: *verum intellectus practici est bonum, quod et finis operationis: bonum enim non movet appetitum, nisi in quantum est apprehensum.*

<sup>99</sup> Sherwin, 113.

<sup>100</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 4 c.: *sicut in ratione speculativa sunt innata principia demonstrationum, ita in ratione practica sunt innati fines connaturales homini; unde circa illa non est habitus acquisitus aut infusus, sed naturalis, sicut synderesis, loco cujus philosophus in 6 Ethic. ponit*

With reason, then, it is sometimes called 'reason as nature' (*ratio ut natura*), "that is, inasmuch as it [reason] knows something naturally" without dialectical reasoning.<sup>101</sup> All of these terms are identical and refer to something that is not the subject of many questions or articles in Aquinas' *corpus*. There is, in fact, only one complete question dedicated to synderesis (*De Veritate*, q. 16, a. 1) and a few articles (especially, q. 79 a. 12). It is, nevertheless, very prominent in some articles that are not exclusively dedicated to it such as the one wherein Aquinas denies that prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues; namely, II-II, q. 47 a. 6. In the first reply of that article he says, "natural reason, which is called synderesis, appoints the end to the moral virtues" (*virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis*). The reason it is inseparably united to a consideration of practical ends is that it is so intimately connected with the natural law that Aquinas considers it to be the "law of our understanding" (*lex intellectus nostri*)<sup>102</sup> or, more precisely the habit of the principles of law.<sup>103</sup> We proceed from the principles it contains to deliberation and choice because its principles are the beginning of choice. In explaining how this is, Aquinas draws a link between synderesis and prudence that will provide the basis for our further considerations. He says in *De Veritate*:

The eternal law ought to be considered in God in a similar way to how the naturally known principles of activity that pertain to prudence or foresight (and from which we

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*intellectum in operativis.*

<sup>101</sup> See *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 c.

<sup>102</sup> Although Damascene refers to this law as conscience (see, for instance, I. q. 79 a. 13c.), Aquinas takes it as a reference to synderesis properly speaking. Conscience is a particular determination of the principles contained in synderesis and is an act whereas synderesis is the habit of these principles of natural law. See I-II, q. 94 a. 1 obj 1 & ad 1, *De Veritate* q. 17 a. 1 s.c. 1 & ad s.c. 1 and *Quodlibet* III, q. 12 a. 1 ad 1: *principia particularia habent virtutem concludendi ex primis principiis universalibus; unde conclusio attribuitur principaliter primis principiis sicut effectus causae primae. Et eadem ratione, quia virtus conscientiae principaliter dependet ex principiis iuris naturalis, sicut ex primis et per se notis, principaliter conscientia dicitur lex naturalis, vel etiam naturale iudicatorium*. As Aquinas explains in *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 4 ad 5, the act of conscience is especially taken from the *lex intellectus nostri*: *conscientia, secundum quod accipitur pro habitu, potest dici lex naturalis, quia ex habitu illo praecipue actus conscientiae elicitur*.

<sup>103</sup> See *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 4 arg. 5 & ad 5.

proceed in deliberating and choosing) are considered in us. In this way, the law of our understanding is related to prudence as an indemonstrable principle is to a demonstration ... just as every effect is attributed to indemonstrable principles.<sup>104</sup>

In other words, prudence, which "applies universal principles to particular conclusions of practical matters (*operabilium*)"<sup>105</sup> begins with indemonstrable principles when it syllogizes to practical conclusions. Those principles are supplied by synderesis.

Neither the person endowed with understanding (or its 'practical' counterpart, synderesis) nor the prudent person is wholly dependent upon the appetites. Sometimes St. Thomas gives this impression in regard to prudence, but since it actually presupposes the principles of the natural law it, too, is able to apply them to particular contingent situations (with the help of the will<sup>106</sup>) in such a way that the word 'appoint' (*praestituere*) can be predicated of this activity. Before turning to the first chapter as a propaedeutic to our endeavor we should have greater familiarity with the word that stands at the center of our consideration, so we will conclude this introduction with explaining its meaning.

### The Meaning of *Praestituere*

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<sup>104</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 5 a. 1 ad 6: *Lex enim aeterna est consideranda in Deo, sicut accipiuntur in nobis principia operabilium naturaliter nota, ex quibus procedimus in consiliando et eligendo: quod est prudentiae, sive providentiae; unde hoc modo se habet lex intellectus nostri ad prudentiam sicut principium indemonstrabile ad demonstrationem... sicut et omnis effectus demonstrationis principii indemonstrabilibus attribuitur.*

<sup>105</sup> II-II q.47 a.6c.

<sup>106</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 1 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod laus prudentiae non consistit in sola consideratione, sed in applicatione ad opus, quod est finis practicae rationis. Et ideo si in hoc defectus accadat, maxime est contrarium prudentiae, quia sicut finis est potissimus in unoquoque, ita et defectus qui est circa finem est pessimus. Unde ibidem philosophus subdit quod prudentia non est solum cum ratione, sicut ars, habet enim, ut dictum est, applicationem ad opus, quod fit per voluntatem.*

The task laid out for us in the coming pages is to determine the best way of explaining why Aquinas says prudence appoints (*praestituit*) the end/s to the moral virtues in a couple of places and why he says elsewhere that prudence does *not* appoint them because it is the role of synderesis to do so. Given our ultimate calling to ends that transcend the order to the proportionate natural good, we will want to do so in reference to the ultimate and final good of the beatific vision as well. In either case, the exercise will be somewhat futile if we omit the foundational consideration of the meaning of the central term, *praestituere*. In making an effort to render this word faithfully by providing an English equivalent, William Barnstone's words come to mind: "the Italian maxim *traduttore, traditore* (translator, traitor) is in the end correct ... When a translation passes as original, it is a profound betrayal."<sup>107</sup> Any translation I provide will necessarily include some element of exegesis. At the least, I can provide some *apologia* for the way I have decided to render it (as 'to appoint').

*Praestituere* comes up in the *corpus* usually in the context of some kind of end which is placed in front of the appetites either by God or the creature and always presupposes understanding. God, of course, is understanding itself ("*Deus est intellectus*"<sup>108</sup>) and is, therefore, the one who ultimately appoints the end to all creatures. Since, moreover, "God and nature do nothing in vain as the Philosopher says in the first book of *De Coelo*,"<sup>109</sup> ends that have been placed in front of the creature by God<sup>110</sup> as ends are not able to be changed; one cannot even

<sup>107</sup> From page 260 of *The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice*, by Willis Barnstone. New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1993. Cited by Robert G. Bratcher, "Review of The Poetics of Translation: History, Theory, Practice by Barnstone, Willis," *Critical Review of Books in Religion* (1994), 79.

<sup>108</sup> *S.Th.*, III, q. 6 a.2 c.

<sup>109</sup> *S.Th.*, III, q. 9 a. 4 c.: *Deus, et natura nihil frustra faciunt, ut Philos. dicit in I. de Coelo*. See *De Caelo*, 271a34 (Bk. 1, ch. 4).

<sup>110</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 44: "Natural things, though, tend to determined ends because natural purposes (*utilitates*) are not pursued by chance because they would not then be realized always or for the most part, but rarely, which is what happens in the case of chance. Since, then, they do not appoint (*praestituant*) the end to themselves because they do not know the *ratio* of the end, it is necessary that the end be appointed to them by another, who is the creator (*institutor*) of nature. This is the one who gives

deliberate about them, they are simply what we are ordered to. As Terrence Irwin says, mirroring Aquinas,<sup>111</sup> "the right ends of human life are 'fixed' or 'definite,' whereas the means to these ends are not fixed, and hence are subject to the deliberative virtue of prudence."<sup>112</sup>

Besides implying an intelligent being making the *praestituens* possible, then, this word also implies antecedence (hence, the '*prae*'). Though I will always translate the word as 'appoint,' some others have translated it as "set in advance." Lewis and Short render it, "*to determine or appoint beforehand, to prescribe*" though they render the phrase, "*nulla praestituta die*" as "*without any fixed term*" thus implying 'fixed' as a translation as well.<sup>113</sup> Deferrari's Thomistic lexicon, similarly, has "*to determine or appoint beforehand, prescribe*."<sup>114</sup>

By rendering it, 'appoint,' I am attempting to make provision for the necessary conclusion that if Aquinas is able to be reconciled with himself, it must have a slightly different meaning when referring to prudence as opposed to the way it is used when referring to understanding. Essentially everyone who has tried to explain this apparent contradiction has said something similar to this, so I have chosen to consistently use a rather generic term to cover the way it is used in every situation. In so doing, I have chosen to follow the lead of Fr. Dominic Farrell, who consistently translates it as 'to fix' in his book on the ends of the moral virtues.<sup>115</sup> An alternative

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being (*esse*) to all things and is the *per se* necessary being we call God" (*Naturalia autem tendunt in fines determinatos: non enim a casu naturales utilitates consequuntur: sic enim non essent semper aut in pluribus, sed raro; horum enim est casus. Cum ergo ipsa non praestituant sibi finem, quia rationem finis non cognoscunt; oportet quod eis praestituatur finis ab alio, qui sit naturae institutor. Hic autem est qui praebet omnibus esse, et est per seipsum necesse-esse, quem Deum dicimus, ut ex supra dictis patet. Non autem posset naturae finem praestituere nisi intelligeret. Deus igitur est intelligens.*).

<sup>111</sup> See I-II, q. 47, a. 15 c.

<sup>112</sup> Terrence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics*, vol. 1 (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 575

<sup>113</sup> Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *Harpers' Latin Dictionary* (New York; Oxford: Harper & Brothers; Clarendon Press, 1891), 1430.

<sup>114</sup> Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 878.

<sup>115</sup> See his rationale for doing so on page 59 of *The Ends of the Moral Virtues and the First Principles of Practical Reason in Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012). In his case, he says he does so "on the understanding that this end-setting is anterior to something else." I would not go this far because it seems to me that prudence, in the end, really more appoints or 'sets' in the sense of applying or enacting that which is prescribed in either natural inclinations or the natural law, as I hope to show.

that was quite tempting was to follow Fr. Cessario's lead and render it as "to appoint beforehand" in regard to synderesis and as "to enact" in regard to prudence.<sup>116</sup> Though I agree wholeheartedly with that rendering of the word in those respective circumstances,<sup>117</sup> I intend to show the wisdom behind Cessario's *modus interpretandi* before following his lead. This seems necessary because if I were to do so from the beginning, I would be presupposing the conclusion I am trying to prove. In the context of a disertation an integral component of which precisely pertains to unravelling the implications involved in rendering the word one way or another, such a *modus operandi* would be *inconveniens*, to say the least.

## Chapter One

### The Importance of the End

Given St. Thomas' teleological worldview, the word 'end' comes up very frequently in his writings. Before we specifically investigate the way the end is appointed by synderesis or prudence (or any other quality<sup>118</sup> such as grace or faith), an understanding of the meaning and role of the end in general is a necessary foundation. The genus of end could be divided variously; e.g., into created and uncreated, proximate/intermediate and remote/final, natural and supernatural, etc. One of the most fascinating divisions is into the 'end by which' (*finis quo*) and the 'end for the sake of which' (*finis gratia cuius*), which comes from Aristotle,<sup>119</sup> is repeated in

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<sup>116</sup> See, Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, 130.

<sup>117</sup> There is, to be sure, a downside of the translation "enact" in regard to prudence inasmuch as it arguably implies too little about the way that prudence enjoys the superior light of the fixed principle when it makes the 'fixing' here and now operative. Nevertheless, this drawback is, in my opinion, offset by the clarity the translation provides by distinguishing between the kinds of appointing that takes place.

<sup>118</sup> The difficulty in finding the common genus of these four qualities is that synderesis is a habit but not a virtue in the strict sense. Grace is described as a habit in the soul in I-II, q. 110 a. 2c. and in I-II, q. 109, a. 1.

<sup>119</sup> The οὗ ἕνεκα οἷς and οὗ ἕνεκα ᾧ (de Anim. II. 4, 415. b. 20 f.). Deferrari quoted this passage in his entry on *finis*. Cf., Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 425.



some form by Aquinas,<sup>120</sup> and adroitly applied as follows by William Wheatley, whose words were mistaken as being from Aquinas for a time:

The end is twofold: namely, the end *by which* and the end *for the sake of which* all things come about (*fiunt*). The latter is one; namely, God or beatitude; and this end is desired by all under one aspect (*ratione*) inasmuch as it is the good satisfying man's desire (*appetitus*). But the end *by which* is an action whereby men strive to attain the end *for the sake of which* - and such an end is not one just as all do not share the same action.<sup>121</sup>

This text draws attention to the fact that whatever we say about the end in general or the end of the moral virtues in particular (and, indeed, the way they are appointed), "God or beatitude" must be included in our account.

Thomas suggests the proximate ends of the moral virtues are infinite in number and yet have one common end of happiness.<sup>122</sup> They are all ordered to the good, and since happiness is nothing else than the perfect good, they are all ordered to it.<sup>123</sup> What unites these virtues in their pursuit of the perfect good is reason because:

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<sup>120</sup> In *S.Th.* I, q. 26 a. 3 ad 2, Aquinas says: *Finis est duplex scilicet cuius et quo, ..., scilicet ipsa res, et usus rei; sicut avaro est finis pecunia, et acquisitio pecuniae. creaturae igitur rationalis est quidem Deus finis ultimus ut res; beatitudo autem creata, ut usus vel magis fruitio rei.*

<sup>121</sup> Guillelmus Wheatley, *In De Consolatione Philosophiae*, bk. 3 ch. 3 (from the *Corpus Thomisticum* website as this work was thought to be written by Aquinas for a time). *duplex est finis: scilicet finis quo, et finis gratia cujus omnia fiunt. Ille enim est unus sicut Deus vel beatitudo; et iste finis appetitur ab omnibus sub una ratione, inquantum est bonum satians appetitum hominis. Finis autem quo, est operatio qua homines nituntur adipisci finem gratia cujus: et talis finis non est unus sicut non est una operatio omnium.*

<sup>122</sup> See I-II, q. 60 a.1 obj. 3 and ad 3:

*Praeterea. Moralia recipiunt speciem a fine, ut supra dictum est (q. 1. art. 3. et 5.); sed finis omnium virtutum moralium communis est unus, scilicet felicitas; proprii autem, et propinqui sunt infiniti: non sunt autem infinitae virtutes morales; ergo videtur, quod sit una tantum.*

*Ad tertium dicendum, quod moralia non habent speciem a fine ultimo, sed a finibus proximis; qui quidem etsi infiniti sint numero, non tamen infiniti sunt specie.*

<sup>123</sup> See, I-II q.5 a.8 ad 3 (*bonum perfectum, quod est beatitudo*) ; I-II, q. 5 a. 8c. (*omnis homo beatitudinem velit: ratio autem beatitudinis communis est, ut sit bonum perfectum*) ; I-II, q. 10 a. 2c.: *quia defectus cujuscumque boni habet rationem non boni, ideo illud solum bonum quod est perfectum, et cui nihil deficit, est tale bonum, quod voluntas non potest non velle, quod est beatitudo*; I-II, q. 13 a. 6c.: *solum autem perfectum bonum, quod est beatitudo, non potest ratio apprehendere sub ratione mali, aut alicujus defectus: et ideo ex necessitate beatitudinem homo vult.*

The proper end of any given moral virtue precisely consists in its conformity to right reason, for temperance exerts itself lest a man be diverted from reason due to carnal desires; fortitude lest he be diverted from the right judgment of reason out of fear or presumption: and this end is appointed (*praestitutus*) to man according to the natural reason since reason dictates to each one that he should act according to reason.<sup>124</sup>

Although this text only refers to the moral virtues that are in the sensitive appetites, something similar can be said about the virtues in the will because the will, too, as Banez says, "is determined by its nature to the good of reason."<sup>125</sup> Simply put then, the natural reason directs the moral virtues and unites them in the pursuit of the perfect good of happiness. Corresponding to this, Aquinas says in a passage slightly different from the one we just saw that the first thing required for the perfection of moral virtue is the appointing of the end (*praestitutio finis*). He adds:

The proximate end of human life is the *bonum rationi in communi*. For this reason, Dionysius says that man's evil is to be contrary to reason; it is intended in all the moral virtues, therefore, that passions and actions be reduced to the rectitude of reason. Now the rectitude of reason is natural so in this way, the appointing of the end pertains to the natural reason.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.7 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae, est finis proprius cujuslibet virtutis moralis: temperantia enim hoc intendit, ne propter concupiscentias homo divertat a ratione: et similiter fortitudo, ne a recto iudicio rationis divertat propter timorem, vel audaciam: et hic finis praestitutus est homini secundum naturalem rationem: naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique, ut secundum rationem operetur.*

II-II, q. 141 a. 2 c. gives a similar explanation of how temperance and fortitude pursue the good of reason: *Nam temperantia retrahit ab his quae contra rationem appetitum alliciunt, fortitudo autem impellit ad ea sustinenda vel aggredienda.*

<sup>125</sup> R.P.F. Dominici Banez, ordinis Praedicatorum: *Commentarii Fr. Dominici Banez Super Secundam Secundae S. Thomae* (Venice, Minimam Societatem, 1595), Quaest. LVII *De Iustitia*, art. V, p. 25: *Sic etiam voluntas est determinata ex natura sua ad bonum rationis in communi.*

<sup>126</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 3 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod ad perfectionem virtutis moralis tria sunt necessaria. Primum est praestitutio finis; secundum autem est inclinatio ad finem praestitutum; tertium est electio eorum quae sunt ad finem. Finis autem proximus humanae vitae est bonum rationis in communi; unde dicit Dionysius, quod malum hominis est contra rationem esse: et ideo est intentum in omnibus virtutibus moralibus, ut passiones et operationes ad rectitudinem rationis reducantur. Rectitudo*

We can conclude from this, as Milhet has, that "synderesis dictates the good of reason in common"<sup>127</sup> because, again, the natural reason and synderesis are synonymous. Nevertheless, the natural reason is not the *supreme* rule of action. Although Aquinas says synderesis is more *like* the first rule of human actions than conscience (which he calls a ruled rule) is,<sup>128</sup> the first rule of human actions in itself is nothing other than the eternal law in which the natural law and its principles held by the habit of synderesis<sup>129</sup> participate. As Thomas words it, "it is from the eternal law, which is the divine reason, that the human reason is the rule of the human will, from which its goodness is measured."<sup>130</sup> As a consequence, "the moral virtues attain to reason as the proximate rule, but to God as the first rule."<sup>131</sup>

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*autem rationis naturalis est; unde hoc modo praestitutio finis ad naturalem rationem pertinet.*

<sup>127</sup> Arnaldo Milhet, *Summa Philosophiae Angelicae, Pars IV: Ethica Seu Philosophia Moralis* (Toulouse: Bernardus Dupuy, 1664), 616: *synderesis dictat bonum rationis in communi... inclinationem voluntatis succedit discursus intellectus practici sic procedens ex principiis synderesis. Bonum rationis est prosequendum et in operationibus et in passionibus, in materia temperantiae, castitatis, etc.*

<sup>128</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 ad 7: *conscientia non est prima regula humanorum operum, sed magis synderesis; conscientia autem est quasi regula regulata; unde nihil mirum, si in ea error accidere potest.* In the *Summa*, Thomas clarifies that the natural reason/synderesis is not the measure of nature but only of thing that man ought (or ought not) to do: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod ratio humana secundum se non est regula rerum: sed principia ei naturaliter indita sunt regulae quaedam generales, et mensurae omnium eorum, quae sunt per hominem agenda, quorum ratio naturalis est regula, et mensura, licet non sit mensura eorum, quae sunt a natura* (I-II, q. 91 a. 3 ad 2).

<sup>129</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 4 c.: *Et secundum hunc modum patet, qualiter differant synderesis, lex naturalis, et conscientia: quia lex naturalis nominat ipsa universalia principia juris, synderesis vero nominat habitum eorum, seu potentiam cum habitu; conscientia vero nominat applicationem quamdam legis naturalis ad aliquid faciendum per modum conclusionis cujusdam.*

<sup>130</sup> I-II q. 19 a.4 c.: *quod autem ratio humana sit regula voluntatis humanae, ex qua ejus bonitas mensuretur, habet ex lege aeterna, quae est ratio divina.*

<sup>131</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 5 a. 1 ad 10: *Ad decimum dicendum, quod virtutes morales attingunt rationem sicut regulam proximam, Deum autem sicut regulam primam. Res autem specificantur secundum propria et proxima principia, non secundum principia prima.* The objection, which was not rejected on this point was: *ratio virtutis moralis sumitur secundum quod attingit rationem, ut patet per philosophum in II Ethicor., qui definit virtutem per hoc, quod est secundum rationem rectam. Sed ratio recta est regula regulata a prima regula quae est Deus; a qua etiam virtutem regulandi habet. Ergo virtutes morales praecipue habent rationem virtutis ex eo quod attingunt primam regulam, scilicet Deum.* See also, *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 c.: *Bonum autem ad quod humanae virtutes proxime ordinantur, est bonum rationis* and I-II q.71 a.6 c.: *Regula autem voluntatis humanae est duplex: una propinqua, et homogenea, scilicet ipsa humana ratio: alia vero est prima regula, scilicet lex aeterna, quae est quasi ratio Dei; II-II, q. 17 a. 1c.: duplex est mensura; una quidem proxima, et homogenea, scilicet ratio: alia*

Since God or the eternal law (which are identical *in re*<sup>132</sup>) is more absolute, their goodness depends more upon the eternal law than upon human reason.<sup>133</sup> On one level, human reason and the eternal law should not be thought of as having an untraversable chasm between them. After all, the natural law, which is known by reason, is the rational creature's participation in the eternal law. Worded differently, "man naturally participates in the eternal law according to certain common principles on the part of the practical reason"<sup>134</sup> and he is set apart from all the other animals precisely because of this cognitional participation he has in addition to the various kinds of natural teleological participation creatures devoid of reason enjoy.<sup>135</sup> At the same time, the "human reason is not able to participate in the full dictate of the divine reason," but only "in its way and imperfectly"<sup>136</sup> because "the eternal law is unknown to us inasmuch as it is in the divine mind." It is only known by our minds in some measure (*aliqua*liter) either by the natural reason which is derived from the eternal law or "from some additional (*superadditam*)

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*autem est suprema, et excedens, scilicet Deus, et ob hoc omnis actus humanus attingens ad rationem, aut ad ipsum Deum, est bonus.*

<sup>132</sup> Though this is not said in these terms, I-II, q. 71 a. 6 c. equates the eternal law with the *ratio Dei*, which is certainly not distinct from his essence. Also, I-II, q. 93 a.4 ad 2 says Christ is not subject to the eternal law because he is the eternal law. The *index tertius* of *Summa Theologica*, Editio altera Romana (Romae: Forzani et Sodalis, 1894) thus makes this conclusion saying: *Regula actuum humanorum duplex, scilicet humana ratio, et lex aeterna, scilicet Deus.*

<sup>133</sup> I-II q. 19 a.4 c.: *multo magis dependet bonitas voluntatis humanae a lege aeterna, quam a ratione humana*; I-II, q. 93 a. 1s.c.: *lex aeterna est summa ratio, cui semper obtemperandum est*; I-II q.71 a.6 c.: *Regula autem voluntatis humanae est duplex: una propinqua, et homogenea, scilicet ipsa humana ratio: alia vero est prima regula, scilicet lex aeterna, quae est quasi ratio Dei.*

<sup>134</sup> I-II, q. 91 a.3 ad1: *ex parte rationis practicae naturaliter homo participat legem aeternam secundum quaedam communia principia.*

<sup>135</sup> I-II, q. 93 a. 6c.: "There are two ways in which a thing is subject to the eternal law, as explained above (A. 5): first, by partaking of the eternal law by way of knowledge; secondly, by way of action and passion, i.e., by partaking of the eternal law by way of an inward motive principle: and in this second way, irrational creatures are subject to the eternal law, as stated above (*ibid.*). But since the rational nature, together with that which it has in common with all creatures, has something proper to itself inasmuch as it is rational, consequently it is subject to the eternal law in both ways; because while each rational creature has some knowledge of the eternal law, as stated above (A. 2), it also has a natural inclination to that which is in harmony with the eternal law; for *we are naturally adapted to be the recipients of virtue*" (trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province).

<sup>136</sup> I-II, q. 91 a.3 ad1: *ratio humana non potest participare ad plenum dictamen rationis divinae, sed suo modo, et imperfecte.*

revelation."<sup>137</sup> What this implies is that when "human reason falls short, it must have recourse to the eternal reason."<sup>138</sup>

Returning to William Wheatley's statement that "God or beatitude" is the end for the sake of which everyone acts, the participation in the eternal law that comes by means of reason alone is certainly not extended to the point of considering the very essence of God himself as the end for the sake of which (*finis gratia cuius*) and the "object of beatitude"<sup>139</sup> because *gratia* (in another sense of the word, of course) would be necessary for this. Consider these two texts:

The reason and the will are ordered to God naturally inasmuch as He is the beginning and end of nature according to the proportion of nature. But the reason and will are not ordered sufficiently to him inasmuch as he is the object of supernatural beatitude.<sup>140</sup>

Reason is not able to sufficiently direct one to that which exceeds natural human knowledge. Nevertheless, all of our acts must be ordered towards it as towards an ultimate end: thus is it necessary that faith direct us.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>137</sup> I-II q. 19 a.4 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod licet lex aeterna sit nobis ignota, secundum quod est in mente divina; innotescit tamen nobis aliquantulum vel per rationem naturalem, quae ab ea derivatur, ut propria ejus imago, vel per aliqualem revelationem superadditam.*

<sup>138</sup> I-II q. 19 a.4 c.: *multo magis dependet bonitas voluntatis humanae a lege aeterna, quam a ratione humana: et ubi deficit humana ratio, oportet ad rationem aeternam recurrere.*

<sup>139</sup> II-II, q. 4, a. 7 c.: *cum ultimus finis sit ... in intellectu autem per fidem, necesse est quod fides sit prima inter omnes virtutes, quia naturalis cognitio non potest attingere ad Deum secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis.*

<sup>140</sup> I-II, q. 62 a. 1 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod ad Deum naturaliter ratio et voluntas ordinatur prout est naturae principium et finis, secundum tamen proportionem naturae. Sed ad ipsum secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis supernaturalis, ratio et voluntas secundum suam naturam non ordinantur sufficienter.* Something analogous can be said about the love that flows from this knowledge; I-II, 109.3 ad 1: "Charity loves God over all things in a more eminent way than nature. For nature loves God over all things inasmuch as he is the beginning and end of the natural good whereas charity loves him according as he is the object of beatitude and inasmuch as man has a certain spiritual friendship with God" (*Caritas diligit deum super omnia eminentius quam natura. Natura enim diligit deum super omnia, prout est principium et finis naturalis boni, caritas autem secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, et secundum quod homo habet quandam societatem spiritualem cum deo*).

<sup>141</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 41 q. 1 a. 1 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod ratio non potest sufficienter dirigere ad hoc quod humanam cognitionem naturalem excedit; in quod tamen, sicut in finem ultimum, oportet omnes actus nostros ordinari: ideo oportet quod fides dirigat.*

The Dominican commentators of St. Thomas, as Thomas Joseph White observes, insisted that the natural desire for God has to be elicited precisely on the basis of "the desire to know the hidden cause of manifest effects. Therefore it is properly natural in both its formal constitution and its end or object, and not supernatural as such."<sup>142</sup> Although one might wonder, as Steven Long does, whether this elicited desire could be considered "natural" without qualification, it is nevertheless "clearly natural as opposed to being supernatural ... that is to say that it is a desire to know the essence of the God who is *incognito*, known only through the effects of creatures."<sup>143</sup> This is not to deny, of course, that the graced desire for the beatific vision simply cannot be in the genus of nature given its intrinsically supernatural end. What we are speaking about is simply the desire to know the cause of created effects even though the individual cannot possibly conceive of what "God has prepared" for those who attain to beatific knowledge.<sup>144</sup>

In any event, man is in some way able to use natural reason to know that the perfect good is necessarily bound up with knowing the highest cause and man's will, which is an "inclination following an understood form,"<sup>145</sup> and is apt to be moved to desire that good as an object of happiness. The primary emphasis in this chapter will be on seeing how far man's natural reason, which is central to our consideration and which Thomas sometimes identifies with *synderesis*,<sup>146</sup> can get him in coming to see that God is the perfect good he implicitly desires although we will turn to the role of grace once that has been sufficiently established.

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<sup>142</sup> Thomas Joseph White, O.P., "The Natural Desire to See God according to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters by Lawrence Feingold (Review)" in *The Thomist: A Speculative Quarterly Review*; Volume 74 # 3 (2010), 463.

<sup>143</sup> Steven Long, "On the Possibility of a Purely Natural End for Man" in *The Thomist* 64 (2000), 222.

<sup>144</sup> See, 1 Corinthians 2:9.

<sup>145</sup> *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2: "the motion of the will is an inclination following an understood form" (*motus voluntatis est inclinatio sequens formam intellectam*).

<sup>146</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1: *virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesi*.

Returning to the question of the end in general, James Keenan expresses how crucial the notion is for Aquinas:

In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Thomas declares that it is in the end, as the cause of the causes, that the meaning of good is to be found.<sup>147</sup> This affirmation that the end is “the cause of the causes” continues throughout his writings.<sup>148</sup> Similarly, he holds the end as the “first of all the causes.”<sup>149</sup> These titles are used fundamentally to affirm causal primacy: without the end, the agent does not act.<sup>150</sup> Because the end moves the agent, all other causes derive their causality from the end, and all other causes receive from the final cause their status as causes.<sup>151</sup>

Each of the four causes (the final, efficient, material, and formal) are important, but the final is paramount. Edward Feser summarizes the relationship among the causes that Aquinas would subscribe to by saying “the formal and material causes depend on final causes by way of efficient causes.”<sup>152</sup> We can deduce from this that another kind of causality which stands out is the efficient cause even though it remains subordinated to the final one. This is true in a particular way when we speak of moral activity in which humans act as efficient causes or agents who

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<sup>147</sup> *Super Sent.* bk. 1 d. 38 q.1 a.1ad 4. Cf. *Super Sent.* Bk 1, d. 45q.1a.3c. & bk. 2 d. 9 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1

<sup>148</sup> See, for instance, *De principiis naturae ad fratrem Sylvestrum*, cap. 3: *finis est causa causarum, quia est causa causalitatis in omnibus causis.*

<sup>149</sup> I-II q 1 a 2c.: *Prima autem inter omnes causas est causa finalis.* See also *Super Sent.* I d.8q.1a.3c; *De div nom.* 1.3; *S.Th.* I, q. 5 a 4c; q.39 a8 obj. 4 and 8c; q. 44 a. 4 obj.4; q.82 a.3.obj. 1.

<sup>150</sup> I q. 5 a 2 ad1.: ... *agens non agit nisi propter finem.*

<sup>151</sup> Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 27. It should be kept in mind that Keenan thinks Aquinas changed his minds on these points, but I intend to show that the contrary is, in fact, the case. On the final point, St. Thomas says: “The end holds the highest place among causes, and it is from it that all other causes derive their actual causality: since the agent acts not except for the end” (SCG III, ch. 17, no. 9, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924). The cause known as the end has primacy among the causes throughout his writings. Keenan points to: *In I sent.*, dist. 38, q. 1, a. 1, ad4; *De veritate* q. 21, a. 3.ad 3; *ST I*, q. 5, a. 2, ad1; *In I eth.*, lec. 5, no.58; *In II metaphys.*,lec.4, no. 318: “Remota autem causa finali, removetur natura et ratio boni: eadem enim ratio boni et finis est.”

<sup>152</sup> Edward Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics, A Contemporary Introduction* (Lancaster, England: Editiones Scholasticae, 2014), 91.

direct their activities towards certain ends. Corresponding to this, Aquinas singles out "the agent and the reason for acting" as necessary to be "taken into account in any action."<sup>153</sup>

The final cause, from which activity and motion begin, is the principle for an efficient cause (*principium ad causam agentem*)<sup>154</sup> in the sense that the "end is said to effect by moving the efficient cause" thereby giving the efficient cause its efficiency.<sup>155</sup> Whenever anything is done, the activity is due to a final cause.<sup>156</sup> John of St. Thomas clarifies that the role (*munus*) of the end is "to terminate and conclude" whatever was done for the sake of carrying something out." He adds:

Nothing is moved towards doing or attaining something unless the end of the action and motion be placed before it. Otherwise, if something were not specified that would terminate and put the action at rest, the action would not be susceptible to coming to an end and would be indefinite. The end, therefore, implies the goodness or perfection that causes motion to cease ... and it thus diffuses its goodness... by putting that thing forward (*praebendo*) in which the agent's motion terminates."<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> *De Veritate* q. 22 a 12c.: *In qualibet actione duo considerentur: scilicet agens, et ratio agendi.*

<sup>154</sup> *In De divinis nominibus*, cap. 1 lect. 2: *primo ponit quaedam quae pertinent ad universalem rationem principii, cum dicit: sicut quod est omnium causa et principium, ut causa referatur ad finem, quae est prima causarum et principium ad causam agentem, a qua incipit operatio et motus*

<sup>155</sup> *S.Th.* I, q. 48 a 1 ad 4: *aliquid agere dicitur... per modum causae finalis, sicut finis dicitur efficere movendo efficientem.* Similarly, the end is said to move the agent because the understood good moves the will as an end in I, q. 82 a. 4 c.

<sup>156</sup> See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk. 3 ch. 2

<sup>157</sup> *Munus finis... est... terminare, et ultimare ea quod pertinent ad exercitium, et executionem rei fiendae: nullus enim movetur ad aliquid faciendum, vel exequendum, nisi sibi ponatur finis operationis, et motus, alias maneret infinitus, et impertransibilis, si non poneretur sibi aliquid ubi sisteret et quiesceret, et ideo finis importat bonitatem, seu perfectionem sistentem motum ... et sic diffundit suam bonitatem... praebendo id ad quod efficientiae motus terminetur.* *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus (Nova Editio) Tomus Secundus; Philosophia Naturalis; Prima Pars; Quaestio XIII, De Fine Articulus Primus* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, Editor, 1883), 244.



Whenever we act for an end, we have some potency that has yet to be actualized or perfected by attaining that end. When that end is put forward to us, we are naturally drawn towards it to the degree it is good, and if we attain it, we rest in it.

Implicit in the way that act and potency relate to each other is the fact that, as Feser says, "efficient and final causality go hand in hand" because "efficient causation is just the actualization of a potency" and a potency, for its part, is always a potency for some end.<sup>158</sup> Aquinas further elaborates on the mutual causality that causes can have upon each other in *De Principiis Naturae*, where we learn that the final cause, or the reason the agent acts, "is called the cause of the efficient cause"<sup>159</sup> and that, inversely, the efficient or agent cause "is the cause of that which is the end." He explains their mutual causality (that is, the fact that "the same thing can be both a cause and caused in respect of the same thing, though in different ways") by means of an example.

He observes that walking or performing the medical art is able to be an efficient cause of health while health is able to be the final cause of either of them. The final and the efficient causes are causes of each other. Though the efficient cause does not make the end to be an end, it does make the end to act as an end (he does not *facit finem esse finalem*) in the sense that the agent makes the end to be an end he strives to bring about. The doctor, of course, does not make health to *be* an end towards which man's nature is ordered (he doesn't *facit finem esse finem* and he is not the cause of the causality of the end), but he does actualize the ability his patients' bodies have for health (i.e., he *facit sanitatem esse in actu*) as a result of efficiently working towards it.<sup>160</sup> In all of this, the end retains primacy and thus St. Thomas concludes this portion of

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<sup>158</sup> Feser, 90.

<sup>159</sup> *De Principiis Naturae*, cap. 4: *Finis dicitur causa efficientis, cum non operetur nisi per intentionem finis. unde efficiens est causa illius quod est finis.*

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*: *efficiens est causa illius quod est finis: ut sit sanitas; non tamen facit finem esse finem, et ita non est causa causalitatis finis, idest non facit finem esse finalem: sicut medicus facit sanitatem esse in actu,*

*De Principiis* by pointing out that the end is not only the cause of the causality of the efficient causes but also of all causes.<sup>161</sup>

The end is that towards which something tends, as the name *intentio* implies.<sup>162</sup> Since intention is an act of the will and the proper object of the will is the universal good,<sup>163</sup> the end must at least be perceived in some way as good if the will is to follow after it.<sup>164</sup> In fact, the end and the good are so connected that Aquinas sometimes says the proper object of the will is "the end *and* the good" which two things (seen as conjoined to each other<sup>165</sup>) are "that by which one is moved to act."<sup>166</sup> They cannot be separated from each other because "when the final cause is removed, the nature and *ratio* of the good is removed since the *ratio* of the good is the same as the *ratio* of the end."<sup>167</sup> If this is so, there must be one end.

### A. On the Necessity of Having One Final End

A central aspect of Aquinas' thought is that there must be one ultimate final cause.

Thomas explains in his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* how this is so:

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*non tamen facit quod sanitas sit finis...*

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.: *unde finis est causa causalitatis efficientis, quia facit efficiens esse efficiens: similiter facit materiam esse materiam, et formam esse formam ... unde dicitur quod finis est causa causarum, quia est causa causalitatis in omnibus causis.*

<sup>162</sup> I-II q. 12 a 1c.: *Intentio, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat in aliquid tendere.*

<sup>163</sup> see *De Potentia*, q. 3 a 15 ad 5

<sup>164</sup> As Gaine says, "no one can will without aiming at something good in some respect, even if it is illusory." Simon Francis Gaine, *'Will There Be Free Will in Heaven?': Freedom, Impeccability, and Beatitude* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 129.

<sup>165</sup> They are even conjoined with the singular of the verb 'to be' in *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 12 s.c. 3 (*bonum et finis est obiectum voluntatis*) and *Summa Contra Gentiles* bk. 4 ch. 19: (*finis enim et bonum est voluntatis obiectum*).

<sup>166</sup> *SCG*, bk. 3, ch. 1 (emphasis added) and bk. 1, ch. 72. Also of note is that he says the proper object of the will is the 'end' in *S.Th.*, I-II q.73 a.6 c. and the 'good understood' in *SCG* bk. 1, ch. 72 and bk. 3, ch. 107. In *S.Th.*, I, q. 2 a. 4c., he says the object of the will is the *bonum et finis in communi*.

<sup>167</sup> In *Meta.*II, lectio 4 # 318.: *Remota autem causa finali, removetur natura et ratio boni: eadem enim ratio boni et finis est.*

If one were to proceed indefinitely (*in infinitum*) in the desire of ends, as would happen if one end were to always be desired on account of something else, one would never attain the desired ends that were being sought. But for no purpose (*frustra*) and in vain would someone seek that which he is not able to attain. Therefore, the desire of the end would be for nothing and in vain. But this desire is natural; for it was said above that the good is what all naturally desire. Therefore, it would follow that a natural desire would be inane and empty (*inane et vacuum*). But this is impossible because a natural desire is nothing other than an inclination adhering to things from the ordinance of the first mover, which is not able to be pointless (*supervacua*). Therefore, it is impossible that one would proceed indefinitely. And thus it is necessary that there be some last end on account of which all other things are desired and that it itself is not desired for the sake of something else.<sup>168</sup>

The question of how to exactly describe the good which all desire for its own sake is not as easy to resolve as one might expect. As Ralph McInerny succinctly puts it, "the human good, man's ultimate end, is complex."<sup>169</sup> What is certain is that this human good must pertain to reason in some way because reason is "the cause and root of the human good"<sup>170</sup> in virtue of its

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<sup>168</sup> #3 *Quod autem sit impossibile in finibus procedere in infinitum, probat tertia ratione quae est etiam ducens ad impossibile, hoc modo. Si procedatur in infinitum in desiderio finium, ut scilicet semper unus finis desideretur propter alium in infinitum, nunquam erit devenire ad hoc quod homo consequatur fines desideratos.*

*Sed frustra et vane aliquis desiderat id quod non potest assequi; ergo desiderium finis esset frustra et vanum. Sed hoc desiderium est naturale: dictum enim est supra quod bonum est, quod naturaliter omnia desiderant; ergo sequetur quod naturale desiderium sit inane et vacuum. Sed hoc est impossibile. Quia naturale desiderium nihil aliud est quam inclinatio inhaerens rebus ex ordinatione primi moventis, quae non potest esse supervacua; ergo impossibile est quod in finibus procedatur in infinitum.*

#4 *Et sic necesse est esse aliquem ultimum finem propter quem omnia alia desiderantur et ipse non desideratur propter alia. Et ita necesse est esse aliquem optimum finem rerum humanarum.*  
*Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 1 lect. 2 n. 3; See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk. 3 ch. 2.

<sup>169</sup> Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 46.

<sup>170</sup> I-II q. 66 a 1c.: *causa et radix humani boni est ratio*. Similarly, in *De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 c., reason is called the beginning of a moral act (see also, I-II, q. 104 a. 1 ad 3) and I-II, q. 90 a. 1 c. refers to it as the principle of human acts.

participation in the divine Reason itself.<sup>171</sup> As an animal whose specific difference - that whereby he is distinguished from the other animals - is reason, his good is necessarily connected to reason.<sup>172</sup> As Aquinas says in the *Contra Gentiles*, "since man is man through having reason, his proper good which is happiness must needs be in accordance with that which is proper to reason."<sup>173</sup>

Accordingly, acts that are done without the deliberation of reason (such as the scratching of one's beard might be) are not even human acts properly speaking because their end is not appointed by reason (*per rationem praestitutum*).<sup>174</sup> Presupposing, however, that a man acts from a deliberated will ("one that flows from a will under the direction of reason's consideration of the end and the means to that end"<sup>175</sup>), and that his action is consequently not merely an act of man (*actus humani*) but a human act (*actus humanus*),<sup>176</sup> it is vital that the end he appoints to himself

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<sup>171</sup> *S.Th.*, I-II q. 19 a. 4 c.: *quod autem ratio humana sit regula voluntatis humanae, ex qua ejus bonitas mensuretur, habet ex lege aeterna, quae est ratio divina.*

<sup>172</sup> For this reason, every voluntary human act that is in accordance with (concordat) reason and the eternal law is a good one and every one that falls back from the order of reason and the eternal law is evil (see I-II q. 21 a. 1 c.). Reason is the proximate rule of human acts and the eternal law, "which is as the reason of God" is the first or remote rule (see, I-II q. 71 a. 6c.).

<sup>173</sup> Bk. 3, ch. 34. *Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 3 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 76.

<sup>174</sup> I-II q. 1 a. 1 ad 3: *huiusmodi actiones non sunt proprie humanae, quia non procedunt ex deliberatione rationis, quae est proprium principium humanorum actuum. Et ideo habent quidem finem imaginatum, non autem per rationem praestitutum.* I-II q. 18 a. 9 c.: *Cum enim rationis sit ordinare, actus a ratione deliberativa procedens, si non sit ad debitum finem ordinatus, ex hoc ipso repugnat rationi, et habet rationem mali ... necesse est omnem actum hominis a deliberativa ratione procedentem, in individuo consideratum, bonum esse vel malum. Si autem non procedit a ratione deliberativa... sicut cum aliquis fricat barbam... talis actus non est, proprie loquendo, moralis vel humanus; cum hoc habeat actus a ratione. Et sic erit indifferens, quasi extra genus moralium actuum existens.*

<sup>175</sup> Quote from Sherwin, page 23.

<sup>176</sup> *S.Th.*, III q. 19 a. 2 c.: *quia homo est id quod est secundum rationem, illa operatio dicitur esse simpliciter humana quae a ratione procedit per voluntatem, quae est rationis appetitus. Si qua autem operatio est in homine quae non procedit a ratione et voluntate, non est simpliciter operatio humana.* See *De Virtutibus* q. 1 a. 4c, *S.Th.*, I q. 1 a. 4; *Sent.* 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 3 ad 3; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 chs. 85, 139 & 140.

be a fitting end (*debitum finem*)<sup>177</sup> and also that his appetites be habitually disposed to follow such an end if he is to be truly virtuous.<sup>178</sup>

The practical import of this, of course, is that since "man is composed of a twofold nature, intellective and sensitive,"<sup>179</sup> he needs to both know what to do in his intellect and have appetites that are correctly ordered. Unfortunately, however, "the good in view of which someone acts is not always a true good, but sometimes a true good and sometimes an apparent one;"<sup>180</sup> that is, sometimes that which is not truly good can be the motivating factor in an action. Part of the reason for this is that a person's disposition can change when a passion moves his will. If he develops a vicious habit, then, he will habitually see a false good as a true good

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<sup>177</sup> I-II, q. 18 a. 9c.: "since it pertains to reason to order, an act that proceeds from the deliberating reason is repugnant to reason and has the *ratio* of evil if it is not ordered to a fitting end (*debitum finem*)."  
*S.Th.*, q. 1 a 6 c.: *prudens sapiens dicitur inquantum ordinat humanos actus ad debitum finem*; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 1 n. 5: *Quaedam namque sic a Deo producta sunt ut, intellectum habentia, eius similitudinem gerant et imaginem repraesentent: unde et ipsa non solum sunt directa, sed et seipsa dirigentia secundum proprias actiones in debitum finem.*

<sup>178</sup> Thus in commenting on book three of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (see, lectio 17 # 5), Aquinas says rage seems to be the passion most connatural to fortitude, though it needs to follow from choice and not precede it and also be ordered to a further *debitum finem* for which it works as a final cause (*cuius gratia operetur*). See also:

I-II, q. 89 a.6c.: *Si vero non ordinet seipsum ad debitum finem, secundum quod in illa aetate est capax discretionis, peccabit mortaliter, non faciens quod in se est*; I-II q. 18 a 9c.: *cum autem rationis sit ordinare; actus a ratione deliberativa procedens, si non sit ad debitum finem ordinatus, ex hoc ipso repugnat rationi, et habet rationem mali... Si autem non procedit a ratione deliberativa, sed ex quadam imaginatione (sicut cum aliquis fricat barbam, vel movet manum, aut pedem) talis actus non est, proprie loquendo, moralis, vel humanus, cum hoc habeat actus a ratione.*

*S.Th.* I q. 1 a 6c.: *In genere totius humanae vitae prudens sapiens dicitur, inquantum ordinat humanos actus ad debitum finem.*

<sup>179</sup> II-II, q. 165 a. 2c.: *homo compositus est ex duplici natura, intellectiva scilicet, et sensitiva.*

<sup>180</sup> I-II, q. 18 a. 4 ad 1: *Bonum, ad quod aliquis respiciens operatur, non semper est verum bonum, sed quandoque verum bonum, et quandoque apparens.*

because "as each one is, so does the end seem to him."<sup>181</sup> Because man is hylemorphic, both his matter (his body) and his form (his rational soul) need to work together.<sup>182</sup>

That this cooperation does not always take place is evident from the fact that humans pursue or appoint (*praestituant*) to themselves many different ends (such as riches or power) as if they were final ends. Aquinas elaborates:

Just as we find a highest cause regarding those things which are truly good; namely, the greatest good which is the last end, by knowing which, man is said to be truly wise, so also in evil things one is able to find something to which all others are to be referred as to a last end, by knowing which, man is said to be wise for acting badly... Now whoever turns away from the fitting end, necessarily appoints to himself (*sibi praestituat*) some unfitting end, because every agent acts for an end. Wherefore, if he appoints to himself an end that consists in external earthly things, his wisdom is called earthly, if in bodily goods, it is called brutish wisdom, if in some excellence, it is called diabolical wisdom, because it imitates the devil's pride, concerning which it is written in Job 41 [v. 25], "He is king over all the children of pride."<sup>183</sup>

When a person is lacking the kind of virtuous disposition that comes from subjecting passions to reason, he may be wise in one of these senses, but he will not have the kind of

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<sup>181</sup> I-II, q. 9 a.2 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod, sicut supra dictum est (art. praec.), id quod apprehenditur sub ratione boni, et convenientis, movet voluntatem per modum objecti; quod autem aliquid videatur bonum, et conveniens, ex duobus contingit; scilicet ex conditione ejus quod proponitur, et ejus, cui proponitur; conveniens enim secundum relationem dicitur; unde ex utroque extremorum dependet...; unde Philos. dicit in 3. Ethic. (cap. 5. a med.): Qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei.*

<sup>182</sup> I-II, q. 63 a. 1c.: *forma vero hominis est anima rationalis, materia vero corpus.*

<sup>183</sup> II-II q.45 a.1 ad 1: *sicut circa ea, quae sunt vere bona, invenitur aliqua altissima causa, quae est summum bonum, quod est ultimus finis, per cujus cognitionem dicitur homo vere sapiens: ita etiam in malis est invenire aliquid, ad quod alia referuntur, sicut ad ultimum finem, per cujus cognitionem homo dicitur esse sapiens ad male agendum, secundum illud Hierem. 4.: Sapientes sunt, ut faciam mala; bene autem facere nescierunt: quicumque autem avertitur a fine debito, necesse est quod aliquem finem indebitum sibi praestituat: quia omne agens agit propter finem; unde si praestituat sibi finem in bonis exterioribus terrenis, vocatur sapientia terrena: si autem in bonis corporalibus, vocatur sapientia animalis: si autem in aliqua excellentia, vocatur sapientia diabolica, propter imitationem superbiae diaboli, de quo dicitur Job 41.: Ipse est rex super omnes filios superbiae.*

wisdom that would keep him from turning away from his true end, which is the sovereign good. That kind of practical wisdom, what Aquinas calls "wisdom in practical affairs,"<sup>184</sup> is known as prudence - which both presupposes and ensures right appetite. When a man happily possesses this habit, his appetites will promptly and joyfully<sup>185</sup> follow the human good of reason, thus paving the way for true happiness.<sup>186</sup>

Among human appetites, the noblest one is the will (the rational appetite), the proportionate object of which is the understood good.<sup>187</sup> It is essential for the attainment of virtue and the pursuit of happiness, therefore, that the good be apprehended by reason, which is the "proper principle of human acts."<sup>188</sup> When the good that is proper to man is so apprehended, his will is enabled to pursue it.<sup>189</sup> We now turn to the fundamental consideration of what the good that is proper to us as humans actually is.

## **B. The End *qua* "Perfect Good of Happiness"**

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<sup>184</sup> II-II q.47 a.2 ad 1: *Prudentia est sapientia in rebus humanis: non autem sapientia simpliciter; quia non est circa causam altissimam simpliciter.*

<sup>185</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 5 a. 2 ad 2: *habitus secundum se facit prompte et delectabiliter operari*

<sup>186</sup> This can be said even more so about the habit of wisdom that is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Someone who is wise in any particular genus is able to judge and order everything in that particular genus, but he who is wise simply and thus has the gift of the Holy Spirit is able "to judge and order *everything* according to the divine rules" (See II-II q. 45 a 1c.). If he can do that, he necessarily has virtues that have been informed by charity and is thus able to follow the promptings of reason even better than the man for whom prudence is the form of the virtues.

<sup>187</sup> See I-II q. 19 a 3c. *S. Th.* I 82 a 4 c. and *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 81 say the same of the good without the qualification 'proportionate'. *SCG* Book 1, chapter 95, no. 3 and *S.Th.* I q. 13 a 5 ad 2 refer to its object as an 'apprehended good'.

<sup>188</sup> II-II q. 157 a. 2 c.: *proprium principium humanorum actuum*. See I-II q. 1 a 1 ad 3 and I-II q 100 a 1c. In *De Malo*, he specifies that the deliberation of reason is the proper and principal active principle of human acts: .... *procedit a ratione deliberante, quae est proprium et principale activum principium humanorum actuum* (*De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 ad 1).

<sup>189</sup> The "will tends to its act through being moved by the apprehension of reason that presents to it its proper good." Saint Thomas Aquinas, Fathers of the English Dominican Province, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 3 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 25 (Bk. 3, ch. 10).

For Aquinas, the "first principle of everything else in practical matters" is happiness or beatitude (*felicitas vel beatitudo*).<sup>190</sup> As simple as it may sound to say we all desire this "kind of most perfect state"<sup>191</sup> which is sometimes called "the perfect good"<sup>192</sup> because it is the last end and object of the will,<sup>193</sup> we will be contemplating the implications of this fact in essentially every chapter so as to investigate the way *intellectus* and reason (and particularly *recta ratio agibilium* / prudence) relates to this desire as an end, what this perfect good consists of and, finally, the freedom that ensues from fittingly pursuing such a compelling end.

The Angelic Doctor teaches that if something is not sought "as the perfect good which is the ultimate end, it is necessary that it be sought as tending towards the perfect good."<sup>194</sup> This is basically to say that anything we seek must at least be an apparent good of some sort. For this reason, a "perverse appetite" is always accompanied by "some falsity of practical knowledge."<sup>195</sup> The causal force of what Thomas refers to as "the perfect good of happiness"<sup>196</sup> can be exemplified by the way he explains Augustine's stealing of a neighbor's pears. The problem he is dealing with in this section of the *Scriptum*, in part, that the end is *ex suppositio*, something good

<sup>190</sup> I-II, q. 90 a. 2 c.: *Sicut autem ratio est principium humanorum actuum, ita etiam in ipsa ratione est aliquid quod est principium respectu omnium aliorum... Primum autem principium in operativis, quorum est ratio practica, est finis ultimus. Est autem ultimus finis humanae vitae felicitas vel beatitudo, ut supra habitum est.*

<sup>191</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 2 ad 2: *quamvis beatitudo sit occulta quantum ad substantiam, tamen ratio beatitudinis nota est: omnes enim per beatitudinem intelligunt quemdam perfectissimum statum: sed in quo consistat ille status perfectus, utrum in vita, vel post vitam, vel in bonis corporalibus vel spiritualibus, et in quibus spiritualibus, occultum est.*

<sup>192</sup> I-II q.5 a 5 ad.1: *Creatura rationalis, quae potest consequi perfectum beatitudinis bonum, indigens ad hoc divino auxilio, est perfectior, quam creatura irrationalis.*

<sup>193</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 49 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 2 c.: *Ad secundam quaestionem dicendum, quod beatitudinem esse in voluntate, dupliciter potest intelligi. Uno modo ita quod sit voluntatis objectum; et sic beatitudo, cum sit ultimus finis, et ex fine sit ratio boni, quod est voluntatis objectum.*

I-II, q. 90 a. 2 c.: *ultimus finis humanae vitae felicitas vel beatitudo.*

<sup>194</sup> I-II q. 1 a 6c.: *quidquid homo appetit, appetit sub ratione boni; quod quidem si non appetitur ut bonum perfectum, quod est ultimus finis, necesse est ut appetatur ut tendens in bonum perfectum: quia semper inchoatio alicujus ordinatur ad consummationem ipsius*

<sup>195</sup> *De Malo*, q. 16 a. 6 ad 11: *appetitus perversus semper est cum aliqua falsitate practicae cognitionis.*

<sup>196</sup> I-II q.5 a 5 ad.1: *Creatura rationalis, quae potest consequi perfectum beatitudinis bonum, indigens ad hoc divino auxilio, est perfectior, quam creatura irrationalis.*



that all men pursue as an end. He had quoted Augustine and Pseudo-Dionysius to argue that "all creatures, according to an impression received from the Creator, are, each according to its own mode, inclined by appetite to the good, so that a certain circular pattern is found in things: for, having gone forth from the good, they tend toward the good."<sup>197</sup> This being so, all things must have a desire for their own good and rational creatures in particular must have a natural desire for their own beatitude.<sup>198</sup> As is made clear in *De Malo*, both angels and men "have the end of beatitude naturally appointed (*praestitutum*) to them; accordingly, they naturally desire it."<sup>199</sup>

To act in a way that is evil by disregarding the natural law and stealing another's goods is, however, contrary to one's own happiness. For this reason, the pear incident is especially engaging because Augustine himself says the pears he stole were unappealing either to look at or eat; in fact, "the pleasure was in the evil act itself."<sup>200</sup> Aquinas explains that he must have nevertheless been doing it because he saw it as tending towards the good:

In that thievery, as Augustine says in the same place, there was something having an appearance of good, in which a certain shadow of freedom appeared; hence he says: "What, therefore, did I love in that thievery, and how was I imitating you, my God, [though] viciously and perversely? And he answers, saying: "Or was it not pleasing to act against the law at least by trickery, since I could not do so by power, in order that I, being a slave, might imitate freedom by doing with impunity what was unlawful, in a dark likeness of omnipotence?"<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, 368 (see, *Super Sent.* 4, d. 49 q 1 a 3 qc. 1c.).

<sup>198</sup> The same question is taken up in *S.Th.* I-II, q. 1, a. 6; *S.Th.* I, q. 60, a. 2; *SCG* I, chs. 100–101.

<sup>199</sup> *De Malo* q. 16 a 5c.: *angelus et homo habent finem naturaliter praestitutum sibi beatitudinem; unde naturaliter appetunt eam, nec possunt velle miseriam*. See also, *Super Psalmo* 18 n. 5: *finis, quem omnino volumus, qui est praestitutus nobis*.

<sup>200</sup> Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, ed. Roy Joseph Deferrari, trans. Vernon J. Bourke, vol. 21, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1953), 46 (Book 2, Chapter 8 # 16).

Even in that evil act Augustine was seeking the good of happiness as an end. By attempting to imitate God's omnipotent nature by 'trickery' he certainly turned away from the "unchangeable good" in which the "*ratio* of the ultimate end is truly found," but he could not have turned away from intending the last end as an ultimate goal.<sup>202</sup> He establishes some principles for this fact in the body of the article:

According to the Philosopher in *Ethics* VII, in the order of appetible items, the end holds the rank that a principle holds in the order of intelligible items.<sup>203</sup> Now, since that which is first and maximum in any genus is the cause of those that are after it, so knowledge of the principles in speculative matters is the cause of the knowledge of all other such matters; and likewise, appetite for the end is the cause of having appetite for all other things that are toward the end. Hence, since beatitude is the end of human life, whatever the will has appetite to bring about, is ordered to beatitude. This is clear also from experience; for whoever has appetite for something, has appetite for it insofar as it is judged a good. But by the very fact that someone has something that he judges good, he reckons himself nearer to beatitude, since the addition of a good to a good makes one approach nearer to the perfect good, which is beatitude itself. And, therefore, any and every appetite is ordered to beatitude.<sup>204</sup>

In regard to the end known as beatitude or happiness, every rational creature necessarily pursues it as a good. As the *Summa Contra Gentiles* says, "whoever wills necessarily wills his last end just as man necessarily wills his happiness."<sup>205</sup> Whatever anyone does is necessarily ordered

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<sup>201</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity: Readings from the Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard*, 376 (see, *Super Sent.* 4, d. 49 q. 1 a 3 qc. 4 ad 3).

<sup>202</sup> See I-II q. 1 a. 7 ad. 1 and obj. 1.

<sup>203</sup> See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* VII, ch. 8 (1151a16–17).

<sup>204</sup> *On Love and Charity*, 375 (*Super Sent.* 4, d. 49 q. 1 a 3 qc. 4c.).

<sup>205</sup> *SCG* Bk. 1 ch. 80 n. 3: *Quilibet volens de necessitate vult suum ultimum finem: sicut homo de necessitate vult suam beatitudinem.*

towards it because it is desired "for its own sake and never for the sake of another."<sup>206</sup> One may certainly be defectively ordered towards it by pursuing that which only has the semblance of good (i.e., that which is merely an apparent good), but the perfect good of happiness is pursued by all even if all do not know that in which it objectively consists.

John of St. Thomas explains there are final causes that are not the last end because they are subordinated to a further end and dependent upon it. They have the true *ratio* of an end, but since they put on the *ratio* of a means in some way, they only are able to be considered ends in virtue of their participation in the last end. Because they are simply speaking desirable, they can be considered last ends inasmuch as they are supreme in a certain genus. They remain, however, distinct from the supreme end to which anything in any genus at all is subordinated.<sup>207</sup> In other words, only the ultimate end is never desired for the sake of another end, though one may desire another end (such as one of these) as if it were absolute. Final causes such as these would include ends such as knowledge, virtue, health, life, and being,<sup>208</sup> each of which can be seen as falling

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<sup>206</sup> *On Love and Charity*, 375 (*Super Sent.* 4, d. 49 q. 1 a 3 qc. 4c.).

<sup>207</sup> *Finis causa, sive finis, cujus gratia dividitur in finem ultimum, et non ultimum. Finis ultimus est ad quem omnia ordinantur sine subordinatione ad alterum. Non ultimus ad quem ordinantur aliqua cum subordinatione, et dependentia ad alterum. Et habet veram rationem finis, etiam non ultimus, sed participatam, in quo rationem medii aliquo modo induit; simpliciter tamen habet rationem finis, quia simpliciter est appetibile, licet participative, sicut substantia creata est ens per se, participative tamen ab increata; ex quo intelligitur alia divisio finis ultimi, quod alius est finis ultimus simpliciter, id est in omni genere, cui omnia in quocunque genere subordinantur, vel ultimus in aliquo genere, et respectu hujus appetentis.* John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus: Tomus Secundus Philosophia naturalis* Q. 12, *De Fine* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, 1883), 242.

<sup>208</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 1 d. 48 q. 1 a. 4 c, speaks of knowledge, virtue and health:

*Sciendum tamen, quod cum sint diversi gradus appetitus consequentes diversas apprehensiones, nullus appetitus tenetur tendere in illud bonum cujus rationem non apprehendit... Est et quaedam voluntas in nobis naturalis, qua appetimus id quod secundum se bonum est homini, in quantum est homo; et hoc sequitur apprehensionem rationis, prout est aliquid absolute considerans: sicut vult homo scientiam, virtutem, sanitatem et hujusmodi.* Parenthetically, Aquinas suggests in the conclusion of this article that these naturally desired ends need to be ordered by reason lest one merely follow an impulse towards any one of them: "the motion of the deliberated will is corrupt in sinners, who relinquish the deliberation of reason and follow the impetus of the natural will."

The *Expositio Peri Hermeneias*, bk. 1 lectio 14 # 24 speaks of being (*esse*), living (*vivere*) and understanding (*intelligere*) and necessarily desirable goods of this sort, whereas *De Malo*, q. 6 ad 1 speaks of living and understanding: *omnes homines naturaliter desiderant esse, vivere et intelligere.*

short of the perfect good in some way (e.g., one could sacrifice life for virtue or one's temporal health for eternal life).<sup>209</sup> Nevertheless, the truly last end is that which sets every desire at rest and leaves nothing to be desired.<sup>210</sup> Every thing else that is desired must, therefore, have "reference to the desire for beatitude, whether mediately or immediately."<sup>211</sup>

What the rational creature does may be ordered towards beatitude mediately (as a means) as when "someone wants to undertake works of virtue so that through this, he may merit beatitude" or, alternatively, the action may be ordered to it inasmuch as it possesses "some likeness to beatitude" because it is not only perfect happiness that is naturally desired, "but even any likeness or participation in it."<sup>212</sup> In the case of Augustine, Thomas suggests, his sinful action

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In his commentary on Pseudo-Dionysius *Divine Names*, Aquinas points out that even though all desire naturally to be and live and understand, they are able through their free will to "voluntarily avert their understanding" from considering the good inasmuch as it is good because they don't want to follow it. As a consequence, they fall back from "the goods that belong to them according to the order of their nature and they are called evil inasmuch as they are not." In other words, they fall back from being even though it is naturally desired. For more on this, see, *De Divinis Nominibus*, ch. 4, *lectio* 20. See also, I-II q. 10 a. 2 ad 3 and *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5c.

<sup>209</sup> In I-II, q. 12 a. 1 ad 3, Aquinas says we will health absolutely (*absolute*), which means it pertains to *volens* and not to *intentio*. However, even when we come to will (*velle*) something simply and absolutely, this can be fall short of the perfect good. *Absolute* is not always used by Aquinas in the same way that we use it (namely, as synonymous with 'unconditional'). In the following passage, for instance, we are told that something absolute is only considered absolute inasmuch as the reason does not consider it in light of some other good. As such, even something naturally desired as simply good could be fall short of necessarily moving the will: *Voluntas autem ut natura movetur in aliquid, ut dictum est, absolute: unde si per rationem non ordinetur in aliquid aliud, acceptabit illud absolute, et erit illius tamquam finis; si autem ordinet in finem, non acceptabit aliquid absolute, quousque perveniat ad considerationem finis* (*Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 17 q. 1 a. 2 qc. 1 c.). Similarly, his commentary on the Perihermeneas, he says someone would necessarily will to will things like understanding and life *if* they saw the necessary connection with these things to the perfect good of happiness. In fact, he almost sounds tentative himself about whether anything else could be necessarily willed: *Ita etiam est quoddam bonum quod est propter se appetibile, sicut felicitas, quae habet rationem ultimi finis; et huiusmodi bono ex necessitate inhaeret voluntas: naturali enim quadam necessitate omnes appetunt esse felices ... Si igitur essent aliqua bona, quibus non existentibus, non posset aliquis esse felix, haec etiam essent ex necessitate appetibilia et maxime apud eum, qui talem ordinem perciperet; et forte talia sunt esse, vivere et intelligere et si qua alia sunt similia. Sed particularia bona, in quibus humani actus consistunt, non sunt talia, nec sub ea ratione apprehenduntur ut sine quibus felicitas esse non possit, puta, comedere hunc cibum vel illum, aut abstinere ab eo* (*In Expositio Peri Hermeneias*, bk. 1 *lectio* 14 # 24).

<sup>210</sup> See *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 100.

<sup>211</sup> *On Love and Charity*, 375 (*Super Sent.* 4, d. 49 q. 1 a 3 qc. 4 s.c. 1).

<sup>212</sup> I-II, q. 3 a 6 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod naturaliter desideratur non solum perfecta beatitudo, sed etiam qualiscumque similitudo, vel participatio ipsius* [al. *ejus*].

was ordered towards beatitude in the second way; he was "striving for beatitude and toward an imitation of God" by performing an act which was merely a "dark likeness"<sup>213</sup> of God's omnipotence.<sup>214</sup> Augustine was necessarily striving for happiness in that act (indeed, the desire for happiness is not even subject to free will),<sup>215</sup> but he failed either to attain it or do something truly conducive to it. As Aquinas explains it in the *Summa*, every sin of the will necessarily falls short of the "ultimate intended end" of happiness because "no evil act of the will is able to be ordered to happiness, which is the ultimate end." Even if the sinful person attains the proximate end he had intended as an "end that is ordered to the ultimate end," he is not able to be considered truly happy,<sup>216</sup> both because sin itself is a falling away from reason<sup>217</sup> and because nothing but the perfect and universal good is able to satisfy man's appetite as an ultimate end.<sup>218</sup>

This brings us back yet again to the fact that even if God so ordains human nature that all men desire happiness, that in which happiness consists is not clear to all. St. Thomas speaks to this fact in the fifth question of the *Prima Secundae*. He explains that the common notion of happiness is that it is the "perfect good" that completely satisfies the will and leaves nothing to be desired. Since everyone wants this, everyone wills happiness. However, just as the young

<sup>213</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity*, 376 (see, *Super Sent.* bk. 4, d. 49 q. 1 a 3 qc. 4 ad 3).

<sup>214</sup> *On Love and Charity*, 376 (*Super Sent.* bk. 4, d. 49 q. 1 a 3 qc. 4 ad 2.): "For the result of the will's having appetite for something is that it also desires that in which the thing's likeness is found, even if it cannot have the chief desideratum; and in this way, all who have appetite for sins are [still] striving for beatitude and toward an imitation of God."

<sup>215</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a. 1 ad 5c.: *naturaliter homo appetit ultimum finem, scilicet beatitudinem. Qui quidem appetitus naturalis est, et non subjacet libero arbitrio.*

<sup>216</sup> I-II q.21 a.1 ad 2: *duplex est finis, scilicet: ultimus, et propinquus... in peccato voluntatis semper est defectus ab ultimo fine intento; quia nullus actus voluntatis malus est ordinabilis ad beatitudinem, quae est ultimus finis, licet non deficiat ab aliquo fine proximo, quem voluntas intendit, et consequitur: unde etiam, cum ipsa intentio hujus finis ordinetur ad finem ultimum, in ipsa intentione hujusmodi finis potest inveniri ratio rectitudinis, et peccati.*

<sup>217</sup> In I-II, q. 73 a. 2, Thomas suggests that the gradations of sins depend on the degree to which the sinner recedes from the rectitude of reason. Of course, what makes a man human is that he has reason, so "his proper good which is happiness" must be "according to that which is proper to reason" as *SCG*, bk. 3 ch. 34 says.

<sup>218</sup> I-II, q. 2 a. 7 c.: *bonum enim quod est ultimus finis, est bonum perfectum complens boni appetitum: appetitus autem humanus, qui est voluntas, est boni universalis.*

Augustine was, they are sometimes ignorant of the more proper (*specialem*) notion of happiness that pertains to that in which happiness consists: "and thus all do not know happiness because they are ignorant of that to which the common notion of happiness belongs."<sup>219</sup> Worded differently, although happiness itself is necessarily known and desired, one can appoint various subordinate ends to himself. Part of the mystery here is that this dynamic presupposes the dispositions of the individual. In the *De Virtutibus*, Thomas clarifies:

The will does not only pertain to the ultimate end, but also to other ends. But in regard to the appetite for the other ends, the will is able to be rightly or non-rightly ordered. After all, good people appoint to themselves (*preaestituunt sibi*) good ends whereas bad people appoint bad ends. As it is said in the third book of the *Ethics*, 'as each one is, so does the end appear to him.'<sup>220</sup>

Since whatever end one prescribes for himself to follow must be seen as good, the habit one has acquired must color the various possible ends and make some stand out as the best means to the ultimate end of happiness even though they are merely apparent goods in some cases.

Prescinding from subjective inclinations, though, what is the end itself actually and what things are necessarily constitutive of it? At the end of this chapter, we will focus on filling out the answer to this question from the theological standpoint which requires the aid of revelation and grace. As Steven Long observes, "grace orders human nature to an end that infinitely transcends

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<sup>219</sup> I-II q. 5 a 8: *beatitudo dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo secundum communem rationem beatitudinis: et sic necesse est, quod omnis homo beatitudinem velit: ratio autem beatitudinis communis est, ut sit bonum perfectum, sicut dictum est (q. 3. huj. q. et q. 1. art. 5. et 7.). Cum autem bonum sit objectum voluntatis, perfectum bonum est alicujus, quod totaliter ejus voluntati satisfacit; unde appetere beatitudinem nihil aliud est, quam appetere ut voluntas satietur: quod quilibet vult. Alio modo possumus loqui de beatitudine secundum specialem rationem, quantum ad id, in quo beatitudo consistit: et sic non omnes cognoscunt beatitudinem: quia nesciunt, cui rei communis ratio beatitudinis conveniat, et per consequens, quantum ad hoc, non omnes eam volunt.*

<sup>220</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 5 arg. 2: *Sed contra, voluntas non solum est finis ultimi, sed etiam finium aliorum. Sed circa appetitum aliorum finium contingit voluntatem et recte et non recte se habere. Nam boni praestituunt sibi bonos fines, mali vero malos, ut dicitur in III Ethic.: qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei.*

the most profound philosophic contemplation of human finality."<sup>221</sup> Since, however, synderesis (which is also known as natural reason<sup>222</sup>) is one of the protagonists of this book, it seems best to first establish what the end is on the natural level before bringing in the inestimable role of grace.

## **C. In What Does this Perfect Good Consist?**

### **1. The Perfect Good, Nature and Synderesis**

Among non-angelic creatures, man's nature alone is properly speaking made according to (*ad*) the image of God. This results from the kind of likeness to God he has in virtue of his immaterial soul. Because he has the ability to know and understand immaterial things – the intellect being ordered to the universal true, and the will to the universal good, as object – he is capable of the highest good (*capax summi boni*).<sup>223</sup> The question that arises, of course, is what the highest good is exactly. Aquinas often says the perfect good is happiness,<sup>224</sup> but that will not get us very far if we don't know that in which it consists. Nature and the reason that is founded upon it (i.e., the natural reason, "which is called synderesis"<sup>225</sup>) at least provide the foundation for discerning this.

For Thomas, natural reason ensures that men assent to the good.<sup>226</sup> Owing to the fact that it is natural, it is necessarily a permanent principle. He explains in *De Veritate*:

Nature intends the good in all of its works in addition to the conservation of those things that come about through its works. Therefore, in all of nature's works, the principles are

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<sup>221</sup> Steven Long, "On the Possibility of a Purely Natural End for Man" in *The Thomist* 64 (2000), 235.

<sup>222</sup> See, II-II, q. 47 a 6 ad 1 and I-II, q. 100 a.1 c.

<sup>223</sup> See I q. 93 a 2.

<sup>224</sup> See, for instance, I-II, q. 2 a.2 c. and q. 13 a. 6.

<sup>225</sup> II-II q 47 a 6 ad 1: *ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis*.

<sup>226</sup> *De Veritate* q. 16 a 2 c.: *illud principium permanens omni malo resistat, et omni bono assentiat. Et haec est synderesis*.

permanent and unchangeable and preservative of right order because it is necessary for the principles to remain ... In order for there to be rectitude in human actions, there must be some permanent principle which is immutably upright and that resists all evil and assents to every good so that all human works can be examined. And this is synderesis, whose duty (*officium*) it is to warn against evil and to incline to the good.<sup>227</sup>

Thanks to the "imprint on us of the Divine light,"<sup>228</sup> human nature itself has been given a capacity that makes it cognizant of the perfect good which the will necessarily moves towards once the reason has presented it.<sup>229</sup> When referring respectively to the most natural cognitive and appetitive movements in man, Thomas sometimes employs Damascene's terms "reason as nature" (*ratio ut natura*) and "will as nature" (*voluntas ut natura* or θέλησις<sup>230</sup>). The former

<sup>227</sup> *De Veritate* q. 16 a 2 c.: *Natura in omnibus suis operibus bonum intendit, et conservationem eorum quae per operationem naturae fiunt; et ideo in omnibus naturae operibus semper principia sunt permanentia et immutabilia, et rectitudinem conservantia... in operibus humanis, ad hoc quod aliqua rectitudo in eis esse possit, oportet esse aliquod principium permanens, quod rectitudinem immutabilem habeat, ad quod omnia humana opera examinentur; ita quod illud principium permanens omni malo resistat, et omni bono assentiat. Et haec est synderesis, cuius officium est remurmurare malo, et inclinare ad bonum.* See also, *S.Th.*, I, q. 79 a. 12 c.: *synderesis dicitur instigare ad bonum.*

<sup>228</sup> I-II q.91 a.2 c.: *lumen rationis naturalis, quo discernimus quid sit bonum, et quid malum, quod pertinet ad naturalem legem, nihil aliud sit, quam impressio divini luminis in nobis;* "the light of natural reason, whereby we discern what is good and what is evil, which is the function of the natural law, is nothing else than an imprint on us of the Divine light."

<sup>229</sup> I-II, q. 10 a. 2 ad 3: *finis ultimus ex necessitate movet voluntatem, quia est bonum perfectum: et similiter illa, quae ordinantur ad hunc finem, sine quibus finis haberi non potest; sicut esse, et vivere, et huiusmodi: alia vero, sine quibus finis haberi potest, non ex necessitate vult qui vult finem.* Strictly speaking, only the motion towards happiness and the good in general is absolutely necessary because even the desire to live (*vivere*) can be set aside. In other words, the necessity pertaining to anything but the perfect good is only a qualified necessity deriving from the teleological ordering of nature and reflected in synderesis. Other goods may be desired in virtue of a kind of graded necessity, but that alone is necessarily desired. Thomas suggested in his letter to the King of Cyprus that the rational creature's natural desire for the perfect good that "comprehends all desirable things in itself" is happiness. Interestingly, he says there that this desire is for the universal good that comprehends all desirable things in itself and is ultimately not for an earthly good: ... *esse felicem, quod nullus potest non velle... Beatitudinem quidem dicimus ultimum desideriorum finem. Neque enim desiderii motus usque in infinitum procedit; esset enim inane naturale desiderium, cum infinita pertransiri non possint. Cum autem desiderium intellectualis naturae sit universalis boni, hoc solum bonum vere beatum facere poterit, quo adepti nullum bonum restat quod amplius desiderari possit: unde et beatitudo dicitur bonum perfectum, quasi omnia desiderabilia in se comprehendens. Tale autem non est aliquod bonum terrenum.*

<sup>230</sup> *S.Th.*, III q.18 a.3 c.: [*voluntas*] *quod fertur in aliquid quod est secundum se volitum, ut sanitas; quod a Damasceno (loc. cit.) vocatur θέλησις, idest simplex voluntas, et a Magistris vocatur voluntas ut natura:*



apprehends common goods and ensures that people will naturally perceive absolutely good things. "Reason as nature" is not used in the *Summa*, but as Rhonheimer notes, even though it:

is seldom used (four times in *Super sent.* and three in *De veritate*) and never occurs in the *Summa theologiae* ... it would perfectly fit with *voluntas ut natura* in the sense of what is 'naturally known' by the intellect and, therefore, becoming 'naturally desired' by the will.<sup>231</sup>

Thomas explains that the *voluntas ut natura* follows the judgment of reason in regard to an indemonstrably known principle of practical activity that:

has the role of a final cause (*se habet per modum finis*) because in doable things, the end has the place of the beginning, as it says in the sixth book of the *Ethics*. Therefore, that which is the end of man is naturally known in the reason to be good and to be sought out (*appetendum*) and the will following this knowledge is called the will as nature.<sup>232</sup>

This end of man that is naturally known, therefore, is consequently naturally desired since there is nothing about it that is imperfectly good; since the object of the will is the good defined by reason,<sup>233</sup> the will necessarily is drawn to an end that is good in all respects. As Thomas words it in the *Prima Secundae*, the will of man is "not able not to will" the perfect good precisely

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*et ideo alterius rationis est actus voluntatis, secundum quod fertur in aliquid, quod est volitum solum ex ordine ad alterum; sicut est sumptio medicinae: quem quidem voluntatis actum Damasc. vocat βούλησιν, idest consiliativam voluntatem, a Magistris autem vocatur voluntas ut ratio. See, Super Sent., bk. 3 d. 17 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 ad 1. Thomas also speaks of the will as a kind of nature in S.Th., I., q. 41 a. 2 ad 3: voluntas, inquantum est natura quaedam, aliquid naturaliter vult; sicut voluntas hominis naturaliter tendit ad beatitudinem.*

<sup>231</sup> Martin Rhonheimer, "Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law" in *Studies in Christian Ethics* [2006] 19:357, page 363.

<sup>232</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2: *voluntas ut ... natura... sequitur iudicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis, quia in operabilibus finis habet locum principii, ut in 6 Ethic. dicitur. Unde illud quod finis est hominis, est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura.*

<sup>233</sup> See I-II, q. 77 a. 1 obj. 1 and ad 1.

because it is that "which lacks nothing."<sup>234</sup> One might wonder how the will, which is called the "master of its own acts" and is "open to opposites"<sup>235</sup> could *necessarily* be drawn towards the end that is naturally known. Thomas replies that it is only when we speak of the 'will as nature' that this is the case and that the necessity that "is present in the voluntary appetite with respect to the end" does not necessitate necessity in regard to the means.<sup>236</sup>

It is only natural and good for us to follow our reason and let it guide us regarding the end which Thomas spoke of as the "end which has the place of the beginning" and is sometimes explained as the "perfect and final good."<sup>237</sup> Because we are rational creatures, we are ordered towards happiness necessarily because our reason is unable to see the perfect and final good in a negative way. Once it is perceived as perfect and final, we want it, and it is beneficial for us that we want it precisely because it is perfective of us - and all men naturally desire perfection<sup>238</sup> just as "every imperfect thing" in general tends to perfection.<sup>239</sup>

Given that nature is that whereby this natural inclination arises, one might think the perfect good should be sought in nature. After all, Aquinas oft repeats Aristotle's adage, "nature

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<sup>234</sup> I-II, q. 10 a. 2c.: *quia defectus cujuscumque boni habet rationem non boni, ideo illud solum bonum quod est perfectum, et cui nihil deficit, est tale bonum, quod voluntas non potest non velle.*

<sup>235</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5 ad s. c. 5: *Ad quintum dicendum quod voluntas, in quantum est rationalis, ad opposita se habet: hoc est enim considerare ipsam secundum hoc quod est ei proprium; sed prout est natura quaedam, nihil prohibet eam determinari ad unum.*

*De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5 ad s. c. 7: *hoc enim est proprium voluntati, in quantum est voluntas, quod sit domina suorum actuum.*

<sup>236</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6 ad 4: *ex necessitate quae inest appetitui voluntario respectu finis, non inducitur necessitas ei respectu eorum quae sunt ad finem.* See the previous footnote.

<sup>237</sup> See I-II, q. 5 a. 8 ad 2. As is explained in that article, everyone naturally desires the "general *ratio* of happiness" which is understood by all to be the "final and perfect good." Not everyone knows that it consists in the beatific vision, but the distinction between the beatific vision and the perfect good is not a real distinction but only a logical one (*secundum rationis considerationem*).

<sup>238</sup> I-II, q. 84 a. 4 c.: *bonum praecipue movet appetitum ex hoc, quod participat aliquid de proprietate felicitatis, quam naturaliter omnes appetunt; de cujus ratione est primo quaedam perfectio: nam felicitas est perfectum bonum.*

*S.Th.*, I, q. 5 a. 1c.: *bonum est, quod omnia appetunt: manifestum est autem, quod unumquodque est appetibile, secundum quod est perfectum; nam omnia appetunt suam perfectionem.*

<sup>239</sup> I-II, q. 16 a. 4 c.: *omne autem imperfectum tendit in perfectionem.* SCG, bk. 4, ch. 79: "imperfect things naturally strive to attain perfection."

does nothing in vain,"<sup>240</sup> so it would seem that by simply lending an ear to nature and heeding its promptings, one would attain the perfect good.<sup>241</sup> The essence of nature itself is that it is the "intrinsic principle of motion" in things;<sup>242</sup> why not, then, simply allow it to tend where it wills? Is it not supremely virtuous to simply be natural since God himself imprinted his light upon our natural reason? In support of this conclusion, one could cite the great doctor of the Church, St. John Damascene, for whom "the virtues are natural qualities, and are implanted in all by nature and in equal measure."<sup>243</sup> In commenting upon this quote, Thomas affirms that natural things are never eradicated<sup>244</sup> and he goes on to say nature disposes man to attain a kind of happiness through his own natural powers (*ad quamdam felicitatem... homo natus est acquirere per propria naturalia*<sup>245</sup>). For this reason, the option of entrusting one's happiness to the natural inclinations (at least inasmuch as God is the author of them) is worthy of consideration.

Aquinas explains man's natural aptitude to the perfection that is found in virtue by relating this aptitude to the three subjects of virtue; namely, the intellect, the will, and the lower appetite. Although the intellect can be divided into the active and the passive intellect, it is considered one subject of virtue. The second is the rational appetite known as the will, and the third is that which is sometimes called the "lower appetite" even though, like the intellect, it can be divided into two (in this case, into the irascible and concupiscible appetites).

<sup>240</sup> As in *SCG*, bk. 3, ch. 48: "The natural desire cannot be void because *nature does nothing in vain*." In the words of Aristotle, οὐθὲν μάτην ἢ φύσις ποιεῖ (*Politics*, 1. 2, 1253. a. 9)

<sup>241</sup> As Heraclitus said, "wisdom is ... to act according to nature, giving ear thereto (σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας); DK 112.

<sup>242</sup> *S.Th.*, III, q. 2 a.1 c.: [nature is the] *principium intrinsecum motus, secundum quod Philosophus dicit in 2. Physic. (tex. 3.) quod 'natura est principium motus in eo, in quo est per se, et non secundum accidens.'*

<sup>243</sup> "The virtues are natural powers" is a translation of Φυσικαὶ μὲν γὰρ εἰσιν αἱ ἀρεταί. See, John Damascene, "An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith," in *St. Hilary of Poitiers, John of Damascus*, ed. Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, trans. S. D. F. Salmond, vol. 9b, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series (New York: Christian Literature Company, 1899), 60 (Bk. 3, ch. 14). See also Cicero's *De Legibus*, 1.

<sup>244</sup> The objection of *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8 says, *Dicit enim Damascenus, III Bk.: naturales sunt virtutes, et naturaliter et aequaliter insunt nobis* and the ad 1 begins, "*naturalia per peccatum non amittuntur.*"

<sup>245</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 9 ad 7.

He elaborates:

In each of these, one can reflect upon some kind of active principle of virtue and susceptibility to it. In the intellective part, there is:

a) the possible intellect, which is in ability for all understandable things (in the knowledge of which intellectual virtue consists)

and

b) the agent intellect, in whose light things become understandable in act. Immediately and without any study or inquiry (*inquisitio*), such things are naturally made known to man from the beginning. About such things are the first principles - not only regarding speculative matters (such as 'the whole is greater than its part' and like things), but also regarding practical (*operativus*) ones (such as, 'evil ought to be avoided' and such things).

Now these naturally known things are the principles of all the following knowledge - whether practical or speculative - that is acquired by study.

It is similarly manifest in regards to the will that there is some first natural principle that is active. For the will is naturally inclined towards the ultimate end. But the end in practical things has the notion of a natural principle. Therefore, the inclination of the will is a certain active principle in respect to every disposition that is acquired through exercise in the affective part. For it is manifest that the will itself, inasmuch as it is a power related in different ways (*utrumlibet se habens*) to the means (*quae sunt ad finem*), is susceptible of a habitual inclination into this or that.

Now the irascible and the concupiscible are naturally able to obey reason and are, therefore, naturally susceptible of virtue, which is brought to perfection in them to the degree they are disposed to follow the good of the reason.

All the aforementioned beginnings of the virtues follow upon the nature of the human species and are, therefore, common to everyone.<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8c.: "In homine triplex potest esse subiectum virtutis, sicut ex superioribus patet; scilicet intellectus, voluntas et appetitus inferior, qui in concupiscibilem et irascibilem dividitur. In unoquoque autem est considerare aliquo modo et susceptibilitatem virtutis et principium activum virtutis. Manifestum est enim quod in parte intellectiva est intellectus possibilis, qui est in potentia ad omnia intelligibilia, in quorum cognitione consistit intellectualis virtus; et intellectus agens, cuius lumine intelligibilia fiunt actu; quorum quaedam statim a principio naturaliter homini innotescunt absque studio et inquisitione: et huiusmodi sunt principia prima, non solum in speculativis, ut: omne totum est maius sua parte, et similia; sed etiam in operativis, ut: malum esse fugiendum, et huiusmodi. Haec autem naturaliter nota, sunt principia totius cognitionis sequentis, quae per studium acquiritur; sive sit practica,

The agent intellect is the principle of the subject of natural virtue<sup>247</sup> – which kind of virtue can pertain to either speculative notions that have no immediate import for practical matters or practical ones that more directly pertain to practical activity. In either case, the first naturally known principles are the foundation of all the knowledge that results from them. Similarly, the will is necessarily ordered towards the ultimate end, but anything that is a means towards this end (and is thus anything that is a kind of application of that end to something particular) is able to vary; as a consequence, an inclination that follows upon the natural will is necessary if someone is to be habitually inclined regarding certain particular goods. There thus arises the need for virtues in the sensitive appetites as well. These appetites are apt to obey the reason, but need to be continually guided in that direction. In other words, they need to be habituated to obey reason. Aquinas, continuing his explanation of the natural seeds of virtue, elaborates:

All of the aforementioned beginnings of the virtues follow upon the nature of the human species and are, therefore, common to all. Now there is a certain beginning of virtue, which is attendant upon the nature of the individual inasmuch as some man is inclined by either his natural disposition (*complexione*) or celestial influence (*caelesti impressione*) to an act of some virtue. And this inclination is, indeed, a kind of beginning of virtue, but it is not a perfected virtue, because a perfected virtue requires the moderation that comes

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*sive sit speculativa. Similiter autem circa voluntatem manifestum est quod est aliquod principium activum naturale. Nam voluntas naturaliter inclinatur in ultimum finem. Finis autem in operativis habet rationem principii naturalis. Ergo inclinatio voluntatis est quoddam principium activum respectu omnis dispositionis, quae per exercitium in parte affectiva acquiritur. Manifestum autem est quod ipsa voluntas, in quantum est potentia ad utrumlibet se habens, in his quae sunt ad finem, est susceptiva habitualis inclinationis in haec vel in illa. Irascibilis autem et concupiscibilis naturaliter sunt obaudibiles rationi: unde naturaliter sunt susceptivae virtutis, quae in eis perficitur, secundum quod disponuntur ad bonum rationis sequendum. Et omnes praedictae inchoationes virtutum consequuntur naturam speciei humanae unde et omnibus sunt communes.*

<sup>247</sup> In *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 13, Thomas says the agent intellect, which is that whereby the intelligible in potency becomes intelligible in act, is not the subject of habits (and thus it is not the subject of virtues) and adds that the possible intellect has this role. We must, therefore, call the agent intellect the principle/foundation of the subject of virtue and not the subject of virtue *simpliciter*.

from the reason. Accordingly, reason is placed in the definition of virtue because virtue is something pertaining to choice of means according to right reason.<sup>248</sup> For if someone would follow an inclination of this sort without discretion, he would frequently sin. And just as if this beginning of virtue were devoid of reason's activity, it would not have the *ratio* of perfected virtue, so neither would any of the other aforementioned beginnings of virtue. For one arrives at that which is specific [by proceeding from] universal principles by means of reason's examination (*inquisitionem*). It is also by means of reason's official duty that a man is led from the appetite of the last end towards those things that are befitting that end. By commanding the irascible and concupiscible appetites, reason also makes them subject to itself. So it is manifest that the work of reason is required for the consummation of virtue; whether the virtue be in the intellect, or in the will, or in the irascible or concupiscible appetite. It is, then, clear from this that the reason, which is superior, works for the completion of every virtue. For the operative principle which is reason is different from (*dividitur contra*) the operative principle which is nature (as is clear in the second book of the *Physics*) because the rational power relates to opposites whereas nature is ordered to one. It is obvious, then, that the perfection of virtue is not from nature but from reason.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>248</sup>This is Aristotle's definition, which says in its complete form, "Virtue, then, is a habit (ἔξις), resulting from choice (προαιρετική), lying in the middle [of two extremes] relative to us and determined by reason as a prudent man would determine it" (ἡ ἀρετὴ ἔξις προαιρετική, ἐν μεσότητι οὖσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὁρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ᾧ ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὁρίσειεν; *Nicomachean Ethics (Greek)*, ed. J. Bywater (Medford, MA: Perseus Digital Library, 1894), Bk. 2, ch. 6 (1107a.1)). The Latin of Thomas reads, *quod est electiva medii secundum rationem rectam*.

<sup>249</sup>*De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8, con'd.: *Et omnes praedictae inchoationes virtutum consequuntur naturam speciei humanae unde et omnibus sunt communes. Est autem aliqua inchoatio virtutis, quae consequitur naturam individui, secundum quod aliquis homo ex naturali complexione vel caelesti impressione inclinatur ad actum alicuius virtutis. Et haec quidem inclinatio est quaedam virtutis inchoatio; non tamen est virtus perfecta; quia ad virtutem perfectam requiritur moderatio rationis: unde et in definitione virtutis ponitur, quod est electiva medii secundum rationem rectam. Si enim aliquis absque rationis discretionem inclinationem huiusmodi sequeretur, frequenter peccaret. Et sicut haec virtutis inchoatio absque rationis opere, perfectae virtutis rationem non habet, ita nec aliqua praemissarum. Nam ex universalibus principiis in specialia pervenitur per inquisitionem rationis. Rationis etiam officio ex appetitu ultimi finis homo deducitur in ea quae sunt convenientia illi fini. Ipsa etiam ratio imperando irascibilem et concupiscibilem facit sibi esse subiectas. Unde manifestum est quod ad consummationem virtutis requiritur opus rationis; sive virtus sit in intellectu, sive sit in voluntate, sive in irascibili et concupiscibili ... Unde etiam manifestum est, quod ratio, quae est superior, operatur ad completionem omnis virtutis. Dividitur autem principium operativum quod est ratio, contra principium operativum quod est natura, ut patet in II Phys.; eo quod rationalis potestas est ad opposita, natura autem ordinatur ad unum. Unde manifestum est quod perfectio virtutis non est a natura, sed a ratione.*

We can see in this quote from this first question of *De Virtutibus* something similar to what he says in the *Summa* about the importance of the examination or inquiry (*inquisitionem*) of reason. Though there is a natural inclination to virtue in man precisely because he has a natural disposition to perform acts that are consonant with his rational form, "many actions are made to come about in accordance with virtue" precisely because reason's inquiry makes them come about.<sup>250</sup>

The guiding influence of reason, of course, is made possible by the virtue of prudence which is placed in the definition of moral virtue as the intellectual virtue that "directs all the [moral] virtues."<sup>251</sup> Without its moderating influence, the moral virtues (or, rather, the inclinations which have potencies of becoming moral virtues and which are present in the will or the lower appetites) would not be perfected<sup>252</sup> virtues because "moral virtue only has the *ratio* of virtue to the degree it participates in intellectual virtue."<sup>253</sup> Aquinas goes so far as to suggest prudence is "in a certain measure an efficient cause" of moral virtue.<sup>254</sup> The importance of

<sup>250</sup> I-II, q. 94 a. 3 c.: *Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem. Unde secundum hoc, omnes actus virtutum sunt de lege naturali, dictat enim hoc naturaliter unicuique propria ratio, ut virtuose agat. Sed si loquamur de actibus virtuosus secundum seipsos, prout scilicet in propriis speciebus considerantur, sic non omnes actus virtuosus sunt de lege naturae. Multa enim secundum virtutem fiunt, ad quae natura non primo inclinatur; sed per rationis inquisitionem ea homines adinvenerunt, quasi utilia ad bene vivendum.*

<sup>251</sup> I-II, q. 58 a. 2 ad 4: *recta ratio, quae est secundum prudentiam, ponitur in definitione virtutis moralis, non tanquam pars essentiae eius, sed sicut quiddam participatum in omnibus virtutibus moralibus, inquantum prudentia dirigit omnes virtutes morales.*

<sup>252</sup> By translating *perfectae virtutis rationem non habet* (in *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8) as, "it would not have the *ratio* of perfect virtue" I may have made it sound as if a natural inclination would be a virtue without prudence, but in the strict sense, a moral virtue must make the one possessing it good and natural inclination does not ensure this.

<sup>253</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.5 ad 1: *illa definitio non datur de virtute in communi, sed de virtute morali; in cuius definitione convenienter ponitur virtus intellectualis, communicans in materia cum ipsa, scilicet prudentia: quia sicut virtutis moralis subjectum est aliquid participans rationem, ita virtus moralis habet rationem virtutis, inquantum participat virtutem intellectualem.*

<sup>254</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 12 ad 16: *Ad decimum sextum dicendum, quod ratio recta prudentiae non ponitur in definitione virtutis moralis, quasi aliquid de essentia eius existens; sed sicut causa quodammodo*

prudence to perform its "official duty" of leading man "from the appetite of the last end towards those things that are befitting that end"<sup>255</sup> is evident in another section of the first question of *De Virtutibus*:

The comment of Cicero [virtue ... acts in the manner of nature / *virtus ... agit in modum naturae*] is understood in regard to the inclination of the appetite tending towards some common good, such as acting courageously or something of the sort. But unless it be directed by the judgment of reason, such an inclination would frequently be led to a precipice and all the more so to the degree it is more vehement; as the example the Philosopher gives in the sixth book of the *Ethics* about the blind person who gets injured yet more when running into a wall if he is a fast runner.<sup>256</sup>

In a sense, the "right reason about contingent things"<sup>257</sup> that is prudence transcends nature even prescinding from the question of whether or not it is infused prudence (which is strictly speaking the only true prudence<sup>258</sup>). This explains the notion that "the operative principle which is reason is different from the operative principle which is nature" that we saw above.<sup>259</sup> Prudence goes

*effectiva ipsius, vel per participationem. Nam virtus moralis nihil aliud est quam participatio quaedam rationis rectae in parte appetitiva, ut in superioribus dictum est. Similarly, he says in replying to the second objection of article six: prudentia... non parum sed multum confert ad virtutem; immo ipsam virtutem causat.*

<sup>255</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8.

<sup>256</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 6 ad 4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod verbum Tullii intelligitur quantum ad inclinationem appetitus tendentis in aliquod bonum commune, sicut in fortiter agere, vel aliquid huiusmodi. Sed nisi rationis iudicio dirigeretur, talis inclinatio frequenter duceretur in praecipitium; et tanto magis, quanto esset vehementior; sicut ponit philosophus exemplum de caeco, in VI Ethic., qui tanto magis laeditur ad parietem impingens, quanto fortius currit.*

inclinations to virtue do not become perfect or true virtues until prudence.

<sup>257</sup> *Sententia De Anima*, bk. 3 lectio 4 # 16; *S.Th.* I, q. 22 a 2 obj. 1.

<sup>258</sup> I-II, q. 65 a. 2 c.: "The moral virtues, inasmuch as they pertain to good works that are ordered to an end that does not surpass the natural power of man, are able to be acquired by human works. In this way, the acquired virtues are able to be without charity as was the case for many gentiles. However, inasmuch as they pertain to good works that are ordered to the ultimate supernatural end, they perfectly and truly have the character of virtue and are not able to be acquired by human acts, but are infused by God."

<sup>259</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8: *Dividitur autem principium operativum quod est ratio, contra principium operativum quod est natura, ut patet in II Phys.; eo quod rationalis potestas est ad opposita, natura autem ordinatur ad unum.* Of course, "nature" here is being taken in a restrictive sense (i.e., in regard to inclinations) in order to distinguish reason *qua* transcending inclinations. Strictly speaking though, reason



beyond the natural reason precisely because it is able to order one thing to another by a process of ratiocination in virtue of what is sometimes called "reason as reason," which is explained as follows in *De Veritate*:

"Reason as nature" is understood to refer to the reason being compared to those things one naturally knows or desires, whereas "reason as reason" is understood to refer to the reason inasmuch as it is ordered to knowing or desiring [something] since it is the proper function of the reason to make a comparison. Now there are certain things that when considered in themselves ought to be shunned and yet are desired due to the way they are ordered to something else: as hunger and thirst are to be shunned when considered in themselves and yet they are desired to the extent they are considered as useful for the health of the soul or the body. And thus "reason as reason" rejoices in them whereas "reason as nature" is saddened by them.<sup>260</sup>

Because prudence is able to reason properly in the sense that it is not limited to natural impulses, it can ensure the appetites are not "led to a precipice" while rushing headlong. At the same time, when it performs the duty that is proper to it (i.e., the ordering of "contingent future things, inasmuch as they are orderable by man to the end of human life"), it does so while presupposing "certain things that are necessary on account of the end and which are subjected to divine providence" *qua* absolutely necessary.<sup>261</sup> Those things that are necessary on account of the

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pertains to man's nature as well. For this reason, Thomas only divides them (at least to my knowledge) when making this particular distinction.

<sup>260</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 26, a.9 ad 7: *dicamus rationem ut naturam intelligi secundum quod ratio comparatur ad ea quae naturaliter cognoscit vel appetit; rationem vero ut rationem, secundum quod per quamdam collationem ordinatur ad aliquid cognoscendum vel appetendum, eo quod rationis est proprium conferre. Sunt enim quaedam quae secundum se considerata sunt fugienda, appetuntur vero secundum ordinem ad aliud: sicut fames et sitis secundum se considerata sunt fugienda; prout autem considerantur ut utilia ad salutem animae vel corporis, sic appetuntur. Et sic ratio ut ratio de eis gaudet, ratio vero ut natura de eis tristatur.*

<sup>261</sup> II-II, q. 49 a. 6 c.: *prudencia proprie est circa ea quae sunt ad finem; et hoc ad ejus officium proprie pertinet, ut ad finem debite ordinentur: et quamvis aliqua necessaria sint propter finem, quae subjiciuntur divinae providentiae, humanae tamen providentiae non subjiciuntur nisi contingentia operabilia, quae*

ultimate end, though, are things pertaining to the natural law which is so close to the eternal law in which it participates that it is not "something different" from it according to Thomas.<sup>262</sup> For this reason, it must be said that as important as prudence is in applying first principles and rectifying appetites, the starting point<sup>263</sup> of its process of reasoning "as reason" is the natural reason, which retains a kind of primacy because "all dialectical reasoning (*omnis ratiocinatio*) is derived from the principles that are naturally known."<sup>264</sup> According to the analysis provided by Aquinas in II-II q. 47, prudence (which, again, is "right reason about contingent matters"<sup>265</sup> or "right reason about doable things"<sup>266</sup>) tends to the end appointed (*praestitutum*) by the natural reason and thus is moved by it just as the habit of knowledge is moved by the understanding (i.e., the intellectual virtue pertaining to speculative principles).<sup>267</sup> Though we need to return to this central question as he seemed to argue otherwise in I-II, q. 66, he says something similar in the *Prima Pars*: "although our intellect acts on its own in regard to some things, others are appointed in advance (*praestituta*) by nature, as are the first principles to which everyone has a necessary

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*per hominem possunt fieri propter finem: praeterita autem in necessitatem quamdam transeunt: quia impossibile est, non esse quod factum est: similiter etiam praesentia, inquantum hujusmodi, necessitatem quamdam habent: necesse est enim Socratem sedere, dum sedet; unde consequens est, quod contingentia futura, secundum quod sunt per hominem in finem humanae vitae ordinabilia, pertineant ad prudentiam: utrumque autem horum importatur in nomine providentiae: importat enim providentia respectum quemdam alicujus distantis ad ea [al. ad quod ea] quae in praesenti occurrunt, et ordinanda sunt; unde providentia est pars prudentiae.*

<sup>262</sup> I-II, q. 91 a. 2 ad 1: *ratio illa procederet, si lex naturalis esset aliquid diversum a lege aeterna: non autem est nisi quaedam participatio ejus,*

<sup>263</sup> At least if God and nature itself are left out of the consideration.

<sup>264</sup> I-II, q. 91 a. 2 ad 2: *omnis ratiocinatio derivatur a principiis naturaliter notis.*

<sup>265</sup> *Sententia De Anima*, bk. 3 lectio 4 # 16; *S.Th.* I, q. 22 a 2 obj. 1.

<sup>266</sup> See II-II, q. 47 a. 2 s.c., II-II, q. 47 a. 8 c., *Quodlibet* XII, q. 15 c., *et passim.*

<sup>267</sup> II-II q.47 a.6 ad 3: *finis non pertinet ad virtutes morales, tamquam ipsae praestituant finem; sed quia tendunt in finem a ratione naturali praestitutum: ad quod juvantur per prudentiam, quae eis viam parat, disponendo ea quae sunt ad finem; unde relinquitur, quod prudentia sit nobilior virtutibus moralibus, et moveat eas: sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam.*

relationship (*circa quae non potest aliter se habere*) and also the last end, which one is not able not to will."<sup>268</sup>

We might tend to think that if God wanted us to be truly perfect, we should have the ability to think as we wish about any given thing without being limited by nature, but for Aquinas, a kind of natural habit or virtue<sup>269</sup> is indispensable. Even God himself, who necessarily acts in accord with his own infinite goodness, cannot will something impossible and is only able to will things that are (or are able to be) good.<sup>270</sup> So we should not be surprised if rational creatures are also called to conform themselves to the good even if it excludes that which is not good. One of the ways he shows this is by observing that the natural inclination of anything at all is for its own operation. Just as something warm such as fire naturally inclines to heating something else and something heavy naturally inclines to descending, man naturally inclines to the operation that is proper to him as a man, namely to understand.<sup>271</sup> The act of understanding is good for man as one of those things providentially necessary for the ultimate end, so whatever

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<sup>268</sup> *S.Th. q. 1 a. 3c.: Sed quamvis intellectus noster ad aliqua se agat, tamen aliqua sunt ei praestituta a natura; sicut sunt prima principia, circa quae non potest aliter se habere, et ultimus finis, quem non potest non velle. Unde, licet quantum ad aliquid moveat se, tamen oportet quod quantum ad aliqua ab alio moveatur.*

<sup>269</sup> 'Virtue' is used equivocally in Thomas. On many levels, a natural virtue would be not virtue at all. This would be the case whether it were divided against acquired or infused virtue (the three kinds of habit enumerated in *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 4 c. are natural, acquired and infused). At the same time, 'virtus' essentially means 'power' and natural virtue is a kind of power; moreover, it adds to the notion of 'disposition' that it is firm and habitual and thus on this level, even something natural can be considered a virtue (the *Catechism of the Catholic Church's* definition of virtue is precisely that it is "an habitual and firm disposition to do the good." See, § 1803).

<sup>270</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1 ch. 84: "According as a thing is related to being, so is it related to goodness. But impossibles are things that cannot be. Therefore they cannot be good. Neither therefore can they be willed by God, Who wills only the things that are or can be good."

Saint Thomas Aquinas, Fathers of the English Dominican Province, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 1 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 181.

<sup>271</sup> *Sententia Metaphysicae*, librum 1 l. 1 # 3: *Secundo, quia quaelibet res naturalem inclinationem habet ad suam propriam operationem: sicut calidum ad calefaciendum, et grave ut deorsum moveatur. Propria autem operatio hominis inquantum homo, est intelligere.*

the perfect good is for humans, it must at least be founded upon this connatural good. Aquinas elaborates:

The nature of any given thing is chiefly the form from which the species of the thing is derived. Now man is established in his species through his rational soul. Therefore, whatever is contrary to the order of the reason is properly contrary to man's nature inasmuch as he is a man [i.e., inasmuch as he is not just an animal, but a rational one] while that which is in accord with reason is in accordance with man's nature, inasmuch as he is a man. Now, the good of man is to be in accord with reason and his evil is to place himself beyond reason's reach (*est praeter rationem esse*)<sup>272</sup>... wherefore, human virtue, which makes a man good and renders his work good, is in accordance with the nature of man insofar as it accords with his reason.<sup>273</sup>

It is through the operation of understanding that man differs from other animals because his form, which is the principle of his action, is rational and thus has an end appointed to it by God that befits its rationality.<sup>274</sup> As a consequence, the desire of man naturally inclines towards

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<sup>272</sup> Although *praeter* could possibly be translated as 'against,' it usually signifies being beyond in some way. It is bad for man to act outside of reason's reach if he does so intentionally (as Thomas teaches when speaking about consequent ignorance) just as it is bad to act directly against the judgment of reason known as conscience (see, *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4). I have also rendered *praeter* in this way in view of the fact that man appoints to himself the end, albeit while presupposing his natural ordering to the common end, which is the perfect good. If a man were beyond reason's reach unintentionally (such as by scratching himself without deliberating about it), it would not be an evil act, as Aquinas explicitly says in I-II, q. 18 a. 9c. He must, therefore, be referring here to an act that is intentionally beyond reason's reach in some way.

<sup>273</sup> I-II, q. 71 a. 2 c.: *natura uniuscujusque rei potissime est forma, secundum quam res speciem sortitur: homo autem in specie constituitur per animam rationalem; et ideo id, quod est contra ordinem rationis, proprie est contra naturam hominis, inquantum est homo: quod autem est secundum rationem, est secundum naturam hominis, inquantum est homo: bonum autem hominis est secundum rationem esse, et malum hominis est praeter rationem esse, ut Dionys. dicit 4. cap. de Div. Nom. (part. 4. lect. 22.); unde virtus humana, quae hominem facit bonum, et opus ipsius bonum reddit, intantum est secundum naturam hominis, inquantum convenit rationi: vitium autem intantum est contra naturam hominis, quantum est contra ordinem rationis.* See Oderberg's discussion of this passage and Finnis' take on it on page 70 of *Natural Moral Law in Contemporary Society* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2010): 44-75.

<sup>274</sup> II-II, q. 23 a. 2 c.: *Nullus autem actus perfecte producit ab aliqua potentia activa, nisi sit ei connaturalis per aliquam formam, quae sit principium actionis; unde Deus, qui omnia movet ad debitos fines, singulis rebus indidit formas, per quas inclinantur ad fines sibi praestitutos a Deo: et secundum hoc disponit omnia suaviter, ut dicitur Sap. 8.*

intellectual activity<sup>275</sup> and towards acting "according to reason - and this is to act according to virtue."<sup>276</sup> This natural desire to live in accordance with reason is, for Thomas, so strong that the human will naturally inclines to ends that are possessed in the practical reason by the natural habit of synderesis:

There is not able to be a moral virtue in the will in regard to the end (*ex parte illa qua est de fine*) because the end is the principle in practical activities (*operativis*<sup>277</sup>). Therefore, just as there are innate principles of demonstrations in the speculative reason, so in the practical reason there are innate ends that are connatural to man. Thus, there is no acquired or infused habit about these ends, but only natural, as synderesis - which Aristotle posits to be the understanding of practical affairs.<sup>278</sup>

Aquinas goes on to say the natural desire for the end can be understood in terms of a natural agreement (*communicatio*) by which "it comes about that the appetite, naturally joined to the

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<sup>275</sup> *Sententia Metaphysicae*, librum 1 l. 1 # 3: *Secundo, quia quaelibet res naturalem inclinationem habet ad suam propriam operationem: sicut calidum ad calefaciendum, et grave ut deorsum moveatur. Propria autem operatio hominis inquantum homo, est intelligere. Per hoc enim ab omnibus aliis differt. Unde naturaliter desiderium hominis inclinatur ad intelligendum, et per consequens ad sciendum; S.Th., I, q. 62 a. 2 c.: Naturalis autem inclinatio voluntatis est ad id quod est conveniens secundum naturam.* The consequence of this principle is that since that which essentially distinguishes humans from other animals within the genus of 'animal' is that they are rational (in other words, since reason is the specific difference), humans have a natural volitional inclination to follow the dictates of reason.

<sup>276</sup> I-II, q. 94 a. 3 c.: *Inclinatur autem unumquodque naturaliter ad operationem sibi convenientem secundum suam formam, sicut ignis ad calefaciendum. Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria forma hominis, naturalis inclinatio inest cuilibet homini ad hoc quod agat secundum rationem. Et hoc est agere secundum virtutem.*

<sup>277</sup> The Thomistic Lexicon has "belonging to or concerning the operative and the active, the opposite of *speculativus* and *theoricus*" for this word. Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 772.

<sup>278</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 4 c.: *sicut in voluntate non potest esse virtus moralis ex parte illa qua est finis, propter naturalem inclinationem, ita etiam nec in ratione ex parte illa qua est de fine, quia finis est principium in operativis. Unde sicut in ratione speculativa sunt innata principia demonstrationum, ita in ratione practica sunt innati fines connaturales homini; unde circa illa non est habitus acquisitus aut infusus, sed naturalis, sicut synderesis, loco cuius philosophus in 6 Ethic. ponit intellectum in operativis.*

reason, tends to conform itself to the reason as to a rule<sup>279</sup> - and from this the will is naturally inclined to the end, which is naturally implanted in the reason."<sup>280</sup>

So is it possible to locate the perfect good in nature or natural reason? There are actually many reasons why the perfect good of happiness cannot be attained by simply allowing nature to run its course and acting 'naturally' on the pretext that nature does nothing in vain (and will thus surely lead to perfection). One reason is that the natural reason is not specific enough to lead a person to do what is perfectly good for him in the present moment and that a man consequently needs the ratiocination of prudence to guide him towards enacting its norms in a virtuous manner. Though Aquinas speaks of "certain natural virtues" which provide some men and women with the ability to make correct judgments in regard to particular right ends (*rectos fines*), he insists the knowledge of the means towards those ends is something that can be in no one naturally. For this reason, prudence is necessary in matters of particular, practical actions.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> That reason is the rule of the will is also evident from the following. I-II, q. 19 a. 4c.: *ratio humana sit regula voluntatis humanae, ex qua ejus bonitas mensuretur*; I-II, q. 64 a. 1 c.: *mensura autem, et regula appetitivi motus circa appetibilia est ipsa ratio*; I-II, q. 90 a. 1 c.: *regula autem, et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est principium primum actuum humanorum*.

<sup>280</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 4 c.: *naturalis inclinatio ad finem aliquem est ex praestituente naturam, qui talem ordinem naturae tribuit; ideo naturalis inclinatio voluntatis ad finem non est ex ratione, nisi forte secundum naturalem communicantiam, qua fit ut appetitus rationi conjunctus naturaliter tendat ad conformandum se rationi sicut regulae; et ex hoc est quod voluntas est naturaliter inclinata ad finem, qui naturaliter rationi est inditus*. This might make it seem as if justice, which is in the will, is not an acquired virtue, but even in the *Scriptum*, he speaks of acquired justice as contrasted with infused justice. See, *Super Script.* III, d.40 q.1 a. 3 (cf., *De Veritate*, q. 28 a. 3 & I-II, q. 100 a. 12).

<sup>281</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 15c.: *quantum autem ad particularem cognitionem eorum, circa quae operatio consistit, est iterum distinguendum: quia operatio consistit circa aliquid, vel sicut circa finem, vel sicut circa ea quae sunt ad finem:*

*fines autem recti humanae vitae sunt determinati; et ideo potest esse naturalis inclinatio respectu horum finium; sicut supra dictum est (I-2. q. 63. art. 1. et 2.), quod quidam habent ex naturali dispositione quasdam virtutes, quibus inclinantur ad rectos fines; et per consequens etiam habent naturaliter rectum iudicium de hujusmodi finibus: sed ea quae sunt ad finem in rebus humanis non sunt determinata, sed multipliciter diversificantur secundum diversitatem personarum, et negotiorum; unde quia inclinatio naturae semper est ad aliquid determinatum, talis cognitio non potest homini inesse naturaliter; licet ex naturali dispositione unus sit aptior ad hujusmodi discernenda, quam alius; sicut etiam accidit circa conclusiones speculativarum scientiarum: quia ego prudentia non est circa fines, sed circa ea quae sunt ad finem, ut supra habitum est (art. 6. huj. q.), ideo prudentia non est naturalis.*

A further reason why the perfect good cannot be found in human nature itself is provided by Cajetan who argues the consequence of the human person being composed of both a sensitive part and a rational part in his very nature (*in puris naturalibus*) is that it is impossible for him not at sometime to turn indordinately more to one of those contraries than another.<sup>282</sup> Or, as Thomas himself said, "man is composed from contraries in regard to ... the appetite of the sense [the sensitive appetites, whether irascible or concupiscible] and the appetite of the intellect [the will]."<sup>283</sup> Necessarily, therefore, one must always exercise vigilance and cultivate habits of true virtue while transcending, in a sense, the merely the natural habit of either synderesis or some other natural 'virtue.' Otherwise, he will not be able to know and pursue the ends that are truly best suited to the dignity of his rational nature. Even while presupposing moral virtues, Thomas speaks of the need of prudence's guidance so that he may do so:

Moral virtue intends to attain the mean by way of nature. But because the mean as such is not found in the same way in everyone, it follows that the inclination of nature, that always works in the same way, does not suffice for this purpose, but requires the ruling (*ratio*) of prudence.<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> See the Leonine edition of the *Summa*, commentary on I-II, q. 109 article 2; *Sancti Thomae Aquinatis Doctoris Angelici Opera Omnia Iussu Impensaue Leonis XIII. P.M., Tomus Septimus* (Romae: De Propaganda Fide, 1892), 292.

<sup>283</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 4 q. 2 a. 1 qc. 3 c.: *Baptismus aufert; sed non aufert actu infectionem prout afficit naturam: quod patet ex hoc quod baptizatus per actum naturae originale transmittit in prolem, similiter nec poenas quae consequuntur principia naturae destitutae gratia innocentiae primi status, cujusmodi sunt rebellio carnis ad spiritum, mors, et huiusmodi poenalitates, quae consequuntur ex hoc ipso quod homo ex contrariis compositus est et quantum ad corpus et quantum ad animam quodammodo, scilicet quantum ad appetitum sensus et intellectus.*

<sup>284</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 7 ad 3: *virtus moralis per modum naturae intendit pervenire ad medium. Sed quia medium, secundum quod medium, non eodem modo invenitur in omnibus; ideo inclinatio naturae, quae semper eodem modo operatur, ad hoc non sufficit, sed requiritur ratio prudentiae.*

At the end of this chapter, we will see that original sin altered the moral landscape such that man needed healing grace to do even things that are connatural to his nature.<sup>285</sup> Even "the natural reason was beclouded by the lusts of sin."<sup>286</sup> Prescinding from this consideration, though, it seems there is a tension in nature itself between the reason and the appetites because, as Cajetan says, intellectual goods and bodily ones do not always align.<sup>287</sup> For example, someone may need to direct his attention towards procuring food even when doing so would hamper the apprehension of universal truth - or *vice versa*. In either case, the individual could be excessively drawn in one direction when he should be pursuing the other. Although Adam enjoyed the praeternatural gift of integrity, this is not something man enjoys in virtue of nature itself. Reason, then, must exercise some kind of rule over all the person's actions.

Though the truths made known by the *natural* reason<sup>288</sup> are indispensable, habits of virtue also have to be developed in man due to the deliberative reason. Such is both the burden and the dignity of humans. They partake more perfectly in divine providence (which is a *ratio* existing in the divine mind<sup>289</sup>) by being providential over themselves and others thanks to their possession of reason. Because they have foresight in virtue of the faculty of reason, they are able to not only appoint for themselves (*praestituunt*) ends that are implanted in them by nature, but to rise above

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<sup>285</sup> See, I-II, q. 109 a. 3 c.

<sup>286</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 22 a. 1 ad 1: *tamen ad ea etiam, ad quae naturalis ratio inclinatur, sicut sunt actus virtutum moralium, necessarium fuit praecepta legis divinae dari, propter maiorem firmitatem: et praecipue quia naturalis ratio hominis obtenebrata erat per concupiscentias peccati.*

<sup>287</sup> See the Leonine edition of the *Summa*, commentary on I-II, q. 109 article 2 (sect. IV). This, for him, would even be the case in the state of pure nature: *in puris naturalibus contrariantur appetitus sensibilis et rationalis, dum non plene rationali subiicitur sensibilis, sed sit liber, tendens quandoque in proprium bonum praeter rationis ordinem* (In [a state of] purely natural endowments, the sensitive and the rational appetites are at odds when the sensitive appetite is not fully subjected to the rational appetite but instead is free, at times tending to its private good apart from the order of reason).

<sup>288</sup> In the precise sense articulated above—more widely, we speak of “natural reason” as encompassing both senses.

<sup>289</sup> See I. q. 22 a 1 where providence is called a *ratio ordinandum in finem* that is *in mente divina*.



mere instinct and pursue ends that "they themselves appoint" and that is what sets them apart from irrational animals.<sup>290</sup> As Shakespeare says:

What is a man  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he that hath made us with such large discourse,  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To fust in us unused.<sup>291</sup>

Reason (considered now as distinct from *intellectus* or *synderesis*) is discursive and not merely directed to one by a kind of simple apprehension. It pertains to an act of comparing two things (an act of composing and dividing) and to "particular doable things that are contingent" which means its judgment "has itself diversely to more than one [conclusion] and is not determined to one." It is, in a word, the very foundation of *liberum arbitrium*, the judgment that is frequently called free will.<sup>292</sup> Thanks to reason, man is able to reflect upon his natural "inclinations to his proper acts and ends"<sup>293</sup> and the teleological order in which all creatures

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<sup>290</sup> I-II, q. 18 a. 3 c.: *Sed quamvis hujusmodi animalia formam, quae est principium motus, per sensum accipiant, non tamen per seipsa praestituunt sibi finem suae operationis, vel sui motus, sed est eis inditus a natura, cujus instinctu ad aliquid agendum moventur per formam sensu apprehensam. Unde supra talia animalia sunt illa, quae movent seipsa, etiam habito respectu ad finem, quem sibi praestituunt. Quod quidem non fit, nisi per rationem, et intellectum, cujus est cognoscere proportionem finis, et ejus, quod est ad finem, et unum ordinare in alterum.*

<sup>291</sup> Hamlet, Act IV, Scene 4: William Shakespeare, *Complete Plays* (New York: Fall River Press, 2012), 699.

<sup>292</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a. 1 c.: *Sed quia iudicium istud non est ex naturali instinctu in particulari operabili, sed ex collatione quadam rationis, ideo agit libero iudicio, potens in diversa ferri: ratio enim circa contingens [al. contingentia] habet viam ad opposita, ut patet in Dialecticis syllogismis, et Rhetoricis persuasionibus: particularia autem operabilia sunt quaedam contingentia et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum. Et pro tanto necesse est, quod homo sit liberi arbitrii ex hoc ipso, quod rationalis est.*

<sup>293</sup> I-II q 91 a 2 c.: *Omnia participant aliquantulum legem aeternam; inquantum scilicet ex impressione ejus habent inclinationes in proprios actus, et fines.*

passively participate. In view of what he finds, he can act accordingly and attain the happiness that is proper to him as the rational animal we call 'man.'

## 2. The Perfect Good and Moral Virtue

As Long observes, happiness "is not merely subjective fulfillment, but the achievement of the good" by which is meant the "achievement of those ends that define a good life, and this is the work of a lifetime, a work requiring both practical and speculative virtue as authentically perfective of the person."<sup>294</sup> Happiness is not merely a feeling of satisfaction or joy. As the "common end of all the moral virtues,"<sup>295</sup> it implies, for wayfarers, the need to improve moral dispositions through repeated good actions. Though it may not be desired under this *ratio* since the idea of expending energy is not always an attractive prospect, the perfect good in general always remains something we naturally desire.<sup>296</sup> Aquinas argues it can be demonstrated "by reason" (that is, by using philosophical arguments) that happiness is the reward of virtue, suggesting, first of all, that the idea is not an indemonstrable axiom, but also that virtue is not identical with happiness (even if it is so closely united with it that we might think it is). His

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<sup>294</sup> Steven Long, *The Teleological Grammar of the Moral Act, Second Edition* (Naples, Florida: Sapientia Press, 2015), 69.

<sup>295</sup> *De Malo*, q. 8 a. 1 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum quod sicut in virtutibus consideratur duplex finis, scilicet finis ultimus et communis, qui est felicitas, et finis proprius qui est bonum proprium uniuscuiusque virtutis*; I-II, q. 60 a. 1 obj. 3: *finis omnium virtutum moralium communis est unus, scilicet felicitas*.

<sup>296</sup> I-II q.5 a.8 ad 2: "Since the will follows the apprehension of the intellect or reason; just as it happens that where there is no real distinction, there may be a distinction according to the consideration of reason; so does it happen that one and the same thing is desired in one way, and not desired in another. So that happiness may be considered as the final and perfect good, which is the general notion of happiness: and thus the will naturally and of necessity tends thereto, as stated above. Again it can be considered under other special aspects, either on the part of the operation itself, or on the part of the operating power, or on the part of the object; and thus the will does not tend thereto of necessity." Translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.).

argument in his letter to the King of Cyprus makes it clear he has in mind moral and not natural virtue:

This is manifested by reason because it is implanted in the reason of everyone using it (*ratione utentium inditum*) that happiness is the reward of virtue. Now the virtue of anything whatsoever is described as that which makes the one having it good and renders his deed good.<sup>297</sup> Now that which anyone strives to attain by acting well is that which is most deeply implanted in his desire. Now this is to be happy, which no one is able to not will. That which makes man happy, then, is fittingly expected to be the reward of virtue.<sup>298</sup>

The desire of nature is to act well and attain virtue so as to attain complete fulfillment. Ironically, though, one in a sense has to transcend nature to do so. The primary way this is true, of course, is that supernatural grace must lead one to a supernatural end by supernatural means (which we will turn our attention to at the end of the chapter). The other way in which one must actually transcend nature in order to fulfill it is by submitting to the reason's guidance as to the means to the end(s) pointed out by the natural reason.

If the foundation of synderesis is presupposed, in other words, we must go further than that and apply those principles to particular situations, which means its principles must be carried into individual actions. In a way, conscience does this because conscience is a "certain application of the first law, namely of the common principles, to particular acts."<sup>299</sup> In the case of

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<sup>297</sup> Aquinas explains in I-II, q. 55 a. 4 that this refers to moral virtue.

<sup>298</sup> *De Regno*, bk. 1 ch. 9: *Hoc autem ratione manifestatur. Est enim mentibus omnium ratione utentium inditum, virtutis praeium beatitudinem esse. Virtus enim uniuscuiusque rei describitur, quae bonum facit habentem, et opus eius bonum reddit. Ad hoc autem quisque bene operando nititur pervenire, quod est maxime desiderio inditum; hoc autem est esse felicem, quod nullus potest non velle. Hoc igitur praeium virtutis convenienter expectatur quod hominem beatum facit.*

<sup>299</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 3 a. 2 ad 3: *conscientia non est prima lex et primum dirigens in humanis actibus, sed quasi quaedam applicatio primae legis, scilicet principiorum communium, ad actus particulares.*

conscience, however, it applies those principles as if while speculating about them<sup>300</sup> and it arrives at conclusions based on the foundational principles of synderesis "indifferently;" i.e., in such a way that its dictate could be applicable in "the present or the past or the future."<sup>301</sup> Michel Therrien comments:

An important implication presents itself in this text. Because it is speculative, the judgment of conscience acquires motive force only if we have recourse to it in our free decisions. The judgment of conscience is practical by extension, but does not have motive force, except insofar as we allow it to exercise a determinative influence on our free-decision. Right practical reasoning, therefore, always results from a decision to use and follow our conscience.<sup>302</sup>

In a sense, then, conscience is in potency in regard to a particular right action. When prudence engages in its act of applying the judgment of conscience to particular circumstances and commands some singular action, the command itself and the action that ensues as a consequence of it entail a further actualization or perfection of the potency. At this point, one would squarely be in the realm of the practical. We might then, with John Naus, consider the judgment of conscience to be "*secundum quid* speculative" or *secundum quid* "theoretical,"<sup>303</sup> inasmuch as it

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<sup>300</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem iudicium conscientiae; sicut cum aliquis examinat aliquid quod imminet faciendum, et iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia, hoc esse malum, utpote fornicari cum hac muliere; sed quando incipit applicare ad agendum, occurrunt undique multae circumstantiae circa ipsum actum, ut puta fornicationis delectatio, ex cuius concupiscentia ligatur ratio, ne eius dictamen in electionem prorumpat. Et sic aliquis errat in eligendo, et non in conscientia; sed contra conscientiam facit: et dicitur hoc mala conscientia facere, in quantum factum iudicio scientiae non concordat. Et sic patet quod non oportet conscientiam esse idem quod liberum arbitrium.*

<sup>301</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q.2 a.4 c.: *conclusio autem, quae est, adulterium hoc esse vitandum, ad conscientiam pertinet, et indifferenter, sive sit de praesenti vel de praeterito vel futuro.*

<sup>302</sup> Michel Therrien: *Law, Liberty and Virtue: A Thomistic Defense for the Pedagogical Character of Law. Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Theology of the University of Fribourg (Switzerland) for the Degree of Doctor in Theology* (June 2007), 54-55.

<sup>303</sup> See pages 189 and 167 of *The Nature of the Practical Intellect according to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Libreria Editrice Dell' Universita Gregoriana, 1959). He places prudence in the category of the

remains more remote from the actual practical act than prudence is (and especially prudence's act of commanding). It does still pertain to practical matters and it is only theoretical in a qualified way (*secundum quid*), but its judgment is not at the point of being applied in a fully distinct and practical way. Commenting on the aforementioned *De Veritate* passage that spoke of conscience as speculating about principles, Naus writes:

Reason is the specifying, directing, ordering faculty... prudence, it is true, will be vitiated at its roots if the will is not rectified towards the end by the moral virtues. But the will rectified by moral virtues will not move to a virtuous choice of a singular concrete action unless reason perfected by prudence applies the correct judgment of conscience to particular circumstances of persons, place and time... The will rectified by moral virtues chooses what the practical reason prudently judges to be good for me here and now in light of what my conscience dictates.<sup>304</sup>

If someone is going to virtuously apply first principles that are naturally known to a tangible situation in such a way that the 'perfect good' will actually begin to be approached, he or she will have to go beyond merely applying some principles to a deed in an abstract or *secundum quid* theoretical way (in the sense that it may or may not be done). In other words, the judgment of conscience will have to be chosen. As Sherwin says, "the judgment of conscience ... only concludes in knowledge, while the judgment of choice concludes in action: the action that results when "knowledge is applied to affection."<sup>305</sup>

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"purely practical" and, in regard to conscience, he actually leaves it open whether it is *secundum quid* speculative or *secundum quid* practical, but since he calls its judgment theoretical, it seems he would have placed it in the former category if pressed on the matter (he had it listed with a number of other faculties/acts/etc.).

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., 189.

<sup>305</sup> *By Knowledge and By Love*, 36.

If that which conscience dictates is to be chosen and enacted virtuously, though, prudence is necessary since "the right choice of the means pertains to prudence."<sup>306</sup> One could, of course, make a choice about what we might call the proximate ends proposed by the judgment of conscience without prudence, but because prudence presupposes the rightly ordered appetites of the moral virtues, it ensures the proper application of the principles of the natural reason all the way down to a particular act taking place here and now in a virtuous manner in view of the circumstances and dispositions of the acting person. Thomas says, "the praise of prudence consists not in the consideration only, but in the application to a deed (*ad opus*)."<sup>307</sup> Although conscience also applies principles to a deed (*ad opus*),<sup>308</sup> prudence seems to go even further than conscience because it pertains to more than a kind of speculation about particular principles.<sup>309</sup>

The "perfection of virtue" requires being in accordance with right reason<sup>310</sup> and since humans are composed of body and soul, their sensitive appetites also ought to be conformed to reason. Unlike the will, the irascible and concupiscible appetites are not in themselves rational appetites that naturally incline towards following the reason. Instead, they are merely *able* to obey (*obedibiles*) it.<sup>311</sup> Reason only rules them as free subjects that are not "wholly subject to

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<sup>306</sup> II-II, q. 54 a. 2c.: *electio autem recta eorum quae sunt ad finem, ad prudentiam pertinet.*

<sup>307</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 1 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod laus prudentiae non consistit in sola consideratione, sed in applicatione ad opus, quod est finis practicae rationis.*

<sup>308</sup> *Super Rom.*, ch. 14 lect. 3: *Id enim quod universaliter fide tenemus, puta usum ciborum esse licitum vel illicitum, conscientia applicat ad opus quod est factum vel faciendum.*

<sup>309</sup> The example of the kind of principle that can be considered in a quasi-speculative mode by conscience given in the following pertains to not fornicating with a particular woman:

*Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem iudicium conscientiae; sicut cum aliquis examinat aliquid quod imminet faciendum, et iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia, hoc esse malum, utpote fornicari cum hac muliere (De Veritate, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4).*

<sup>310</sup> *S.Th.*, III, q. 15 a. 2 ad 1: *perfectio virtutis, quae est secundum rationem rectam.*

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*: *inferiores vires pertinentes ad sensibilem appetitum naturaliter sunt obedibiles rationi; Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 4 c.: *in appetitu autem inferiori est ex assuetudine, vel ex Dei dono, quantum ad sui complementum; sed aliqua ejus inchoatio etiam est a natura, inquantum est naturaliter obaudibilis rationi.*

*Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 3 a. 1 qc. 3 c.: *Ad rationem enim pertinet praecipere quod faciendum est, quia aliae vires obediunt aliquantulum rationi.*

command" and therefore Aquinas and Aristotle liken the sensitive appetites to free citizens living in a society under constitutional rule.<sup>312</sup> For this reason, virtuous habits that have been acquired by repeated acts (and are, therefore, not merely natural since a habit is a *second* nature) are, in a sense, especially necessary for the attainment of the perfect good in one's practical affairs. As Aquinas goes on to say in the passage from the *Scriptum*:

The habit perfecting the reason deliberating about the means [namely, prudence] presupposes an inclination of the appetite towards the end. This inclination [for the end] that is in the superior appetite known as the will is natural. But in the inferior appetite, it is either from custom or from a gift of God in regard to its attainment. There is, however, some beginning of it from nature inasmuch as it is naturally able to obey the reason (*naturaliter obaudibilis rationi*). In this, then, prudence differs from continence: the continent person has perfect reason about those things that are for the end, presupposing, however, the natural inclination for the end, whereas the prudent person's presupposed inclination is either from an acquired or infused virtue in his lower powers. As the Philosopher says, therefore, it has its principles in the moral virtues.<sup>313</sup>

The continent man reasons well but only has nature to go on in the sense that he has not developed a moral virtue. He may even enjoy the possession of practical science, but even that would remain impotent in leading him to habitually perform upright acts with alacrity. In *De Virtutibus*, Thomas explains this while distinguishing between practical science and prudence:

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<sup>312</sup> See *De Malo*, q. 3, a. 9 ad 14, *S.Th.*, I-II, q. 17 a. 7 & Aristotle's *Politics*, I, 5 (1254b 3-5).

<sup>313</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 4 qc. 4 c.: *oportet quod habitus perficiens rationem negotiantem de his quae sunt ad finem, praesupponat inclinationem appetitus ad finem: quae quidem inclinatio in appetitu superiori, scilicet voluntate, est naturalis; in appetitu autem inferiori est ex assuetudine, vel ex Dei dono, quantum ad sui complementum; sed aliqua ejus inchoatio etiam est a natura, inquantum est naturaliter obaudibilis rationi. In hoc igitur differt prudens a continente; quia continens habet perfectam rationem de his quae sunt ad finem, praesupposita tamen naturali inclinatione voluntatis ad finem; prudens autem praesupposita inclinatione quae est ex virtute acquisita vel infusa in potentiis inferioribus; et ideo prudentia, ut dicit philosophus, habet sua principia in aliis virtutibus moralibus.*

Prudence implies more than practical science. For the universal judgment about things to be done pertains to practical science - as, for instance, the judgment that fornication is evil, one ought not to steal, and things of this sort. Even with this science existing, though, the judgment of reason is sometimes intercepted so that one fails to adjudicate rightly and on account of this it is said to avail little for virtue... But it pertains to prudence to judge rightly about particular doable things inasmuch as they are to be done now - which judgment, certainly is corrupted by any sin. And therefore with prudence remaining, a man does not sin. It thus contributes much and not little to virtue; nay rather, it causes virtue.<sup>314</sup>

If one is to attain moral virtue and have hope of attaining the perfect good, he must consequently rely not only upon that which is natural to him but also upon virtue. In a text from the commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (one that is similar to II-II, q. 49 a. 2 - which we encountered in the Introduction - though it makes some different observations), Thomas explains this in terms of the need of having two kinds of understanding - one pertaining to the first principles of the practical intellect (i.e., synderesis) and the other pertaining to an understanding of particulars that are already habitually ordered to the good of reason. He says:

There are two kinds of understanding. One of them is about first and immutable principles in demonstrations, which proceed from immutable and first terms (that is from indemonstrable principles) that are first known and unchangeable because the knowledge about them is not able to be removed from man. But the understanding which pertains to

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<sup>314</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 6 ad 1 *prudencia plus importat quam scientia practica: nam ad scientiam practica pertinet universale iudicium de agendis; sicut fornicationem esse malam, furtum non esse faciendum, et huiusmodi. Qua quidem scientia existente, in particulari actu contingit iudicium rationis intercipi, ut non recte diiudicet; et propter hoc dicitur parum valere ad virtutem, quia ea existente contingit hominem contra virtutem peccare. Sed ad prudentiam pertinet recte iudicare de singulis agibilibus, prout sint nunc agenda: quod quidem iudicium corrumpitur per quodlibet peccatum. Et ideo prudentia manente, homo non peccat; unde ipsa non parum sed multum confert ad virtutem; immo ipsam virtutem causat, ut dictum est.*



practical things is from another kind of extreme, namely a singular and contingent one that has another proposition; i.e., not a universal one that is as the major premise in a practical syllogism, but the singular which is as the minor premise. As to why an extreme of this sort is called 'understanding,' it is evident because understanding treats of principles. Now these singulars about which this kind of understanding is concerned are principles that are done for the sake of something (*cuius gratia*); that is, they are principles in the manner of a final cause (*per modum causae finalis*).<sup>315</sup>

To attain the happiness that flows from having control over one's lower appetites and in such a way that they are subjected to reason while reason is subjected to higher reason, one has to be able to rely upon both kinds of understanding. When the extremes known by both of them line up with each other, the virtuous person will have very nearly attained the integrity Adam enjoyed<sup>316</sup> because the appetites will be pointing affectively to the same end that is known cognitively. In other words, the end, which is like the conclusion of a practical syllogism, will necessarily be the conclusion.

One can easily imagine the satisfaction an individual would have if everything he deemed worthy of pursuit in his intellect were simultaneously desired by the appetites. Since this happens

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<sup>315</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6 lect. 9 n. 13-14: *Est autem duplex intellectus. Quorum hic quidem est circa immobiles terminos et primos, qui sunt secundum demonstrationes, quae procedunt ab immobilibus et primis terminis, id est a principiis indemonstrabilibus, quae sunt prima cognita et immobilia, quia scilicet eorum cognitio ab homine removeri non potest. Sed intellectus qui est in practicis, est alterius modi extremi, scilicet singularis, et contingentis et alterius propositionis, id est non universalis quae est quasi maior, sed singularis quae est minor in syllogismo operativo.*

*Quare autem huiusmodi extremi dicatur intellectus, patet per hoc, quod intellectus est principiorum; haec autem singularia, quorum dicimus esse intellectum huiusmodi, principia eius sunt quod est cuius gratia, id est sunt principia ad modum causae finalis.*

Thomas clarifies in the *Scriptum* that the second kind of *intellectus* is the cogitative power or the particular reason:

*Ad tertium dicendum, quod intellectus practicus ad hoc quod de singularibus disponat, ut dicitur in 3 de anima, indiget ratione particulari, qua mediante, opinio quae est universalis (quae est in intellectu) ad particulare opus applicetur: ut sic quidem fiat syllogismus, cujus major est universalis, quae est opinio intellectus practici; minor vero singularis, quae est aestimatio rationis particularis, quae alio nomine dicitur cogitativa: conclusio vero consistit in electione operis. (Super Sent., bk. 4 d. 50 q. 1 a. 3 ad s. c. 3).*

<sup>316</sup> Since humans do not now have the preternatural gifts, it seems unlikely one could perfectly attain the integrity of the first man.

for the virtuous man, we might think that virtue *simpliciter* is that in which we can find the happiness that's also known as the perfect good.<sup>317</sup> If we think carefully about it, however, there is at least a distinction to be made. Shakespeare seemed to have a good grasp of the Aristotelian-Thomistic view on this point as evinced by these words in the *Taming of the Shrew*: "Virtue, and that part of philosophy will I apply, that treats of happiness by virtue especially to be achieved." Moral virtue leads to happiness but is not exactly coterminous with it. We can, therefore, distinguish between intellectual and moral virtue. The latter, which renders man's work good,<sup>318</sup> is more truly virtue than the intellectual kind. Intellectual virtues, such as understanding, knowledge and wisdom, merely ensure that the one possessing them has the capacity (*facultas*) to use them well.<sup>319</sup> The moral virtues, on the other hand, also ensure that the individual actually uses that very capacity well and thus allow him to more readily attain the good proper to man, which is to live in accordance with reason. Aquinas explains:

Because a virtue is that which makes the one having it good and renders his action good, habits of this sort [moral virtues] are unqualifiedly (*simpliciter*) called virtues because they render the work actually good and they make the one having them unqualifiedly good. The first kind of habits [the intellectual] are not unqualifiedly called virtues because they do not render the action good except inasmuch as they bestow a certain capacity... for a man possessing knowledge or a skill is not called unqualifiedly good

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<sup>317</sup>See, I-II q.5 a.8 ad 3 (*bonum perfectum, quod est beatitudo*); I-II, q. 5 a. 8c. (*omnis homo beatitudinem velit: ratio autem beatitudinis communis est, ut sit bonum perfectum*); I-II, q. 10 a. 2c.: *quia defectus cuiuscumque boni habet rationem non boni, ideo illud solum bonum quod est perfectum, et cui nihil deficit, est tale bonum, quod voluntas non potest non velle, quod est beatitudo*; I-II, q. 13 a. 6c.: *solum autem perfectum bonum, quod est beatitudo, non potest ratio apprehendere sub ratione mali, aut alicujus defectus: et ideo ex necessitate beatitudinem homo vult*.

<sup>318</sup> Aquinas indicates that the words about rendering a work good in Augustine's definition of virtue indicate the definition must pertain to moral virtue in I-II, q. 55 a. 4.

<sup>319</sup> I-II, q. 56 a. 3 c.: *per huiusmodi habitum acquiritur homini facultas ad bonum actum*.

because of his knowledge or skill. Rather, he is only called good in a qualified way (*secundum quid*).<sup>320</sup>

If someone is to be truly good, his appetites must be rightly ordered. Because, as Reichenberg says, the moral virtues are the virtues which "rectify the will and sense appetites,"<sup>321</sup> they are more truly virtues than the intellectual ones.

Man's ultimate happiness, though, does not consist in the moral virtues despite their undeniable value. St. Thomas says this explicitly in the *Contra Gentiles* and implicitly in the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the latter, he observes that since man's proper operation pertains to reason (because the principle of his operation, which is his form, is rational), his happiness must also pertain to reason. One way in which someone can be rational is by an act of the appetite when it participates in reason by being ruled by it and the other is by an act of the intellect, which is rational in virtue of its very essence. Whatever is rational essentially, therefore, must be that in which happiness consists and the human person's "principal happiness" must consequently consist in "the contemplative life more than in the active and in an act of the reason or intellect more than in an act of the appetite being ruled by reason."<sup>322</sup>

In the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas addresses this issue while asserting that human happiness cannot consist in act of moral virtue for six reasons, three of which are:

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<sup>320</sup> Ibid.: *Virtus est, quae bonum facit habentem, et opus ejus bonum reddit, hujusmodi habitus simpliciter dicuntur virtutes, quia reddunt bonum opus in actu, et simpliciter faciunt bonum habentem. Primi vero habitus non simpliciter dicuntur virtutes; quia non reddunt bonum opus, nisi in quadam facultate, nec simpliciter faciunt bonum habentem; non enim dicitur simpliciter aliquis homo bonus ex hoc, quod est sciens, vel artifex, sed dicitur bonus solum secundum quid.*

<sup>321</sup> Gregory M. Reichenberg, "The Intellectual Virtues (Ia IIae, Qq. 57–58)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 140.

<sup>322</sup> See *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 1, lectio 10 nn. 4–9, the conclusion of which is, *Quia igitur felicitas est principalissimum bonum hominis, consequens est, ut magis consistat in eo quod pertinet ad id quod est rationale per essentiam quam in eo quod pertinet ad id quod est rationale per participationem.*

*Ex quo potest accipi, quod felicitas principalius consistit in vita contemplativa quam in activa; et in actu rationis vel intellectus, quam in actu appetitus ratione regulati.*

[1] The moral virtues are for the sake of preserving the mean in internal passions and exterior things. But it is not possible that a modification of the passions or of exterior things be the ultimate happiness of man.

[2] Since a man is a man in virtue of his possession of reason, the good that is proper to him, which is happiness, must be in accordance with that which is proper to reason. But what reason has in itself is more proper to reason than what it brings about in something else. Since, then, the good of moral virtue is something brought about by the reason in other things, it is not able to be the best good, which is happiness; rather, it must be a good that is in the reason itself...

[3] Happiness is man's proper good. That, therefore, which is most proper to man among all the human goods in comparison with the other animals will be that in which his ultimate happiness ought to be sought. But acts of the moral virtues are not this sort of thing because the other animals partake of liberality or fortitude whereas no animal has some kind of participation in an intellectual action. Man's ultimate happiness, therefore, is not in moral acts.<sup>323</sup>

In other words, as eminent as moral virtue is, it does not directly pertain to what is highest in us.

It ensures that our appetites are rectified and that inordinate attachments do not unnecessarily becloud our reason, but it does not rectify the reason itself, which pertains to the intellectual

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<sup>323</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 34 §§ 3-4; 6:

[1] *Virtutes morales ad hoc sunt ut per eas conservetur medium in passionibus intrinsecis et exterioribus rebus. Non est autem possibile quod modificatio passionum vel rerum exteriorum sit ultimus finis humanae vitae: cum ipsae passionem et exteriores res sint ad aliud ordinabiles. Non est igitur possibile quod in actibus virtutum moralium sit ultima hominis felicitas.*

[2] *Cum homo sit homo ex eo quod est rationem habens, oportet quod proprium eius bonum, quod est felicitas, sit secundum id quod est proprium rationi. Magis autem est proprium rationis quod ipsa in se habet, quam quod in alio facit. Cum igitur bonum moralis virtutis sit quoddam a ratione in rebus aliis a se institutum, non poterit esse optimum hominis, quod est felicitas: sed magis bonum quod est in ipsa ratione situm....*

[3] *Felicitas est proprium hominis bonum. Illud igitur quod est maxime proprium hominis inter omnia bona humana respectu aliorum animalium, est in quo quaerenda est eius ultima felicitas. Huiusmodi autem non est virtutum moralium actus: nam aliqua animalia aliquid participant vel liberalitatis vel fortitudinis; intellectualis autem actionis nullum animal aliquid participat. Non est igitur ultima hominis felicitas in actibus moralibus.*

virtues.<sup>324</sup> The intellectual virtues, therefore, bring us closer to the perfect good than the moral ones. Thomas does consider the possibility that the moral virtues may "perhaps" be closer to happiness inasmuch as they are closer to it by way of preparation (inasmuch as they eliminate the impediments to happiness such as disordered passions), but in the end, he consistently insists it is only an "act of the reason or intellect" that can be pertain to the essence of perfect happiness itself.<sup>325</sup>

### C. The Perfect Good and Intellectual Virtue

Among the intellectual virtues, prudence and art pertain to the practical realm. Since the *Contra Gentiles* passage deemed it impossible for the modification of exterior things to be man's ultimate happiness, we can rule out the virtue of art as a candidate for being a virtue in which happiness could consist. Prudence, however, is more interesting to consider in this context. It is an intellectual virtue "according to its essence," and yet since it is about moral works (which is what the *agibilia* in *recta ratio agibilium* refers to),<sup>326</sup> it is "sometimes enumerated with the moral virtues, existing somehow midway between the intellectual and the moral virtues."<sup>327</sup> It directs all the moral virtues<sup>328</sup> and is spoken of as "effective" of moral virtue in a way (*quodammodo*).<sup>329</sup> Similarly, Aquinas says it *quodammodo* "appoints (*praestituit*) the end to the

<sup>324</sup> II-II q. 123 a. 1 c.: ... *ipsa ratio rectificatur; quod fit per virtutes intellectuales*. By 'alone', I mean out of the two kinds of virtues.

<sup>325</sup> See *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 7 ad 4 and q. 1 a. 5 ad 8.

<sup>326</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 5 a. 1 ad 3: *prudentia est recta ratio agibilium. Agibilia autem dicuntur moralia opera... et ideo prudentia convenit cum moralibus virtutibus quantum ad sui materiam et propter hoc connumeratur eis, licet quantum ad suam essentiam vel subiectum sit intellectus*.

<sup>327</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 12 ad 14: *prudentia secundum essentiam suam intellectualis est, sed habet materiam moralem; et ideo quandoque cum moralibus numeratur, quodammodo media existens inter intellectuales et morales*.

<sup>328</sup> See, I-II, q. 58 a. 2 ad 4.

<sup>329</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 12 ad 16: *ratio recta prudentiae non ponitur in definitione virtutis moralis, quasi aliquid de essentia eius existens; sed sicut causa quodammodo effectiva ipsius, vel per participationem*.

moral virtues"<sup>330</sup> because it determines the mean that is the end of each moral virtue.<sup>331</sup> It might, for example, help the virtuous person attain the mean of fortitude, which would be somewhere between cowardice and recklessness,<sup>332</sup> depending on the individual's natural inclinations.<sup>333</sup> Nevertheless, happiness cannot consist in an act of prudence precisely because it also pertains to matter that is contingent and particular just as the moral virtues do.<sup>334</sup>

Man's happiness is in the best activity of man. But the best operation of man, inasmuch as it is proper to him, is in comparison with the most perfect objects. But the activity of prudence is not about the most perfect objects of the intellect or the reason because it is not about necessary things, but contingent doable things. Its activity, therefore, is not man's ultimate happiness.<sup>335</sup>

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*Nam virtus moralis nihil aliud est quam participatio quaedam rationis rectae.*

<sup>330</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 3 c.: *medium virtutis moralis, ut in 2 Ethic. dicitur, est secundum rationem rectam, quae est prudentia; et sic quodammodo prudentia praestituit finem virtutibus moralibus, et ejus actus in earum actibus immiscetur* (the mean of moral virtue, as is said in the second book of the ethics, is that which is in accordance with right reason, which is prudence; and thus prudence somehow appoints the end to the moral virtues and its act is intermingled with theirs).

<sup>331</sup> I-II, q. 66 a. 3 ad 2: *prudentia non solum dirigit virtutes morales in eligendo ea quae sunt ad finem, sed etiam in praestituendo finem: est autem finis uniuscujusque virtutis moralis attingere medium in propria materia; quod quidem medium determinatur secundum rectam rationem prudentiae* (prudence does not only direct the moral virtues in choosing those things that are for the end, but also in appointing the end: for the end of each moral virtue is to attain the mean in the matter proper to that virtue; which mean, to be sure, is determined in accordance with the right reason of prudence).

<sup>332</sup> See, Jean Porter, "The Virtue of Justice (IIa IIae, Qq. 58–122)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 274.

<sup>333</sup> In Aristotle's definition, virtue is said to exist in the mean *towards us* precisely because the mean varies for the individual. Someone who is disposed to temerity will need to allow fear to have more influence over him on the battle field than someone who is inclined to pusillanimity.

<sup>334</sup> II-II, q. 49 a. 5 ad 2: *... particularia autem operabilia, in quibus prudentia dirigit...*  
II-II, q. 49 a. 8 c.: *... ea, circa quae est prudentia, sunt contingentia operabilia.*

<sup>335</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 35 # 4: *Quod ordinatur ad alterum sicut ad finem, non est ultima hominis felicitas. Operatio autem prudentiae ordinatur ad alterum sicut ad finem: tum quia omnis practica cognitio, sub qua continetur prudentia, ordinatur ad operationem; tum etiam quia prudentia facit hominem bene se habere in his quae sunt ad finem eligenda, sicut patet per Aristotelem, in VI Ethicorum. Non est igitur in operatione prudentiae ultima hominis felicitas.*

Prudence is like the moral virtues in that it merely enables a person to habitually perform actions that are conducive to happiness.<sup>336</sup> More than any of the moral virtues, it is "that by which we live rightly<sup>337</sup> and because it is an intellectual virtue, it is able to cognize the means that lead to happiness<sup>338</sup> and issue commands in regard to it; however, it remains subordinate to happiness in some way<sup>339</sup> even if constitutive of it.<sup>340</sup>

As we might expect, Thomas says the act that is essentially happiness itself must ultimately either be an act of reason or of the intellect and that it must be about necessary and non-contingent things. Even more specifically, it "is nothing other than the perfect contemplation of the highest truth" to which the "will is ordered by a natural desire."<sup>341</sup> We might be led to guess that it consists, therefore, in an act of the speculative intellect and particularly one of understanding since this habit is the very foundation of knowledge. Nevertheless, Aquinas argues it is not possible for "the ultimate happiness of man" to consist in "the contemplation that is according to the understanding of principles" primarily because this habit "is most imperfect." By this he seems to mean it only provides the beginning of the dialectical process which concludes in knowledge and is consequently at the opposite extreme of the conclusions that flow from its principles (i.e., it does not stand at the *finis humani studii*<sup>342</sup> but at the beginning). Also, the principles contained in this natural habit come forth to us from our nature instead of resulting

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<sup>336</sup> I-II, q. 62 a. 1 c.: *per virtutem perficitur homo ad actus, quibus in beatitudinem ordinatur.*

<sup>337</sup> See, I-II, q. 55 a. 4 c.

<sup>338</sup> See I-II, q. 66 a. 5 ad 1.

<sup>339</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 2 says happiness is obtained through virtue and I-II, q. 5 a. 7 says happiness is the reward of works of virtue. See also *Super Sent.* IV d.49 q. 1 qc. 4 ad 2, which speaks of someone undertaking works of virtue for the sake of attaining happiness.

<sup>340</sup> I-II, q. 5 a. 4 says happiness principally consists in an act of virtue.

<sup>341</sup> See, *De Veritate*, q. 1 a. 5 ad 8 which also says the natural desire is for "the contemplative happiness of which the philosophers spoke."

<sup>342</sup> See the following footnote.

from the zeal for truth and its principles are "most universal" meaning they need to be led to their conclusions.<sup>343</sup>

The two other speculative virtues are knowledge (*scientia*) and wisdom. Although the former pertains to the end of a process of enquiry (ratiocination) and, unlike understanding, actually provides the conclusions, Thomas says knowledge is necessarily less perfect than understanding because it relies upon it for its principles.<sup>344</sup> By process of elimination, therefore, "it remains that the ultimate happiness of man consists in wisdom's contemplation regarding divine things."<sup>345</sup> Wisdom, as pertaining to the very object of happiness which is the most understandable being there is, "is a beginning of future happiness" enjoyed in this life and the closest approximation to it of all the intellectual virtues.<sup>346</sup> It does, however, remain a mere approximation of the future happiness. Rightly, therefore, Thomas speak of two "things that are honored besides virtue" and even as being "more excellent than [it]; namely, God and happiness."<sup>347</sup>

#### 4. The Perfect Good in Relation to God

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<sup>343</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 37 n. 8: *Non est autem possibile quod ultima hominis felicitas consistat in contemplatione quae est secundum intellectum principiorum, quae est imperfectissima, sicut maxime universalis, rerum cognitionem in potentia continens; et est principium, non finis humani studii, a natura nobis proveniens, non secundum studium veritatis. Neque etiam secundum scientias quae sunt de rebus infimis: cum oporteat felicitatem esse in operatione intellectus per comparisonem ad nobilissima intelligibilia.* As he says in the next chapter of the *Summa Contra Gentiles* (bk. 3, ch. 38 n. 6), "happiness is a perfect action and the highest good of man must be according to that which is in act and not according to that which is in potency only because a potency is perfected by an act that has the essential character of the good" (*Felicitas autem est operatio perfecta; et summum hominis bonum oportet esse secundum id quod est actu, et non secundum quod est potentia tantum; nam potentia per actum perfecta habet boni rationem*).

<sup>344</sup> I-II, q. 57 a. 2 ad 2: *istae tres virtutes non ex aequo distiguuntur ab invicem, sed ordine quodam; sicut accidit in totis potentialibus, quorum una pars est perfectior altera; sicut anima rationalis est perfectior, quam sensibilis, et sensibilis, quam vegetabilis; hoc enim modo scientia dependet ab intellectu, sicut a principaliori.*

<sup>345</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 37 n. 8: *Relinquitur igitur quod in contemplatione sapientiae ultima hominis felicitas consistat, secundum divinorum considerationem.*

<sup>346</sup> See I-II, q. 66 a. 5 ad 1.

<sup>347</sup> II-II q.145 a.1 ad 2: *eorum quae honorantur praeter virtutem, aliquid est virtute excellentius; scilicet: Deus et beatitudo.*



Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas all speak of the pursuit of the perfect good as inseparably connected with the God in some way. This begs the question of whether or not it would be more proper to say that God himself is the final end (which is synonymous with the perfect good<sup>348</sup>) rather than happiness or beatitude.<sup>349</sup>

For St. Thomas:

In every series of causes, the first cause is more a cause than the second causes: since the second cause is not a cause save through the first. As a consequence, that which is the first cause in the series of final causes, must needs be more the final cause of each thing, than the proximate final cause. Now God is the first cause in the series of final causes: for He is supreme in the order of good things. He is, therefore, the end of each thing more even than any proximate end.<sup>350</sup>

If God is the most final cause among the final causes, it seems manifest that he and not happiness (or an act of wisdom that is merely a beginning of happiness) is the ultimate end. However, if he is himself the end, then how is it that something other than him can be desired as the ultimate end when, *ex suppositio*, that end is naturally desired by all rational creatures? Aquinas clearly says the angels either appointed (*praestituerunt*) God as their end or something other than God and

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<sup>348</sup> I-II, q. 2 a. 7c.: *ultimis finis est bonum perfectum complens boni appetitum*

<sup>349</sup> *S.Th.*, Supplementum q.75 a.1 c.: *ultimus enim finis hominis, quem naturaliter omnes homines desiderant, est beatitudo* (originally from *Super. Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 43 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 c.)

<sup>350</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 3 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 34 (bk. 3, ch. 17). He said essentially the same thing in fewer words in Book III, Chapter 17 of the same work: *Si enim nihil tendit in aliquid sicut in finem nisi inquantum ipsum est bonum, ergo oportet quod bonum inquantum bonum sit finis. Quod igitur est summum bonum, est maxime omnium finis. Sed summum bonum est unum tantum, quod est Deus*. For an interesting discussion of this latter passage, see Georg Wieland, "Happiness" in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, Stephen J. Pope, ed., Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 59.

that they were consequently either happy or miserable.<sup>351</sup> If it is possible for angels to appoint ends to themselves other than God, then men (who are far less perfect than the angels) can certainly do so. In fact, many - even philosophers - have sought happiness in an end other than God. Aquinas speaks to this in his commentary on Psalm thirty-two:

Different people have thought about beatitude in different ways and according to the different opinions concerning it, there are different sects of philosophers. For some placed it in bodily goods, as did Epicurus; some, in the works of the active life, as did the Stoics; while still others, in the contemplation of truth, as did the Peripatetics. [Yet] to seek beatitude in what is beneath us is vain, because beatitude is something above us. But the one above us is God.<sup>352</sup>

How is it possible for God to be the "end of each thing more even than the proximate end"<sup>353</sup> if he is not recognized as such by all? Would we not have to say *happiness* is the true universal end that is the perfect good if all men necessarily desire happiness while many do not desire God? Since the ultimate end is the first principle in morals,<sup>354</sup> the answer to this question will necessarily have significant implications. If, for instance, God is the last end and thus the first principle in morality, one might think of even eternal happiness as a subordinated end that might have to be sacrificed. By neglecting to advert to the goodness of nature and natural desires, in

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<sup>351</sup> *Compendium Theologiae*, bk. 1, ch. 184: *Angeli vero quando primo cum voluntate deliberata sibi finem praestituerunt vel Deum vel aliquid creatum, et ex tunc beati vel miseri facti sunt. In animabus enim humanis mutabilitas esse potest non solum ex libertate voluntatis, sed etiam ex mutabilitate corporis, in Angelis vero ex sola libertate arbitrii. Et ideo Angeli ex prima electione immutabilitatem consequuntur.*

<sup>352</sup> See *Super Ps. 32*, # 11. Translation by Kwasniewski in *On Love and Charity*, 131. See also, Peter A. Kwasniewski, "Divine Drunkenness: The Secret Life of Thomistic Reason," *The Modern Schoolman* 82 (2004): 1–31, esp. 3–7, 12–15.

<sup>353</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 17.

<sup>354</sup> As Aquinas says, *Principium autem totius ordinis in moralibus est finis ultimus, qui ita se habet in operativis, sicut principium indemonstrabile in speculativis, ut dicitur in VII Ethic.* (I-II q. 72 a 5c.).

other words, one could arrive at the conclusions of Père Fénelon and the Quietists that God ought to be loved for himself alone and *not* "because of the happiness to be found in loving him" or even because of the joy to be found in contemplating him. If this were the case, the Quietists would be right that the ideal is to "wish nothing for ourselves" - even virtue or salvation - and solely wish "all for God" with no consideration of self interest.<sup>355</sup> As it turns out, however, those sentiments were condemned by the Church. In an effort to avoid such conclusions, we might be tempted to prescind from any further consideration of how the 'last end' of happiness relates to God. However, just as bracketing the issue of happiness when discussing the final end *qua* God could lead to the errors of Fénelon, prescinding from considering how God factors into the final end of happiness could easily lead to the errors of Pelagianism because we might find ourselves thinking we are able to actualize our potency for beatitude on our own. Besides, for Aquinas, the "ultimate happiness of man consists" not only "in wisdom's consideration of divine things" in general, but particularly in "the contemplation of God,"<sup>356</sup> who is the best of divine things.

We've seen that certain philosophical schools fell far short of the true ideal of happiness. Aquinas makes a more general observation that even if "all people grasp that happiness is some kind of perfect state" they do not agree about "that in which this perfect state consists, whether in life or something in the afterlife, whether in bodily or spiritual goods" because these things are hidden to them.<sup>357</sup> At the same time, it is possible to make philosophical arguments that

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<sup>355</sup> These and similar condemned propositions can be found in Henry Denzinger and Karl Rahner, eds., *The Sources of Catholic Dogma*, trans. Roy J. Deferrari (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1954), 343–345.

<sup>356</sup> See, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 37, *ad finem*.

<sup>357</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 2 ad 2: *quamvis beatitudo sit occulta quantum ad substantiam, tamen ratio beatitudinis nota est: omnes enim per beatitudinem intelligunt quemdam perfectissimum statum: sed in quo consistat ille status perfectus, utrum in vita, vel post vitam, vel in bonis corporalibus vel spiritualibus, et in quibus spiritualibus, occultum est.*

happiness must pertain to something above man and something that is only truly found in God.

One such argument along these lines is found in the *Scriptum*:

It should be said that the good that all long for is being [*esse*], as is evident from Boethius in *On the Consolation of Philosophy*.<sup>358</sup> Hence the ultimate object of desire for all things is perfect being, to the extent that it is possible in their nature. Now, everything that has being from another has its perfection from another, since each one receives being the more perfectly, the more truly it is conjoined to the principle of its being... And so the ultimate end of anything whatsoever that has being from another is twofold: one outside [itself], namely according to that which is the principle of the desired perfection; another within [itself], namely its very own perfection, which union to its principle brings about. Hence, since beatitude is man's ultimate end, beatitude will be twofold: one that is within man himself, namely that ultimate perfection of himself which it is possible for him to attain, and this is created beatitude; whereas the other is outside himself, through union with which the aforementioned beatitude is *caused* in him; and this is uncreated beatitude, which is God himself.<sup>359</sup>

All creatures desire to be and thus desire the very principle of being who, as the perfect being, exists in virtue of his own being (as the one who is *per se ipsum necesse-esse* and *ipsum esse subsistens*<sup>360</sup>). Since there is no way of escaping this desire, the creature is "ordained in a natural manner to God as to an end."<sup>361</sup> However, only rational animals have as a last end the attainment of the uncreated end as their proper end. Jörn Müller explains:

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<sup>358</sup> Boethius, *On the Consolation of Philosophy* III, Prose 11 (CCSL 94:58–59).

<sup>359</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity*, 353 (*Super Sent.* 4 d 49 q 1 a 2c.). I-II q 2 a 7c. says something at least similar: "The thing itself which one has an appetite for as an end is that in which beatitude consists, and which makes happy; but the attainment of this is called happiness. Accordingly, it should be said that happiness is something of the soul but that in which happiness consists is something outside of the soul" (*Res ergo ipsa, quae appetitur ut finis, est id, in quo beatitudo consistit, et quod beatum facit: sed hujus rei adeptio vocatur beatitudo, unde dicendum est, quod beatitudo est aliquid animae; sed id, in quo consistit beatitudo, est aliquid extra animam*).

<sup>360</sup> See, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1 ch. 44 # 7 and *S.Th.* I q 4 a 2c., respectively.

<sup>361</sup> *Summa Theologiae*, III q.1 a.3 ad 2.

Aquinas's treatise on happiness in *ST* I-2.1-5 relies heavily on a distinction that comes to the fore when he inquires if there is one final goal (*finis ultimus*) for all beings (*ST* I-2.1.8). In some sense, there is: God as the final cause at which all creatures aim is the single end (*finis cuius*) of everything. On the other hand, all creatures have their specific *finis quo*, their proper mode of attaining their end or perfection: they participate in the similitude of God in different manners. In the case of rational creatures like human beings this specific *finis quo* is to have knowledge of God.<sup>362</sup> The *finis cuius* thus is the "external" end or good, while the *finis quo* is its "internal acquisition" (see *In Sent.* 4.49.I.1 qc.2 resp.).<sup>363</sup>

All animals concur in having the thing that *is* the end as their last end "because God is the ultimate end of man and of all other things,"<sup>364</sup> but only rational animals can come to know and embrace the fact that their happiness consists in God<sup>365</sup> and only they have a capacity of nature that enables them to actually attain him. In other words, even though all things participate in the divine reason (also known as the eternal law),<sup>366</sup> the rational creature can subject itself to divine providence in a more excellent way (*excellentiore quodam modo*) by becoming a partaker of divine providence in a manner wherein it can even be providential over its *own* actions thanks to

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<sup>362</sup> See SCG, bk. 3, ch. 40: *Cognitio de Deo dicta est finis inquantum ultimo fini rerum, scilicet Deo, coniungit.*

<sup>363</sup> Jörn Müller, "Duplex Beatitudo," chapter 4 of *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 66.

<sup>364</sup> I-II q.1 a.8c.: *si ergo loquamur de ultimo fine hominis quantum ad ipsam rem, quae est finis, sic in ultimo fine hominis omnia alia conveniunt, quia Deus est ultimus finis hominis, et omnium aliarum rerum. Si autem loquamur de ultimo fine hominis quantum ad consecutionem finis, sic in hoc fine hominis non communicant creaturae irrationales.*

<sup>365</sup> *S.Th.* I q 82 a 2 speaks of God as the one *in quo solo vera beatitudo consistit*. I-II q. 3 a 4 s.c. and SCG bk. 3, ch. 25 say it consists in the knowledge of God (*beatitudo hominis in cognitione Dei consistit*, to quote the former), but as we have seen, the attainment of him by means of union with him and his essence itself can be considered as one *qua* end.

<sup>366</sup> I-II q. 19 a 4: "the eternal law, which is the divine reason"; I-II q 93 a 1: "the eternal law is the highest *ratio* existing in God." Since God has no accidents, this is, of course, really God himself and thus the twofold rule of our actions is often referred to as the human reason and God, where 'God' is synonymous with the *ratio Dei* (see, I-II q. 23 a 6c., II-II q. 23 a 3c., *De Virtutibus* q. 5 a 2c., I-II q. 63 a 4c. *et passim*).

the "light of the natural reason" present in them due to the impression made upon them by the reason of God.<sup>367</sup>

Humans, therefore, need to be perceptive and let the natural desire for being lead them to the pursuit and contemplation of the source of being itself. That is to say, they need to be attentive to nature, to that which is highest in the nature specific to them in comparison with the other animals (i.e., reason) and allow the laws of nature to provide them with guidance by doing good and avoiding evil. If they do that, they will implicitly understand there is no 'competitive finality' when it comes to the end that is God and the end of happiness (and especially, of eternal happiness).<sup>368</sup>

Aristotle is one of those who, whether wittingly or not, took to heart the words of Heraclitus, who said true wisdom is concerned with acting "according to nature, giving ear thereto."<sup>369</sup> As a Peripatetic, he certainly thought of happiness as consisting of performing the highest act of man's nature, the act of reasoning, as well as possible while directing that act to the highest end to which his rational nature directed him; namely, God. Thomas was struck by the

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<sup>367</sup> See I-II q. 91 a 2, from which the Latin quotations were taken. Regarding the eternal law being equated with the divine reason, see (as mentioned above) I-II q. 19 a 4 (the eternal law, which is the divine reason) and I-II q 93 a 1 (the eternal law is the highest *ratio* existing in God).

<sup>368</sup> We have seen that the Quietists were condemned for thinking God might want them to sacrifice their eternal happiness. This condemnation does not, however, mean to suggest we will have perfect happiness here by doing God's will. In the third apparition to St. Bernadette on Feb. 18, 1858, Mary is reported to have said "I do not promise to make you happy in this world but only in the other" (see, Johannes Jørgensen, *Lourdes, translated by Ingeborg Lund* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1914), 19).

Insofar as God is, objectively, infinite happiness, being joined to God in perfect knowledge and love in the beatific vision is attaining the only ontologically perfect happiness (as opposed to a happiness perfect in its natural species, but ontologically limited). In other words, if what is desired is perfect happiness, and God *is* perfect happiness, then union with God and the subjective perfection that ensues is happiness *simpliciter* for the rational creature. Of course, the notion of the beatific vision presupposes revelation, but the contemplative approach to God in this life is limited, and so involves a participation of true happiness even though it cannot constitute perfect happiness.

<sup>369</sup> σοφίη ἀληθέα λέγειν καὶ ποιεῖν κατὰ φύσιν ἐπαίοντας (wisdom is to speak the truth and to act according to nature, giving ear thereto); DK 112.

fact that Aristotle connected happiness to contemplation of God and he (Aquinas) deduced from this fact that the contemplation of God is something attainable by nature:

According to the Philosopher, the last end of human life is the contemplation of God. If therefore, man were not able to attain this, we would be constituted in vain because what is in vain, according to the Philosopher, is that which is for the sake of some end that is not attained. But this is unfitting. As it is said in *Psalms* 88 v. 48, "you didn't constitute man in vain, did you?"<sup>370</sup>

Despite his undeniably high estimation of the Philosopher, though, Thomas argues he limited himself to speaking about the imperfect happiness humans can attain "as men."<sup>371</sup>

Aristotle [bk. 10, ch. 8 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*] says that man's ultimate happiness is the most perfect contemplation by which the supremely understandable being that is God is able to be contemplated in this life: but over this happiness there is another happiness which we expect in the future, by which we will see God as he is. This, certainly, is above any given created intellect at all.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 1 d. 3 q. 1 a. 1 s. c. 2: *ut supra dictum est, etiam secundum philosophum, ultimus finis humanae vitae est contemplatio Dei. Si igitur ad hoc homo non posset pertingere, in vanum esset constitutus; quia vanum est, secundum philosophum, quod ad aliquem finem est, quem non attingit; et hoc est inconueniens, ut dicitur in Psal. 88, 48: numquid enim vane constituisti eum?* Interestingly, the RSVCE renders this verse: "for what vanity thou hast created all the sons of men!"

A similar text is found in *De Malo* 5 a. 1 ad 1 in which Thomas says God ensured man had not been made in vain by making him able to attain happiness by proposing a remedy for man from the beginning of the human race; namely Christ: *homo frustra et vane factus esset, si beatitudinem consequi non posset, sicut quaelibet res quae non potest consequi ultimum finem. Unde ne homo frustra et vane factus esset, cum peccato originali nascens, a principio humani generis proposuit Deus homini remedium, per quod ab hac vanitate liberaretur, scilicet ipsum mediatorem Deum et hominem Iesum Christum per cuius fidem impedimentum peccati originalis subtrahi posset. Unde in Psalm. LXXXVIII, 48, dicitur: memorare quae mea substantia; numquid enim vane constituisti omnes filios hominum? Quod exponens Glossa, dicit, quod David petit incarnationem filii, qui de sua substantia carnem assumpturus erat, et per ipsum homines erant a vanitate liberandi.*

<sup>371</sup> See, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 48.

<sup>372</sup> *S.Th.*, I q. 62 a.1 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod nomine beatitudinis intelligitur ultima perfectio rationalis, seu intellectualis naturae: et inde est, quod naturaliter desideratur; quia unumquodque naturaliter desiderat suam ultimam perfectionem. Ultima autem perfectio rationalis, seu intellectualis naturae est duplex. Una quidem, quam potest assequi virtute suae naturae; et haec quodammodo beatitudo, vel felicitas dicitur. Unde et Arist. (bk. 10. Eth. cap. 8.) perfectissimam hominis*

In other words, St. Thomas held the happiness Aristotle was seeking was the kind that is certainly "a participation of [supernatural] beatitude," but that remains an earthly and natural happiness.<sup>373</sup> Such happiness must be imperfect because the perfect good is simply unattainable in this life.<sup>374</sup>

In the following text, Thomas contrasts a participated good (such as an action of contemplating God that Aristotle spoke of) with that which is participated in (and is thus the only truly perfect good or true source of happiness). It is a worthwhile text because even though he is answering what might seem to be a sophistical question of whether happiness is the soul, it helps clarify the difference between contemplation and the object of contemplation (*viz.*, God) in addition to the dependence of the former upon the latter, thus preparing the way for a more accurate delineation between what can be known naturally and that which requires divine aid. He says:

'End' is twofold: the thing itself that we desire to attain and the use; namely, the attainment or possession of the thing. If we speak of the last end of man as regards the

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*contemplationem, qua optimum intelligibile, quod est Deus, contemplari potest in hac vita, dicit esse ultimam hominis felicitatem: sed super hanc felicitatem est alia felicitas, quam in futuro expectamus, qua videbimus Deum sicuti est. Quod quidem est supra cujuslibet intellectus creati naturam.*

<sup>373</sup> *Super Sent.* IV, d 49 q. 1 a.1 qc. 4c.: "There can be a participation of [supernatural] beatitude in this life, according as man is perfect in the goods of reason ... it is about this [earthly] happiness that the Philosopher determines in the book of *Ethics* neither asserting nor denying another [happiness] that is after this life." Translation from *On Love and Charity*, 351.

<sup>374</sup> Bk., 3, ch. 48: "All admit that happiness is a perfect good: else it would not bring rest to the appetite. Now perfect good is that which is wholly free from any admixture of evil: just as that which is perfectly white is that which is entirely free from any admixture of black. But man cannot be wholly free from evils in this state of life; not only from evils of the body, such as hunger, thirst, heat, cold and the like, but also from evils of the soul. For no one is there who at times is not disturbed by inordinate passions; who sometimes does not go beyond the mean, wherein virtue consists, either in excess or in deficiency; who is not deceived in some thing or another; or at least ignores what he would wish to know, or feels doubtful about an opinion of which he would like to be certain. Therefore no man is happy in this life." *Summa Contra Gentiles*, vol. 3 (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 112–113.



thing itself which we desire as a last end, it is impossible for the last end of man to be the soul itself or something pertaining to it because the soul itself, considered in itself, exists as in potency because it is made to know in act from only knowing in potency and is made to be virtuous in act from being virtuous in potency. Now since potency is for the sake of act as for that which completes it, it is impossible that something existing in potency in itself could have the *ratio* of the last end. Accordingly, it is impossible that the soul itself is its own last end. Similarly, however, neither can something pertaining to it (*aliquid eius*) whether it be a power or a habit or an act. For the good that is the last end is the perfect good fulfilling the appetite. But the human appetite, which is the will, is for the universal good. And whatever good adhering to the soul is a participated good and is thus a particular good. It is, therefore, impossible that one of these [a power or habit or act] be the last end of man. But if we speak of the last end of man as to the attainment or possession of it or as to any use of the thing itself that is desired as an end, in this way something pertaining to man's soul does belong to the last end. Therefore, the thing itself which is desired as an end is that in which happiness consists and is that which makes man happy, but the attainment of it is called happiness. Accordingly, it should be said that happiness is something pertaining to the soul but that in which beatitude consists is something outside of the soul.<sup>375</sup>

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<sup>375</sup> I-II q. 2 a. 7 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, finis dupliciter dicitur, scilicet ipsa res quam adipisci desideramus; et usus, seu adeptio aut possessio illius rei. Si ergo loquamur de ultimo fine hominis quantum ad ipsam rem quam appetimus sicut ultimum finem, impossibile est quod ultimus finis hominis sit ipsa anima, vel aliquid eius. Ipsa enim anima, in se considerata, est ut in potentia existens, fit enim de potentia sciente actu sciens, et de potentia virtuosa actu virtuosa. Cum autem potentia sit propter actum, sicut propter complementum, impossibile est quod id quod est secundum se in potentia existens, habeat rationem ultimi finis. Unde impossibile est quod ipsa anima sit ultimus finis sui ipsius. Similiter etiam neque aliquid eius, sive sit potentia, sive habitus, sive actus. Bonum enim quod est ultimus finis, est bonum perfectum complens appetitum. Appetitus autem humanus, qui est voluntas, est boni universalis. Quodlibet bonum autem inhaerens ipsi animae, est bonum participatum, et per consequens particulatum. Unde impossibile est quod aliquod eorum sit ultimus finis hominis. Sed si loquamur de ultimo fine hominis quantum ad ipsam adeptionem vel possessionem, seu quemcumque usum ipsius rei quae appetitur ut finis, sic ad ultimum finem pertinet aliquid hominis ex parte animae, quia homo per animam beatitudinem consequitur. Res ergo ipsa quae appetitur ut finis, est id in quo beatitudo consistit, et quod beatum facit, sed huius rei adeptio vocatur beatitudo. Unde dicendum est quod beatitudo est aliquid animae; sed id in quo consistit beatitudo, est aliquid extra animam.* A nearly identical text is found in the next question (I-II, q. 3 a. 1c.) in which he distinguishes between the uncreated good who is God and the created attainment of him: “End is spoken of in two ways. In one way, regarding the thing itself that we desire to attain... In another way, either the attainment (or possession) or the use (or enjoyment) of a thing that is desired ... In the first way, the ultimate end of man is the uncreated good, namely God, who alone is able to perfectly fulfill the will by his own infinite

Applying this text to the habit of virtue, we can gather that no natural virtue can be the last end because it is not proportioned to the object of true beatitude which is not only outside of the soul, but infinitely transcends it. As Thomas says, "the natural inclination of the will is for that which is suitable to it according to nature. And therefore if something is above nature, the will is not able to be carried into it unless it be helped by some higher principle." But "to see God by [his] essence, in which the ultimate beatitude of the rational creature consists, is above the nature of any created intellect whatever. Therefore, no rational creature is able to have a motion of the will ordered to that beatitude unless moved by a supernatural agent: and we call this the help of grace."<sup>376</sup> Just as God appoints the end to all things in virtue of their nature,<sup>377</sup> so he must appoint to them a supernatural end if they are to know what to direct their activity towards:

the knowledge of the ultimate end must be appointed (*praestituatur*) to us by grace so that we might voluntarily be directed towards it. But this knowledge is not able to be one of clear vision in this state of life, as was proved. Necessarily, therefore, this knowledge is through faith.<sup>378</sup>

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goodness. In the second way, the ultimate end of man is something created existing within him, which is nothing other than the attainment or enjoyment of the ultimate end. The ultimate end, however, is called beatitude. If, then, man's beatitude is considered in regard to the cause or the object, it is something uncreated, but if it is considered in regard to the essence itself of beatitude, it is something created."

<sup>376</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 62 a.2c.: *naturalis autem inclinatio voluntatis est ad id, quod est conveniens secundum naturam. Et ideo, si aliquid sit supra naturam, voluntas in id ferri non potest, nisi ab aliquo alio supernaturali principio adjuta... videre Deum per essentiam, in quo ultima beatitudo rationalis creaturae consistit, est supra naturam cujuslibet intellectus creati. Unde nulla creatura rationalis potest habere motum voluntatis ordinatum ad illam beatitudinem, nisi mota a supernaturali agente: et hoc dicimus auxilium gratiae.*

<sup>377</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1 ch. 44 n. 7: *Omne quod tendit determinate in aliquem finem, aut ipsum praestituit sibi finem, aut praestituitur ei finis ab alio: alias non magis in hunc quam in illum finem tenderet. Naturalia autem tendunt in fines determinatos: non enim a casu naturales utilitates consequuntur: sic enim non essent semper aut in pluribus, sed raro; horum enim est casus. Cum ergo ipsa non praestituant sibi finem, quia rationem finis non cognoscunt; oportet quod eis praestituatur finis ab alio, qui sit naturae institutor. Hic autem est qui praebet omnibus esse, et est per seipsum necesse-esse, quem Deum dicimus, ut ex supra dictis patet. Non autem posset naturae finem praestituere nisi intelligeret. Deus igitur est intelligens.*

<sup>378</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 152 n. 2: *Motus enim quo per gratiam in ultimum finem dirigimur, est voluntarius, non violentus, ut supra ostensum est. Voluntarius autem motus in aliquid esse non potest*

Grace is thus indispensable for attaining that which is above our nature. Synderesis may appoint the natural end of living according to reason and other ends constitutive of the perfect good, but faith that has been caused by grace<sup>379</sup> must do so as well:

The goodness of the human will depends much more upon the eternal law than upon human reason, and where human reason is insufficient, it is necessary to have recourse to the eternal reason.<sup>380</sup>

The eternal reason, which is synonymous with the eternal law,<sup>381</sup> "directs us in many things that surpass human reason, e.g. in matters of faith."<sup>382</sup> Principal among those things is the knowledge of what our ultimate perfection consists of:

By the name of beatitude is understood the ultimate perfection of a rational or intellectual nature: accordingly, it is naturally desired since everything naturally desires its perfection. Now the ultimate perfection of a rational or intellectual nature is twofold. One, certainly, which is able to be attained in virtue of one's own nature and this is, in a manner, called beatitude or happiness ... but over this happiness there is another

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*nisi sit cognitum. Oportet igitur quod per gratiam in nobis cognitio ultimi finis praestituatur, ad hoc quod voluntarie dirigamur in ipsum. Haec autem cognitio non potest esse secundum apertam visionem in statu isto, ut supra probatum est. Oportet igitur quod sit cognitio per fidem.*

<sup>379</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 152 n. 1: *necessarium est quod ... in nobis fides per gratiam causetur.*

<sup>380</sup> I-II q.19 a.4 c.: *multo magis dependet bonitas voluntatis humanae a lege aeterna, quam a ratione humana: et ubi deficit humana ratio, oportet ad rationem aeternam recurrere.*

<sup>381</sup> As also seems evident from I-II, q. 91 a. 2 ad 3: *etiam animalia irrationalia participant rationem aeternam suo modo, sicut et rationalis creatura: sed quia rationalis creatura participat eam intellectualiter, et rationaliter, ideo participatio legis aeternae in creatura rationali proprie lex vocatur...*

<sup>382</sup> I-II, q. 71 a.6 ad 5: *per legem aeternam regulemur in multis, quae excedunt rationem humanam; sicut in his, quae sunt fidei.* The quoted translation is that of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province.

happiness which we expect in the future, by which we will see God as he is. This, certainly, is above any given created intellect at all.<sup>383</sup>

This teaching from *ST* I, q. 62, a. 1, is repeated in the following article, which introduces the concept of a twofold happiness corresponding to man's twofold perfection. Virtue, he says, perfects man so that he can attain happiness, but to attain the happiness that surpasses what is proportionate to human nature he needs the theological virtues because there can be no natural desire "to see God by his essence, in which the ultimate beatitude of a rational creature consists."<sup>384</sup>

The natural virtues in addition to the form of the natural virtues which is prudence stand in need of being oriented to the supernatural. Thomas explains that without charity, which is "more excellent than the other virtues"<sup>385</sup> as that which "most attains God,"<sup>386</sup> man's will cannot be properly related to God:

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<sup>383</sup> I, q. 62 a.1 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod nomine beatitudinis intelligitur ultima perfectio rationalis, seu intellectualis naturae: et inde est, quod naturaliter desideratur; quia unumquodque naturaliter desiderat suam ultimam perfectionem. Ultima autem perfectio rationalis, seu intellectualis naturae est duplex. Una quidem, quam potest assequi virtute suae naturae; et haec quodammodo beatitudo, vel felicitas dicitur. Unde et Arist. (bk. 10. Eth. cap. 8.) perfectissimam hominis contemplationem, qua optimum intelligibile, quod est Deus, contemplari potest in hac vita, dicit esse ultimam hominis felicitatem: sed super hanc felicitatem est alia felicitas, quam in futuro expectamus, qua videbimus Deum sicuti est. Quod quidem est supra cujuslibet intellectus creati naturam.*

<sup>384</sup> *S.Th.* I, q. 62 a.2c.: *naturalis autem inclinatio voluntatis est ad id, quod est conveniens secundum naturam. Et ideo, si aliquid sit supra naturam, voluntas in id ferri non potest, nisi ab aliquo alio supernaturali principio adjuta; sicut patet, quod ignis habet naturalem inclinationem ad calefaciendum, et ad generandum ignem; sed generare carnem est supra naturalem virtutem ignis; unde ignis ad hoc nullam inclinationem habet, nisi secundum quod movetur ut instrumentum ab anima nutritiva. Ostensum est autem supra (q. 12. art. 4. et 5.), cum de Dei cognitione ageretur, quod videre Deum per essentiam, in quo ultima beatitudo rationalis creaturae consistit, est supra naturam cujuslibet intellectus creati. Unde nulla creatura rationalis potest habere motum voluntatis ordinatum ad illam beatitudinem, nisi mota a supernaturali agente: et hoc dicimus auxilium gratiae.*

<sup>385</sup> II-II, q. 24 a. 4 ad 2: *... sequitur, quod ipsa sit excellentior aliis virtutibus.* II-II, q. 157 a. 4 ad 2, similarly, refers to charity as the *maxima virtutum*.

<sup>386</sup> II-II, q. 23 a. 6c.

God is the end of those with upright wills - and charity and good delight and happiness; nevertheless in such a way that God is the ultimate end and happiness encompassing charity and delight, even as an end under the end, being joined together by the ultimate end since an operation tends to the object: nor is there a right relation of the will towards God except by means of these three.<sup>387</sup>

Charity, which is constitutive of true happiness, unites man with the supreme end, God himself. Although it is not a natural but an accidental form,<sup>388</sup> the fact that "every agent acts by virtue of form,"<sup>389</sup> implies that those who have it act in virtue of it. Granted that prudence is the form of the moral virtues, charity holds the place of honor as the form of *all* the virtues<sup>390</sup> which means that prudence relies upon charity and faith if it is to direct someone to the supernatural

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<sup>387</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 2 c.: *Ipsa autem operatio perfecta, beatitudo est; objectum autem altissimum Deus est; habitus autem perfectissimus caritas est; delectatio autem purissima est spiritualis delectatio, ut in 10 Ethic. probatur: et ideo in littera dicitur quod Deus rectorum voluntatum finis est, et caritas et bona delectatio, et beatitudo; ita tamen quod Deus ultimus finis sit, et beatitudo caritatem et delectationem complectens, sit sicut finis sub fine, conjungens ultimo fini; cum operatio in objectum tendat: nec est recta relatio voluntatis in Deum nisi mediantibus his tribus.*

<sup>388</sup> See, II-II, q. 23 a.3 ad 2

<sup>389</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *On Creation*, trans. S. C. Selner-Wright, Thomas Aquinas in Translation (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 79 (article 9, ad 5). Cf. Aristotle, *Physics* III 2, 202a9–12. In his commentary on this text, Thomas says, *omne agens moveat secundum formam* (lect. 4, no. 593).

<sup>390</sup> *Super Sent.* bk. 2 d.27 q 2 a4 qc 3 c.: "charity is the form of *all* the other virtues, as prudence is the form of the *moral* virtues." Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity*, 166.

happiness<sup>391</sup> that surpasses man's natural capacity.<sup>392</sup> In other words, prudence needs to be infused by charity, which for its part necessarily presupposes faith<sup>393</sup> since the will is only able to be moved towards the last end if that end is first in the intellect.<sup>394</sup>

Without charity moving prudence efficiently<sup>395</sup> towards the supernatural end, prudence cannot enable man to attain the truly "right realization"<sup>396</sup> of himself:

It is evident that the rectitude of human reason is compared to divine reason as a lower motive principle. Because it is moved to the higher one, it is also referred to it; for the eternal reason is the supreme rule of all human rectitude - and thus prudence, which

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<sup>391</sup> II-II, q. 4 a. 7 c. says faith is *per se* first among all the virtues and *Super Sent.* bk.2 d. 41 q. 1 a. 1 ad 2 elaborates on its importance in directing all of our acts to the last end: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod ratio non potest sufficienter dirigere ad hoc quod humanam cognitionem naturalem excedit; in quod tamen, sicut in finem ultimum, oportet omnes actus nostros ordinari: ideo oportet quod fides dirigat.*

The following text emphasizes that natural prudence is not sufficient: *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 41 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod prudentia sufficienter dirigit ad finem illum qui est bonum humanum, non autem ad finem qui est bonum divinum, quale est quod in patria promittitur.* In *distinctio* 38 of the same book, Thomas clarifies that the beatitude or happiness that is the ultimate end is the kind of happiness that "embraces charity" as an end under the end (*sicut finis sub fine*; see, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 2c.). For this reason, we might say that true prudence leads one to true happiness in virtue of charity.

Finally, *Super Sent.* bk. 3 d.3 q. 1 ad 3 further elaborates on the need for each of the theological virtues: "in regard to the end elevated above nature, to which the natural inclination does not attain, freely given habits must precede the other habits—both in the intellect (as faith) and in the affective part (as charity and hope)" *On Love and Charity*, 102.

<sup>392</sup> See, *S.Th.*, I, q. 62 a.1c.

<sup>393</sup> II-II, q. 4 a.7 ad 5: *Ad quintum dicendum, quod actus voluntatis praeexigitur ad fidem, non tamen actus voluntatis charitate informatus: sed talis actus praesupponit fidem; quia non potest voluntas perfecto amore in Deum tendere, nisi intellectus rectam fidem habeat circa ipsum.*

<sup>394</sup> II-II, q. 4 a. 7c.: *ipse autem ultimus finis oportet quod prius sit in intellectu, quam in voluntate: quia voluntas non fertur in aliquid, nisi prout est in intellectu apprehensum.*

<sup>395</sup> II-II, q. 23 a.8 ad1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod charitas dicitur esse forma aliarum virtutum non quidem exemplariter, aut essentialiter, sed magis effective; inquantum scilicet omnibus formam imponit.*

<sup>396</sup> This is an oblique reference to James Keenan. I use the phrase somewhat tongue in cheek because Keenan does not seem to fully grasp the point I am trying to make here as he seems in the following quote to think of natural prudence as being sufficient for some:

"This move allows Thomas to speak across confessional lines so as to engage all human beings to see that the quest we each have for the right realization of our own selves is accessible to each one of us. The thirteenth-century Dominican offers through prudence ... a way that one can determine oneself according to one's own inclinations." James F. Keenan, "The Virtue of Prudence (IIa IIae, Qq. 47–56)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 264, including note 57.

implies rectitude of reason, is most of all perfected and helped inasmuch as it is ruled and moved by the Holy Spirit.<sup>397</sup>

Although "prudence sufficiently directs one towards that end which is the human good," it does not sufficiently direct a man towards "the divine good, which is promised in the heavenly fatherland."<sup>398</sup> As an intellectual virtue it is, in a sense, especially reliant upon faith for this because:

There cannot be a voluntary motion towards something unless that thing be known. It is necessary, therefore, that the knowledge of the ultimate end be appointed (*praestituatur*) in us by grace so that we might voluntarily be directed towards it. This knowledge, though, is not able to be according to an open vision in the present state, as was shown.

Therefore, it must be known by faith .... By the help of divine grace, we are directed towards this end, which is the manifest vision of the first truth in itself. Necessarily, then, before this end is attained, man's intellect must be subjected to God by way of believing, with divine grace bringing this about.<sup>399</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> II-II, q. 52 a. 2c.: *manifestum est autem, quod rectitudo rationis humanae comparatur ad rationem divinam, sicut principium motivum inferius; quod movetur ad superius, et refertur in ipsum; ratio enim aeterna est suprema regula omnis humanae rectitudinis; et ideo prudentia, quae importat rationis rectitudinem, maxime perficitur, et juvatur, secundum quod regulatur, et movetur a Spiritu Sancto.* See also, I-II, 109.3 ad 1: "Charity loves God over all things in a more eminent way than nature. For nature loves God over all things inasmuch as he is the beginning and end of the natural good whereas charity loves him according as he is the object of beatitude and inasmuch as man has a certain spiritual friendship with God." (*Caritas diligit deum super omnia eminentius quam natura. Natura enim diligit deum super omnia, prout est principium et finis naturalis boni, caritas autem secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, et secundum quod homo habet quandam societatem spirituales cum Deo.*) He is referring to the gift of counsel, but the theological virtues are the origin of the gifts (I-II, q. 69 a. 4 ad 3).

<sup>398</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 41 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod prudentia sufficienter dirigit ad finem illum qui est bonum humanum, non autem ad finem qui est bonum divinum, quale est quod in patria promittitur.*

<sup>399</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 152 n. 2 *Motus enim quo per gratiam in ultimum finem dirigimur, est voluntarius, non violentus, ut supra ostensum est. Voluntarius autem motus in aliquid esse non potest nisi sit cognitum. Oportet igitur quod per gratiam in nobis cognitio ultimi finis praestituatur, ad hoc quod voluntarie dirigamur in ipsum. Haec autem cognitio non potest esse secundum apertam visionem in statu isto, ut supra probatum est. Oportet igitur quod sit cognitio per fidem.... Auxilio divinae gratiae dirigimur in ultimum finem, qui est manifesta visio Primae Veritatis in seipsa. Ergo oportet quod, antequam ad istum finem veniatur, intellectus hominis Deo subdatur per modum credulitatis, divina gratia hoc faciente.*

The virtue of faith is preeminent among all the virtues inasmuch as it ensures the human intellect has the supernatural end appointed (*praestituatur*) to it.<sup>400</sup> St. Thomas even says faith is *per se* first among all the virtues precisely for this reason:

Since in practical affairs (*agibilium*), the end is the beginning... it is necessary that the theological virtues, the object of which is the ultimate end, be prior to the other virtues. It is necessary, however, that the ultimate end itself be in the intellect before it is in the will because the will is not carried into something except to the degree that it is apprehended by the intellect.<sup>401</sup> Accordingly, since the ultimate end is in the will through hope and charity but in the intellect through faith, it is necessary that faith be first among all the virtues because natural knowledge is not able to attain to God inasmuch as he is the object of beatitude, according to which aspect hope and charity tend to him.<sup>402</sup>

Faith is the foundational virtue that makes actions that lead to the attainment of eternal beatitude possible. Although all do not have it, everyone at least has knowledge of the universal and

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<sup>400</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 152 n. 2: *Oportet igitur quod per gratiam in nobis cognitio ultimi finis praestituatur, ad hoc quod voluntarie dirigamur in ipsum.*

*Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 118 n. 6: *Hinc est quod dicitur Hebr. 11-6: sine fide impossibile est placere Deo. Et Exodi 20-2, antequam alia praecepta legis ponantur, praestituitur recta fides de Deo, cum dicitur: audi Israel: dominus Deus tuus unus est.*

<sup>401</sup> As John of St. Thomas says, *esse apprehensum est conditio omnis objecti propositi voluntati, sive sit finis, sive medium, 'nihil enim est volitum, quin praecognitum.'*

*Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus (Nova Editio) Tomus Secundus; Philosophia Naturalis; Prima Pars; Quaestio XIII, De Fine Articulus Primus* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, Editor, 1883), 243.

<sup>402</sup> II-II, q. 4 a. 7 c. *Respondeo dicendum quod aliquid potest esse prius altero dupliciter, uno modo, per se; alio modo, per accidens. Per se quidem inter omnes virtutes prima est fides. Cum enim in agibilibus finis sit principium, ut supra dictum est, necesse est virtutes theologicas, quarum obiectum est ultimus finis, esse priores ceteris virtutibus. Ipse autem ultimus finis oportet quod prius sit in intellectu quam in voluntate, quia voluntas non fertur in aliquid nisi prout est in intellectu apprehensum. Unde cum ultimus finis sit quidem in voluntate per spem et caritatem, in intellectu autem per fidem, necesse est quod fides sit prima inter omnes virtutes, quia naturalis cognitio non potest attingere ad Deum secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, prout tendit in ipsum spes et caritas. Sed per accidens potest aliqua virtus esse prior fide. Causa enim per accidens est per accidens prior. Removere autem prohibens pertinet ad causam per accidens, ut patet per philosophum, in VIII Physic. Et secundum hoc aliquae virtutes possunt dici per accidens priores fide, inquantum remouent impedimenta credendi, sicut fortitudo remouet inordinatum timorem impediens fidem; humilitas autem superbiam, per quam intellectus recusat se submittere veritati fidei. Et idem potest dici de aliquibus aliis virtutibus, quamvis non sint verae virtutes nisi praesupposita fide, ut patet per Augustinum, in libro contra Iulianum.*



perfect good which means they all desire happiness under the common *ratio* of it which Boethius described as "a state that has been perfected by the coming together of all good things."<sup>403</sup> We can conclude from this that there must be an implicit desire for some kind of 'indefinite more'<sup>404</sup> that might be referred to as an implicit desire for God. Aquinas speaks of this kind of desire in *De Veritate* where he says, "created existence (*esse*) itself is a likeness to the divine goodness. When things desire 'to be,' they implicitly desire a likeness to God and God himself."<sup>405</sup> Similarly, in the *Scriptum*, he says "everyone has an appetite for God."<sup>406</sup> Though he refrains from using the word 'implicit' in this text, it seems to suggest it because it is certain that all do not know God exists and they do not have an appetite for him "as he is in his own nature." As St.

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<sup>403</sup> I-II, q. 3 a.3 obj. 2: *Boetius dicit in III de Consol. quod beatitudo est status omnium bonorum congregatione perfectus.*

<sup>404</sup> I first heard this felicitious phrase from Steven Long, and have appropriated it because it is clearly implied in I-II, q. 3 a. 8.

<sup>405</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a.2 ad 2.: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod ipsum esse creatum est similitudo divinae bonitatis; unde in quantum aliqua desiderant esse, desiderant Dei similitudinem et Deum implicite.* He said something similar in the ad 1 in regard to implicit knowledge of God: "all knowing beings implicitly know God in anything known. For just as nothing has the *ratio* of appetibility except through a likeness to the first goodness, so nothing is knowable except through a likeness to the first truth" (*Ad primum igitur dicendum, quod etiam omnia cognoscuntia cognoscunt implicite Deum in quolibet cognito. Sicut enim nihil habet rationem appetibilis nisi per similitudinem primae bonitatis, ita nihil est cognoscibile nisi per similitudinem primae veritatis*).

See also, *De Virtutibus*, q. 2 a. 12 ad 16: *Ad decimum sextum dicendum, quod sicut in cognitione cuiuslibet veri cognoscitur prima veritas, sicut primum exemplar in imagine, vel vestigio; ita etiam in amore cuiuslibet boni amatur summa bonitas. Sed talis amor summae bonitatis non sufficit ad rationem caritatis, sed oportet quod diligatur summum bonum prout est beatitudinis obiectum.*

<sup>406</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 1 d. 3 q. 1 a. 2 ad 1: *auctoritas Damasceni intelligenda est de divina cognitione nobis insita, secundum ipsius similitudinem et non secundum quod est in sua natura; sicut etiam dicitur, quod omnia appetunt Deum: non quidem ipsum prout consideratur in sua natura, sed in sui similitudine; quia nihil desideratur, nisi in quantum habet similitudinem ipsius.*

I have not been consistent in the way I have translated this word, but in this case, I defer to Kwasniewski's way of translating it. As he notes, "have appetite for" is certainly lacking in elegance, but at the least it makes the reader wonder what Aquinas meant by using this word. As he says, "it will not do to substitute systematically "desire" or "seek" or some other verb that has its own solid Latin equivalent (*desiderunt, concupiscunt, quaerunt* etc.) when there is a metaphysical issue at stake, namely the understanding of *appetitus* as such, and not merely *desiderium* or *concupiscentia*.... a different formula, such as "to desire x," suggests false associations—for example, that we are dealing here with emotions." He observes that Aquinas asks the question "whether someone can have an appetite for misery" (*Super Sent.* IV, d.49 q. 1 a.3). He could not ask that if *appetere* ought to be translated as 'feel.' We are certainly speaking about what St. Francis de Sales would call our 'higher natures' here and not the sensitive appetite. See, Thomas Aquinas, *On Love and Charity*, 366.

Paul aptly puts it, "no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him."<sup>407</sup> Accordingly, the appetite for 'him' that is explicit in all men is merely the appetite for any given thing inasmuch as "nothing is desired except to the degree it has a likeness to him."<sup>408</sup>

We are ordered to God and our nature makes us capable of knowing him and being directed towards him. Without the agency of God moving us, however, we do not know that of which we are capable. The potency for even the life of grace, for being conformed to the *imago Christi*, is one that only a divine agent can actualize. As Steven Long says regarding this ability known as obediential potency:

Obediential potency is a passive potency that when conjoined with the active agency of God is susceptible of a definite range of actuation otherwise unattainable (consider the simile of stained glass and the sun's illumination). The natural desire for God signifies the profundity of the human spirit whereby it is able to receive such aid. Yet it is not simply in itself a desire for essentially supernatural beatific vision, but arches toward God along an infravalent trajectory proportioned to the nature of the finite faculty whose perfection is indeterminately sought before being uplifted in desire for the triune God.<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>407</sup> 1 Cor. 2:9, a verse often cited by Aquinas.

<sup>408</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 1 d. 3 q. 1 a. 2 ad 1: *auctoritas Damasceni intelligenda est de divina cognitione nobis insita, secundum ipsius similitudinem et non secundum quod est in sua natura; sicut etiam dicitur, quod omnia appetunt Deum: non quidem ipsum prout consideratur in sua natura, sed in sui similitudine; quia nihil desideratur, nisi inquantum habet similitudinem ipsius.*

<sup>409</sup> Steven Long, *Obediential Potency, Human Knowledge and the Natural Desire for God*: International Philosophical Quarterly, Vol. XXXVII, No. 1 Issue # 145 (March 1997), 58. As he words it elsewhere: The "necessary desire for the perfect good or happiness that structures the will" is the desire for the intelligible-good-in-general. Under the active agency of God this desire is susceptible of becoming a true desire for divine beatitude. But in and of itself this natural desire is not the desire for supernatural beatitude, for the-good-in-general is neither naturally identical with, nor does it naturally "include," the divine good. The full perfection of the good subsists uniquely and super-eminently in God, and hence under God's active agency we may be brought to graced desire for the divine good" ("On the Possibility of a Purely Natural End for Man," *The Thomist* 64 (2000), 225).

See also, *De Veritate*, q. 8, a.4 ad 13; q. 8 a.12 ad 4, q. 29 a.3, *De Virtutibus* q. 1, a. 10 ad 13, Steven A. Long, "Obediential Potency, Human Knowledge, and the Natural Desire for God," *International Philosophical Quarterly* 37 (1997): 45–63; Peter A. Pagan-Aguilar, "St. Thomas Aquinas and Human Finality: Paradox or *Mysterium Fidei*?" *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 375–99

Since this potency is passive, there is, strictly speaking, nothing man can do to get God to actualize it. As Aquinas puts it, "all knowledge, which is in accord with the mode of the created substance, falls short of the vision of the divine essence, which infinitely exceeds every created substance. For this reason, neither man nor any creature is able to attain ultimate beatitude through their own natural powers."<sup>410</sup> Nevertheless, Sacred Scripture is clear that God "desires all to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth"<sup>411</sup> so no one need despair that God will abandon him or her. With this in mind, St. Thomas says "man is instructed to do what is within himself to turn (*convertat*) himself to God, which comes about by free will (*per liberum arbitrium*)."<sup>412</sup> Although "man is not able to prepare himself to receive the light of grace except through the gratuitous help of God moving him interiorly"<sup>413</sup> and although man's *nature* itself cannot "give him some principle by which he is able to attain [supernatural] beatitude," he is nevertheless exhorted to do "that which is within himself"<sup>414</sup> because his nature does at least provide him with the faculty of "free will by which he can turn himself to God, who can make him attain beatitude."<sup>415</sup> In other words, despite the fact that it is impossible for man "to be turned

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<sup>410</sup> I-II, q. 5 a. 5c.: *Omnis autem cognitio, quae est secundum modum substantiae creatae, deficit a visione divinae essentiae, quae in infinitum excedit omnem substantiam creatam; unde nec homo, nec aliqua creatura potest consequi beatitudinem ultimam per sua naturalia.*

<sup>411</sup> 1 Tim. 2:4: ὁς πάντας ἀνθρώπους θέλει σωθῆναι καὶ εἰς ἐπίγνωσιν ἀληθείας ἐλθεῖν.

Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th Edition. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012).

<sup>412</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 6 ad 1: *conversio hominis ad Deum fit quidem per liberum arbitrium: et secundum hoc homini praecipitur, quod se ad Deum convertat. sed liberum arbitrium ad Deum converti non potest, nisi Deo ipsum ad se convertente, secundum illud Hierem. 31.: Convertite me, et convertar: quia tu Domine Deus meus: et Threnorum ultimo: Convertite nos Domine ad te, et convertemur.*

I-II q. 112 a. 3 s.c. adds: *homo recipit ex necessitate gratiam a Deo, quantumcumque se praeparet.*

<sup>413</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 6c.: *homo non potest se praeparare ad lumen gratiae suscipiendum, nisi per auxilium gratuitum Dei interiorius moventis.* See also, *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 1 ad 2: *Gratiam autem, quae opera meritoria facit, quamvis homo non possit ex libero arbitrio acquirere, potest tamen se ad gratiam habendam praeparare, quae ei a Deo non denegabitur, si fecerit quod in se est.*

<sup>414</sup> II-II q. 33 a. 2 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod in omnibus bonis agendis operatio hominis non est efficax, nisi adsit auxilium divinum: et tamen homo debet facere, quod in se.*

<sup>415</sup> *S.Th.*, I-II, q. 5 a. 5 ad 1 explains that nature does not give man the desire for happiness in vain because *quamvis non daret sibi aliquod principium, quo posset beatitudinem consequi: hoc enim erat impossibile: sed dedit ei; I-II, q. 5 a. 5 ad 1: liberum arbitrium, quo dedit ei liberum arbitrium, quo possit converti ad*

towards his ultimate beatitude<sup>416</sup> on his own, it is possible in the qualified sense that "what we can do with the divine aid is not *altogether* impossible for us" since "what we can do through our friends, we can in some way do by ourselves."<sup>417</sup>

In the *De Veritate*, this capacity to turn to God (which must presuppose some initial help of God<sup>418</sup>) is referred to as the ability of man to appoint (*praestituere*) to himself as an end the supreme end which is God himself:

If someone does what is within himself when he enters adulthood [i.e., when he reaches the age of reason], the grace through which he will be exempt from original sin will be given to him and if he does not do what is within himself, there will be guilt due to the sin of omission. Now since any given man is held to avoid sin, and this cannot be done unless he has appointed a fitting end for himself, everyone is held, when he first attains control over his mind, to turn himself to God and to establish the end in him - and by this, he is disposed for grace.<sup>419</sup>

In the case of the angels, who never lack the possession of reason, "some of them immediately appointed / placed (*praestiterunt*) an impediment to their happiness."<sup>420</sup> Humans can do the same

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*Deum, qui eum faceret beatum.*

<sup>416</sup> See, *S.Th.* I, q. 62 a. 2 ad 2 saying it is impossible inasmuch as it is beyond his nature.

<sup>417</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 4 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod illud, quod possumus cum auxilio divino, non est nobis omnino impossibile, secundum illud Philosophi in 3. Ethic. (cap. 3.): Quae per amicos possumus, aliquantulum per nos possumus; unde Hier. ibidem confitetur, sic nostrum liberum esse arbitrium, ut dicamus nos semper indigere Dei auxilio.*

<sup>418</sup> As the body of I-II, q. 112 a. 3 says, God's help is necessary even for the preparation for grace: *praeparatio hominis ad gratiam est a Deo, sicut a movente; a libero autem arbitrio, sicut a moto.*

<sup>419</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 28 a. 3 ad 4: *Cum enim adultus esse incipit, si quod in se est, faciat, gratia ei dabitur, per quam a peccato originali erit immunis; quod si non faciat, reus erit peccato omissionis. Cum enim quilibet teneatur peccatum vitare, et hoc fieri non possit nisi praestituto sibi debito fine; tenetur quilibet, cum primo suae mentis est compos, ad Deum se convertere, et in eo finem constituere; et per hoc ad gratiam disponitur.* I-II, q. 89 a.6c. is practically identical.

<sup>420</sup> *S.Th.*, I q. 63 a. 6 ad 3: *angelus habet liberum arbitrium inflexibile post electionem. Et ideo nisi statim post primum instans, in quo naturalem motum habuit ad bonum, impedimentum beatitudini praestitisset, fuisset firmatus in bono. Sed non est simile de homine.*

when they reach the age of reason. They are, charged, however, to instead place the *ratio* of perfect happiness before themselves, which would at least implicitly be placing God before themselves as their end. Thomas explains the relationship between happiness and God:

Happiness is the perfect good which totally sets the appetite at rest: otherwise, it would not be the ultimate end if there remained an appetite for something further. But the object of the will (which is the human appetite), is the universal good just as the object of the intellect is the universal true. And from this it is clear that nothing is able to set the will of man at rest but the universal good; which is not found in anything created, but only in God.<sup>421</sup>

The natural desire of man is for the universal good which alone can make him truly happy.<sup>422</sup> If he places this end before himself as a goal to pursue,<sup>423</sup> divine grace may make him cognizant of the fact that Providence has ordered him toward the vision of God, considered in his own nature

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<sup>421</sup> I-II, q. 2 a. 8 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod impossibile est, beatitudinem hominis esse in aliquo bono creato: beatitudo enim est bonum perfectum, quod totaliter quietat appetitum: alioquin non esset ultimus finis, si adhuc restaret aliquid appetendum: objectum autem voluntatis, quae est appetitus humanus, est universale bonum: sicut obiectum intellectus est universale verum: ex quo patet, quod nihil potest quietare voluntatem hominis, nisi bonum universale; quod non invenitur in aliquo creato, sed solum in Deo.* Thomas says something very similar in *De Regno ad Regem Cypri*, ch. 9 n. 63. He indicates there that happiness is the fulfillment of the natural desire but that what is at least implicitly desired is a non-earthly good: *Est enim mentibus omnium ratione utentium inditum, virtutis praemium beatitudinem esse. Virtus enim uniuscuiusque rei describitur, quae bonum facit habentem, et opus eius bonum reddit. Ad hoc autem quisque bene operando nititur pervenire, quod est maxime desiderio inditum; hoc autem est esse felicem, quod nullus potest non velle. Hoc igitur praemium virtutis convenienter expectatur quod hominem beatum facit. Si autem bene operari virtutis est opus, regis autem opus est bene regere subditos, hoc etiam erit praemium regis, quod eum faciat esse beatum. Quid autem hoc sit, hinc considerandum est. Beatitudinem quidem dicimus ultimum desideriorum finem. Neque enim desiderii motus usque in infinitum procedit; esset enim inane naturale desiderium, cum infinita pertransiri non possint. Cum autem desiderium intellectualis naturae sit universalis boni, hoc solum bonum vere beatum facere poterit, quo adepti nullum bonum restat quod amplius desiderari possit: unde et beatitudo dicitur bonum perfectum, quasi omnia desiderabilia in se comprehendens. Tale autem non est aliquod bonum terrenum.*

<sup>422</sup> *De regno*, ch. 9, no. 63: “Cum autem desiderium intellectualis naturae sit universalis boni, hoc solum bonum vere beatum facere poterit, quo adepti nullum bonum restat quod amplius desiderari possit: unde et beatitudo dicitur bonum perfectum, quasi omnia desiderabilia in se comprehendens. Tale autem non est aliquod bonum terrenum.”

<sup>423</sup> I speak this way to make clear that man has a role to play in disposing himself for grace. We should always keep in mind, however, that “man is able to do nothing, unless he be moved by God—as is stated in John 15, ‘without me you can do nothing’—and therefore when man is said to do that which is within himself, this is said to be in man’s power insofar as he is moved by God” (I-II, q. 109, a. 6, ad 2).

and not simply under the *ratio* of being the cause of certain created effects.<sup>424</sup> Grace, then, clearly builds upon the nature that is presupposes. Its activity is based upon the capacity for supernatural beatitude that is that is partially based on man's status of having been made *ad imaginem Dei*.<sup>425</sup> As the perfectly good object of all man's desire, God himself is necessarily implicit object of the synderesis, which fundamentally directs man to pursue the good.

Synderesis unites all of man's activities in the pursuit of the perfect good and dialectical reasoning enables him to apply principles held in virtue of natural reason to particular actions. Happiness is, therefore, not found in synderesis because one has to apply those most basic principles such as that "one ought to act according to reason"<sup>426</sup> and "evil should be done to no one"<sup>427</sup> to particular practical actions. On its own, moreover, synderesis is not able to direct someone to the perfect Good that is God himself as the object of beatitude. However, by pointing towards ends such as the need to act in accordance with reason, it does direct man towards the attainment of happiness. I have already made many arguments to the effect that synderesis is primary as that which appoints the end that the appetites follow after in the pursuit of the perfect good. According to this model, synderesis would direct prudence to the end that it pursues even

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<sup>424</sup> ST I-II, q. 3, a. 8, corp.: "Si igitur intellectus humanus cognoscens essentiam alicujus effectus creati non cognoscat de Deo, nisi an est, nondum perfectio ejus attingit simpliciter ad causam primam, sed remanet ei adhuc naturale desiderium inquirendi causam; unde nondum est perfecte beatus: ad perfectam igitur beatitudinem requiritur, quod intellectus pertingat ad ipsam essentiam primae causae." See Jacques Maritain, *Approaches to God*, trans. Peter O'Reilly (New York: Harper, 1954), 109–10: "But this desire to know the *First Cause through its essence* is a desire which does not know what it asks, like the sons of Zebedee when they asked to sit on the right and on the left of the Son of Man. *Ye know not what ye ask*, Jesus replied to them. For to know the First Cause in its essence, or without the intermediary of any other thing, is to know the First cause otherwise than as First Cause" (quoted in Long, "Obediential Potency," 60n49).

<sup>425</sup> See *Gen.* 1:26. In the first article of q. 93 of the *Prima Pars*, Thomas observes that Christ alone *is* the image of God whereas intellectual creatures are made *ad imaginem Dei* (see also, article two). In I-II, q. 113 a. 10 c., we learn that the soul is "naturally capable of grace" because to be made *ad imaginem Dei* implies being capable of God with the help of grace. Due to man's rational nature, he is able to know and love God (see, I, q. 93 a. 4c.). This capacity is a capacity of nature but not a natural capacity (see, I, q. 62 a. 2 and the body of I, q. 93 a. 4c. which says that for man to know and love God "actually or habitually," grace must be active).

<sup>426</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.7 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae, est finis proprius cujuslibet virtutis moralis... et hic finis praestitutus est homini secundum naturalem rationem: naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique, ut secundum rationem operetur.*

II-II, q. 141 a. 2 c. gives a similar explanation of how temperance and fortitude pursue the good of reason: *Nam temperantia retrahit ab his quae contra rationem appetitum alliciunt, fortitudo autem impellit ad ea sustinenda vel aggredienda.*

<sup>427</sup> II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1: *...qui est cognoscitivus universalium; quod pertinet ad intellectum, qui ponitur virtus intellectualis, qua naturaliter nobis cognita sunt non solum universalia principia speculativa, sed etiam practica; sicut: Nulli esse malefaciendum.*

though prudence also relies upon upright appetites to help direct a person to happiness. For many, however, Aquinas had a significant change of thought over the course of his lifetime and he came to think that reason (even the natural reason) does not have the possibility of appointing ends to the will in any meaningful sense because that would indicate a kind of intellectual determinism. We will consider those arguments in the coming chapter and then attempt to explain as clearly and definitively as possible in chapter three how synderesis and prudence can respectively be said to appoint the end to the moral virtues - albeit under the guidance of the supernatural virtue of faith.

## Chapter Two

### On the Causality of the Intellect

With good reason, Daniel Westberg asserts that "one of the most fundamental and challenging problems in the interpretation of St. Thomas is the proper relationship of intellect and will, on which so much of moral theology (and thus of the *Summa Theologiae*) hinges."<sup>428</sup> One's theology is radically dependent upon such fundamental philosophical principles and thus St. Thomas says the theologian must be concerned with all of the effects of God even on the level of nature.<sup>429</sup> Because being is God's proper effect,<sup>430</sup> the relationship between being and the

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<sup>428</sup> Daniel Westberg: "Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?" in *The Thomist* 58, 41.

<sup>429</sup> *S.Th.*, q. 1 a.7 ad 1: *licet de Deo non possimus scire quid est, utimur tamen ejus effectum in hac doctrina, vel naturae, vel gratiae.*

<sup>430</sup> See, *S.Th.*, q. 8 a.1 c.: *Cum autem Deus sit ipsum esse per suam essentiam, oportet, quod esse creatum sit proprius effectus ejus*; q. 145 a.5 c.: *Inter omnes autem effectus universalissimum est ipsum esse. Unde oportet, quod sit proprius effectus primae, et universalissimae causae, quae est Deus... Illud autem, quod est proprius effectus Dei creantis, est illud, quod praesupponitur omnibus aliis, scilicet esse absolute.*

good (and, by extension, between the intellect and the will<sup>431</sup>) are foundational considerations even for the theologian.

In a chapter of Kevin Flannery's extraordinary work *Acts and Precepts* that is dedicated to the relationship of the intellect and the will, he says as if by way of an *apologia*, that the question of this relationship "is not an abstract, "metaphysical" issue; nor is it of merely historical interest, although the approach I take in this chapter is historical."<sup>432</sup> For my part, I would say the question of the relationship between cognition and volition is, in fact, metaphysical to some extent even while insisting that metaphysics enjoys a "privileged instrumentality" within the science of theology.<sup>433</sup> Moreover, since this foundational question has such far reaching implications (and particularly in regard to whether the intellect can be said to appoint ends at all), it seems imperative to dedicate a significant number of pages to be as precise as possible about the way the intellect influences the will and part of that precision will include a heavy historical component. This is, in a sense, the condition for entering into the modern debate about the significance of the intellect's role in the moral life because, as Bradley notes:

Contemporary discussions of free choice/decision often begin by affirming or denying Odon Lottin's claim (publicized first in 1928 and, thereafter, reasserted with various nuances until the mid-1950s) that Aquinas moved away (around 1270, with the publication of the *De Malo*, specifically in question 6 thereof) from an Aristotelian intellectual determinism towards a more radically voluntaristic notion of freedom.<sup>434</sup>

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<sup>431</sup> Being is the "proper object of the intellect" (*S.Th.*, I q. 5 a. 2 c.) whereas "good is the proper object of the will" (*De Potentia*, q. 3 a. 15 ad 5).

<sup>432</sup> Kevin Flannery, S.J., *Acts Amid Precepts, The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 111.

<sup>433</sup> "Esse as the act of being posits and implies substantial nature with its powers and connatural ends. Thus arises the privileged instrumentality of metaphysics, and of ontology of nature, within *sacra doctrina*." Steven Long, "Pruning the Vine of La Nouvelle Theologie in the Garden of Thomism: Regarding the Thomistic Corrective to 'La Nouvelle Theologie,'" in *Angelicum*, 93 (2016), 139.



Evaluating this claim - which coincides with a more particular claim of Lottin that this supposed voluntaristic move coincided with a move away from referring to the intellect as acting in the manner of a final cause<sup>435</sup> - is actually a vital means to a right evaluation of our metanarrative about the appointing of the end. That is, if Aquinas gradually became more voluntaristic in his approach, perhaps the right way of reconciling his apparently conflicting comments regarding synderesis and prudence vis-à-vis the end of the moral virtues would be to argue that the 'mature' Thomas would say they both appoint the end in a quasi-passive fashion. Each of them, after all, is referred to as a kind of reason and if reason is ultimately subjected to will, the sentiment of the earlier Thomas that a human agent is not able to determine to do anything unless his determination arise "from some knowledge appointing (*praestituente*) the end to that action" would certainly be called into question.<sup>436</sup> Were this to occur, one could defensibly maintain that the mature Thomas would say synderesis and prudence (regardless of which has a more fundamental role in the task of appointing ends) only appoint ends that can be judged in terms of their moral goodness thanks to one's subjective appetites. Were this the case, a kind of visceral perceptivity would appear to be the final arbiter of moral goodness.

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<sup>434</sup> Denis J. M. Bradley, "Reason and the Natural Law: Flanner's Reconstruction of Aquinas's Moral Theory" in *The Thomist* 67 (2003), 123-124.

<sup>435</sup> "At no point before *De malo* was reason, the formal cause of human nature, presented as a formal cause of human action" (Il faut toutefois ajouter que nulle part avant le *De malo*, cette raison, cause formelle de la nature humaine, n'est présentée comme cause formelle de l'activité humaine). Odon Lottin, "La preuve de la liberté humaine chez Thomas d'Aquin," *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 23 (1956): 325. cited in *Goodness and Rightness*, 38 n. 1. Lottin further suggests Thomas came to think final causality and efficient causality could not be separated and that, as a result, they would have to be attributed to the will whereas formal causality would have to be attributed to the reason. He comes to this conclusion after asking this rhetorical question: "peut-on séparer, comme Thomas l'avait fait jusqu'ici, causalité finale et causalité efficiente, puisque la cause efficiente ne meut l'acte qu'en vue d'une fin, et que la volonté, cause efficiente de l'acte libre, ne peut agir qu'en vue du bien, de la fin, que est son objet propre?" See *Psychologie et morale*, vol. 1, 254 (see Lauer, 301).

<sup>436</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 c.: *Determinatio autem agentis ad aliquam actionem, oportet quod sit ab aliqua cognitione praestituente finem illi actioni.*

James Keenan is one of the theologians who arrives at a conclusion very similar to this. His teaching, which he attributes to post-1270 Thomas, is that the first exercise of the will is always prior to any intellectual specification<sup>437</sup> and that the will is autonomous.<sup>438</sup> Because he is one of the few<sup>439</sup> modern authors who have taken time to attempt a careful explanation of the differing statements made in regard to prudence in I-II, q. 66 and II-II, q. 47, his ideas are certainly worthy of consideration. We will address his understanding of those texts in particular in the next chapter. More germane to our present consideration is his view of the roles of the intellect and the will, according to which "Lottin and his contemporaries" were correct in positing "a reversal of Thomas's earlier position on the will."<sup>440</sup> If it becomes evident that, *pace* Keenan, there was no "significant shift,"<sup>441</sup> the stage will be set for better addressing his explanation regarding that manner in which ends are appointed to the moral virtues in chapter three.

Keenan is not alone in arguing Aquinas became less and less focused on the causal power of the intellect and its ability to propose (*proponere*, though this seems identical to *praestituere* in most cases) anything to the will. Aquinas wrote in a later work that, "the end moves the desire

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<sup>437</sup> See, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47: "As first mover, the will's movement is independent of and prior to reason's presentation of the object." On 148 and elsewhere, exercise is spoken of as preceding specification. This is because Keenan believes that "formal interior acts" are "antecedent to questions concerning specification" (142).

<sup>438</sup> *Ibid.*, 44 (in which he explains this realization came about for Thomas when he switched from speaking of the intellect's influence in terms of final causality to speaking of it in terms of formal causality). See also, 33 and 46 (in which this autonomy is explained in virtue of the will's ability to move itself from potency to act).

<sup>439</sup> One may also point, above all else, to Dominic Farrell and his work, *The Ends of the Moral Virtues and the First Principles of Practical Reason in Thomas Aquinas* (Rome: Gregorian & Biblical Press, 2012). Others have also taken the issue seriously, though. For instance, John Finnis discusses these texts in *Reason in Action* (Oxford University Press, 2011), 26-29; Terrence Irwin in *The Development of Ethics*, vol. 1 (NY: Oxford University Press, 2011), 521ff.; Denis J.M. Bradley in *Aquinas on the Twofold Good* (pp. 207, 247 and 237-256), and Scott MacDonald in "Foundations in Aquinas's Ethics" in *Objectivism, Subjectivism and Relativism in Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 350ff.

<sup>440</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 41.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*

of the agent"<sup>442</sup> and in this chapter, I will argue that he never altered his position that desire must always follow some intellectual apprehension which inseparably links the intellect to the end. In other words, every agent possessed of free will must "act through an *understood* form"<sup>443</sup> because knowledge proposing the end comes first. St. Thomas' terminology did shift in view of circumstances and audience, but his teaching is remarkably consistent. Accordingly, when Cajetan argues that for Aquinas, the intellect has primacy among the powers of the soul and is even a cause of the other powers (and moves them all)<sup>444</sup> and when Francesco Silvestri (whose annotations have been added to the Leonine edition of the *Summa Contra Gentiles*) says Thomas teaches the intellect is the *superior mover* in man<sup>445</sup> that is "simply prior to the will,"<sup>446</sup> they represent the consistent views of the Angelic Doctor even if many modern scholars differ with them on this point.<sup>447</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 1 lect. 9 n. 6: *finis movet desiderium agentis*. Interestingly, this work is dated to 1271-1272.

<sup>443</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 47 a. 1 ad 1: *Agens autem voluntarium... agit per formam intellectam* (emphasis added).

<sup>444</sup> *Intellectus movet ceteras potentias, iuxta illam maximam, 'Primum in unoquoque genere est causa omnium eorum quae sunt post* (On I-II, Q. IX, Art. II, p. 76 of Leonine). According to SCG 1.47, the powers of the soul (and the intellect is a power of the soul as is clear from SCG 2.61) are distinguished according to their objects. In view of this and the fact that the true is absolutely speaking prior to the good as to the *suppositum* (see, *S.Th.* I, q. 16 a.4 c.) one could arrive at the same conclusion as Cajetan regarding the primacy of the intellect over the other powers. Also, Aquinas says the powers of the soul that precede the other powers in the order of perfection and nature are the principle of the others by way of an end and active principle (I q. 77 a 7 c.). Perhaps he is referring to the intellect moving as a final cause and the will as an efficient cause.

<sup>445</sup> Commenting on the third book of the SCG, ch. 25 (#VII, p. 69). He goes on: *Adverte quod, accipiendo motorem communiter, ut se extendit ad moventem per modum finis ... intellectus est primus motor in homine, quia movet voluntatem per modum finis: quod significavit Sanctus Thomas dum discit quod movet appetitum 'proponendo ei suum obiectum'; nam bonum et finis est obiectum voluntatis*. He is also known as Silvester of Ferrara or Sylvestris.

<sup>446</sup> Commenting on III, ch. 26 (p 78): *intellectus est simpliciter prior voluntate, voluntas autem est intellectu prior tantum secundum quid. In Prima Parte autem, q. 82 a. 3; et De Veritate, q. 22 a. 11, comparat istas potentias secundum proprias rationes, ostenditque intellectum, etiam secundum propriam rationem, esse nobiliorem voluntate simpliciter, voluntatem autem esse nobiliorem secundum quid intellectu*.

<sup>447</sup> See Daniel Westberg's: "Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?" in *The Thomist* 58, p. 51 where he takes a position on this that "is definitely not the standard, 'received' view of traditional scholastic commentators" even though he also argues for greater continuity than do most scholars who have considered the question of development on this point.

The intellect's importance in general is particularly evident from the way St. Thomas speaks throughout the corpus of the way it appoints the end. *De Potentia* (1265-1266)<sup>448</sup> refers to a gradation among beings that is contingent upon their ability (or lack thereof) to determine their own practical ends for themselves.<sup>449</sup> This determination, though, can only occur in intellectual creatures. Although rational beings rely upon nature in regard to certain general ends, those ends must be cognized and appropriated in the individual.<sup>450</sup> Aquinas cites Cicero in the *Scriptum*

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<sup>448</sup> See Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1: *The Person and His Work*, Revised Edition, translated by Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2005), 328.

<sup>449</sup> *De Potentia*, q. 1 a.5c.: *Omne enim agens agit propter finem, quia omnia optant bonum. Actio autem agentis, ad hoc quod sit conveniens fini, oportet quod ei adaptetur et proportionetur quod non potest fieri nisi ab aliquo intellectu, qui finem et rationem finis cognoscat, et proportionem finis ad id quod est ad finem; aliter convenientia actionis ad finem casualis esset. Sed intellectus praeordinans in finem, quandoque quidem est coniunctus agenti vel moventi, ut homo in sua actione; quandoque separatus, ut patet in sagitta, quae ad determinatum finem tendit, non per intellectum sibi coniunctum, sed per intellectum hominis ipsam dirigentem. Impossibile est autem, id quod agit ex naturae necessitate, sibi ipsi determinare finem: quia quod est tale, est ex se agens; et quod est agens vel motum ex se ipso, in ipso est agere vel non agere, moveri vel non moveri, ut dicitur VIII Physic., et hoc non potest competere ei quod ex necessitate movetur, cum sit determinatum ad unum.*

<sup>450</sup> In the *Scriptum* bk. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 c, similarly, the basic division of creatures into two is into those who are able to determine their own actions and others who have it determined to them by another since they do not have rational natures and thus cannot appoint it to themselves: *Determinatio autem agentis ad aliquam actionem, oportet quod sit ab aliqua cognitione praestituente finem illi actioni. Sed cognitio determinans actionem et praestituens finem, in quibusdam quidem conjuncta est, sicut homo finem suae actionis sibi praestituit; in quibusdam vero separata est, sicut in his quae agunt per naturam.* Because this determination pertains to knowledge, Thomas says in *De Veritate* q. 3 a. 1 that this self-determination is brought about through the intellect: *ipsum agens determinat sibi finem, sicut est in omnibus agentibus per intellectum.*

I-II q. 6 a. 2 c. speaks of this intellectual apprehension as a perfect kind of knowledge that rational creatures alone enjoy: *Est autem duplex cognitio finis, perfecta scilicet, et imperfecta. Perfecta quidem finis cognitio est, quando non solum apprehenditur res, quae est finis, sed etiam cognoscitur ratio finis, et proportio ejus quod ordinatur ad finem ipsum: et talis cognitio finis competit soli rationali naturae. Imperfecta autem cognitio finis est, quae in sola finis apprehensione consistit, sine hoc quod cognoscatur ratio finis, et proportio actus ad finem: et talis cognitio finis reperitur in brutis animalibus per sensum, et aestimationem naturalem. Perfectam igitur cognitionem finis sequitur voluntarium secundum rationem perfectam, prout scilicet, apprehenso fine, aliquis potest deliberans de fine, et de his quae sunt ad finem, moveri in finem, vel non moveri.*

See also, *S.Th.*, I, q. 6 a. 2c., q. 11 a. 2 c., q. 18 a.3 and an interesting variation of the theme in *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 1 lectio 9 # 6.

These texts indicate Capreolus was correct to divide creatures into those who have some knowledge conjoined to them in virtue of their rational nature (such as man who is able to appoint/*praestituit* the end for himself) and those who do not. See, Johannis Capreoli, *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis*, Tomus IV Turonibus Alfred Cattier, Ed. 1903, dictinctio XXIV, p 228

(1255-1266)<sup>451</sup> when he says that virtue acts in accordance with a certain natural and affective inclination, but he insists that humans, unlike irrational animals, must use their reason to appoint (*praestituere*) both the common and particular end to the virtues.<sup>452</sup> In question eighteen of the *Prima Pars* (ca. 1270) he adds that those who are not able to do so (*non tamen per seipsa praestituunt sibi finem suae operationis*) are on an entirely inferior level to rational creatures because even though rational creatures are dependent upon God apropos of their ordination to their ultimate ends,<sup>453</sup> they are in a certain way able to have dominion over the way they react to that natural ordination. As such, they:

move themselves even in respect to an end they appoint to themselves (*movent seipsa, etiam habito respectu ad finem, quem sibi praestituunt*), which only comes about through reason and understanding since it pertains to these to know the proportion between the end and that which is for the end and to move the one towards the other.<sup>454</sup>

The intellect, therefore, is the power that enables a man to appoint an end to himself even though this must, of course, be seen in tandem with the fact that "all motions, whether bodily or spiritual, are reduced to the first mover, who is God."<sup>455</sup> Indeed, the intellect's subordinated

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<sup>451</sup> Torrell, 328.

<sup>452</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 5 c.: *Virtus enim, ut dicit Tullius, movet in modum naturae, scilicet per quamdam inclinationem affectus ... oportet quod per rationem... praestituatur finis aliis virtutibus, non solum communis, sed etiam proximus, qui est attingere medium in propria natura. Medium autem secundum rationem rectam determinatur, ut in 2 Ethic. dicitur.*

<sup>453</sup> *S.Th.*, I q.18 a.3 c.: *quamvis intellectus noster ad aliqua se agat, tamen aliqua sunt ei praestituta a natura, sicut sunt prima principia, circa quae non potest aliter se habere; et ultimus finis, quem non potest non velle. Unde licet quantum ad aliquid moveat se, tamen oportet, quod quantum ad aliqua ab alio moveatur. Illud igitur, cujus sua natura, est ipsum ejus intelligere, et cui id, quod naturaliter habet, non determinatur ab alio, hoc est, quod obtinet summum gradum vitae; tale autem est Deus.*

<sup>454</sup> *S.Th.*, I q.18 a.3 c.: *Unde supra talia animalia sunt illa, quae movent seipsa, etiam habito respectu ad finem, quem sibi praestituunt. Quod quidem non fit, nisi per rationem, et intellectum, cujus est cognoscere proportionem finis, et ejus, quod est ad finem, et unum ordinare in alterum.*

<sup>455</sup> I-II, q. 109 a.1 c.: *omnes motus tam corporales quam spirituales reducuntur in primum movens simpliciter, quod est Deus. Et ideo quantumcumque natura aliqua corporalis vel spiritualis ponatur perfecta, non potest in suum actum procedere nisi moveatur a Deo.* See, Long'a *Perfect Storm: Loss of Nature as Normative Principle*, 284-285 for a discussion of the implications of this important text.

causality is evident from what Aquinas goes on to say in question eighteen to the effect that even though our reason or intellect<sup>456</sup> moves itself (*se agat*) in regard to some things, other things (such as the first principles about which one cannot doubt<sup>457</sup>) are appointed (*praestituta*) by nature.<sup>458</sup> That is, even if the intellect can move itself, it is naturally ordered towards first principles that God implants in man by means of nature. Consequently, Thomas insists the natural and universal judgment of synderesis is distinct from *liberum arbitrium*: "free judgment pertains to a particular judgment about this doable thing, which is the judgment of choice. Therefore, synderesis is not the same as free judgment."<sup>459</sup>

Since nature is subordinated to the God of nature, man's reason or intellect is a rule that is ruled by the first rule, which is God.<sup>460</sup> In God, the act of understanding itself is identical to his nature (*sua natura est ipsum ejus intelligere*) and thus he not only has a nature that cannot be

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<sup>456</sup> Although these two are distinguished because the intellect pertains to simple apprehension and the reason to a dialectical process of ratiocination, they are often spoken of as synonymous. Aquinas does so by saying, 'reason or intellect' in many places (e.g., I q. 21 a.2 ad 1; I-II q.13 a.1 c.); in I-II q.62 a.3c., he even speaks of the 'reason or intellect' as containing the first universal principles even though those principles are simply apprehended.

<sup>457</sup> literally, 'about which one cannot have himself otherwise.'

<sup>458</sup> *Sed quamvis intellectus noster ad aliqua se agat, tamen aliqua sunt ei praestituta a natura, sicut sunt prima principia, circa quae non potest aliter se habere; et ultimus finis, quem non potest non velle* (S.Th., I., q. 18 a.3c.)

<sup>459</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 3 ad 4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod iudicium non eodem modo libero arbitrio et synderesi convenit: quia ad synderesim pertinet universale iudicium, secundum universalia juris principia: semper enim de conclusionibus per principia iudicatur... sed ad liberum arbitrium pertinet iudicium particulare de hoc operabili, quod est iudicium electionis. Unde synderesis non est idem quod liberum arbitrium.* Regarding *liberum arbitrium*'s link to the judgment of choice, Thomas also says *liberum arbitrium* is the same as the will though it names the will's order to its act, which is to choose in *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6c. (*Unde liberum arbitrium est ipsa voluntas. Nominat autem eam non absolute, sed in ordine ad aliquem actum eius, qui est eligere*). In this same article, he explains it somewhat differently by saying it does not name the will absolutely, but only in relation to the order to reason (see, *De Veritate*, q. 26 a.6 ad 1).

<sup>460</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 5 a. 1 arg. 10 *Praeterea, ratio virtutis moralis sumitur secundum quod attingit rationem, ut patet per philosophum in II Ethicor., qui definit virtutem per hoc, quod est secundum rationem rectam. Sed ratio recta est regula regulata a prima regula quae est Deus; a qua etiam virtutem regulandi habet... De Virtutibus*, q. 5 a. 1 ad 10: *virtutes morales attingunt rationem sicut regulam proximam, Deum autem sicut regulam primam.*

determined by another,<sup>461</sup> but he also appoints the end to every being.<sup>462</sup> Presupposing the end he appoints through nature or grace, one is able to make those ends one's own if he is endowed with reason and this fact is indicative of the intellect's dignity. But what kind of causality does the intellect exercise when it makes a natural or free judgment? We have seen that faith and synderesis both pertain to knowledge that one must further apply to particular acts, but how does the reason or the intellect in general do that?

For Thomas, "intention presupposes an act of the reason or of the intellect"<sup>463</sup> because it "presupposes knowledge, through which the end toward which it moves is proposed to the will."<sup>464</sup> Before anyone intends to do anything as a means, the intellect has to have first apprehended some truth that it proposes to the will as an object of pursuit. When someone has intellectual knowledge about a thing as good (i.e., when he has knowledge of it *sub ratione boni*), his will necessarily is drawn towards it to the degree it is perceived as good and fitting.<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> *Illud igitur, cuius sua natura, est ipsum ejus intelligere, et cui id, quod naturaliter habet, non determinatur ab alio, hoc est, quod obtinet summum gradum vitae* (I., q.18 a.3 c.).

<sup>462</sup> For passages explicitly stating this fact, see SCG, bk. 1, ch. 44 n. 7 and *De Veritate*, q. 3 a.1.

<sup>463</sup> I-II, q. 12 a. 3 obj. 3 states this and it is not refuted: *Intentio praesupponit actum rationis sive intellectus*.

<sup>464</sup> I-II, q. 12 a. 1 ad 1: *intentio nominatur oculus metaphorice; non quia ad cognitionem pertinet; sed quia cognitionem praesupponit, per quam proponitur voluntati finis, ad quem movet*.

<sup>465</sup> This is at least so inasmuch as it is apprehended as good "according to all the particulars that can be considered;" see, *De Malo* 6c.: *Si ergo apprehendatur aliquid ut bonum conveniens secundum omnia particularia quae considerari possunt, ex necessitate movebit voluntatem*.

Note that the qualification, "to the degree it is perceived as good" is essential. In regard to things that are necessarily willed by nature, see I-II, q. 10 a. 1 c., which speaks of man naturally willing the knowledge of the truth, being, living and other such things that pertain to natural well-being. Also, *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5c., mentions the ultimate end in addition to "those things that are included in it, as being, the knowledge of the truth, and other things of this sort" as things which the will naturally wills (since nature is the *voluntatis fundamentum*). Finally, in *De Malo*, q. 3 a. 3c., Thomas speaks of the will being moved necessarily to *whatever* has a necessary connection with happiness, which is naturally willed." In regard to fittingness, see *De Malo* 6 and I-II q. 9 a. 2 c. The thing that moves the will as an object is *id quod apprehenditur sub ratione boni et convenientis*. Although Thomas sometimes omits mentioning the need for that object to be apprehended as fitting (*conveniens*), the notion seems implied by earlier texts such as that of *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 27 q. 1 a. 1 ad 3 (*amoris radix, per se loquendo, est similitudo amati ad amantem; quia sic est ei bonum et conveniens*) and the *sed contra* 4 of the same article, which makes an argument for the *bonum conveniens* being the object of the concupiscible appetite that could be applied to the rational appetite.

If he judges that it is attainable, he may then intend it as an end<sup>466</sup> that would terminate the motion of his will once attained.<sup>467</sup> For the will to go after it in that way, however, the intellect must point to it. The question, again, is *how* it points to (one might say *appoints*) it exactly.

The final cause, of course, takes precedence over the other causes, and the will does whatever it does for the sake of the final cause. Nevertheless, if the soul's potencies are to be moved towards actualization on the level of exercise, the will must act as a principle of that motion;<sup>468</sup> in other words, "the will must act as the efficient or agent cause of the act"<sup>469</sup> for there to be motion towards the end because it is the "first mover among the powers of the soul vis-à-vis the exercise of the act."<sup>470</sup> If, at least in Aquinas' earlier writings, this activity of the will is ultimately reduced to the causality of the intellect (which, in turn, acts in the manner of a final cause), would this essentially lead to the elimination of free will? In other words, would linking the intellect to final causality essentially make the intellect to be an efficient cause as well? That is, was Lottin correct to suggest that the early Thomas should not have attempted to separate final and efficient causality and should have attributed both to the will instead?<sup>471</sup>

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The perfectly fitting good that is man's happiness itself (I-II q.2 a.6 c.) is, of course, is the only good that necessarily moves the will because it alone "is apprehended as a good according to all the particulars that can be considered" (See *De Malo* 6).

<sup>466</sup> On these acts concerning the end of human actions, see J.A. Oesterle, *Ethics: The Introduction to Moral Science* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1957), 85; Francis L. B. Cunningham, O.P., *The Christian Life* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, n.d. - originally published by Priory Press, 1959), 51-55. Fr. Sherwin, similarly, speaks of apprehension, *simplex voluntas* and *ordinatio* (in which "the practical reason apprehends the good as an end attainable by us") in regard to the end; see, page 85 of *By Knowledge and By Love*.

<sup>467</sup> I-II q. 12 a 2 c.: *Intentio respicit finem, secundum quod est terminus motus voluntatis.*

<sup>468</sup> *De Malo*, q. 6 c.: *Si autem consideremus motus potentiarum animae ex parte exercitii actus, sic principium motionis est ex voluntate.*

<sup>469</sup> Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 51.

<sup>470</sup> I-II q.17 a.1 c.: *Primum autem movens in viribus animae ad exercitium actus est voluntas.*

<sup>471</sup> Peut-on separer, comme Thomas l'avait fait jusqu'ici, causalite finale et causalite efficiente, puisque la cause efficiente ne meut l'acte qu'en vue d'une fin, et que la volonte, cause efficiente de l'acte libre, ne peut agir qu'en vue du bien, de la fin, que est son objet propre? ... c'est donc la volonte qui jouera a la fois le role de cause efficiente et celui de cause finale; et a la raison sera devolu le role de cause formelle. *Psychologie et morale aux XIIIe et XIVe siecles* (Louvain, 1942-49) vol. 1, 254 & 256 (see Lauer, 301).



The end does, in fact, act in such a way that Thomas sometimes speaks of its causality in a way that is reminiscent of efficient causality. As Aquinas says in the *Prima Pars*:

Something is said to act in a threefold way. In one way, formally, in the way of speaking whereby whiteness makes white... In another way, something is said to act effectively, as when a painter is said to make a wall white. In the third way, by way of a final cause (*per modum causae finalis*), as an end is said to effect (*efficere*) by moving the efficient cause (*efficientem*).<sup>472</sup>

One might observe that Thomas is merely asserting here that the intellect is effective in moving an efficient cause in virtue of its presentation of the object, but it remains effective – even if in a qualified sense. If the intellect acts in this manner when it acts as a kind of final cause, is there room for free will? The first thing to establish is that St. Thomas does speak of the causality of the intellect in terms of final causality (at times, at least). Since he does so most frequently in his earlier writings, we will begin there.

### A. The Intellect as a Final Cause in the Earlier Works

The subject of the intellect's final causality - or, more precisely, the subject of whether the intellect acts *in the manner of* a final cause - is indispensable for us as we attempt to determine the way the intellectual habits of synderesis and prudence can be said to appoint or present the end to the moral virtues. In fact, the more general question of how the cognitive and

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<sup>472</sup> S.Th. I, q. 48 a.1 ad 4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod aliquid agere dicitur tripliciter. Uno modo formaliter, eo modo loquendi, quo dicitur albedo facere album. Et sic malum etiam ratione ipsius privationis dicitur corrumpere bonum; quia est ipsa corruptio, vel privatio boni. Alio modo dicitur aliquid agere effective: sicut pictor dicitur facere album parietem. Tertio modo per modum causae finalis, sicut finis dicitur efficere movendo efficientem. His autem duobus modis malum non agit aliquid per se, idest secundum quod est privatio quaedam, sed secundum quod ei bonum adjungitur. Nam omnis actio est ab aliqua forma; et omne, quod desideratur ut finis, est perfectio aliqua.*

appetitive 'parts' of man interact is even more foundational and far reaching in its consequences because the moral virtues, which pertain to the appetitive part, have the good of reason as their end.<sup>473</sup> As such, the intellect or reason must propose (i.e., appoint<sup>474</sup>) the common end of human life (which is, again, the *bonum rationis*)<sup>475</sup> to the appetitive part because they are the two indispensable moving principles in the human person and must act in unison if the final end is to be attained.<sup>476</sup> De Haan appropriately refers to this dynamic as an "inextricable confluence of cognitional operations specifying appetitive operations by final causality, and the efficient causality of appetitive operations drawing the person to the object known and sought."<sup>477</sup> Without this confluence, man simply will not attain the last end.

One of the works in which St. Thomas refers to the intellect moving the will "not according to the manner of an efficient or agent cause, but according to the manner of a final cause... by proposing its object to it"<sup>478</sup> is the *Summa Contra Gentiles*. Interestingly, this way of speaking essentially says *intellectus* appoints (*praestituit*) the end to the will because 'to place

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<sup>473</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 c.: *Bonum autem ad quod humanae virtutes proxime ordinantur, est bonum rationis; De Virtutibus*, q. 2 a. 2 c.: *proprium bonum hominis in quantum homo, est bonum rationis, eo quod homini esse est rationale esse*; See also, II-II, q. 141 a. 6 c.

<sup>474</sup> It seems likely that the word *praestituere* (to appoint) was originally used to refer to the way that God arranged nature by setting it up in an orderly fashion by means of certain laws. That meaning then was carried over and applied to the agent intellect in particular since it was a kind of participation in the *ratio Dei* and thus also able to set up in advance or appoint the end to man. This meaning then was applied further to any way the intellect or the reason in general puts something forward to the will. In this sense, it is synonymous with *proponit* and thus when the intellect is said to propose the end to the will when it acts in the manner of a final cause, it is doing nothing other than appointing the end.

<sup>475</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 3 c.: *Finis autem proximus humanae vitae est bonum rationis in communi*.

<sup>476</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 1 lectio 1 # 8: *Circa primum, considerandum est, quod duo sunt principia humanorum actuum, scilicet intellectus seu ratio, et appetitus*. I-II q. 58 a. 3 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod virtus humana est quidam habitus perficiens hominem ad bene operandum. Principium autem humanorum actuum in homine non est nisi duplex, scilicet intellectus sive ratio, et appetitus, haec enim sunt duo moventia in homine, ut dicitur in III de anima*.

<sup>477</sup> Daniel D. De Haan, *Moral Perception and the Function of the Vis Cogitativa in Thomas Aquinas's Doctrine of Antecedent and Consequent Passions*, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale*, XXV (2014), 303.

<sup>478</sup> *SCG* bk. 3, ch. 72 n. 7: *Intellectus, non secundum modum causae efficientis et moventis, sed secundum modum causae finalis, moveat voluntatem, proponendo sibi suum obiectum, quod est finis*.

before' (*proponere*) and 'to set up before / appoint' (*praestituere*) are practically synonymous. They are also very close to *praeberere* in meaning - which is significant because John of St. Thomas had explained final causality in terms of antecedently putting (*praebendo*) something forward in which the agent's motion terminates."<sup>479</sup> No matter which exact word is used, therefore, final causality seems to be inseparably connected with the notion of putting some good object forward in an intellectual manner. As a consequence, Aquinas is saying the intellect or reason (they are one power<sup>480</sup> though it is important to distinguish them at times<sup>481</sup>) places or appoints the end as a final cause, which is the way, as we will see, the *intellectus* that is translated as 'understanding' (and that is often analogous to *synderesis* or natural reason) appoints or proposes the end.

In one of the places in the *Contra Gentiles* that speaks of the intellect acting in this way, Aquinas is proving it to be "manifestly false" to say the will is higher than the intellect on the pretext that the will "moves the intellect to its act since the intellect only actually considers something that it holds habitually whenever someone wills it."<sup>482</sup> In response to this idea, he says:

First and *per se*, the intellect moves the will because the will, as such, is moved by its object, which is the apprehended good. For the will moves the intellect *per accidens* inasmuch as the act of understanding is apprehended as a good and is thus desired by the will, from which it follows that the intellect understands in act. And in this [act of

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<sup>479</sup> *finis importat bonitatem ... praebendo id ad quod efficientiae motus terminetur. Cursus Philosophicus Thomisticus (Nova Editio) Tomus Secundus; Philosophia Naturalis; Prima Pars; Quaestio XIII, De Fine Articulus Primus* (Paris: Ludovicus Vives, Editor, 1883), 244.

<sup>480</sup> *S.Th.* I q. 79 a.8c.: *per eandem potentiam intelligimus, et ratiocinamur. Et sic patet, quod in homine eadem potentia est ratio, et intellectus.* For this reason, Thomas himself often speaks of them as synonyms; see, *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk.1 lect. 1 # 8 and I-II q. 58 a. 3 c.

<sup>481</sup> See, for instance, *S.Th.*, I q.82 a.1 ad 2.

<sup>482</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: *Voluntas movet intellectum ad suum actum; intellectus enim actu considerat quae habitu tenet, cum aliquis voluerit.*

understanding] itself, the intellect precedes the will: for the will would never desire to understand unless the intellect first apprehended understanding itself as a good. And again, the will moves the intellect for doing things in act in the way an agent is said to move. The intellect, however, moves the will in the way an end moves because the good understood is the end of the will; the agent, however, comes later in moving than the end because the agent does not move except on account of the end. For this reason, it is apparent that the intellect is simply higher than the will.<sup>483</sup>

Aquinas could hardly be more clear when he says the intellect is higher *simpliciter* than the will. The notion that even when the will moves the intellect to understand in act, it is dependent upon the preceding activity of the intellect is also unequivocal. Even so, Cajetan's explanation of this doctrine helps unpack the reasons for Aquinas' teaching on this point. He explains that the intellect is more noble than the will because the object of the intellect is, a sense, more universal. Indeed, the very notion of the good is particularized inasmuch as it implies an order to something else (and thus the will implies a going out) whereas the notion of the true, which the intellect is concerned with,<sup>484</sup> is more abstract<sup>485</sup> (in the sense, I take it, that one can rest in the truth<sup>486</sup> and it is considered for its own sake without reference to something else).

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<sup>483</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: *Quod autem quinta ratio proponit, voluntatem esse altiore intellectus, quasi eius motivam, falsum esse manifestum est. Nam primo et per se intellectus movet voluntatem: voluntas enim, inquantum huiusmodi, movetur a suo obiecto, quod est bonum apprehensum. Voluntas autem movet intellectum quasi per accidens, inquantum scilicet intelligere ipsum apprehenditur ut bonum, et sic desideratur a voluntate, ex quo sequitur quod intellectus actu intelligit. Et in hoc ipso intellectus voluntatem praecedit: nunquam enim voluntas desideraret intelligere nisi prius intellectus ipsum intelligere apprehenderet ut bonum. Et iterum, voluntas movet intellectum ad operandum in actu per modum quo agens movere dicitur; intellectus autem voluntatem per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectum est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem. Unde apparet intellectum simpliciter esse altiore voluntate.*

<sup>484</sup> Although in *S.Th.*, q. 105 a.4c., universal being is said to be the object of the intellect, the true is said to be its object in II-II q.4 a.1. In I-II q.9 a.1c., the "formal principle of the intellect" is *ens et verum universale*.

<sup>485</sup> *boni ratio magis dicitur ad alterum, ratio vero veri dicitur magis absolute* (Commentary on *Prima Pars*, q. 82 a.3, # XXI of commentary).

<sup>486</sup> II-II q.180 a.3 c.: *ultimus autem completivus actus est ipsa contemplatio veritatis*.

For Cajetan, the object of the intellect is a thing inasmuch as it is 'that which is' (*res ut quod quid est*), whereas the object of the will, though referred to as an apprehended or understood good<sup>487</sup> (or even *bonum simpliciter*<sup>488</sup> in many places) is really a *particular* being in the sense that it is only understood as being good because it is first a being. Dewan, who finds this teaching in both I, q. 82 a. 4 (pre-1270) and I-II, q. 9 a. 1 (written around 1270 and the locus of the purported voluntarist shift in Aquinas' thought) explains:

the intellect moves the will because "the good itself" (*ipsum bonum*), the very object of the will as will, is apprehended in function of a special notion (*secundum quandam specialem rationem*) included under the universal notion of "the true" (*sub universali ratione veri*). The special notion here is ... an object of intellect inasmuch as it falls within the proper domain of intellect as itself a particular notion. It is particular as compared to "that which is" (*ens*) and "the true" (*verum*). If goodness is not seen *as a being*, it will not be seen at all.<sup>489</sup>

The good itself is necessarily something that *is*. In other words, it is a *being* which thus has the *ratio* of the good inasmuch as it exists. For this reason, the causality on the side of the object of the intellect is more absolute and causal.<sup>490</sup> He argues, moreover, that the motion of the will is

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<sup>487</sup> In *SCG* bk. 3, ch. 85, the object of the will is the apprehended good and in *SCG*, bk. 1, ch. 72, it is the *bonum intellectum*. Interestingly, in *SCG* bk. 3, ch. 148, it is the "good and the end."

<sup>488</sup> *S.Th.*, I, 48 a 5.

<sup>489</sup> Lawrence Dewan, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 167. See also, I, q. 82 a. 4 ad 1, according to which the "intellect is simply higher and more noble than the will," and the "good is contained under the true inasmuch as it is a certain understood true thing (*quoddam verum intellectum*)." The ad 4 of the same article (q. 82 a. 4) is also most noteworthy as it places the beginning of the mutual causality of the intellect and will in the intellect (*non oportet procedere in infinitum, sed statim in intellectu, sicut in primo. Omnem enim voluntatis motum necesse est quod praecedat apprehensio; sed non omnem apprehensionem praecedat motus voluntatis: sed principium consiliandi*).

<sup>490</sup> Cajetan's Commentary on *Prima Pars*, q. 82 a.3, (## XIV-XVII) argues that the object of the intellect, which is some given thing considered *qua* existing, is more abstract *simpliciter* than the object of the will, which is an object having being (*obiectum habens esse*). He also says the *boni ratio magis dicitur ad alterum, ratio vero veri dicitur magis absolute* and *objectum intellectus est res ut quod quid est*;

necessarily subordinated to that of the intellect because the "motion of the intellect as intellect" goes before the will, "which is the reason intellectual activity (*intellectio*) is first *simpliciter*."<sup>491</sup> In the later Thomas, this is even the case in regard to "the ultimate end itself" because this last end "must be in the intellect previously to its being in the will, because the will is not borne toward anything save inasmuch as it is apprehended by the intellect."<sup>492</sup>

Returning to Thomas' earlier assertions, the *Prima Pars* speaks of the intellect's causality as follows:

That which is first simply and according to the order of nature is more perfect. For this reason, act is prior to potency. In this way, the intellect is prior to the will as the mover is prior to the movable and as the active is prior to the passive; for the understood good moves the will.<sup>493</sup>

This passage is somewhat striking in its profound simplicity. Aquinas suggests that act is to potency as the intellect is to the will as a mover is to something movable as something active is to something passive and, finally, as the understood good is to the will. Laying these out in terms of proportionate ratios will help us see what corresponds to what:

act : potency ::

intellect : will ::

mover<sup>494</sup> : movable ::

the active : the passive ::

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*voluntatis autem ut habens esse.*

<sup>491</sup> Cajetan on *S.Th.*, q. 1 82 a.4: *Cum motus intellectuales nostri sint ordinati, motus voluntatis reducuntur medio motu intellectivo; motus autem intellectus per seipsum. Et quia motus intellectus ut intellectus, non est qui imperatur a voluntate, sed qui praevenit voluntatem, qualis est prima intellectio simpliciter; ideo prima intellectio reducitur in Deum ut universale et primum principium intellectualium.*

<sup>492</sup> II-II, q. 4 a. 7c.: *ultimus finis oportet quod prius sit in intellectu, quam in voluntate: quia voluntas non fertur in aliquid, nisi prout est in intellectu apprehensum.* Cited by Dewan on p. 173 of *Wisdom, Law and Virtue* (translation is Dewan's).

<sup>493</sup> *S.Th.*, I q.82 a.3 ad 2: *illud, quod est prius simpliciter, et secundum naturae ordinem, est perfectius: sic enim actus est prior potentia. Et hoc modo intellectus est prior voluntate, sicut motivum mobili, et activum passivo: bonum enim intellectum movet voluntatem.*

<sup>494</sup> *S.Th.*, I q. 83 a.4 ad 3: *intellectus comparatur ad voluntatem ut movens*

the understood good : the will.<sup>495</sup>

The intellect essentially functions something like the understood good does while acting as some kind of mover. In view of the very next article of the *Prima Pars* that states, "the intellect moves the will because the understood good is the object of the will and moves it as an *end*,"<sup>496</sup> the intellect seems to be most closely associated with final causality at this point in the writings of the Angelic Doctor. Given that "the first mover in man is the intellect" since "the intellect by its intelligible object moves the will,"<sup>497</sup> and that the end is that which is first in intention, it seems natural to say the way the intellect moves or brings things about is as a final cause. In moral matters, that which comes first is something that is inseparably connected with finality; namely, the end. The intellect makes it possible for the end to be intended because intention itself indicates an act of the will with special emphasis on the "order to reason."<sup>498</sup> Whenever we intend

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<sup>495</sup> Namely, as a proximate mover: *Proximum autem motivum voluntatis est bonum intellectum, quod est suum obiectum, et movetur ab ipso sicut visus a colore* (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 88 n. 2). It is necessarily willed (*SCG* bk. 1, ch.72 n. 2: *cum enim bonum intellectum sit obiectum proprium voluntatis, oportet quod bonum intellectum, inquantum huiusmodi, sit volitum*), though something bad is sometimes joined to the good that is understood (*De Malo* q. 3 a 12 ad 2: *voluntas semper fertur principaliter in bonum aliquod; et ex vehementi motu in aliquod bonum contingit quod sustineatur malum quod est illi bonum coniunctum*).

<sup>496</sup> *S.Th.*, I q.82 a.4 c.: *Intellectus movet voluntatem, quia bonum intellectum ... movet ipsam ut finis. De Veritate*, q. 22 a.12 ad 3: *intellectus movet per modum finis; hoc enim modo se habet bonum apprehensum ad voluntatem*.

<sup>497</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Bk. 2, ch. 60 n. 4: *Primum autem movens in homine est intellectus: nam intellectus suo intelligibili movet voluntatem*.

<sup>498</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 13 c.: *Cum ergo obiectum huius actus qui est intentio, sit bonum, quod est finis, quod etiam est obiectum voluntatis, oportet intentionem actum voluntatis esse. Non tamen est actus voluntatis absolute, sed in ordine ad rationem*.

something, our will presupposes “the decree of the reason ordering something toward the end.”<sup>499</sup> If that end were not cognized intellectually, it would simply never be willed.<sup>500</sup>

Nevertheless, many commentators posit an outright reversal of this position. Since all of the pertinent<sup>501</sup> quotes in this section thus far are considered to be pre-1270, further consideration is called for lest we be accused of disregarding Klubertanz's complaint that too many read Aquinas in an "ahistorical" fashion and "continue to discuss the relationship between the will and reason without consideration for any historical development within Thomas's writings."<sup>502</sup> If it turns out that he did, in fact, alter his position and that he came to think the intellect is not able to act in the manner of a final cause by proposing the end to the will, it will be impossible for *any* habit of the intellect (whether synderesis, faith or prudence) to appoint the end to the moral virtues in any significant sense of the word, 'appoint.'

## B. Shift in Aquinas' Teaching?

In Westberg's article, "Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will," he relates the development that led many authors (including Lonergan<sup>503</sup> in addition to Keenan and Sherwin) to

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<sup>499</sup> I-II, q. 12 a. 1 ad 3: *Voluntas... in aliquid tendit secundum ordinem rationis; unde hoc nomen, 'intentio,' nominat actum voluntatis, praesupposita ordinatione rationis ordinantis aliquid in finem*. Of course, the will itself follows the reason as *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2 demonstrates ("the motion of the will is an inclination following an understood form") but intention is, in a sense, more intimately bound up with it.

<sup>500</sup> At this point, we can again call to mind *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2: "the motion of the will is an inclination following an understood form" and the first book of the first chapter of the *Compendium Theologiae*: *appetitus autem sequens intellectum, est voluntas*.

<sup>501</sup> The commentary on the *Ethics*, I-II, q. 58, and II-II, q. 180 are exceptions, but they were addressing indirectly related ideas.

<sup>502</sup> James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*. 82.

<sup>503</sup> "In these latter works, St Thomas conceived the distinction between the specification and the exercise of the act of the will." He cites both passages in the footnote *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan. Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1 (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 96. See also, page 370 of the same work, St. Thomas's Thought on *Gratia Operans*, "Theological Studies 3 (1942): 534 and Westberg, 42.



follow Lottin's 1928 thesis<sup>504</sup> that one should look to the ninth question of the *Prima Secundae* in addition to *De Malo* 6 for a turning point in Aquinas' thought.<sup>505</sup> He explains the position they put forward is that Aquinas went from a kind of 'intellectualist' account that "pictures the will having to follow what the intellect concludes" to one that de-emphasizes the causality of the intellect and might even be called a quasi-voluntarist account according to which "the will is free to decide on an action no matter what the intellect comes up with."<sup>506</sup> No doubt this fascinating theory has some modicum of truth to it. Although Flannery adeptly demonstrated "Lottin's various disclaimers ensure that his position itself will always defy falsification, with the natural consequence that it also lacks a clear sense,"<sup>507</sup> so many scholars would not have gone along with his general attitude towards the question if there were not at least the possibility of coherently arguing Aquinas undertook some sort of significant shift. At the same time, it will serve us well to have in the back of our minds a question Dewan urges us to consider in regard to this very issue; namely, whether any change in terminology or emphasis we happen upon should be

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<sup>504</sup> See "La date de la Question Disputée *De Malo* de Saint Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 24 (1928): 373-388 and Daniel Westberg: "Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?" in *The Thomist* [58], 42.

<sup>505</sup> As David Gallagher says, such scholars see the supposed "introduction" of this "distinction as a response to the condemnation of certain propositions in Paris in 1270, maintaining that Thomas wished to emphasize the will's freedom and self-motion." Others think "Thomas's response to the condemnations accentuated a movement to be found throughout his career toward a more "voluntaristic" understanding of choice." See, David Gallagher, "The Will and Its Acts" in Stephen J. Pope, ed., *The Ethics of Aquinas*, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 75 n. 19. He cites O. Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles*, 2d ed., vol. 1 (Gembloux: J. Ducolot, 1957), 207-16, 225-43. O.-H. Pesch, "Philosophie und Theologie der Freiheit bei Thomas von Aquin in quaest. disp. 6 De malo," *Münchener theologische Zeitschrift* 13 (1962): 1-25; and H. M. Manteau-Bonamy, "La liberté de l'homme selon Thomas d'Aquin (la datation de la Q. Disp. De Malo)," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge* 46 (1979): 7-34.

Keenan notes there has been some pushback to this thesis. He says: "On the attempt to deny this development, see Rosemary Lauer, "St. Thomas's Theory of Intellectual Causality in Election," *The New Scholasticism* 28 (1954): 317-19; Tibor Horváth, *Caritas est in ratione* (Münster: Aschendorffsche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1966), 56-57." James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 41 and note 15.

<sup>506</sup> Westberg, 51.

<sup>507</sup> See, Kevin Flannery, S.J., *Acts Amid Precepts, The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 115. He demonstrates that Lottin was either rather unconvinced of the veracity of his own position or that it was at least frequently in a state of flux.

considered "a development in Thomas' conception of the very things being discussed" or rather a somewhat insignificant "revision in the interests of pedagogy."<sup>508</sup>

Placing the question in its context, St. Thomas was "in the middle of his second full academic year in Paris" when Steven Tempier, the bishop of that city, condemned thirteen propositions pertaining to Latin Averroism.<sup>509</sup> As a proponent of Augustinianism who tended not to sympathize with the attempt to incorporate the thought of Aristotle into theology,<sup>510</sup> the bishop took issue with two propositions of the Averroists that must have especially influenced Aquinas to either rethink or reformulate (at least for expediency's sake) his teachings. One condemned proposition was, "the will of man wills or chooses necessarily" and another was, "*liberum arbitrium est potentia passiva, non activa; et quod necessitate movetur ab appetibili*."<sup>511</sup> In this quote, '*liberum arbitrium*' is often translated as "free will" and thus one translation reads, "free will is a passive power, not an active one; and that it is moved necessarily by the appetible object."<sup>512</sup> Although 'free will' is a conventional way of rendering *liberum arbitrium*, it is important to note that *arbitrium* (judgment) is strictly speaking different than *voluntas* (will).

With this distinction in mind, Sherwin argues that even though Thomas did, in fact, affirm that the *will* is a passive potency, the thesis that was condemned was affirming that free *judgment* is a passive potency, "something Thomas never held."<sup>513</sup> That he at least did not hold it

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<sup>508</sup> See, Lawrence Dewan, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 153.

<sup>509</sup> On these condemnations, see James A. Weisheipl, O.P., *Friar Thomas D'Aquino, his life thought and works* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 276.

<sup>510</sup> See, Weisheipl, 285.

<sup>511</sup> *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, ed.; H. Denifle, vol. I, (Paris, 1899), p. 48.

<sup>512</sup> Weisheipl, 276.

<sup>513</sup> That the earlier Thomas considered the will to be passive is evident from I q. 82 a. 3 ad 2: "the intellect is prior to the will as ... the active is prior to the passive" and that the later Thomas did so is evident from I-II, q. 51 aa. 2&3, I-II, q. 18 a. 2 and *De Malo* q. 6 ad 7 (where the will is said to be in potency). For the Sherwin quote, see *By Knowledge and By Love*, 96 n. 126. Other indications that Thomas did not consider free judgment to be a passive potency can be found in questions 19 and 83 of the *Prima Pars*. In the former, he denies that the will necessarily wills whatever it wills on the grounds that *liberum*

to be an entirely passive power in his earlier thought is indicated by question 83 of the *Prima Pars* in which he says free judgment (*liberum arbitrium*) is "the cause of its own motion because man moves himself to acting by means of free judgment," adding that it is "indifferently related to choosing well or badly."<sup>514</sup> This being the case, it seems unlikely he ever considered it to be entirely passive.<sup>515</sup>

The reality, however, is that some would not have made the distinction between the will and what is often translated as 'free will' (*liberum arbitrium*) because the two are so closely connected. Thomas spoke of how closely allied they are while insisting upon their distinction in the *Scriptum*:

The will which is of the end and the free judgment are not diverse powers... but *boulesis* [which pertains to choosing means] and *thelesis* [which pertains to the end itself <sup>516</sup>] differ because it pertains to free judgment to choose something in order to the end while the will is of the end absolutely.<sup>517</sup>

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*arbitrium* would then perish and in the latter, he says "free judgment (*liberum arbitrium*) is indifferently related to choosing well or badly" (see *S.Th.* I, q. 19 a.8 s.c and I, q. 83 a. 2c).

<sup>514</sup> In *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a. 1 ad 3, he says: *Dicendum quod liberum arbitrium est causa sui motus; quia homo per liberum arbitrium seipsum movet ad agendum* and in the body of the next article, we read: *liberum autem arbitrium indifferenter se habet ad bene eligendum, vel male.*

<sup>515</sup> It may be worth noting that Sherwin's analysis needs to be qualified. It seems undeniable that since *liberum arbitrium* is an active power that needs to be applied, the doctrine of physical premotion would require that it be passive on some level. Sherwin's point remains helpful, however, because Thomas certainly would have made a distinction between the way the will is passive and the way *liberum arbitrium* is.

<sup>516</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a. 4 obj. 1: *Aliud est thesis aliud vero boulesis; thesis autem est voluntas, boulesis autem videtur arbitrium; quia boulesis secundum ipsum est voluntas quae est circa aliquid, quasi unius per comparationem ad aliorum.*

*S.Th.*, III q. 18 a. 3 obj. 1: There is twofold will in man; namely, the natural will which is called θέλησις, and the rational will which is called βούλησις (*duplex est hominis voluntas; scilicet naturalis, quae vocatur θέλησις; et voluntas rationalis, quae vocatur βούλησις*).

<sup>517</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 17 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 3 ad 5: *Ad quintum dicendum, quod voluntas quae est finis, et liberum arbitrium, non sunt diversae potentiae, sicut in 2 Lib., dist. 24, quaest. 1, art. 3, dictum est; sed differunt boulesis et thesis, quia ad liberum arbitrium pertinet eligere aliquid in ordine ad finem, voluntas autem est de fine absolute.*

Just as the speculative and the practical intellects have different ends despite the fact that they are not strictly distinct powers,<sup>518</sup> something similar can be said about the will (i.e., *thelesis*, which regards the end) and the free judgment of choice (i.e., *boulesis*, which regards the means).<sup>519</sup> One can speak of each of them individually even though the difference between them is accidental.

The following text comes from after 1270, but it is useful in understanding this fact:

The act of the will, inasmuch as it is drawn to anything desired of itself, as health, which act is called by Damascene θέλησις—i.e., simple will—and by the masters *will as nature*, is different from the act of the will as it is drawn to anything which is desired only in order to something else, as to take medicine; and this act of the will Damascene calls

<sup>518</sup> See, *S.Th.* I, q. 79 a. 11.

<sup>519</sup> By referring to *boulesis* as the "free judgment of choice," I am trying to emphasize that there is a distinction between the judgments of the intellect alone (viz., the natural one, the judgment of conscience and the theoretical judgment) and the judgment that pertains to the will (since choice is materially of the will even if formally of the intellect). *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a. 4 suggests θέλησις "est voluntas" while βούλεσις seems to be *arbitrium liberum* (see obj., 1, and the reply to it).

The judgment of the will is distinguished from the judgment of the reason as follows in *DV* 24: *potentia qua libere iudicamus, non intelligitur illa qua iudicamus simpliciter, quod est rationis; sed quae facit libertatem in iudicando, quod est voluntatis. Unde liberum arbitrium est ipsa voluntas. Nominat autem eam non absolute, sed in ordine ad aliquem actum eius, qui est eligere* (*De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6 ad 1).

It is distinguished from the judgment of conscience in *DV*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4:

*Differt autem iudicium conscientiae et liberi arbitrii, quia iudicium conscientiae consistit in pura cognitione, iudicium autem liberi arbitrii in applicatione cognitionis ad affectionem: quod quidem iudicium est iudicium electionis.*

It is distinguished from the judgment of *synderesis* in *DV*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 15:

*Ad decimumquintum dicendum, quod iudicium est duplex, scilicet in universali, et hoc pertinet ad synderesim; et in particulari operabili, et est hoc iudicium electionis, et hoc pertinet ad liberum arbitrium, unde non sequitur quod sint idem* and also in *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 3 ad 4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod iudicium non eodem modo libero arbitrio et synderesi convenit: quia ad synderesim pertinet universale iudicium, secundum universalis juris principia: semper enim de conclusionibus per principia iudicatur... sed ad liberum arbitrium pertinet iudicium particulare de hoc operabili, quod est iudicium electionis. Unde synderesis non est idem quod liberum arbitrium.*

It is distinguished from the theoretical judgment pertaining to "conclusions in speculative sciences" in *DV*, q. 24 a. 1 ad 17: *Ad decimumseptimum dicendum, quod iudicium cui attribuitur libertas, est iudicium electionis; non autem iudicium quo sententiat homo de conclusionibus in scientiis speculativis; nam ipsa electio est quasi quaedam scientia de praeconsiliis.*

On these various judgments, see David Gallagher's "Thomas Aquinas on the Causes of Human Choice," pp. 62-64 (Ph.D. diss, CUA, 1988). Sherwin takes his explanation of the same from this disertation. See also, Reginald G. Doherty's *The Judgments of Conscience and Prudence* (River Forest, IL: The Aquinas Library, 1961) and Ralph McInerney, *Aquinas on Human Action: A Theory of Practice*. Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2012, 228.

βούλησις—*i.e.*, conciliative will; and by the masters is called *will as reason*. But this diversity of acts does not diversify the power, since both acts regard the one common ratio of the object, which is goodness.<sup>520</sup>

The will, inasmuch as it is naturally inclined to one thing (such as happiness) is "not subject to free judgment,"<sup>521</sup> but that does not mean it is not free to choose otherwise. Regardless, many would easily fail to make these distinctions and Thomas may have been careful to avoid language that could be brought under censure by the Parisian scholars who advised Tempier and who tended to view Aquinas' Aristotelian categories with suspicion. What seems most remarkable, though, is how consistent Aquinas was over the years regardless of any efforts he may have made to avoid unjust accusations of heterodoxy.

Westberg points out that one of the difficulties with the thesis that Aquinas had a radical change around the time he is supposed to have written both I-II q. 9 and *De Malo* 6<sup>522</sup> regards pinpointing when such a radical transition in Aquinas' thought would have come about. Despite the fact that this thesis is becoming more and more widely accepted,<sup>523</sup> Westberg observes:

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<sup>520</sup> *S.Th.*, III q. 18 a. 3 c.

<sup>521</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a. 2 c.: *Ea autem, ad quae naturaliter inclinamur, non subsunt libero arbitrio, sicut dictum est de appetitu beatitudinis; unde contra propriam rationem liberi arbitrii est, quod sit habitus naturalis.*

<sup>522</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P. says "the date of the disputation of the Questions *De malo* remains difficult to establish ... As to Q. 6, it must be put a little before or after the condemnation of 1270." Regarding the *Prima Secundae*, he says, it "was put together in Paris" in 1271 (*Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, 336). Both of these refrain from speaking of the intellect acting in the manner of a final cause and explicitly say the will moves itself.

James A. Weisheipl, O.P. says the *Prima Pars* was completed "towards the end of 1270" and that "*De libero arbitrio*, inserted into *De malo* as question 6) ... seems to have been disputed in Paris in 1270." See *Friar Thomas D'Aquino, his life thought and works* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), 361 & 366.

<sup>523</sup> Keenan says the "reversal" Aquinas made regarding his earlier position now "enjoys considerable acceptance and has prompted further investigations. He cites: "Giuseppe Abbà, *Lex et Virtus* (Rome: LAS, 1983), 165–173 and 215–217; Mario Gigante, *Genesi e struttura dell'atto libero in S. Tommaso* (Naples: Giannini, 1980), 72–119; Karl-Wilhelm Merks, *Theologische Grundlegung der sittlichen Autonomie* (Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1978); Dorothée Welp, *Willensfreiheit bei Thomas von Aquin* (Freibourg: Universitätsverlag, 1979)" (from page 41, n. 15).

On page 40 (n. 11), he says: "Otto Pesch in his article "Philosophie und Theologie der Freiheit bei Thomas von Aquin in quaest. disp. 6 *De malo*" (*Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift* 13 (1962): 1–25),

There is ... quite a problem in dating implied by this revisionist program, especially by the enthusiasts for *De Malo* 6. There is little disagreement with Glorieux's or Lottin's date of late 1270, in Paris, for this disputed question; but this of course causes trouble for our treatment of the *secunda pars* of the *Summa Theologiae* which was being composed also during this period. If Thomas had had the breakthrough in his view of the freedom of the will which is alleged, then this should have shown up in the remainder of his work; but the evidence for the unity of treatment in the *ST* is far stronger than the evidence for a change in doctrine.<sup>524</sup>

There are, moreover, indications that many of the supposedly changed elements resurfaced even after the purported change<sup>525</sup> and that many of the 'innovations' were, in fact, present in Aquinas' earliest writings. Actually, Kevin Flannery was so unconvinced by what we might call the 'majority opinion' (arguing there was a development in Aquinas in *De Malo* 6 and I-II q. 9 that consisted of a reversal of the *De Veritate* doctrine) that he argues at least some of *De Veritate*

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argues against Odon Lottin's claim that *De malo* is the first work (*Psychologie et morale aux XIIIe et XIIIe siècles* [Gembloux: Duculot, 1942–1954], vol. 1 p. 260. Klaus Riesenhuber sides with Lottin and argues that *De Malo* "seems to show the still fresh traces of a controversy," whereas I.II.9 appears in its wording "more settled and academic" ("The Basis and Meaning of Freedom in Thomas Aquinas," *American Catholic Philosophical Association* 48 [1974]: 109).

<sup>524</sup> Westberg, 48–49.

<sup>525</sup> J. Lebacqz, in *Libre arbitre et jugement* (Paris, 1960), p. 35, noticed that supposedly deterministic ideas surface in I-II q.13 a.1 (in which article, the will, which is called an inferior power to the reason, is said to tend to its object according to the order of reason). Also, a) in I-II q. 13 a.5 ad 1, the intellect is said to be a principle of the will's motion because it proposes the will's object to it; b) in I-II q. 46 a.2, a *motus appetitivae virtutis* is said to follow an *actum virtutis apprehensivae* and c) in I-II, q. 100 a.1c., the reason (and not "the reason and the appetite" as is sometimes said) is said to be the principle of human acts: *Cum autem humani mores dicantur in ordine ad rationem, quae est proprium principium humanorum actuum*.

Westberg notices some other passages. He says on page 48: "in *ST* I-II, q. 76... the relation of sin to ignorance is given an intellectualist base, using the practical syllogism as the basis for decision, and not giving the will the weight that one would expect if he had made the "shift" by this point. When we come to *ST* III, q. 18, a. 4, in the question whether there was *liberum arbitrium* in Christ, the discussion picks up the framework used in *ST* I, q. 83 without any indication that Thomas had a new way of looking at the will's role in decision."

was written after *De Malo* and that *DV* 24 is actually "a rewrite" of *DM* 6 and represents the "more finished version" of it.<sup>526</sup>

Be that as it may, a section of Keenan's book is focused on the purported transition in Aquinas' thought and is thus entitled, "Making the Shift."<sup>527</sup> Many others likewise follow Lottin's thesis, so it ought to be taken seriously. For Keenan in particular, Aquinas went from attributing "final causality to reason and not the will"<sup>528</sup> to "designating reason's presentation of the object as the *formal* cause of the specific act of the will" (emphasis added). He argues that if Aquinas were correct when he spoke of the intellect as moving in the manner of a final cause while maintaining the "final cause is the cause of the causes, and [that] all movement is derived from this cause," all movement would necessarily be "attributed to reason" as "the source of all movement."<sup>529</sup> In view of the fact that well into the *Secunda Secundae*, Thomas argues reason is the "proper beginning of human acts," one might not think such a teaching would be a problem, but for Keenan, the truth of the matter is that the will must be the proper beginning if it is to enjoy what Fuchs had referred to as 'basic freedom.'<sup>530</sup> Moreover, because in earlier texts Thomas thought "that since reason presents the object, which, in turn, acts as final cause" he was led to what Keenan considers a deterministic outlook according to which "bad action can only result from erroneous thinking."<sup>531</sup> If "reason ... and not the will is the final cause in an act of the will,"

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<sup>526</sup> See, Kevin Flannery, S.J., *Acts Amid Precepts, The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory* (Washington, D.C., 2001), 117 and 248.

<sup>527</sup> See pages 43-45.

<sup>528</sup> James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 29.

<sup>529</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>530</sup> See, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47. His teaching relies heavily upon his mentor, Josef Fuchs. See Fuchs' "Basic Freedom and Morality" in *Human Values and Christian Morality* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1970).

<sup>531</sup> See *Goodness and Rightness*, 30 regarding the determination charge and *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: *ubi non est defectus in apprehendendo et conferendo, non potest esse voluntas mali etiam in his quae sunt ad finem, sicut patet in beatis. Et pro tanto dicitur, quod velle malum nec est libertas, nec pars libertatis, quamvis sit quoddam libertatis signum.*

Thomas would not be able to explain on "what grounds" the will is able to deny the object that reason presents."<sup>532</sup> Thomas, then, essentially had no choice but to definitively decide on "the form over the final end"<sup>533</sup> and to argue "the object gives the form of specification; it no longer [as of 1270] gives the end."<sup>534</sup> Had he not done so, Keenan thinks the results "would be startling:" sin would come from error whereas the will would be passive and "reason alone" could explain freedom.<sup>535</sup>

Keenan would agree with Kevin White that by speaking of the intellect as moving in the *manner* of a final cause instead of saying it *is* a final cause, he is speaking in a sort of "exploratory and tentative way"<sup>536</sup> but he insists that the younger "Thomas refers to no other causality. Final causality alone is Thomas's best description of reason's presentation of the object to the will. By this presentation, the will is moved to act. Without this presentation of the (known) good, the will remains a passive power."<sup>537</sup> For Keenan, in other words, if the intellect

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<sup>532</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 40.

<sup>533</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>535</sup> Keenan, 29. I should point out that it is, in fact, the *rational* character of the will that explains freedom because the will is ultimately ordained to the good inasmuch as it is intellectually apprehended. Keenan seems to think this would necessarily imply determinism. We will discuss this more below. For now, we might observe that all finite goods are able to be known in some way as *not* good which means there must, in fact, be knowledge of pertinent goodness if one is to be free (in a perfective sense as distinguished from a merely non-coercive sense) - though there must also be inclinations that do not originatively occlude or impede this knowledge nor cause some kind of undue and rationally unjustified aversion from the already achieved consideration.

<sup>536</sup> See, "Pleasure a Supervenient End" in *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, edited by Tobias Hoffmann, Jorn Muller and Matthias Perkams. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, 235.

<sup>537</sup> Keenan, 28: "Thomas's affirmation that reason moves the will in the way an end moves something is always stated in careful analogical language. Thomas does not state that reason is the final cause but that reason moves the will as an end or as a final cause moves something. By the same token, however, Thomas refers to no other causality. Final causality alone is Thomas's best description of reason's presentation of the object to the will. By this presentation, the will is moved to act. Without this presentation of the (known) good, the will remains a passive power. 'The intellect precedes the will, as the motive power precedes the thing movable, and as the active precedes the passive; for good which is understood moves the will.'"



were to act in the manner of a final cause, the will would be entirely unable to act in the manner of an efficient cause.

This view seems to envision the will's causality and the intellect's causality as mutually exclusive. In every act, Keenan seems to think either the intellect or the will has to have supreme priority. It is my contention, however, that even though the the intellect does, in fact, have priority *simpliciter*, this does not rule out the possibility that in contingent matters pertaining to the means that lead towards ultimate ends, the will has priority in one way and the intellect in another. In other words, the intellect has priority both because it gives the end (and without cognition of the end, there is no volition whatsoever) and also because it is as act to potency (or mover to moved) because absent specification with respect to the good, the will cannot act or move. At the same time, the will has a kind of priority because if one wills to avert his will from the consideration of something proposed to it as good by the intellect, the intellect's appointing will be feckless. This failure to act upon that which is presented by the intellect is attributed to the will by St. Thomas, who points out that the will, which is able to hinder not-acting, is sometimes responsible for the failure to act upon that which is proposed to it.<sup>538</sup> Both the intellect and the will, therefore, have a kind of priority. Keenan seems to preclude this possibility, while there are others besides myself who refuse to think of the intellect and the will as somehow in competition with each other.

De Haan goes so far as to argue that since both are so important, the effort that has been spent determining whether Aquinas' teaching is intellectualist or voluntarist has been unnecessary:<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>538</sup> I-II, q. 6 a. 3c.: *Quia igitur voluntas volendo, et agendo potest impedire hoc quod est non velle, et non agere, et aliquando debet, hoc quod est non velle, et non agere, imputatur ei, quasi ab ipsa existens.*

<sup>539</sup> "A great deal of effort has been wasted and confusions have been generated over the question of whether Aquinas's doctrine of human action is intellectualist or voluntarist. It is neither." See, Daniel De Haan, *Perception and the Vis Cogitativa, A Thomistic Analysis of Aspectual, Actional, and Affectional*

In nearly every question in the *Prima Secundae* on the distinctive cognitive and appetitive moments of human action, Aquinas has an article on whether *fruitio*, *intentio*, *electio*, *consilium*, *consensus*, *usus*, or *imperium* are cognitive or appetitive.<sup>540</sup> Aquinas's answer always clearly concludes in favor of one or the other, but not without first explaining that the two are inextricable from each other, and that to indicate one involves the intelligibility of the other. The cognitive specifies by final causality what the appetitive exercises by efficient causality; they mutually interlock as act and potency within irreducibly diverse, yet inseparably reciprocal, orders of causality.<sup>541</sup>

This seems especially true in regard to individual matters of choice although it also should be incontrovertible that for Thomas, the reason does in fact remain the "first principle of human acts."<sup>542</sup> In other words, even if St. Thomas is, in fact, ultimately 'intellectualist', once we have entered the deliberative activity of any individual action, it may well be unnecessary to attempt to explain whether St. Thomas is emphasizing the intellect or the will; any given practical action necessarily involves the reciprocal causality of both. The final (or indeed formal) causality made possible by the intellect – since the end is specified when the intellect or reason presents it to the will – is compatible with the efficient causality of the will and these causes can be considered mutually enriching at every stage of the moral act pertaining to intentional action.<sup>543</sup> But would the later Aquinas have troubled himself with defending the will's freedom *ex suppositione* that

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*Percepts. American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 88 (3), 409.

<sup>540</sup> See, *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a.3; I-II, q.6 a.6; q. 9 a.1; q.11 a.1; q.12 a.1; q.13 a.1; q.14 a.1 ad2; q.15 a.1; q.16 a.1; q.17 a.1.

<sup>541</sup> De Haan, *Perception and the Vis Cogitativa*, 409-10.

<sup>542</sup> I-II q. 90 a. 1c.: *regula et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est primum principium actuum humanorum*. See also, I-II, q. 18 a. 8c.: *principium actuum humanorum, quod est ratio*.

<sup>543</sup> The qualifications 'moral' and 'pertaining to intentional action' are essential because I agree with De Haan inasmuch as we are presupposing intention of the end. The end/s are appointed naturally and need not be influenced by the efficient causality of the will. For this reason, Aquinas distinguishes between the judgments of synderesis, conscience and theoretical judgment on the one hand and that of free judgment on the other. See *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 15, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4, q. 24 a. 1 ad 17 and q. 24 a. 6 ad 1.

final causality in particular could be attributed to the intellect? Or did he in fact realize he had to change his description about the intellect's causality in order to maintain the freedom of the will?

Just after stating that the will is able to move itself in I-II, q. 9 a.3, Aquinas taught that if God moves the will, it is not possible for it not to be moved.<sup>544</sup> If God is a final cause not only of the will but of all things and yet man retains free will when God moves the will,<sup>545</sup> why would the intellect not be able to move the will (and, in its case, by merely presenting its object to it) without the will losing its freedom? Just as God moves the will while respecting its contingency,<sup>546</sup> it seems that the intellect can present any finite object<sup>547</sup> to the will without moving it in an absolutely necessary fashion. As Thomas says in *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a.1 ad 3, God moves natural causes in such a way that he does not prevent their acts from being natural. He can, then, move the will without depriving it of its voluntariness and he can even do so through the mediation of the intellect without denuding either faculty of the properties concomitant with their natural character. This, parenthetically, could account for why Aquinas occasionally says without qualification that God is the first mover of the will and at other times that the intellect

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<sup>544</sup> See, I-II, q.10 a.4 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod si Deus movet voluntatem ad aliquid, impossibile est huic positioni [al. impossibile est poni], quod voluntas ad illud non moveatur: non tamen est impossibile simpliciter; unde non sequitur, quod voluntas a Deo ex necessitate moveatur.*

<sup>545</sup> As *De Malo* q. 3, a. 2 ad 4 observes, when something is said to be a mover, it is not necessarily the first mover. Actually, it may simultaneously be moved and moving. In the case of God's causality, the will is moved by him, "from whom it has this that it moves itself." That cannot be the case with the way the intellect moves the will, but when Aquinas demonstrates that God or humans have free will, he often begins with rationality because it is the source of free will. As *De Veritate*, q. 24 a.1 says, *Homo vero per virtutem rationis iudicans de agendis, potest de suo arbitrio iudicare, in quantum cognoscit rationem finis et eius quod est ad finem, et habitudinem et ordinem unius ad alterum: et ideo non est solum causa sui ipsius in movendo, sed in iudicando; et ideo est liberi arbitrii, ac si diceretur liberi iudicii de agendo vel non agendo.* This being the case, *mutatis mutandis*, something analogous may be said of the intellect vis-à-vis the will.

<sup>546</sup> I-II q.10 a.4 c.: *Quia igitur voluntas est activum principium non determinatum ad unum, sed indifferenter se habens ad multa; sic Deus ipsam movet, quod non ex necessitate ad unum determinat, sed remanet motus ejus contingens, et non necessarius, nisi in his, ad quae naturaliter movetur.*

<sup>547</sup> I-II, q. 10 a.2 ad 3 says the last end which is the perfect good necessarily moves the will and the body of the article referred to that perfect good that lacks nothing as happiness, which cannot not be willed.

is.<sup>548</sup> Actually, because "all motions, whether bodily or spiritual" are, simply speaking, "reduced to the first mover, which is God,"<sup>549</sup> he must be the *primum movens*<sup>550</sup> even of the intellect. This is so despite the fact that the intellect, in turn, also moves the will by presenting its end to it (and, needless to say, without violating its nature).<sup>551</sup> In a chapter of the *Contra Gentiles* dedicated to showing that God alone can directly move the will as an agent cause, he says it is a "law of providence itself" that "everything is moved immediately by its proximate cause." This proximate causality holds even though "the actions of all creatures are subordinate to divine providence so that they are unable to act beside its laws." The consequence of this for our consideration is that since he clarifies that "the proximate moving cause of the will is the good understood, which is its object, and it is moved thereby as sight by colour,"<sup>552</sup> it is essential in every case that the good in fact be understood by means of the intellect which is the *sine qua non* for something to be understood. God is, of course, the remote cause whose providence is responsible for the intellect's activity, but the proximate cause remains a cause - and one that is able to exert its causality without any kind of coercion.

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<sup>548</sup> e.g., I-II q. 9 a.4. In 17 a.5 ad 3, God or the instinct of nature are said to move it initially: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod cum imperium sit actus rationis, ille actus imperatur, qui rationi subditur: primus autem voluntatis actus ex rationis ordinatione non est, sed ex instinctu naturae, aut superioris causae, ut supra dictum est (q. 9. art. 4.); et ideo non oportet, quod in infinitum procedatur.* By including the instinct of nature as a possible mover, he must be referring to the natural instinct of the will to follow the good (to the degree it is good) that is made known to it by the reason:

I-II, q. 50 a. 5 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod voluntas ex ipsa natura potentiae inclinatur in bonum rationis. Sed quia hoc bonum multipliciter diversificatur, necessarium est ut ad aliquod determinatum bonum rationis voluntas per aliquem habitum inclinetur, ad hoc quod sequatur promptior operatio.*

I-II, q. 78 a. 3 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod voluntas aliter se habet ad bonum, et aliter ad malum. Ex natura enim suae potentiae inclinatur ad bonum rationis, sicut ad proprium obiectum.*

<sup>549</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 1c.: *omnes motus tam corporales, quam spirituales reducuntur in primum movens simpliciter, quod est Deus; et ideo, quantumcumque natura aliqua corporalis, vel spiritualis ponatur perfecta, non potest in suum actum procedere, nisi moveatur a Deo.*

<sup>550</sup> See *S.Th.*, I, q.2 a.3 c.

<sup>551</sup> The intellect, of course, may for its part be applied to its act by the will (though only as specified by a prior act of the intellect).

<sup>552</sup> See, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch 88; vol. 4, 18–19.

On this point, Capreolus insists against Scotus, who read Thomas similarly to the way the theologians of moral motivation and Lottin did, that even though the intellect moves the will as an end moves an efficient cause, the intellect is not the complete mover of the will as if it alone were sufficient to move it.<sup>553</sup> In other words, the will still has the ability to make a free judgment (*liberum arbitrium*) despite the fact the intellect can necessarily move it when it offers an unmitigated good to the will as an end.

Keenan argues Thomas originally held that the source of all movement was found in the object that reason presented to the will,<sup>554</sup> but sometime around 1270 he not only clearly distinguished between the levels of specification and exercise but also came to think of the will as having an activity of its own enabling it to be completely autonomous.<sup>555</sup> For Keenan, this meant Thomas 'discovered' that the will is actually completely autonomous on the level of exercise. This supposed autonomy being presupposed, moreover, one may distinguish between the orders of rightness and goodness (which need not be compatible) while maintaining that this distinction is a development of the mature thought of Thomas. This latter teaching is thus a practically implicit teaching of Aquinas in his later years<sup>556</sup> made possible by "a deep shift in

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<sup>553</sup> *Sancti Thomae non supponit quod intellectus sit totalis motor voluntatis, vel se solo sufficiens voluntatem movere... intellectus movet voluntatem eo modo quo finis movet efficientem.* Johannis Capreoli Tholosani Ordinis Praedicatorum, Thomistarum Principis: *Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis* (Turonibus: Alfred Cattier, Bibiopolae Editoris, 1902), *Positio* Distinctio VII, Questio I, p. 449.

<sup>554</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 180. Ironically, even in I-II, q. 9 a 1c., Thomas says "the motion of the subject itself is from some agent: and since every agent acts for an end, as was shown above, the principle [one might say, 'source'] of this motion [one might say, 'movement'] is from the end (*Motio autem ipsius subjecti est ex agente aliquo: et cum omne agens agat propter finem, ut supra ostensum est (q. 1. art. 2.), principium hujus motionis est ex fine*).

<sup>555</sup> Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 180: "Before 1270 Thomas held that the source of all movement was found in the object that reason presented to the will. Later, however, he presented two sources and distinguished the will's formal movement from its specification informed by objects." On page 41 of *Goodness and Rightness*, he does grant Aquinas spoke of the distinction between the levels of specification and exercise in a text of the *Scriptum* (III Sent. d. 36 q. 1 a. 5 ad 4) that was of course written before 1270, but he downplays its significance because Thomas does not address "the freedom of the will vis-à-vis reason" there. See page 31 of *Goodness and Rightness*.

<sup>556</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 55: "Had Thomas used both the primary and the secondary *exercitium*, he may have discovered the notion of goodness as distinct from rightness. I state this because by explaining

Thomas' thought: while in his earlier works Thomas described all of the will's acts as subsequent to and dependent on reason, in his later works he recognizes an act of will that is antecedent to and independent of reason."<sup>557</sup> Is this, in fact, the case, though?

Sherwin is one of those who agrees Thomas had a significant shift, but he explains the relevance of the shift in significantly different terms. He says:

St. Thomas in his later works more clearly delineates the types of causality exercised by the intellect and will in the genesis of human action. The intellect functions as the formal cause of the act, while the will functions as the efficient cause. In order to illustrate this difference, Thomas introduces his celebrated distinction between specification and exercise.<sup>558</sup>

In other words, for Sherwin, the shift from emphasizing the intellect's final causality (inasmuch as it presents the cognized good) to emphasizing its formal causality provided Thomas with the ability to speak of the intellect as having priority of specification and the will as having priority of exercise. He does not concur with Keenan, then, that there was a major development (or even contradiction) according to which Thomas went from seeing the intellect as imposing blind servitude upon the will to seeing the will as radically autonomous. Sherwin's position is manifestly more tenable inasmuch as there no evidence Thomas ever came to refute his earlier central claims about the intellect's indispensable role, as will be most manifest by turning to the texts before and after the Parisian condemnations.

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reason's presentation of the object as formal and not final causality, Thomas establishes a unique concept: a primary *exercitium*. Had he used his own concept of the primary *exercitium* (rather than Aristotle's or Avicenna's secondary *exercitium*, an *exercitium* of right judgment), he may have arrived at moral goodness."

<sup>557</sup> This is an excellent summary of Keenan's position found on page 14 of Sherwin's work. See page 12 of the same for more on the antecedent motion.

<sup>558</sup> Sherwin, 64.

## 1. Texts Prior to 1270

### a. General Observations

Among the relevant texts prior to 1270, *De Veritate* is frequently cited as pertaining to a time when Aquinas over-emphasized the intellect's causal force. Before turning to some particular articles, it may profit us to have the opinions of Sherwin and Keenan before us.

For Fr. Sherwin,

Aquinas' analysis of intellect and will in the *De veritate* has two principal limitations: he fails to grasp the true nature of reason's causal influence upon the will, and he fails to explain how the will shapes reason's practical judgments.<sup>559</sup>

Elsewhere he says, "the difficulty the reader confronts in *De Veritate* is that Aquinas ... never explains how in the judgment of choice, the will is simultaneously dependent on reason and free to choose."<sup>560</sup> For Sherwin, this omission is not necessarily very problematic because Aquinas arrives at the same conclusion as elsewhere; namely, that the will:

'does not necessarily follow reason,' because even after reason has 'put one thing ahead of another'—in other words even after reason has considered one thing to be the better means to the end—the agent has not yet accepted this consideration as a principle of action until the will accepts it in the act of choice.<sup>561</sup>

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<sup>559</sup> Sherwin, page 50.

<sup>560</sup> Ibid., 37.

<sup>561</sup> Ibid., 35.

However, what Thomas lacks in this earlier text is the ability to persuade (he "seems to stumble at this point"<sup>562</sup>) even if his conclusion is correct. What led to Thomas' lack of persuasiveness for Sherwin was his (a) failure to distinguish between the levels of exercise and specification (with the will having priority in regard to the former and the intellect in regard to the latter) and (b) his "error" that the intellect acts in the manner of a final cause.<sup>563</sup>

Keenan's criticisms are more pronounced than Sherwin's. The latter says:

In *De veritate*, when asking whether humanity is endowed with free choice, Thomas argues that freedom comes from reason. His argument is clear: we act because we are moved, we are moved by a judgment, the judgment comes from reason. Thus, as freedom is derived from movement, so freedom comes from reason<sup>564</sup> ... Thomas decisively identifies reason and not the will as the source of freedom. To judge about one's judgment belongs only to reason, which reflects upon its own act and knows the relationship of things about which it judges and of those by which it judges. Hence the whole root of freedom is located in reason. Consequently, a being is related to free choice in the same way as it is related to reason.<sup>565</sup> Thomas adds to this puzzling remark: 'Though judgment is a function of reason, the freedom of judging belongs immediately to the will.'<sup>566</sup> ... Thomas expressly points out that the will has no autonomy: "Free choice

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<sup>562</sup> *By Knowledge and by Love*, 29.

<sup>563</sup> Ibid., 30: "Aquinas fails to see [in *De veritate* 22.11 ad 5] that the act of showing the end is not an act of final causality, but of formal causality. As we shall see, Aquinas later rectifies this mistake."

<sup>564</sup> Citing *De Veritate* 24, a.1 c. He could have cited I-II, q. 17 a. 1 ad 2, which calls reason the *causa libertatis* and says *Ex hoc enim voluntas libere potest ad diversa ferri, quia ratio potest habere diversas conceptiones boni*. Citing this text, Rhonheimer says, "Human persons act on the basis of reason and thus with freedom, since reason is "open to many things" and can have 'various notions of good'--false ones as well as true." See, "The Cognitive Structure of the Natural Law and the Truth of Subjectivity" in *The Thomist* 67 (2003), 5-6.

<sup>565</sup> He cited *De Veritate*, q. 24 a.2 c.: *Iudicare autem de iudicio suo est solius rationis, quae super actum suum reflectitur, et cognoscit habitudines rerum de quibus iudicat, et per quas iudicat: unde totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta. Unde secundum quod aliquid se habet ad rationem, sic se habet ad liberum arbitrium.*

<sup>566</sup> *De Veritate*, q.24 a.6 ad 3: *Quamvis iudicium sit rationis, tamen libertas iudicandi est voluntatis immediate.*



does not refer to the will absolutely but in subordination to reason.”<sup>567</sup> Furthermore, Thomas establishes freedom in the will solely through the power of reason. Reason alone is the ultimate ground of freedom.<sup>568</sup>

Sherwin's concern, then, is merely that Thomas failed to clearly delineate the lines of causality in human action due to speaking of the intellect in terms of final causality and failing to distinguish between the levels of exercise and specification<sup>569</sup> whereas for Keenan, Aquinas' understanding of the intellect's primacy "expressly" argues "the will has no autonomy." Keenan elsewhere explains the 'autonomy' he has in mind is that wherein the will would be independent of reason and precede it.<sup>570</sup> For him, Thomas does "not clearly establish" this kind of autonomy "until the time he writes the *Prima secundae* of the *Summa theologiae*." He explains:

In earlier writings, Thomas maintains that the will is a moved mover, first moved by reason. He describes this movement by reason as exerting a causality similar to final causality. This description, in effect, precludes any autonomous movement of the will, because any movement is ultimately derived not from what is moved, but from the mover. Insofar as Thomas describes reason and not the will itself as the will's mover, any achievement or any fault in the will must, therefore, originate in reason.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Ibid., q. 26 a.6 ad 1: *Quia liberum arbitrium non nominat voluntatem absolute, sed in ordine ad rationem...*

<sup>568</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 31 - 32.

<sup>569</sup> Sherwin, referring to *De Malo* 6, says "Aquinas underlines that deliberation (*consilium*) and choice (*electio*) are about particular things. This emphasis enables Aquinas to explain more fully the will's freedom on the level of exercise. It enables him to explain how happiness necessarily moves the will on the level of specification but not on the level of exercise. Happiness defined as "a state made perfect by the gathering together of all good things," is the only object of thought apprehended as fitting according to all its particulars (page 45; see also, 43). Interestingly, these ideas seem implicit in many texts prior to 1270 even if not the exact words.

<sup>570</sup> See *Goodness and Rightness*, 55 and Sherwin, 11.

<sup>571</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 23. In regard to this last comment, we should note it does not follow that because there is a fault with an origin in reason, that it originates solely in the reason; for example, a vicious habit affects one's willingness to reason, and that unwillingness to reason about certain things is itself "unreasonable." It also includes a prior defect with respect to reason, but there is also causality here on the part of the defective appetite.

The notion that Aquinas ever came to believe the will had that kind of autonomy is one of the least viable of Keenan's claims. Although this section is dedicated to Thomas' earlier years, it seems worth disproving so that we can move on to assertions that are at least more *prima facie* tenable. We will do so by adverting our attention to two texts from the *Tertia Pars*, which was indisputably written after 1270. In the first, Thomas grants that "motion certainly pertains to the appetitive power" (the will, or course, is such a power) and even that it pertains to it as to a moving principle (*principium movens*). Nevertheless, even there he insists that an appetitive power only moves "according to the command and direction of reason"<sup>572</sup> which is a concept that admits of no hint of any radically autonomous volitional activity. In the second text, Thomas says:

The motion or act of this power that is called the will is sometimes natural and necessary (e.g., with respect to happiness) and sometimes goes forth from the free judgment of the reason and is neither necessary nor natural as is clear from what was said in the first part [cf., I q. 82 a. 2]. And yet even reason itself, which is the principle of this motion, is natural.<sup>573</sup>

These texts from the *Tertia Pars* are significant because the later Thomas manifestly maintained that when the appetitive power of the will is not moved necessarily, it is moved by the reason. Also of note is that Thomas expressly reasserts something he had said in the *Prima Pars* thereby affirming the continuity between his earlier and later views. The will, then, is clearly not

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<sup>572</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 9 ad 1: *motus quidem pertinet ad vim appetitivam, sicut ad principium movens; tamen secundum praeceptum et directionem rationis.*

<sup>573</sup> III, q. 18 a. 1 ad 3: *...motus, vel actus hujus potentiae, qui etiam voluntas dicitur, quandoque quidem est naturalis, et necessarius; puta respectu felicitatis: quandoque autem ex libero arbitrio rationis proveniens, et non necessarius, neque naturalis, sicut patet ex his quae in prima parte dicta sunt; et tamen etiam ipsa ratio, quae est principium hujus motus, est naturalis.*

autonomous even though it remains distinct from the judgment of reason.<sup>574</sup> Reason, whether 'natural' or deliberative, is the principle of the motion of the will.

It is worth noting that Sherwin pointed to a metaphysical difficulty that might make Keenan's pensive endeavor to find at least some realm of the will that is not dependent upon the reason more understandable. Actually, it is very similar to Keenan's concerns. He wonders how one could say the will is free if Aquinas was correct to say in the text we have seen from *De Veritate* that "when there is no failure in apprehending and comparing, there can be no willing of evil."<sup>575</sup> For him, this simply "does not explain how the will is free."<sup>576</sup> Can it ever do anything contrary to what the reason indicates as good? If not, can it be free?

The answer, for Aquinas, is that the will would remain free (at least in some sense) even if it were unable to act contrary to reason. He says in the *Contra Gentiles*, for instance, that the immobility of the wills of just separated souls (i.e., of the saints in Heaven) is "not repugnant to free judgment, the act of which is to choose" even though these just souls are unable to reject the apprehended good.<sup>577</sup> Explaining how such immobility is compatible with freedom, however, takes some explaining and we will thus need to revisit the question in the pages that follow. For

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<sup>574</sup> For the ways Thomas distinguishes the judgment of the will from the judgment of the reason (in *DV* 24), from that of conscience (in *DV*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4), from the judgment of synderesis (in *DV*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 15) and, finally, from the theoretical judgment pertaining to "conclusions in speculative sciences" (in *DV*, q. 24 a. 1 ad 17) see footnote 520 above.

<sup>575</sup> See *By Knowledge and By Love*, 29 and *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6. This is the point at which Sherwin thinks "Aquinas seems to stumble." This quote from *DV* is very similar to that of I-II, q. 77 a. 2, which also says the will would not tend to evil without error or ignorance in the reason. See also, *In Sent.* II, d. 5, q. 1.a. 1, which says: *non potest esse peccatum in voluntate, nisi sit aliquo modo deceptio in ratione; unde omnis malus est quodammodo ignorans.*

<sup>576</sup> Ibid.

<sup>577</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 4 ch. 95 nn. 6-7: *Non est igitur voluntas animae separatae mutabilis de bono in malum... Ex quo apparet quod talis immobilitas voluntatis libero arbitrio non repugnat, cuius actus est eligere: electio enim est eorum quae sunt ad finem, non autem ultimi finis. Sicut igitur non repugnat nunc libero arbitrio quod immobili voluntate desideramus beatitudinem et miseriam fugimus in communi, ita non erit contrarium libero arbitrio quod voluntas immobiliter fertur in aliquod determinatum sicut in ultimum finem: quia sicut nunc immobiliter nobis inhaeret natura communis, per quam beatitudinem appetimus in communi; ita tunc immobiliter manebit illa specialis dispositio per quam hoc vel illud desideratur ut ultimus finis.*

now, it can simply be observed that the will manifestly cannot reject the perfect good once it has been apprehended by the intellect and proposed to the will. In fact, in both *De Virtutibus* (1271-1272)<sup>578</sup> and *De Veritate*, the will is said not even to need a habit to be directed towards it because the power itself suffices.

The will is immediately inclined towards the "understood good" made known to it by the natural habit of the intellect (synderesis) which principally (*praecipue*) moves the will.<sup>579</sup> Dewan explains this in terms of the will's "readiness" for the "universal being and goodness" that is "identical with the nature of the power" of the will itself.<sup>580</sup> Because this power stands in constant readiness to embrace an unmitigated good, Thomas precludes the will's ability to reject it when it is presented to it as such.

A good Thomist might think Aquinas' doctrine that it comes so naturally to the will to be drawn towards the good that is "shown to it by the cognitive power"<sup>581</sup> is a liberating one. If true, man is naturally apt to attain the excellence that comes from imitating the Incarnate Word's habit of always acting reasonably.<sup>582</sup> Nevertheless, one might sympathize with thinkers such as Keenan

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<sup>578</sup> See, Torrell, 329.

<sup>579</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 8 ad 13 *Voluntas non exit in actum suum per aliquas species ipsam informantes, sicut intellectus possibilis; et ideo non requiritur aliquis naturalis habitus in voluntate ad naturale desiderium; et praecipue cum ex habitu naturali intellectus moveatur voluntas, in quantum bonum intellectum est obiectum voluntatis.* In view of I-II, q. 9 a.1 ad 2, which says it is the *practical* intellect that moves the will and not the speculative, we must gather that synderesis is the natural habit of the intellect referred to here.

*De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 4 ad 9: *Affectiva autem superior non indiget hoc modo aliquo habitu, quia naturaliter tendit in bonum sibi connaturale sicut in proprium obiectum. Unde ad hoc quod velit bonum, non requiritur nisi quod ostendatur sibi per vim cognitivam.*

<sup>580</sup> See, Lawrence Dewan, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), 158.

<sup>581</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 4 ad 9: *Affectiva autem superior ... naturaliter tendit in bonum sibi connaturale sicut in proprium obiectum. Unde ad hoc quod velit bonum, non requiritur nisi quod ostendatur sibi per vim cognitivam.*

<sup>582</sup> In *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a.2 ad 3, Thomas speaks of the freedom that comes from being without fault. The fact that the will is naturally drawn to the good proposed to it would help an individual attain that kind of freedom. The reality is that true freedom is freedom for excellence and not freedom of indifference, as Pinckaers is rightly praised for making so clear. See the section 'Freedom for Excellence' below. Also, note that the 'habit' of the Incarnate Word refers to the human nature.

who wonder where liberty would be if the will were so readily drawn towards the good. Is the will at least able to diverge from the reason in regard to goods that fall short of being unmitigated? Is it able to be good on the level of basic freedom or moral motivation irrespective of the data provided it by the reason?

### **b. The Texts (especially *De Veritate*)**

To grapple with these possibilities, we need to begin reflecting upon *De Veritate* in more detail. We will start with question twenty-two, which speaks of the intellect acting as a final cause. Doing so will make it possible to assess the implications for free will. Although the explicit reference to final causality is in the third reply of article twelve, we will begin with the body:

The reason for acting (*ratio agendi*) is the form of the agent by which the agent acts; it is necessary, therefore, for it to be in the agent for the agent to act. It is not in it, however, according to the perfection of its nature<sup>583</sup> because if it were present in this way, the motion would cease. Instead, it is in the agent via his intention because the end comes earlier in intention and later in being. The end, therefore, properly preexists in the mover according to the intellect, to which it pertains to receive something intentionally (*per modum intentionis*) and not according to the being of the nature. Accordingly, the intellect moves the will in the manner by which an end is said to move, namely, inasmuch as it preconceives the *ratio* of the end and proposes it to the will. But to move in the manner of an efficient cause (*causae agentis*) pertains to the will and not the intellect.<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> "*non autem inest secundum esse naturae perfectum.*" James McGlynn, S.J. in *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, vol. 1 (Chicago: Henry Regnery Co., 1953) translates this as, "It is not there, however, according to its perfect act of being." Deferrari has "*perfect according to its nature or essence*" for "*perfectum secundum naturam seu speciem*" which he considers synonymous in this clause. Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 824.

<sup>584</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 12 c.: *in qualibet actione duo considerentur: scilicet agens, et ratio agendi... Ratio autem agendi est forma agentis per quam agit; unde oportet quod insit agenti ad hoc quod agat. Non autem inest secundum esse naturae perfectum, quia hoc habito quiescit motus; sed inest agenti per*

We can see from this that at this time Thomas thought of the intellect as moving the will, at least in a sense, in the manner of a final cause and that it does so in virtue of the reason for acting (the *ratio agendi*). He also thought of the will as moving in the manner of an efficient cause, which is something that undeniably remains consistent throughout his life. Aquinas' intention in saying the *ratio agendi* is the 'form of the agent' is not entirely clear and the phrase is seldom used. Nevertheless, the context provided by an earlier article provides some clarity regarding the good that is desired thanks to the preexisting reason for acting (i.e., the "form of the agent by which the agent acts") that exists antecedent to action in the intellect. He says:

Any given thing is said to desire something inasmuch as it is similar to it. If, then, something desires the good, it must necessarily be like the good. Now since similar things are those which have one quality or form, the form of the good must be in the one desiring the good. But it is not able to be there according to the being of nature because it would then not desire any further good; he who has something no longer desires it. Therefore, the form of the good necessarily preexists by way of intention in the one desiring the good. But the only being that acts in this way is one with knowledge.<sup>585</sup>

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*modum intentionis; nam finis est prior in intentione, sed posterior in esse. Et ideo finis praeexistit in movente proprie secundum intellectum, cuius est recipere aliquid per modum intentionis, et non secundum esse naturae. Unde intellectus movet voluntatem per modum quo finis movere dicitur, in quantum scilicet praeconcepit rationem finis, et eam voluntati proponit. Sed movere per modum causae agentis est voluntatis, et non intellectus.*

<sup>585</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 1 arg. 3: *Praeterea, secundum Boetium in libro de hebdomadibus, unumquodque dicitur appetere aliquid in quantum est sibi simile. Si igitur res aliqua appetit bonum, oportet quod sit similis bono. Cum autem similia sint quorum est qualitas vel forma una, oportet formam boni esse in appetente bonum. Sed non potest esse quod sit ibi secundum esse naturae, quia iam ulterius bonum non appeteret; quod enim habet quis, iam non appetit. Ergo oportet quod in appetente bonum forma boni praeexistat per modum intentionis. Sed in quocumque est aliquid per hunc modum, illud est cognoscens. Ergo appetitus boni non potest esse nisi in cognoscentibus; et sic idem quod prius.* Although this is an objection, all that is denied in the response is that this means irrational creatures cannot desire the good. He points out there that there that in irrational creatures, the form of the good thing that is desired is there in potency even if not by means of a rational apprehension of the essence of the thing desired. The meaning of article 12 text is also clarified by *Quodlibet VIII*, q. 2 a. 2c.: *Unde species intelligibilis est similitudo ipsius essentiae rei, et est quodammodo ipsa quidditas et natura rei secundum esse*

Once again, we see that whatever is received intentionally by the mind is present in the mind in a way that is not according to the 'being of nature.' Apparently, this means the actual shape any act takes will never be identical to the *ratio* of the good that moves one to act in the first place.<sup>586</sup>

On the one hand, E. Royal seems to be correct in asserting that "prior knowledge serves as a 'ratio agendi,' directing the operation of the power to a definite term." Nevertheless, the texts seem to imply that the abstract norm needs to be particularized and that the way it will be present in a tangible act will necessarily be different than the way it preexists in the mind. That is, there is always more in the particular action than in the intention because intention regards the good according to its nature and certain generalized circumstantial aspects and cannot reach to all the particularity of an act save in an abstract way. For this reason, Royal's further assertion that the definite term "will emanate in a predetermined way from existing knowledge" and that "the outcome of such operation is to a large extent settled in advance"<sup>587</sup> may need to be qualified significantly. Even if the reason for acting is, in fact, "largely settled," we are speaking of some kind of abstract concept that needs to be particularized because the way it will be present in a tangible act will necessarily be different than the way it preexists intentionally in the mind. That which we are here glimpsing on the horizon, of course, is prudence and its inestimable role in specifying the final form any given intention takes on in view of the endless variety of circumstances that may present themselves at an individual moment. This is not to say Simon was correct to argue prudence's "last practical judgment (about particulars) ... results from the

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*intelligibile, non secundum esse naturale, prout est in rebus. Et ideo omnia quae non cadunt sub sensu et imaginatione, sed sub solo intellectu, cognoscuntur per hoc quod essentiae vel quidditates eorum sunt aliquo modo in intellectu.*

<sup>586</sup> In other words, the act will never be identical in its mode of being, even if there is intentional union.

<sup>587</sup> E. Peter Royal, "Concerning the Coercion of the Intellect" *Laval théologique et philosophique*, vol. 13, n° 1, 1957, 103.

affective and non-logical character of the act that determines its judgment,”<sup>588</sup> but it is to say that the certitude attained in practical syllogisms is not the same as that attained in speculative ones.

Returning to the question of what it means for something to be received intentionally, one must already have some inclination towards the end that is preconceived of in the mind or else there will be no action; i.e, if "something desires the good, it must necessarily be like the good" that is apprehended.<sup>589</sup> Aquinas makes a related point in the *Contra Gentiles* when he explains a voluntary agent acts according to the likeness of the action that is conceived of in the intellect. In other words, he is like the good he desires inasmuch as there is a likeness of the intended act in his mind and inasmuch as he acts in accordance with that conception:

Every agent produces its like. Hence it follows that every agent works by that according to which it bears a likeness to its effect: thus fire heats according to the mode of its heat. Now in every voluntary agent, as such, the likeness to his effect is in respect of the apprehension of his intellect... Therefore every voluntary agent produces an effect according to the reason of his intellect.<sup>590</sup>

Relating this back to the notion that for something good to be desired, the agent must be good,<sup>591</sup> there must be an inclination towards the good that is conceived of in the intellect if there is to be good action - and thus even if intellectual apprehension comes first, the action that follows remains voluntary because like is attracted to like.<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>588</sup> *Practical Knowledge*, 24

<sup>589</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 1

<sup>590</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 2 ch. 24 (vol. 2, p. 42 of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province translation).

<sup>591</sup> See *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 1

<sup>592</sup> The notion that “like tends to like,” is described by Thomas as “so patent” that it is considered an axiom. See, Thomas Aquinas, *An Exposition of the “On the Hebdomads” of Boethius*, trans. Janice L. Schultz and Edward A. Synan (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2001), xxxii.



In a text we have already seen, the intellect was said to move "the will in the way an end moves because the good understood is the end of the will."<sup>593</sup> In *DV* 22, a. 12, he says essentially the same thing in replying to the following objection:

Every passive power is moved by its object. But the will is a passive power because it is that kind of appetite that is a 'moved mover' as is said in the third book of *On the Soul*. Therefore, it is moved by its object. But its object is the good understood or apprehended, as is said in the same place. Therefore the intellect or another apprehensive power moves the will and not the other way around.<sup>594</sup>

The reply is a simple one:

That argument shows that the intellect moves in the manner of an end; for the apprehended good is related to the will in this way.<sup>595</sup>

Keenan comments:

Citing Aristotle's *De anima* III, 10, Thomas argues in *De veritate* that the apprehended good moves the appetite and that the will, therefore, is a passive power.<sup>596</sup> Thus, only knowledge of an end moves the will and an end, therefore, is an object, presented by the reason, moving the will. Thomas concludes that the reason moves in the manner of an

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<sup>593</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: *intellectus autem voluntatem per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectum est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem. Unde apparet intellectum simpliciter esse altiore voluntate.*

<sup>594</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a.12 obj. 3: *Praeterea, omnis potentia passiva movetur a suo obiecto. Sed voluntas est potentia passiva; est enim appetitus movens motum, ut dicitur in III de anima. Ergo movetur a suo obiecto. Sed obiectum eius est bonum intellectum vel apprehensum, ut dicitur in III de anima. Ergo intellectus, aut alia vis apprehensiva, movet voluntatem, et non e converso.*

<sup>595</sup> *De Veritate* q. 22 a 12 ad 3: *intellectus movet per modum finis; hoc enim se habet bonum apprehensum ad voluntatem.*

<sup>596</sup> This is true, but it is passive because it is a moved mover. In other words, it is both passive and active. *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 12 arg. 3: *omnis potentia passiva movetur a suo obiecto. Sed voluntas est potentia passiva; est enim appetitus movens motum.* In replying to this, Thomas evidently accepts that the will is passive, but he says this fact merely shows that "the intellect moves in the manner of an end" because "in this way the apprehended good is related to the will."

end. If then the end is the cause of the efficient cause, then the will only moves at the command of reason.<sup>597</sup>

Keenan's position rests, as Hibbs says, on the "thesis that Thomas develops in the *Summa theologiae* a doctrine of the autonomy of the will, based on the distinction between the orders of specification and exercise."<sup>598</sup> Although Aquinas does not explicitly make this distinction in the *De Veritate*, he comes close to doing so and even in the text referring to *De Anima*, he speaks of the will acting in one way and the intellect in another (just as he says in other places that the intellect has priority on the level of specification and the will on the level of exercise). We read in question fourteen:

The will and the intellect precede each other in different ways. The intellect precedes the will by way of receptivity because if something is to move the will, it is necessary that it first be received in the intellect, as is clear in the third book of *On the Soul*. But in moving or acting the will is prior because every action or motion is from the intention one has for the good.<sup>599</sup>

If the will is prior in moving or acting, it seems the will must at least be able to move the intellect when one is in the realm of the practical (which begins with intention even if intention is not a fully practical act).<sup>600</sup> As Thomas explains in I-II, q. 58, although reason apprehending the end

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<sup>597</sup> James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 26.

He cites here *De Veritate* "q. 14.5ad5; 22.3c; 12.ob3 and ad 3; 6.2.ad3; 25.4c."

<sup>598</sup> Thomas S. Hibbs, "Interpretations of Aquinas's Ethics Since Vatican II," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 420.

<sup>599</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 14 a. 5 ad 5: *Ad quantum dicendum, quod voluntas et intellectus diversimode invicem se praecedunt. Intellectus enim praecedit voluntatem in via receptionis: ad hoc enim quod aliquid voluntatem moveat oportet quod prius in intellectu recipiatur, ut patet in III de anima. Sed in movendo sive agendo voluntas est prior: quia omnis actio vel motus est ex intentione boni.*

<sup>600</sup> As John Naus says, "St. Thomas does not say that knowledge becomes actually practical *when* or *as soon as* the agent intends to act. Certainly it will not become so *unless* or *before* the agent intends to act. Intention is a necessary condition: he must have willed the end... arguing from common experience, a man may want the end and consequently deliberate about the means and even judge that this is the best

precedes the appetite for the end, "the appetite for the end precedes discursive reasoning (*rationem ratiocinantem*) in regard to the choosing of means, which pertains to prudence."<sup>601</sup>

Thomas does not stop there, though. He goes on to insist that the "will moves *all* the powers of the soul."<sup>602</sup> As a power, it is even able to move itself. In the sixth article of the same question, Aquinas had spoken of the will as "flexible" in that it could be directed towards evil. The reason he gave is not that it is moved by the intellect to do evil, but rather that it is made *de nihilo* and is thus able to return to nothingness by turning away from God.<sup>603</sup> Aquinas' intention is not, presumably, to repudiate the teaching that the intellect acts *per modum finis*,<sup>604</sup> or that one must apprehend the goodness of any given action intellectually (even if the goodness is only apparent) for the will *qua* rational appetite to go after it, but he does seem to grant some latitude to the will by speaking of its ability to 'flex' itself in some way. Finally, he even rules out the possibility that the will is only able to move the *practical* intellect (and not the speculative one) by saying:

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means. Certainly these acts are placed under the original and continued impetus of intention. However, at the last moment, some passion or distraction may interpose so that the man does not order this knowledge to a concrete operable. He does not choose to do this particular act here and now. The judgment which terminated his deliberation, although made because he desired the end, remains not completely practical, therefore in some sense speculative" (*The Nature of the Practical Intellect*, 175).

<sup>601</sup> *Ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitum finis: sed appetitus finis praecedit rationem ratiocinantem ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam: sicut etiam in speculativis intellectus principiorum est principium rationis syllogizantis* (I-II, q. 58 a. 5 ad. 1).

<sup>602</sup> *Anselmus dicit in Lib. de similitudinibus, cap. II quod voluntas movet omnes animae vires* (*De Veritate*, q. 22 a.12 s.c. 1).

<sup>603</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod in Deo non est potentia passiva vel materialis, quae distinguitur contra actum, de qua obiectio procedit; sed potentia activa, quae est ipse actus, quia unumquodque est potens agere secundum quod est actu. Et tamen hoc quod voluntas sit flexibilis ad malum, non habet secundum quod est a Deo, sed secundum quod est de nihilo.*

<sup>604</sup> *De Veritate* q. 22 a 12 ad 3: *intellectus movet per modum finis; hoc enim se habet bonum apprehensum ad voluntatem; Summa Contra Gentiles, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: intellectus autem voluntatem per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectum est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem.*

When the will moves the other powers towards their acts, it not only does so in respect of those acts which pertain to the practical intellect but even to those which pertain to the speculative intellect. For, just as a man wills to walk or to do something of that sort, so also he wills to consider and to find out the answer to some question.<sup>605</sup>

The will, then, moves even the speculative intellect to do things such as deliberating about theoretical truths without reference to practical activity. Does this mean it is strictly autonomous from the intellect even in the *De Veritate*? One might think so given that he later says, "however much the reason prefers one thing to another, preference is not given to one thing to be done over another thing to be done until the moment that the will is inclined more towards one [of them] than the other: for the will does not necessarily follow the reason."<sup>606</sup> Even at this early date, therefore, the will is given a robust kind of activity. Nevertheless, the very next sentence clarifies that it is "proper to the reason" either to "compare one thing to another, or to prefer [one thing to another]" while adding that such a thing is "found in an act of the will from the impression of reason."<sup>607</sup> At least at this time, then, the will is unequivocally not autonomous.

These texts do, however, make it clear that even in the early Thomas the will was far from being considered feckless and this remains the case even presupposing its status as a moved mover and the intellect's status as a potent causality that enjoys a kind of primacy. We must say, then, that even though St. Thomas attributed the ultimate foundation of freedom to the

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<sup>605</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 3 ad 4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod cum voluntas moveat omnes potentias in actus suos, non solum est respectu eorum quae ad practicum intellectum pertinent, sed etiam eorum quae ad speculativum: sicut enim homo vult ambulare, vel aliquid huiusmodi facere; ita etiam vult considerare, et veritatem quaestionis alicujus invenire.*

<sup>606</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 15 c.: *Nam quantumcumque ratio unum alteri praeferat, nondum est unum alteri praeacceptatum ad operandum, quousque (until the moment) voluntas inclinatur in unum magis quam in aliud: non enim voluntas de necessitate sequitur rationem.*

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*: *in electione apparet id quod est proprium rationis, scilicet conferre unum alteri, vel praeferre: quod quidem in actu voluntatis invenitur ex impressione rationis, in quantum scilicet ipsa ratio proponit voluntati aliquid non ut utile simpliciter, sed ut utilius ad finem.*

intellect,<sup>608</sup> he seemed just as solicitous to defend the freedom of the will as Keenan does (though the latter does so in a much different way since the ideal for him is something like freedom of indifference). An indication of this is his belief that the more a creature was able to leave behind mere instinct by directing itself in some way, the more perfect that creature would be. What I am describing is certainly not freedom of indifference (in the sense that it would be liberating to act independently from reason) because one must always follow nature and God's laws and thereby attain true freedom. However, neither reason nor the the rational appetite are merely constrained by natural impulse and the creatures that possess these rational powers are more perfect than others.

In question *De Veritate* q. 22 a. 3, Thomas says lays out the gradation among beings in terms of whether they are 'unmoved movers,' 'moved movers' or 'solely moved'. Animals, which have a sense appetite (*appetitus sensibilis*) that transcends mere inclination (such as the inclination a rock has to heed the laws of gravity) are more perfect than inanimate creatures such as rocks because it pertains in a special way to them to be "moved of themselves" (*moventur ex se*) and to desire things in virtue of their own powers.<sup>609</sup> As a consequence, they can be said to move themselves in a real sense even if they only do so imperfectly.

In the the twenty-second article of *De Veritate*, he explains that the creature with a rational nature is closest to God and thus:

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<sup>608</sup> This is clear even in later years by the fact that "freedom from sin is true freedom" (II-II, q. 183. a. 4 c.) and that sin itself is something contrary to either "human reason" or the "reason of God" (see, I-II, q. 71 a. 6 c. and ad 4). See also, I-II, q. 17 a. 1 ad 2, which says reason is the "root of freedom" as the cause while adding that the will is only able to be freely carried to diverse things because of diverse rational concepts.

<sup>609</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 3 c.: *appetere, quod quodammodo commune est omnibus, fit quodammodo speciale animatis, scilicet animalibus, in quantum in eis invenitur et appetitus, et movens appetitum. Ipsum enim bonum apprehensum est movens appetitum, secundum philosophum in Lib. III de anima. Unde, sicut animalia moventur ex se prae aliis, ita et appetunt ex se. Et propter hoc, sicut vis motiva est specialis potentia in anima, ita et vis appetitiva.*

has an inclination within its power so that it is not necessary to be inclined to the apprehended desirable object (*appetibile apprehensum*) but is, rather, able to be inclined or not inclined. And this inclination itself is not determined for it by another, but by itself. This belongs to it inasmuch as it does not utilize a bodily organ and so, getting further from the nature of what is moved, it approaches the nature of what moves and acts. Something cannot determine the way it is inclined towards the end, though, unless it knows the end and the bearing of the end upon the things that are for the end, which only belongs to the reason. Thus such an appetite, which is not determined necessarily by something else, follows the apprehension of the reason. Consequently, the rational appetite, which is called the will, is another power than the sense appetite.<sup>610</sup>

Because rational animals have more than the estimative power of brutes and are able to transcend sheerly natural inclinations, they are to some extent able to determine their inclinations for themselves. We see here that the will follows the apprehension of the reason, but Thomas only sees that as a source of a kind of subordinated autonomy and it clearly never would have come into his mind to think that the intellect is practically oppressive. This is consonant with something he said in the *Prima Pars* (also pre-1270):

Man acts from judgment, because he judges by the knowing power that something should be avoided or sought. But because this judgment is not from a natural instinct in regard to a particular doable but from a kind of comparison in the reason, it acts from a free judgment and is able to be inclined towards various things. For reason in contingent

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<sup>610</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 4 c.: *Sed natura rationalis, quae est Deo vicinissima, non solum habet inclinationem in aliquid sicut habent inanimata, nec solum movens hanc inclinationem quasi aliunde eis determinatam, sicut natura sensibilis; sed ultra hoc habet in potestate ipsam inclinationem, ut non sit ei necessarium inclinari ad appetibile apprehensum, sed possit inclinari vel non inclinari. Et sic ipsa inclinatio non determinatur ei ab alio, sed a seipsa. Et hoc quidem competit ei in quantum non utitur organo corporali: et sic recedens a natura mobilis, accedit ad naturam moventis et agentis. Quod autem aliquid determinet sibi inclinationem in finem, non potest contingere nisi cognoscat finem, et habitudinem finis in ea quae sunt ad finem: quod est tantum rationis. Et ideo talis appetitus non determinatus ex aliquo alio de necessitate, sequitur apprehensionem rationis; unde appetitus rationalis, qui voluntas dicitur, est alia potentia ab appetitu sensibili.*

matters is related to opposites as is clear in dialectical syllogisms and rhetorical arguments. Now particular doables are certain contingent things and the judgment of the reason is consequently related to them in different ways and is not determined to one [of them in particular]. And for this to be, man must possess the free judgment that comes from being rational.<sup>611</sup>

Because of the link between rationality and the free judgment that is pursuant to it, Thomas goes on to say that when irrational animals are sometimes said to have some kind of voluntariness, what is meant is merely that nature does not violently force them to act as they do. However, because they do not have reason, even when they act spontaneously, they lack "the use of free choice (*liberae electionis*)."<sup>612</sup> In the case of humans who do have the fortune of possessing reason, there may be times when the reason is clouded by appetite or even hindered some kind of unfortunate accident, but *qua* rational, they retain the freedom to choose. Choice, which is essentially an act of the will,<sup>613</sup> pertains to that rational power<sup>614</sup> and is "therefore related to opposites and thus is not determined to something from necessity."<sup>615</sup> Even the ability to choose something contrary to reason, in fact, flows from the power of the reason because *liberum*

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<sup>611</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 83 a.1 c.: *homo agit iudicio: quia per vim cognoscitivam iudicat, aliquid esse fugiendum, vel prosequendum. Sed quia iudicium istud non est ex naturali instinctu in particulari operabili, sed ex collatione quadam rationis, ideo agit libero iudicio, potens in diversa ferri: ratio enim circa contingens [al. contingentia] habet viam ad opposita, ut patet in Dialecticis syllogismis, et Rhetoricis persuasionibus: particularia autem operabilia sunt quaedam contingentia et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum. Et pro tanto necesse est, quod homo sit liberi arbitrii ex hoc ipso, quod rationalis est.*

<sup>612</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a.2 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod voluntarium ponitur a philosopho in brutis, non secundum quod convenit cum voluntate, sed secundum quod opponitur violento; ut sic dicatur voluntarium esse in brutis vel pueris, quia, sua sponte aliquid faciunt, non propter usum liberae electionis.*

<sup>613</sup> I-II, q. 13 a. 1 c.: *electio substantialiter non est actus rationis, sed voluntatis.*

<sup>614</sup> I, q. 83 a. 4 ad 2: *electio et voluntas... pertinent ad unam potentiam.*

<sup>615</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5 s. c. 5: *Praeterea, potestates rationales se habent ad opposita, secundum philosophum. Sed voluntas est rationalis potentia; est enim in ratione, ut dicitur in III de anima. Ergo se habet ad opposita; et ideo non de necessitate determinatur ad aliquid.*

*arbitrium* is only a free judgment because of the reason<sup>616</sup> and "the whole root of freedom is established in the reason (*totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta*).<sup>617</sup>

Simon gives an example of what it looks like when deliberation about any finite good takes place:

By reason of its being a living relation to the comprehensive good, the will invalidates the claim of any particular good to bring about a determinate judgment of desirability. At the instant when the attraction of a thing good in some respect inclines the mind to utter the proposition 'this is good for me,' the infinite ambition of the will reverses the perspective. The thing which is good only in a certain respect discloses uncongenial aspects, and the proposition 'this is not good for me' fights with its contradictory for the assent of the mind.<sup>618</sup>

Men are not moved solely by instinct. They retain an ability to act in accordance with their inclinations and appetites and may even refrain from acting upon that which is presented by the reason as a finite good, but even if we call the free choice or free judgment that rational creatures enjoy a kind of autonomy, we must at least recognize the 'autonomy' is not absolute because it always relies upon the reason in one way or another. Aquinas explains in article thirteen (of *De Veritate* 22):

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<sup>616</sup> See, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 2 ch. 48. After speaking of the fact that the will results from intellectual judgments, Thomas suggests it is only *free* will because it is the "free judgment of reason": *Omnia igitur intellectualia liberam voluntatem habent ex iudicio intellectus venientem. Quod est liberum arbitrium habere, quod definitur esse liberum de ratione iudicium.*

<sup>617</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 2c.

<sup>618</sup> Simon, *Freedom of Choice*, 102–103 (quoted in Clifford G. Kossel, "Thomistic Moral Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 393, n. 75).



When the will is moved to its object proposed to it by the reason, it is moved diversely inasmuch as the object is diversely proposed to it. Accordingly, when the reason proposes something to it absolutely, the will is moved into it absolutely, and this is to will. When, however, something is proposed to it under the aspect of the good (*sub ratione boni*) towards which other things are ordered as to an end, then the will tends toward it with a certain kind of order, which is found in an act of the will, not according to its own nature, but according to the exigence of the reason.<sup>619</sup>

In a sense, this text manifests that the will enjoys a kind of freedom because if something is not proposed to it as absolute, it is not absolutely carried into it. That which is proposed to it falls under the *ratio* of the good to the degree that it is a certain kind of good thing and this is the case even if it is not the perfect good itself (which alone necessarily draws the will into it along with anything that is constitutive of the good). The phrase *sub ratione boni* is telling in this regard. The only thing that necessarily moves the will is the good - or, more specifically, the perfect good. If something falls *under* that *ratio*, it is merely ordered to that good "as to an end." In other words, the end comes first (at least structurally if not temporally) and when it is appointed by the intellect, "the will is moved into it absolutely" whereas if a means is appointed (and "the proper object of choice is the means to an end"),<sup>620</sup> by the intellect, the will is free to choose it or not choose it.<sup>621</sup>

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<sup>619</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 13 ad 1: *Cum enim voluntas moveatur in suum obiectum sibi propositum a ratione, diversimode movetur, secundum quod diversimode sibi proponitur. Unde, cum ratio proponit sibi aliquid ut absolute bonum, voluntas movetur in illud absolute; et hoc est velle. Cum autem proponit sibi aliquid sub ratione boni, ad quod alia ordinentur ut ad finem, tunc tendit in illud cum quodam ordine, qui invenitur in actu voluntatis, non secundum propriam naturam, sed secundum exigentiam rationis. Et ita intendere est actus voluntatis in ordine ad rationem.*

<sup>620</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 15 c.: *proprium obiectum electionis est id quod est ad finem, quod pertinet ad rationem boni.*

<sup>621</sup> If the means is essentially connected with the end as the only way of attaining the end, one might necessarily be moved towards the means as well, but it would seem better in such a case to call such a "means" a *bonum honestum* that is actually constitutive of the end and inseparable from it.

In article six of *De Veritate* 22, Aquinas explained this kind of freedom (or "lack of fixity") by comparing the way various practical means relate to the end to the way principles lead to conclusions in demonstrative sciences:

In the demonstrative sciences, the conclusions are related to the principles in such a way that if the conclusion is removed, the principle is removed; and so from this fixity (*determinationem*) of the conclusions in respect to the principles, the intellect is compelled by the principles themselves to assent to the conclusions. But those things that are for the end (*the means*) do not have such a fixity in respect of the end that if one of them were removed, the end would [also] be removed because it is possible to attain the last end in varied ways - either in truth or in appearance. Therefore, from the necessity that is present in the voluntary appetite in regard to the end, a necessity in regard to those things that are for the end is not imposed.<sup>622</sup>

Even if the will is necessarily ordered to certain primary ends, then, it remains free in regard to secondary ones.

In another article of the same question of *De Veritate*, Aquinas insists "we are the lords of that which is within us" and that we are consequently able to either "will or not to will."<sup>623</sup> For Dewan, this "freedom to act or not to act" is the "only 'autonomy' of the will one ever has in St. Thomas" because "it is impossible, in the doctrine of St. Thomas, to posit an act of the will that

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<sup>622</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6 ad 4: *Ad quartum dicendum, quod in scientiis demonstrativis conclusiones hoc modo se habent ad principia, quod remota conclusione removetur principium; et sic propter hanc determinationem conclusionum respectu principiorum, ex ipsis principiis intellectus cogitur ad consentiendum conclusionibus. Sed ea quae sunt ad finem, non habent hanc determinationem respectu finis, ut remoto aliquo eorum, removeatur finis; cum per diversas vias possit perveniri ad finem ultimum vel secundum veritatem vel secundum apparentiam. Et ideo ex necessitate quae inest appetitui voluntario respectu finis, non inducitur necessitas ei respectu eorum quae sunt ad finem.* Similarly, Thomas says in I-II, q. 10 a. 2 ad 3: *finis ultimus ex necessitate movet voluntatem, quia est bonum perfectum: et similiter illa, quae ordinantur ad hunc finem, sine quibus finis haberi non potest; sicut esse, et vivere, et huiusmodi: alia vero, sine quibus finis haberi potest, non ex necessitate vult qui vult finem.*

<sup>623</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5 s.c. 7.

is not formed by natural intellectual knowledge of the good."<sup>624</sup> This analysis coincides with the Aquinas' assertion in the *Scriptum* that even the "will as nature" follows the reason's natural knowledge about that which is good.<sup>625</sup> Presupposing Thomas never rejected this teaching, it remains striking that Thomas adds in *De Veritate* 22 that the will is able to will certain things in virtue of its "own (*propria*) disposition without any necessity"<sup>626</sup> and that it is not "coerced by the good" due to the "very nature of willing."<sup>627</sup> We must, it seems understand this in terms of particular goods presented by the intellect.

If the will can exercise its act of willing in accordance with its proper disposition in regard to these goods (and, indeed, can turn away from them), one might think it could act contrary to the reason in its choice of something other than these goods.<sup>628</sup> However, Thomas refrains from attributing *absolute* autonomy to the will at this stage in his intellectual development. He points out, in fact, that there are times when "the operation of the intellect is able to be against the inclination of man, which is the will: as when a certain opinion pleases someone but it is led to assent to the contrary through the intellect on account of the force (*efficaciam*) of arguments."<sup>629</sup> If there are times that it is altered "through the intellect" it is

<sup>624</sup> *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue*, 169 and 170.

<sup>625</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2: *voluntas ut ... natura... sequitur iudicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis, quia in operabilibus finis habet locum principii, ut in 6 Ethic. dicitur. Unde illud quod finis est hominis, est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura.*

<sup>626</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5c.: *In appetibilibus autem finis est fundamentum et principium eorum quae sunt ad finem; cum quae sunt propter finem, non appetantur nisi ratione finis. Et ideo, id quod voluntas de necessitate vult quasi naturali inclinatione in ipsum determinata, est finis ultimus, ut beatitudo, et ea quae in ipso includuntur, ut esse, cognitio veritatis, et aliqua huiusmodi; ad alia vero non de necessitate determinatur naturali inclinatione, sed propria dispositione absque omni necessitate.*

<sup>627</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5 ad 8: *voluntas non cogitur a bono... ex ipsa ratione voluntatis.*

<sup>628</sup> This can, in fact, be done regarding some particular judgment about a finite good, but even then, the will must either be in accord with some other judgment or refuse to continue considering the goodness of that good (which refusal itself would be due to some other inclination being judged more important).

<sup>629</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5 ad 3: *operatio intellectus potest esse contra inclinationem hominis, quae est voluntas; ut cum alicui placet aliqua opinio, sed propter efficaciam rationum deducitur ad assentiendum contrario per intellectum.*

certainly not wholly independent of it since, as Thomas says in the *Prima Pars*, "an action of the will is nothing other than a certain inclination following an *understood* form."<sup>630</sup> Nevertheless, it retains freedom. Steven Long explains:

The very nature of the will as inclination following the form of reason is such that its object — the universal good or good in general— is irreducible to any finite good, wherefore no finite good can compel the will.<sup>631</sup>

Ultimately, the question seems to be whether Keenan is correct to suggest that the will has some positive contact with the end that is not itself specified by the intellect. We have seen Thomas precludes that possibility regarding the *voluntas ut natura*, which follows the judgment of reason,<sup>632</sup> but what about the will's activity in the process of deliberating about particular goods/proximate ends? Simply put, even in regard to these goods, there is no evidence Aquinas would grant the will a strict kind of independence. If it turns from that which is presented by the intellect, it seems clear it can only do so in respect to some other judgment, such as "this is bad to consider, because it impedes a clear good." Even in this instance (when the 'good' is identified erroneously and under the impetus of unrectified appetite), the will would be specified by reason. Indeed, even the will *not to know* something that it would be good or even morally obligatory to

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<sup>630</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 87 a. 4c.: *actus voluntatis nihil aliud est, quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam*. See also, *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2: *motus voluntatis est inclinatio sequens formam intellectam* and the *Compendium Theologiae*, book one, chapter one: *appetitus autem sequens intellectum, est voluntas*.

<sup>631</sup> Steven Long, "Perfect Storm Loss of Nature as Normative Principle." Chapter 11 of *What happened in and to Moral Philosophy in the Twentieth Century?: Philosophical Essays in Honor of Alasdair MacIntyre* (Notre Dame : University of Notre Dame Press, 2013), 295, n.5.

<sup>632</sup> See, *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2: *voluntas ut ... natura... sequitur iudicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis, quia in operabilibus finis habet locum principii, ut in 6 Ethic. dicitur. Unde illud quod finis est hominis, est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura*.

know is itself influenced by a defective reason brought about by inordinate inclination and some measure of ignorance. One might, for instance, will *not to know* the truth – as when a person dating someone *does not wish to know whether that person is already married* – and this would surely be a voluntary act because the will would be acting in virtue of its "own (*propria*) disposition without any necessity."<sup>633</sup> However, the will to turn away from knowing and following the reason would be specified by reason insofar as the intellect would have to consider some other good as more worthy of consideration and pursuit thereby enabling the will to choose to act in view of this other *cognized* good. The aspects of knowledge that could move one otherwise would thereby be minimized, but the will would remain specified by reason – albeit erroneous reason. In other words, even when the will applies the power of the intellect in such a way that it moves it to consider some other good, it is precisely under some *ratio* that it does so. This conclusion seems necessary given what Thomas says in the *Contra Gentiles*:

All intellectual beings have free will (*liberam voluntatem*) from the presence (*venientem*) of the judgment of the intellect. That is to have free will (*liberum arbitrium*), which is defined as being the free judgment of the reason.<sup>634</sup>

It seems that Keenan and others who think of *De Veritate* as expressive of a more 'intellectualist' mindset (one Aquinas is said to have abandoned) think that if the intellect acts as

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<sup>633</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5c.: *In appetibilibus autem finis est fundamentum et principium eorum quae sunt ad finem; cum quae sunt propter finem, non appetantur nisi ratione finis. Et ideo, id quod voluntas de necessitate vult quasi naturali inclinatione in ipsum determinata, est finis ultimus, ut beatitudo, et ea quae in ipso includuntur, ut esse, cognitio veritatis, et aliqua huiusmodi; ad alia vero non de necessitate determinatur naturali inclinatione, sed propria dispositione absque omni necessitate.*

<sup>634</sup> *Omnia igitur intellectualia liberam voluntatem habent ex iudicio intellectus venientem. Quod est liberum arbitrium habere, quod definitur esse liberum de ratione iudicium (Summa Contra Gentiles, bk. 2 ch. 48).*

a final cause, it must act as a kind of efficient cause. Lottin himself, for instance, argued that the early Thomas had wrongly attempted to separate final causality and efficient causality (since "the efficient cause moves to the act only for the purpose of an end") and he suggests the later Thomas necessarily maintained that the will must "play both the role of efficient cause and that of final cause" while ascribing to reason merely formal causality.<sup>635</sup> As Dewan points out, however, even when Thomas "affirms the natural priority and nobility of the intellect over the will" on the grounds that what moves the will is the understood good, the movement implied is by no means efficient causality.<sup>636</sup> Moreover, since the will is free to will or not to will (*velle vel non velle*),<sup>637</sup> as Thomas repeatedly says in this work, it must have a kind of primacy in regard to things that are not necessarily willed. The later Thomas would imply this is a kind of primacy on the level of exercise. In I-II, q. 9 a.1 ad 3, for instance, he says, "the will moves the intellect in regard to the exercise of the act."<sup>638</sup> As already suggested, though, this doctrine seems to be present in seminal form even in the *De Veritate*. Consider the ninth article of question twenty-two:

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<sup>635</sup> Peut-on separer, comme Thomas l'avait fait jusqu'iei, causalite finale et causalite efficiente, puisque la cause efficiente ne meut a l'acte qu'en vue d'une fin, et que la volonte, cause efficiente de l'acte libre, ne peut agir qu'en vue du bien, de la fin, que est son objet propre? ... c'est donc la volonte qui jouera a la fois le role de cause efficiente et celui de cause finale; et a la raison sera devolu le role de cause formelle. *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siecles* (Louvain, 1942-49) vol. 1, 254 & 256. Cited by Rosemary Zita Lauer in "St. Thomas's Theory of Intellectual Causality in Election" in *The New Scholasticism* 28 (1954): 301.

<sup>636</sup> See Dewan, "St. Thomas According to James Keenan," 161.

<sup>637</sup> In q. 22 a 6, he says, *libertas voluntatis in tribus considerabitur: scilicet quantum ad actum, in quantum potest velle vel non velle; et quantum ad obiectum, in quantum potest velle hoc vel illud, etiam eius oppositum; et quantum ad ordinem finis, in quantum potest velle bonum vel malum*. He sometimes says, *velle et non velle*, which he does three times in this question, but the sentiment is the same. This is essentially identical to saying the will is free on the level of exercise. In fact, combining this text with *Sent.* IV d.49.q.3 a.5 sol.3 ad 2 (which also adverts to the distinction between specification and exercise) might provide an antidote to Keenan's notion of charity unhinged from reason because, as Hibbs says, "Keenan's position rests on the controversial thesis that Thomas develops in the *Summa theologiae* a doctrine of the autonomy of the will, based on the distinction between the orders of specification and exercise." See, Thomas S. Hibbs, "Interpretations of Aquinas's Ethics Since Vatican II," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 420.

<sup>638</sup> *Voluntas movet intellectum quantum ad exercitium actus*.

The will has a twofold object. One, to which the natural inclination is determined necessarily. And this object, certainly, is implanted in and proposed to the will by the Creator who gives to it the natural inclination... The other, indeed, is the object of the will which is apt to incline the will inasmuch as there is some likeness or order in respect of the ultimate end that is naturally desired. The will, however, is not necessarily immutable on the side of this object... because there is not found in it a singular order to the naturally desired ultimate end. And by means of this object, some creature is able to incline the will to some extent although it cannot necessarily alter it; as is clear when someone persuades another that something ought to be done by proposing to him its utility or decency (*honestatem*). Nevertheless, it is in the power of the will that it either accept what has been proposed or not because it is not naturally determined to it.<sup>639</sup>

If the will is *not* "necessarily immutable" on the side of an object that merely has a likeness to the ultimate end, it can accept or not accept such an object. That is, a good presented as such *hic et nunc* does not necessarily move the will. In the reply to the first objection of article twelve, we are told that even if "the intellect is prior to the will *simpliciter*, it is nevertheless made posterior to the will (*efficitur voluntate posterior*) by a kind of reflection."<sup>640</sup> In other words, on the level of exercise, the will is able to have a kind of primacy. In view of this primacy,

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<sup>639</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 9: *Sed si consideretur actus voluntatis ex parte obiecti, sic voluntatis invenitur duplex obiectum. Unum, ad quod de necessitate naturalis inclinatio determinatur. Et hoc quidem obiectum est voluntati inditum et propositum a creatore, qui ei naturalem inclinationem dedit in illud. Unde nullus potest necessario per tale obiectum immutare voluntatem nisi solus Deus. Aliud vero est obiectum voluntatis, quod quidem natum est inclinare voluntatem, in quantum est in eo aliqua similitudo vel ordo respectu ultimi finis naturaliter desiderati; non tamen ex hoc obiecto voluntas de necessitate immutatur, ut prius dictum est, quia non in eo singulariter invenitur ordo ad ultimum finem naturaliter desideratum. Et mediante hoc obiecto potest aliqua creatura inclinare aliquatenus voluntatem, non tamen necessario immutare; sicut patet cum aliquis persuadet alicui aliquid faciendum proponendo ei eius utilitatem vel honestatem; tamen in potestate voluntatis est ut illud acceptet vel non acceptet, eo quod non est naturaliter determinata ad illud.*

<sup>640</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 12 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod cum in reflexione sit quaedam similitudo motus circularis, in quo est ultimum motus quod primo erat principium, oportet sic dicere in reflexione, ut illud quod primo erat prius, secundo fiat posterius. Et ideo, quamvis intellectus sit prior voluntate simpliciter, tamen per reflexionem efficitur voluntate posterior; et sic voluntas intellectum movere potest.*

apparently, Thomas is even open to qualifying the intellect's superiority in view of the will's nobility:

Although the intellect is simply nobler than the will, *at least in regard to some things*, nevertheless, in regard to the aspect of moving, which belongs to the will from the distinctive character of its object, the will is found to be nobler (emphasis added).<sup>641</sup>

The will's motion is responsible for a variety of actions including those that make certain objects appear choiceworthy even if they are not actually so. This, too, implies the will's ability to be a kind of primary source of movement on the level of exercise. As Thomas says in question twenty-four, the inclination of a habit can cause someone to think a certain thing to be worth pursuing as an end that is not actually a good thing because "as each one is, so does the end seem to him." A habit "inclines towards that which is suitable to it. It happens, therefore, that the good of the one who has a habit of voluptuousness seems to be that which corresponds to voluptuousness as to that which is connatural to him."<sup>642</sup> When Thomas made the same point in the *Scriptum*, he explicitly attributed that habit to the power of the one who acquired it.<sup>643</sup> How would such a habit be developed if not by turning against reason's presentation of some particular good and refusing to allow that object to compel it? If that is the case, there must be

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<sup>641</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 12 ad 5: *intellectus completius comparatur ad verum quam voluntas; et voluntas perfectius comparatur ad bonum quod est in rebus, quam intellectus. Unde, quamvis intellectus simpliciter sit nobilior voluntate, ad minus respectu aliquarum rerum; tamen secundum rationem movendi, quae competit voluntati ex ratione propria obiecti, voluntas nobilior invenitur.*

<sup>642</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 10 c.: *vitii habitus quasi natura quaedam inclinatur in id quod est sibi conveniens; unde fit ut habenti habitum luxuriae bonum videatur id quod luxuriae convenit, quasi connaturale. Et hoc est quod philosophus dicit in III Ethicorum, quod qualis intus unusquisque est, talis et finis videtur ei.*

<sup>643</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 ad 5: *Ad quintum dicendum, quod qualitas alicujus est duplex: quaedam ex habitu, et quaedam ex naturali complexione; et secundum illam quae est ex habitu, videtur alicui finis talis qualis est ipse; verbi gratia, ei qui habet habitum luxuriae, videtur optimum delectabile venereum, quod est secundum similitudinem sui habitus. In his ergo qualitas, puta hoc quod est habere virtuosum habitum vel vitiosum, est in potestate nostra.*



some movement that is not found in the reason *qua* appointing that particular object - although it must, I would suggest, be found in the reason *qua* appointing some other object since the *motus voluntatis est inclinatio sequens formam intellectam*.<sup>644</sup>

In question seventeen of *De Veritate*, Thomas speaks of the instance in which the judgment of someone's conscience tells him he should not fornicate even though he goes on to err "in choosing and not in conscience" by acting "against conscience: and this is called acting with a bad conscience inasmuch as the deed is not concordant with the judgment of knowledge."<sup>645</sup> As mentioned above, it seems the will would even then have to be specified by the intellect inasmuch as it would apply the intellect only to know the objects that accent the apparent good of something contrary to the true good. In other words, the sinful man would retain natural reason despite his having turned against his conscience by adverting his attention to some good aspect of an evil act. In question twenty-five, Thomas touches upon the will's ability to turn away from that which would truly be conducive of happiness:

The will naturally has an appetite for the good that is the end; namely, happiness in general, and similarly the good that is for the end; for each one naturally desires what is

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<sup>644</sup> *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2: "the motion of the will is an inclination following an understood form." See also *Compendium Theologiae*, book one, chapter one: *appetitus autem sequens intellectum, est voluntas*.

<sup>645</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a.1 ad 4.: *Differt autem iudicium conscientiae et liberi arbitrii, quia iudicium conscientiae consistit in pura cognitione, iudicium autem liberi arbitrii in applicatione cognitionis ad affectionem: quod quidem iudicium est iudicium electionis. Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem iudicium conscientiae; sicut cum aliquis examinat aliquid quod imminet faciendum, et iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia, hoc esse malum, utpote fornicari cum hac muliere; sed ... ex cuius concupiscentia ligatur ratio, ne eius dictamen in electionem prorumpat. Et sic aliquis errat in eligendo, et non in conscientia; sed contra conscientiam facit: et dicitur hoc mala conscientia facere, in quantum factum iudicio scientiae non concordat. Et sic patet quod non oportet conscientiam esse idem quod liberum arbitrium.* The phrase, "ne eius dictamen prorumpat in electionem" indicates that he at least wills to pursue the pleasure instead of the judgment of the reason.

useful to it. But in desiring this or that or in choosing this or that, the sin of the will is able to occur.<sup>646</sup>

When the power (*virtus*) of natural reason (i.e., synderesis) remains in one's conscience in such a way that its principles are "preserved in the conclusions," conscience is practically synonymous with synderesis<sup>647</sup> and is thus in a special way related to the end - or at least, "the good that is for the end." In these cases, one can reject the proximate end proposed by choosing something other than what conscience tells him to do. Once again, therefore, we have evidence that the will, for even the younger Thomas, can freely move itself away from some particular object presented by the intellect.<sup>648</sup>

In question twelve of *De Veritate*, Thomas discusses the different ways in which the will is free. It does not, he says, necessarily will whatever it wills and is free "as regards (a) the act,

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<sup>646</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 25 a. 8c.: *voluntas naturaliter appetit bonum quod est finis, scilicet felicitatem in generali, et similiter bonum quod est ad finem; unusquisque enim naturaliter appetit utilitatem suam; sed in hoc vel illo fine appetendo, aut hoc vel illo utili eligendo, incidit peccatum voluntatis. DV q. 24 8c. says something nearly identical: Et propter hoc voluntas naturaliter appetit bonum quod est finis, scilicet felicitatem in generali, et similiter bonum quod est ad finem; unusquisque enim naturaliter appetit utilitatem suam; sed in hoc vel illo fine appetendo, aut hoc vel illo utili eligendo, incidit peccatum voluntatis.*

<sup>647</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 3 a. 2 ad 2: *conscientia dicitur naturale iudicatorium [i.e., synderesis] non per se, sed inquantum virtus synderesis in ipsa manet; sicut virtus principiorum salvatur in conclusionibus: et ex parte illa non errat.*

The body of *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 speaks of times when the judgments of synderesis and conscience are identical (in which case, the two seem to elide): *Sciendum tamen, quod in quibusdam conscientia nunquam errare potest; quando scilicet actus ille particularis ad quem conscientia applicatur, habet de se universale iudicium in synderesi... nullus decipitur ... in hoc quod est, Deum a me non esse diligendum, vel, aliquod malum esse faciendum, nulla conscientia errare potest; eo quod in utroque syllogismo, tam speculabilem quam operabilem, et maior est per se nota, utpote in universali iudicio existens; et minor etiam in qua idem de seipso praedicatur particulariter; ut cum dicitur: omne totum est maius sua parte. Hoc totum est totum. Ergo est maius sua parte.*

Cf., I-II, q. 79 a. 13 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod actus, etsi non semper maneat in se, semper tamen manet in sua causa, quae est potentia et habitus. Habitus autem ex quibus conscientia informatur, etsi multi sint, omnes tamen efficaciam habent ab uno primo, scilicet ab habitu primorum principiorum, qui dicitur synderesis. Unde specialiter hic habitus interdum conscientia nominatur, ut supra dictum est.*

<sup>648</sup> When this is done, however, the intellect must be involved in some way if there is to be a human act. That is, given that it is a human act, some understanding or judgment that is contrary to that which a sufficient consideration of the implications of conscience would allow could prevail, but it would remain some kind of intellectual judgment.

inasmuch as it is able to will or not to will, (b) as regards the object, inasmuch as it is able to will this or that or even its opposite and (c) as regards the way it is ordered to the end, inasmuch as it is able to will good or evil."<sup>649</sup> It has freedom, therefore, "in respect of certain things that are for the end and not of the end itself."<sup>650</sup> This freedom includes not only the ability to be moved by itself but also to move the acts of any of the other powers:

All the acts of the diverse powers are referred to free judgment by means of one act, which is to choose. We are moved in accordance with it by the free judgment because we choose to be moved by the free judgment; and so it is with the other acts. Accordingly, from this it .... is shown that the free judgment ... is one power moving the diverse powers (*potentias*) by its power (*virtute*).<sup>651</sup>

The free judgment truly is free, then, even though it cannot choose the last end. As we have seen, the natural judging power known as *synderesis* or natural reason, however, is not free in the same way. The difference between these two kinds of judgments is further clarified in question sixteen where we learn that "judgment is twofold; of universals, which pertains to *synderesis* and [secondly] of particular doable things – and this is the judgment of choice and pertains to free will (*liberum arbitrium*)."<sup>652</sup> He considers the latter kind of judgment, the free judgment, to be nothing other than the will itself even though it does not "name it not absolutely" (i.e., not *qua* simple will or 'will as nature'), but only "in relation to one of its acts, which is to choose."<sup>653</sup> As

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<sup>649</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: *Cum autem voluntas dicatur libera, in quantum necessitatem non habet, libertas voluntatis in tribus considerabitur: scilicet quantum ad actum, in quantum potest velle vel non velle; et quantum ad obiectum, in quantum potest velle hoc vel illud, etiam eius oppositum; et quantum ad ordinem finis, in quantum potest velle bonum vel malum.*

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*: *inest libertas voluntati ... respectu quorundam obiectorum, scilicet respectu eorum quae sunt ad finem et non ipsius finis.*

<sup>651</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 5 c.: *Omnes enim actus diversarum potentialium non referuntur ad liberum arbitrium nisi mediante uno actu, qui est eligere: secundum hoc enim libero arbitrio movemur, quod libero arbitrio moveri eligimus; et sic de aliis actibus. Unde ex hoc non ostenditur liberum arbitrium esse plures potentias, sed esse unam potentiam moventem sua virtute potentias diversas.*

<sup>652</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 15: *iudicium est duplex, scilicet in universali, et hoc pertinet ad synderesim; et in particulari operabili, et est hoc iudicium electionis, et hoc pertinet ad liberum arbitrium.*

<sup>653</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6c.: *liberum arbitrium esse ipsa voluntas. Nominat autem eam non absolute, sed in ordine ad aliquem actum eius, qui est eligere.*

he worded it in the *Scriptum*, just as the act of understanding is to understand, "so that act which is to choose is attributed (*assignatur*) to free judgment."<sup>654</sup> In other words, the act of understanding or synderesis is known as 'understanding' and the act of free judgment (*liberum arbitrium*) is known as 'choosing.' He indicates later in the same work that this latter judgment enjoys liberty due to the free motion of the will:

The appetite which has the good and the end for an object<sup>655</sup> moves itself and the cognitive power to act. For from the desire for an act or an end, someone proceeds to exercise (*exerceat*) some act, as long as it is not from a necessity of nature.<sup>656</sup>

Thus the will considered as free judgment (and not the natural one of the *voluntas ut natura*) is able to choose freely. Since the 'will as nature' follows the natural reason,<sup>657</sup> it cannot do so in regard to the final end, but it is certainly able to do so in regard to some proximate end that is a finite good.<sup>658</sup> As a *rational* appetite, it is even able to command the acts of any of the "powers that are able to obey the reason" and when those powers are moved, their movement can

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<sup>654</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 1 a. 2 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod actus aliquis attribuitur alicui potentiae dupliciter. Vel quia elicit ipsum sicut proprium, sicut visus videre et intellectus intelligere, et sic libero arbitrio assignatur actus ille qui est eligere.*

<sup>655</sup> This, of course, is the will. See, *SCG*, bk. 3, chapters 1 & 148 and *S.Th.*, II-II, q. 4 a. 1 c.

<sup>656</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 49 q. 3 a. 5 qc. 3 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod habitus inclinatur ad actum dupliciter. Uno modo ad hoc ut actus exerceatur; et sic inclinare ad actum non est nisi habitus in parte appetitiva existentis: quia appetitus qui habet bonum et finem pro objecto, movet seipsum et vim cognitivam in actum: ex desiderio enim actus vel finis provenit quod aliquis aliquem actum exerceat, dummodo non sit ex necessitate naturae.*

<sup>657</sup> *Unde illud quod finis est hominis, est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura* (*Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2).

<sup>658</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: "in respect to the object, the will is indeterminate as regards the means, not, however, as regards the end itself" (*Respectu obiecti quidem est indeterminata voluntas quantum ad ea quae sunt ad finem, non quantum ad ipsum finem ultimum. De Potentia*, q. 2 a. 3 ad 6: *Quamvis enim ad inclinationem naturae voluntas ad aliquid unum determinetur, quod est ultimus finis a natura intentus, respectu tamen aliorum indeterminata manet; sicut patet in homine, qui naturaliter vult beatitudinem et de necessitate, non autem alia.*)

be attributed to it because it is the "mover of all the powers."<sup>659</sup> We must conclude, then, that at this time, Thomas already held the will to be profoundly free despite the intellect's primacy.<sup>660</sup>

### **α. 'Freedom' of Indifference and the Ability to Sin**

The notion of indetermination is rather strong in the early Thomas<sup>661</sup> despite the intellect's property of acting *per modum finis*.<sup>662</sup> It consequently seems inaccurate to argue "self-movement is only possible if final causality is derived from some source other than reason."<sup>663</sup> As Thomas asserts in the *Prima Pars* and other pre-1270 works, the free will is "related indifferently to choosing well or badly."<sup>664</sup> This is so because the means towards the ultimate end are able to be

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<sup>659</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 1 a. 2 ad 3: *Alio modo [actus aliquis actus attribuitur alicui potentiae] quia imperat ipsum; et hoc modo actus omnium virium obedientium rationi possunt voluntati attribui quae est motor omnium virium: et ita etiam actus diversarum virium libero arbitrio attribuuntur.*

<sup>660</sup> This primacy is evinced by two succinct pre-1270 texts asserting, respectively, that the will's nature is to follow an *understood* form (*S.Th.*, I, q. 87 a. 4c.) and that the intellect is the first mover in man precisely because it moves the will (*SCG*, Bk. 2, ch. 60 n. 4: *Primum autem movens in homine est intellectus: nam intellectus suo intelligibili movet voluntatem*).

<sup>661</sup> Volitional 'indifference' is even spoken of in *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 14c.: *Sed voluntas hominis non est determinata ad aliquam unam operationem, sed se habet indifferenter ad multas.*

<sup>662</sup> *De Veritate* q. 22 a. 12 ad 3: *intellectus movet per modum finis; hoc enim se habet bonum apprehensum ad voluntatem; SCG Bk. 1, ch. 72 n. 7: Intellectus, non secundum modum causae efficientis et moventis, sed secundum modum causae finalis, moveat voluntatem, proponendo sibi suum obiectum, quod est finis; Super Ethicorum, Liber 6, Lectio 9 #14: Quare autem huiusmodi extremi dicatur intellectus, patet per hoc, quod intellectus est principiorum; haec autem singularia, quorum dicimus esse intellectum huiusmodi, principia eius sunt quod est cuius gratia, id est sunt principia ad modum causae finalis. Summa Contra Gentiles, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: intellectus autem voluntatem per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectum est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem.*

<sup>663</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 31.

<sup>664</sup> I, q. 83 a. 2 c.: *Liberum autem arbitrium indifferenter se habet ad bene eligendum vel male. Unde impossibile est quod liberum arbitrium sit habitus.* I have decided to follow the convention here and translate *liberum arbitrium* as free will. Though it seems to confuse things to always translate it that way, it remains true that for Thomas, *liberum arbitrium* is "the will itself" though it names the will in relation to its act of choosing (*liberum arbitrium esse ipsa voluntas. Nominat autem eam non absolute, sed in ordine ad aliquem actum eius, qui est eligere; De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6c.).

See also, *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 14c.: *Sed voluntas hominis non est determinata ad aliquam unam operationem, sed se habet indifferenter ad multas.*

I-II, q. 10 a. 4 c.: *voluntas est ... non determinatum ad unum, sed indifferenter se habens ad multa. De Malo*, q. 6 ad 3: *naturam voluntatis motae, quae indifferenter se habet ad diversa, non inducitur necessitas, sed manet libertas.*

chosen freely. As we have seen, part of that choosing involves moving the reason to deliberate or to focus on one particular (and perhaps only apparent) good over another. So long as the object is seen as "orderable to happiness,"<sup>665</sup> the choosing of it is possible and the will can guide the deliberation to see good in it:

He who wills to fornicate, although he knows in general (*in universali*) that fornication is evil, nevertheless judges that an act of fornication is good for him now and he chooses it under the species of good because no one acts intending to do evil, as Dionysius says.<sup>666</sup>

In this light, we can understand how it is that even if "judgment is of the reason, nevertheless the freedom of judging is immediately of the will."<sup>667</sup> Gallagher's explanation of how this can be even if the will is dependent upon the reason is insightful:

Since the will's act depends upon the intellect's presentation of the object, and because the will can command the act of the intellect, it is possible, for any given proposed act, simply to will to cease thinking about the object and so to obviate all acts in its regard.<sup>668</sup>

The will is responsible for the act of thinking or the absence of that act. Even when the will obviates all acts in regard to what is proposed to it, there must be some *reason* why it does so, but it remains responsible for this obviation. The right ordering of the will is thus a *sine qua non*

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<sup>665</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: *nunquam deduceretur in appetendam fornicationem, nisi in quantum apprehendit eam ut quoddam hominis bonum, in quantum est quiddam delectabile, et sic ut ordinabilem in beatitudinem.*

<sup>666</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 2c.: *Qui enim vult fornicari, quamvis sciat in universali fornicationem malum esse, tamen iudicat sibi ut nunc bonum esse fornicationis actum, et sub specie boni ipsum eligit. Nullus enim intendens ad malum operatur, ut Dionysius dicit.*

<sup>667</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod quamvis iudicium sit rationis, tamen libertas iudicandi est voluntatis immediate.*

<sup>668</sup> David M. Gallagher, "The Will and Its Acts (Ia IIae, Qq. 6–17)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 76. Of course, even this obviation would have rational specification; we can refuse to consider something *because* we apprehend that doing so would be irritating or less enjoyable than considering something else.

for the very being of prudence even though the opposite is true as well. Without an upright will directing prudence to a good end,<sup>669</sup> sound deliberation about means would be of no avail because the object would be unfitting and the only wisdom one would have would be "earthly wisdom"<sup>670</sup> (as opposed to the practical wisdom known as prudence).<sup>671</sup> The will's role is, therefore, not only crucial but also that to which Thomas primarily attributes sin.<sup>672</sup> Sin is always a possibility in regard to finite goods because in any case involving something other than the perfect good of happiness itself, the "indetermination of the will, which is able to have an appetite for good or evil" remains.<sup>673</sup>

Although this indeterminacy is not objectively ideal since "the creature would be better if it were to adhere to God immovably, nevertheless, that being is good which is able to adhere or not adhere to God."<sup>674</sup> Man can even turn away from God and treat a creature as if it were his last end instead of him<sup>675</sup> but this ability itself remains a sign of man's dignity. In virtue of his very

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<sup>669</sup> In *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 7c., Thomas says the end of prudence is determined by the will more than once.

<sup>670</sup> II-II q.45 a.1 ad 1: *Sapientes sunt, ut faciam mala; bene autem facere nescierunt: quicumque autem avertitur a fine debito, necesse est quod aliquem finem indebitum sibi praestituat: quia omne agens agit propter finem; unde si praestituat sibi finem in bonis exterioribus terrenis, vocatur sapientia terrena.*

<sup>671</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 2 lect. 7 # 5: *Sapiens autem hic dicitur ... prudens qui est sapiens rerum humanarum.*

<sup>672</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 44 q. 2 a. 3 expos.: *actibus plurium potentiarum peccare contingit. Sed dicendum, quod nulla potentia habet quod eliciat actum peccati, nisi in quantum est voluntas vel a voluntate mota; et ideo una potentia est secundum quam primo peccatum inest, scilicet voluntas vel liberum arbitrium.* He also says acts are only considered moral because of the will in bk. 2 d. 42 q. 1 a. 1 c.: *actus non ponitur in genere moris nisi propter voluntatem, scilicet secundum quod est a voluntate elicited vel imperatus.* For this reason, it is the principle of both meriting and demeriting (*principium merendi et demerendi*; bk. 4 d. 17 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 ad 1).

See also, I-II q.71 a.6 ad 2, which says the first cause of sin is in the will.

<sup>673</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: *qui appetit naturaliter beatitudinem appetitu recto, nunquam deduceretur in appetendam fornicationem, nisi in quantum apprehendit eam ut quoddam hominis bonum, in quantum est quiddam delectabile, et sic ut ordinabilem in beatitudinem, velut quamdam imaginem eius. Et ex hoc sequitur indeterminatio voluntatis, qua potest bonum vel malum appetere.*

<sup>674</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 1 ad 16: *quamvis creatura esset melior si immobiliter Deo adhaereret, tamen illa est bona quae potest Deo adhaerere et non adhaerere; et ita melius est universum ubi utraque creatura invenitur.*

<sup>675</sup> I-II, q. 72 a. 5 c. speaks of the soul turning away from God, its last end, by sin. See also: I-II, q. 89 a. 1 ad 2., II-II q.9 a.4 c., II-II, q. 55 a. 1 s.c.

nature, he is free to either place God before him as an end by turning himself towards him as his fitting end (at least inasmuch as God is the beginning and end of created effects) or to refrain from doing so.<sup>676</sup> Since he is "bound to avoid sin, and this is not done without appointing to himself a fitting end," it would be better for him to "turn himself to God" (*ad Deum se convertere*).<sup>677</sup> Nevertheless, as we have already established, he is certainly free to instead "appoint to himself an unfitting end" by putting worldly goods ahead of God,<sup>678</sup> in whom his true happiness lies.<sup>679</sup>

The good, for Thomas, is "named from *ratio* of the end," which "is especially found in those who appoint the end to themselves."<sup>680</sup> The fact that man has free will is therefore good even if this means he can appoint evil ends.<sup>681</sup> If he does so, he does so by freely moving his

<sup>676</sup> We must, of course, keep in mind that the "first motion of the will proceeds from the instinct" of God, the exterior moving principle, but the doctrine of physical premotion does not negate the causality of secondary causes (See I-II, q. 9 a. 4: *necesse est ponere, quod in primum motum voluntatis voluntas prodeat ex instinctu alicujus exterioris moventis, ut Aristoteles concludit in quodam cap. Eth. Eudemicarum*). As Thomas says in the *ad primum*, although it pertains to the notion of the voluntary that its principle is internal, this does not mean that the first intrinsic principle does not have its first principle from outside of it (*ab extra*) because the first natural motion that is *ab extra* moves nature.

<sup>677</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 28 a. 3 ad 4: *Cum enim adultus esse incipit, si quod in se est, faciat, gratia ei dabitur, per quam a peccato originali erit immunis; quod si non faciat, reus erit peccato omissionis. Cum enim quilibet teneatur peccatum vitare, et hoc fieri non possit nisi praestituto sibi debito fine; tenetur quilibet, cum primo suae mentis est compos, ad Deum se convertere, et in eo finem constituere; et per hoc ad gratiam disponitur*. By not placing impediments to grace in the way, man does his part so that *per gratiam in nobis cognitio ultimi finis praestituatur, ad hoc quod voluntarie dirigamur in ipsum* (SCG bk. 3, ch. 152 n. 2). Nevertheless, as I-II, q. 112 a. 3c makes pellucidly clear, God's help is necessary even for this preparation: *praeparatio hominis ad gratiam est a Deo, sicut a movente; a libero autem arbitrio, sicut a moto*. See also, I-II, q. 9 a. 6.

<sup>678</sup> II-II, q. 45 a. 1 ad 1: *Sapientes sunt, ut faciam mala; bene autem facere nescierunt: quicumque autem avertitur a fine debito, necesse est quod aliquem finem indebitum sibi praestituat: quia omne agens agit propter finem; unde si praestituat sibi finem in bonis exterioribus terrenis, vocatur sapientia terrena*.

<sup>679</sup> I-II, q. 2 a. 8c.: *objectum autem voluntatis, quae est appetitus humanus, est universale bonum: sicut obiectum intellectus est universale verum: ex quo patet, quod nihil potest quietare voluntatem hominis, nisi bonum universale; quod non invenitur in aliquo creato, sed solum in Deo: quia omnis creatura habet bonitatem participatam. Unde solus Deus voluntatem hominis implere potest*.

<sup>680</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 27 q. 1 a. 2 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod quamvis bonum convertatur cum ente, tamen quodam speciali modo invenitur in rebus animatis et habentibus electionem, ut in 5 Metaphys. dicitur. Cujus ratio est, quia bonum dicitur ex ratione finis; et ideo quamvis inveniatur in omnibus in quibus est finis, tamen specialius invenitur in illis quae finem sibi praestituunt, et intentionem finis cognoscunt*.

<sup>681</sup> *Super Sent.* 2 d. 41, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 5: *ex infidelitatis errore finem sibi praestituunt*.



reason to justify some evil act under the *ratio* of good. Reason is not devoid of influence even in regard to an evil act because even the disordered will remains subject to the natural reason. That said, though, a kind of subordinated "self-movement" could be predicated of the will inasmuch as it would have a kind of primacy over the deliberating power known as 'reason as reason.'<sup>682</sup> As Aquinas explained in the *Scriptum*, "it is from a desire for an act or an end that someone exercises (*exerceat*) some act, as long as it is not from a necessity of nature,"<sup>683</sup> he is not constrained by any object appointed by the reason as a pursuable proximate end. In other words, when his reason proposes some finite good, he always retains freedom on the level of exercise and in this way, the will has primacy and a kind of self-movement. There is no indication the early Thomas would ever preclude rational specification, but some form of qualified volitional primacy remains. This seems manifest inasmuch as unrectified inclination can cause both an aversion from a particular good that is proposed by the deliberative reason and also a defect in knowledge. As a consequence, the freedom of the will must be placed by the individual at the service of the universal good, which leads us to the consideration of true freedom.

### β. Freedom for Excellence

In question twenty-four of *De Veritate*, Thomas refers to free will (*liberum arbitrium*) as the kind of judgment that "causes (*facit*) liberty in judging."<sup>684</sup> Since, however, men are able to

<sup>682</sup> The 'reason as reason' is not ordered to one. As such, it requires the influence of the will since the will is free (as *DV* q. 22 a. 6c. says) on the side of the object to choose "this or that or its opposite."

*De Veritate*, q. 26, a.9 ad 7 explains that whereas 'reason as reason' is understood to "refer to the reason inasmuch as it is ordered to knowing or desiring [something] because it is the proper function of the reason to make a comparison," 'reason as nature' is understood to "refer to the reason being compared to those things one naturally knows or desires.

<sup>683</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 49 q. 3 a. 5 qc. 3 ad 2: *ex desiderio enim actus vel finis provenit quod aliquis aliquem actum exercent, dummodo non sit ex necessitate naturae.*

<sup>684</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6c.: *potentia qua libere iudicamus, non intelligitur illa qua iudicamus simpliciter, quod est rationis; sed quae facit libertatem in iudicando, quod est voluntatis. Unde liberum arbitrium est ipsa voluntas. Nominat autem eam non absolute, sed in ordine ad aliquem actum eius, qui est eligere.* Of course, even though this free judgment "pertains to the will," it is specified by reason in some way

choose a variety of means of attaining the naturally desired good of happiness,<sup>685</sup> a question arises regarding what is requisite for attaining the goal. We should be careful to keep in mind that the freedom to choose the good is only truly free (i.e., in the sense of being perfective)<sup>686</sup> when it chooses in accord with natural reason and whatever one's conscience judges to be good. If, instead, man uses the act of *liberum arbitrium* (which is to choose<sup>687</sup>) in such a way that he wills something evil, that is not true freedom because "to will evil is neither freedom, nor a part of freedom, although it is a certain sign of freedom."<sup>688</sup>

In book three of the *Scriptum*, Thomas speaks to the inclinations that come from nature and the inclinations that come from the free will of the acting person in addition to the indispensable and liberating role of the intellect. His teaching on these points is important for understanding his approach to authentic liberty:

The one knowing the end and the means... not only directs himself to the end, but also to other things just as an archer shoots his arrow towards a target. Thus someone tends to the end in two ways. In one way, he is directed by himself, which only occurs in the case of someone knowing the end and the *ratio* of the end. In another way, he is directed by another and in this way all things tend in accordance with nature to their proper and

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because the will cannot act in any other way. Even the will not to will is rationally specified. When the will applies powers to act, it is precisely under some *ratio* that it does so.

<sup>685</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 7 q. 1 a. 1 ad 1: *Voluntas enim non potest esse de miseria neque de malo inquantum huiusmodi, sed semper est de bono et de beatitudine: ad quam tamen consequendam possunt homines diversas vias eligere, scilicet secundum quod in illis melius existimant se posse felicitatem consequi; unde potest esse error in electione eorum quae sunt ad finem ipsum.*

<sup>686</sup> This kind of freedom can be distinguished from the freedom of indifference, which is a kind of freedom from compulsion. The latter kind of freedom, of course, pertains to the will inasmuch as it cannot be compelled by any finite object.

<sup>687</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 1 a. 2 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod actus aliquis attribuitur alicui potentiae dupliciter. Vel quia elicit ipsum sicut proprium, sicut visus videre et intellectus intelligere, et sic libero arbitrio assignatur actus ille qui est eligere.*

<sup>688</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: *Et pro tanto dicitur, quod velle malum nec est libertas, nec pars libertatis, quamvis sit quoddam libertatis signum.* Interestingly, in II-II, q. 164 a. 4 ad 4, this false freedom is not qualified as such: *undecimus gradus humilitatis est, ut homo non delectetur facere propriam voluntatem; cui opponitur libertas, per quam scilicet homo delectatur libere facere quod vult.*

natural ends, having been directed thereto by the wise one who is establishing nature as it is (*a sapientia instituyente naturam*)<sup>689</sup> and, in accordance with this, we find two appetites; viz.,

- 1) the natural appetite which is nothing other than the inclination of a thing into its natural end which is from the direction of the one establishing nature as it is and, again,
- 2) the voluntary appetite, which is an inclination of someone who knows the end and the order to that end ...

Thus it is evident that the natural and voluntary appetite differ inasmuch as the natural appetite is from an extrinsic principle (and therefore does not have freedom because a free thing is that which is its own cause) whereas the inclination of the voluntary appetite is in the willing individual himself (and therefore the will has freedom)

... The will, then, has in addition to (*praeter*) the natural inclination another inclination and the one willing it causes it himself.<sup>690</sup>

The natural inclination here is distinguished from the inclination of the rational animal whose ability to reason and know ends (and *not* despite this ability) enables him to be authentically free.

In a sense, the will is even indifferent to in regard to certain means and particular goods (i.e., it enjoys the liberty attendant upon the nature of choice as rooted in the intellect<sup>691</sup>). However, the

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<sup>689</sup> One might be tempted to translate *instituyente* as "established" but as it is in the present tense, Aquinas surely had in mind that God is continuing, as it were, to ensure that nature acts in accordance with the eternal law which all creatures passively participate in by being directed to their proper acts and ends. See, *S.Th.*, I, q. 22 a. 1 and I-II, q. 91 a.2.

<sup>690</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 27 q. 1 a. 2 c.: *Cognoscens autem finem et ea quae sunt ad finem, non solum seipsum in finem dirigit, sed etiam alia, sicut sagittator emittit sagittam ad signum. Sic ergo dupliciter aliquid tendit in finem. Uno modo directum in finem a seipso, quod est tantum in cognoscente finem et rationem finis. Alio modo directum ab alio; et hoc modo omnia secundum suam naturam tendunt in fines proprios et naturales, directa a sapientia instituyente naturam. Et secundum hoc invenimus duos appetitus: scilicet appetitum naturalem, qui nihil aliud est quam inclinatio rei in finem suum naturalem qui est ex directione instituentis naturam, et iterum appetitum voluntarium, qui est inclinatio cognoscentis finem, et ordinem in finem illum... Sic ergo patet quod in hoc differt appetitus naturalis et voluntarius, quod inclinatio naturalis appetitus est ex principio extrinseco; et ideo non habet libertatem, quia liberum est quod est sui causa... voluntas autem habet praeter inclinationem naturalem, aliam, cujus est ipse volens causa.*

<sup>691</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 1 a. 2 arg. 4: *electio nihil aliud est quam duobus propositis alterum alteri praeoptare ... Sed eligere assignatur proprie actus liberi arbitrii in littera. Ergo videtur quod liberum arbitrium non sit determinata potentia. I-II, q. 13 a. 3c.: electio consequitur sententiam vel iudicium, quod est sicut conclusio syllogismi operativi.*

only liberating way to use free will is by striving for excellence and acting in accordance with nature, faith, and reason (not to mention grace). For this reason, Thomas explains elsewhere in the *Scriptum* that *liberum arbitrium* is *per se* ordered to the good and that it therefore does not tend towards evil except on account of some defect. As a consequence, *liberum arbitrium* is only perfectly found when it is, in fact, not able to tend towards evil.<sup>692</sup> He does not deny that freedom to choose evil is a kind of freedom, but he insists that “freedom regarding the good (*ad bonum*) is more [truly] freedom than freedom regarding evil (*ad malum*).”<sup>693</sup> Since choosing the good would be the more perfect form of freedom and since both *liberum arbitrium* and its act of choice involve the intellect and the will,<sup>694</sup> we can apply what Pinckaers says even to the early writings:

In Aquinas we find a freedom rooted in the intellect and will according to their natural inclinations to the true and the good, and this is what we call a freedom of excellence or perfection.<sup>695</sup>

This freedom is linked to the intellect as regards the inclination to the true and to the will as regards the inclination to the good. By acting virtuously for the sake of these naturally desired ends, freedom of excellence is attained.

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<sup>692</sup> *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 1 ad 2: *quia liberum arbitrium per se in bonum ordinatum est, cum bonum sit objectum voluntatis, nec in malum tendit nisi propter aliquem defectum, quia apprehenditur ut bonum; cum non sit voluntas aut electio nisi boni, aut apparentis boni: et ideo ubi perfectissimum est liberum arbitrium, ibi in malum tendere non potest, quia imperfectum esse non potest.*

<sup>693</sup> *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 25 q. 1 a. 5: *ad malum non est libertas, nisi secundum quid; et quod est simpliciter, est magis eo quod est secundum quid. Et dicendum, quod haec comparatio non attenditur secundum proprietatem libertatis; quia libertas ad bonum magis est libertas quam libertas ad malum.*

<sup>694</sup> *Liberal arbitrium*, according to the first article of the *prima secundae* is a *facultas voluntatis et rationis*. For choice being the act of *liberum arbitrium*, see *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 24 q. 1 a. 2 ad 3 and *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 5 c.

<sup>695</sup> Servais Pinckaers, "Dominican Moral Theology in the 20th Century," chapter 5 of *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Moral Theology*, edited by John Berkman and Craid Titus (Washington, D.C.: CUA Press, 2005), 81. Again, this sense of freedom is a consequence of habitually living in accordance with reason (i.e., it is a consequence of virtue) whereas freedom of choice is a natural consequence of possessing a rational appetite.

### γ. Concluding the Section

We are now in a position to better evaluate Keenan's criticism of *De Veritate* and the other earlier works. For him, the earlier Thomas' belief that "the whole root of freedom is located in reason"<sup>696</sup> necessarily implies that he "decisively identifies reason and not the will as the source of freedom."<sup>697</sup> If it is true, however, that the one willing is himself the cause of his inclination and if a man's will is free in regard to its act, object and the order of the object to the end,<sup>698</sup> the will must necessarily at least be some kind of root of freedom<sup>699</sup> even if it is subordinate to the intellectual power regarding the last end and whatever is constitutive of it.<sup>700</sup> The 'intellect or reason,'<sup>701</sup> in other words, may be responsible for presenting the last end<sup>702</sup> and other necessarily desired ends such as knowledge, virtue, health, life, and being,<sup>703</sup> but freedom

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<sup>696</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 2c.: *totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta*.

<sup>697</sup> Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 31-32.

<sup>698</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 6c.: *libertas voluntatis in tribus considerabitur: scilicet quantum ad actum, in quantum potest velle vel non velle; et quantum ad obiectum, in quantum potest velle hoc vel illud, etiam eius oppositum; et quantum ad ordinem finis, in quantum potest velle bonum vel malum*.

<sup>699</sup> As we will see, this is what Thomas says in *De Veritate*, q. 23 a. 1 s.c. 4: *voluntas est radix libertatis*.

<sup>700</sup> In *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 2 c., Thomas speaks of God as the last end of those with upright wills and of "happiness embracing charity and delight" as an "end under the end, joining [the individual] to the last end." Objectively, there is no "right relation of the will towards God except by means of these three." This, of course, pertains to the supernatural level. Nevertheless, there are other things necessarily connected with happiness as constitutive of it. In the *Expositio Peri Hermeneias*, bk. 1 lectio 14 # 24, Thomas suggests that such necessarily desirable goods of this sort are being (*esse*), living (*vivere*) and understanding (*intelligere*); see also, I-II q. 10 a. 2 ad 3 and *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 5c. It is in this sense, perhaps, that Thomas says understanding is an end of every intellectual substance in *Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 25 (*Intelligere autem est propria operatio substantiae intellectuali. Ipsa igitur est finis ejus*); i.e., it is a *finis sub fine*.

<sup>701</sup> They are, again, one power: *S.Th.* I q. 79 a.8c.: *per eandem potentiam intelligimus, et ratiocinamur. Et sic patet, quod in homine eadem potentia est ratio, et intellectus*.

<sup>702</sup> I-II q. 62 a. 3c. speaks of the natural inclination ordering man to his connatural end. The first way ordering occurs is "according to reason or intellect inasmuch as it contains the first universal principles known to us by the natural light of the intellect, from which the reason proceeds as much as in speculative things as in practical ones."

<sup>703</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 1 d. 48 q. 1 a. 4 c, speaks of knowledge, virtue and health and *De Malo*, q. 6 ad 1 speaks of living and understanding as ends of this sort. See footnote # 208.

remains in regard to subordinate ends. It seems one could only be concerned if he were to conflate the false freedom to choose sin with freedom for excellence and if he were to fail to see that neither nature nor grace hinder true freedom.

No doubt, reason must be the ultimate root of liberty because the will's very nature is to follow the apprehension of the reason.<sup>704</sup> Keenan overlooks, however, that Thomas says in the following question that the *will* is also a root of freedom.<sup>705</sup> There is no need to posit competitive causality between them as Keenan's words, "the reason and *not* the will" imply. They are both roots of freedom, but one of the roots needs to be rooted in the other one for there to be anything other than a mere aping of true freedom. What seems implied in all this is the later teaching of the *Prima Secundae*, according to which, "the will is the root of freedom as its subject, but reason is the root as a cause."<sup>706</sup> In other words, freedom for excellence would be precluded were the will to be separated from the reason because it is prerequisite to this perfective kind of freedom that the will's object (the universal good) be intellectually apprehended. If the will, moreover, were to cut itself off from the root of freedom (the *radix libertatis*) and ignorance were to ensue, any act committed in virtue of that ignorance would be sinful, as both the *Scriptum* and the *Summa* say.<sup>707</sup>

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<sup>704</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 4: *talis appetitus non determinatus ex aliquo alio de necessitate, sequitur apprehensionem rationis; unde appetitus rationalis, qui voluntas dicitur, est alia potentia ab appetitu sensibili*. It is important to reiterate that even that which the will naturally wills follows upon the intellect according to bk. 2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2 of the *Scriptum*.

<sup>705</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 23 a. 1 s.c. 4: *voluntas est radix libertatis*.

<sup>706</sup> I-II, q. 17 a. 1 ad 2: *radix libertatis est voluntas sicut subiectum, sed sicut causa, est ratio*.

<sup>707</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 22 q. 2 a. 2 c.: *ignorantiae divisio tripliciter potest sumi. Primo ex parte ipsius scientis; quia quaedam est in potestate scientis, et haec dicitur ignorantia vincibilis, vel affectata... Quedam vero ignorantia est quae quodammodo affectum peccati consequitur, ut quando ex concupiscentia peccati, quam voluntas non reprimit, absorbetur iudicium rationis de particulari operabili, secundum quod dicitur in 6 Ethic., quod delectatio corrumpit existimationem prudentiae: et haec est ignorantia electionis, secundum quam omnis malus dicitur ignorans. His ergo visis, sciendum est, quod ignorantia non excusat nec minuit peccatum nisi secundum quod causat involuntarium*. See, I-II, q. 76 a. 2c.; I-II, q. 74 a. 1 ad 2; I-II, q. 19 a. 6 ad 3.

Keenan supposed that "if the final cause is derived from reason" there would be no ground for "the will to deny the object that reason presents"<sup>708</sup> and he seems to highly value that possibility as if reason were not that which distinguishes us from the beasts. It is true that for Aquinas the will has no unconditional autonomy, but the very desire for such autonomy would seem akin to a kind of Nietzschean 'will to power' and would be quite antithetical to the spirit of Christianity.

One reason the will cannot be unhinged from the intellect is that it is not able to be the cause of everything it knows. For Thomas, one cannot *not* know principles such as "the whole is greater than its part"<sup>709</sup> on the side of the speculative intellect and "one ought to live according to reason"<sup>710</sup> on the side of the practical intellect. Such knowledge, therefore, does not depend upon the will.<sup>711</sup> Keenan found it "puzzling" that this could be the case given another dictum of Aquinas that "the freedom of judging belongs immediately to the will."<sup>712</sup> The reality, however, is that even though there is no choosing when it comes to ultimate ends, when it comes to the

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<sup>708</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 30.

<sup>709</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 c.: *Sicut enim in speculativis non contingit errare circa particulares conclusiones quae directe sub principiis universalibus assumuntur in eisdem terminis, ut in hoc quod est, hoc totum esse maius sua parte, nullus decipitur; sicut nec in hoc, omne totum est maius sua parte; ita etiam nec in hoc quod est, Deum a me non esse diligendum, vel, aliquod malum esse faciendum, nulla conscientia errare potest; eo quod in utroque syllogismo, tam speculabilem quam operabilem, et maior est per se nota, utpote in universali iudicio existens; et minor etiam in qua idem de seipso praedicatur particulariter; ut cum dicitur: omne totum est maius sua parte. Hoc totum est totum. Ergo est maius sua parte.*

<sup>710</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 9: *synderesis neque nominat superiorem rationem neque inferiorem, sed aliquid communiter se habens ad utramque. In ipso enim habitu universalium principiorum iuris continentur quaedam quae pertinent ad rationes aeternas, ut hoc quod est Deo esse obediendum; quaedam vero quae pertinent ad rationes inferiores, utpote secundum rationem esse vivendum.*

<sup>711</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 1 ad 20: *Iudicium autem in agendis sumitur ex fine, sicut de conclusionibus ex principiis. Unde, sicut de primis principiis non iudicamus ea examinantes, sed naturaliter ei assentimus, et secundum ea omnia alia examinamus; ita et in appetibilibus, de fine ultimo non iudicamus iudicio discussionis vel examinationis, sed naturaliter approbamus, propter quod de eo non est electio, sed voluntas. Habemus ergo respectu eius liberam voluntatem, cum necessitas naturalis inclinationis libertati non repugnet, secundum Augustinum, V de civitate Dei; non autem liberum iudicium, proprie loquendo, cum non cadat sub electione.*

<sup>712</sup> See, *Goodness and Rightness*, 32 and *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 6 ad 3: *Quamvis iudicium sit rationis, tamen libertas iudicandi est voluntatis immediate.*

free judgment that presupposes that universal and natural judgment, there *is* freedom and the will is responsible for it. In fact, since the causality of *intellectus* and/or synderesis is at least ontologically prior, it can be said to have dominion over lesser judgments without mediation. As *De Veritate* said, the will need not follow the reason<sup>713</sup> and thus presupposing *intellectus* or synderesis, it can move the judgment regarding particular contingents immediately.

We must conclude, therefore, that even though the intellect was said to appoint ends in the manner of a final cause during this period, Thomas conceived of the will as retaining some kind of ability to move itself in regard to particular means. Aquinas referred to this ability in terms of indifference,<sup>714</sup> but we saw that as long as Keenan's understanding of 'autonomy' (autonomy from reason<sup>715</sup> wherein the will would be independent of reason and precede it<sup>716</sup>) is not resorted to, the will's ability could perhaps even be labeled autonomous in a sense; after all, the will is certainly able to turn from reason's judgment about some finite good towards a merely apparent good.<sup>717</sup> The result of this aversion, of course, would be an action in which "the

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<sup>713</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 15 c.: *Nam quantumcumque ratio unum alteri praeferat, nondum est unum alteri praeacceptatum ad operandum, quousque (until the moment) voluntas inclinatur in unum magis quam in aliud: non enim voluntas de necessitate sequitur rationem.*

<sup>714</sup> I, q. 83 a. 2 c.: *Liberum autem arbitrium indifferenter se habet ad bene eligendum vel male.*  
*De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 14c.: *Sed voluntas hominis non est determinata ad aliquam unam operationem, sed se habet indifferenter ad multas.*

I-II, q. 10 a. 4 c.: *voluntas est activum principium non determinatum ad unum, sed indifferenter se habens ad multa.*

*De Malo*, q. 6 ad 3: *naturam voluntatis motae, quae indifferenter se habet ad diversa, non inducitur necessitas, sed manet libertas.*

<sup>715</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 27

<sup>716</sup> See *Goodness and Rightness*, 47 & 55 and Sherwin, 11.

<sup>717</sup> Sometimes, this occurs due to the influence of the sensitive appetites: *Cum igitur voluntas tendit in actum mota ex apprehensione rationis repraesentantis sibi proprium bonum, sequitur debita actio. Cum autem voluntas in actionem prorumpit ad apprehensionem apprehensivae sensualis; vel ipsius rationis aliquod aliud bonum repraesentantis a proprio bono diversum; sequitur in actione voluntatis peccatum morale* (*Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 10 n. 16).

See also, *SCG*, bk. 3 ch. 10 n. 17: *Praecedit igitur in voluntate peccatum actionis defectus ordinis ad rationem; et ad proprium finem. Ad rationem quidem, sicut cum, ad subitam apprehensionem sensus, voluntas in bonum delectabile secundum sensum tendit.*



appetitive motion recedes from the order of reason."<sup>718</sup> An indication that the will itself can do this in some way is found in the *Prima Secundae*, where Thomas speaks of the possibility of "the will itself being moved to evil from itself" and not "from a defect of the reason."<sup>719</sup> Even in an instance such as this, the reason would presumably have to judge the apparent good to be good in some way because the will is, by definition, a *rational* appetite that "tends towards that which is judged by the reason."<sup>720</sup> Nevertheless, if someone were to describe the ability to choose evil in virtue of "the will itself" in terms of some kind of volitional autonomy, this would be at least defensible.

In the earlier Thomas, this kind of indifference was certainly not absolute because, as he said in the *Contra Gentiles*, the intellect "first and *per se* moves the will... in the manner in which an end moves, for the understood good is the end of the will."<sup>721</sup> Despite the robust causality of the intellect, though, he insisted that the will retains the ability to bring about a "lack of order to reason" by tending "to a good that is pleasurable to sense" not only because the will is able to will or not to will but also because "it is in the will's power that the reason actually consider" something "or cease from considering it; or that it consider this matter, or that."<sup>722</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> *De Malo*, q. 8 a. 1 ad 3: *virtus constituitur ex hoc quod ordo rationis ponitur in vi appetitiva; vitium autem consurgit ex hoc quod motus appetitivus ab ordine rationis recedit. Non autem tamen secundum idem, ordo rationis ponitur in appetitu, et appetitus recedit ab ordine rationis...*

<sup>719</sup> I-II, q. 78, a. 3c.: *omne peccatum dicitur esse contra naturam, quod ergo in aliquod malum voluntas eligendo inclinatur, oportet quod aliunde contingat: et quandoque quidem contingit ex defectu rationis; sicut cum aliquis ex ignorantia peccat: quandoque autem ex impulsu appetitus sensitivi: sicut cum peccat ex passione: sed neutrum horum est ex certa malitia peccare: sed tunc solum ex certa malitia aliquis peccat, quando ipsa voluntas ex seipsa movetur ad malum.*

<sup>720</sup> I-II, q. 74 a. 7 ad 1: *voluntas tendit in id quod est ratione iudicatum.*

<sup>721</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: *Nam primo et per se intellectus movet voluntatem... per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectum est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem. Unde apparet intellectum simpliciter esse altiore voluntate: voluntatem vero intellectu per accidens et secundum quid.*

<sup>722</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3, ch. 10: Consequently, the sin of action in the will is preceded by lack of order to reason, and to its proper end: to reason, as when the will, on the sudden apprehension of a sense, tends to a good that is pleasurable to sense:—to its due end, as when by deliberating the reason arrives at some good which is not good now, or in some particular way; and yet the will tends to that good as though it were its proper good. Now this lack of order is voluntary: for it is in the will's power to will

During this same period, remarkably, Thomas even spoke of the will's ability to 'exercise'<sup>723</sup> and suggested that the will is able to divert from the norm of reason or act contrary to conscience<sup>724</sup> (the person thereby sinning by preferring a sensible good to the norm of reason).<sup>725</sup>

In regard to good acts, as well, he affirmed the will's ability to choose one particular good or another. As we have seen, his teaching about the will's freedom even allowed him to argue that the will is more noble than the intellect *secundum quid*; namely, "in moving."<sup>726</sup> Though Aquinas

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or not to will. Again it is in the will's power that the reason actually consider the matter, or cease from considering it; or that it consider this matter, or that. Nor is this lack of order a moral evil: for if the reason were to consider nothing, or to consider any good whatever, as yet there is no sin, until the will tends to an undue end: and this itself is an act of the will (vol. 3 of *Summa Contra Gentiles*. London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, 1924), 25–26.

<sup>723</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 49 q. 3 a. 5 qc. 3 ad 2: *appetitus qui habet bonum et finem pro objecto, movet seipsum et vim cognitivam in actum: ex desiderio enim actus vel finis provenit quod aliquis aliquem actum exerceat, dummodo non sit ex necessitate naturae.*

<sup>724</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem iudicium conscientiae; sicut cum aliquis examinat aliquid quod imminet faciendum, et iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia, hoc esse malum, utpote fornicari cum hac muliere; sed quando incipit applicare ad agendum, occurrunt undique multae circumstantiae circa ipsum actum, ut puta fornicationis delectatio, ex cuius concupiscentia ligatur ratio, ne eius dictamen in electionem prorumpat. Et sic aliquis errat in eligendo, et non in conscientia; sed contra conscientiam facit: et dicitur hoc mala conscientia facere, in quantum factum iudicio scientiae non concordat.*

<sup>725</sup> A sin is something contrary to reason, as is evident in I-II, q. 71 a. 6 and in *De Malo*, q. 2 a. 1 s.c. 3, the latter of which says: *in moralibus peccatum est contra rationem esse.*

See also, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 10: "The sin of action in the will is preceded by lack of order to reason, and to its proper end: to reason, as when the will, on the sudden apprehension of a sense, tends to a good that is pleasurable to sense:—to its due end, as when by deliberating the reason arrives at some good which is not good now, or in some particular way; and yet the will tends to that good as though it were its proper good" (Dominican Fathers translation).

Similarly, I-II, q. 54 a. 3 distinguishes vice from virtue inasmuch as the former is in accordance with reason whereas the latter is contrary to it. Also, I-II, q. 78 a. 3 c. tells us that "if a will be inclined, by its choice, to some evil, this must be occasioned by something else. Sometimes, in fact, this is occasioned through some defect in the reason, as when anyone sins through ignorance, and sometimes this arises through the impulse of the sensitive appetite, as when anyone sins through passion."

At the same time, it is noteworthy that the preference to choose a sensible good 'over' that of reason (thereby acting contrary to reason on one level) can only be a sin because it is a *rational* preference. As I-II, q. 21 a. 1 c. says, a sin is that which consists in an act that is done for some end and lacks the fitting order to that end. The end, however, has to be cognized. Due to an inordinate attachment, the will can indeed divert one's consideration to something other than those universal principles whose consideration would midwife conclusions that upbraid disordered inclinations. As Thomas says in I-II, q. 75 a. 1 ad 3, the cause of sin is the will's failure to apply the rule of reason or of the Divine Law. However, reason has to be involved because there must at least be an apparently good reason to act or else we will not act and "the subject of sin is the rational soul" (*Contra Gentiles*, bk. 4, ch. 51).

<sup>726</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 11 ad s. c. 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod libertas voluntatis non ostendit eam esse nobiliorem simpliciter, sed nobiliorem in movendo: quod ex sequentibus patebit.*

apparently did not explicitly make what Sherwin referred to as the "celebrated distinction between specification and exercise"<sup>727</sup> prior to 1270, the doctrine is nevertheless implied.<sup>728</sup> As a consequence, Keenan's contention that "if reason acts as the ultimate cause of all presentations, not only would we be unable to refuse an object; we would also be unable to look for another"<sup>729</sup> seems untenable. At the least, the essential elements of Thomas' teaching regarding volitional liberty were very consistent throughout his life regardless of any supposed emphasis - or lack thereof - on cognitional causality. It would, therefore, be reasonable to wonder whether he had any significant change at all on this topic over the years. It is this consideration that leads us to the next section.

## 2. Texts After 1270

Keenan, for whom "the will is not moved by an object" insofar as it first exercises itself,<sup>730</sup> seems vexed that he is "hard pressed to find clear evidence for the will's autonomy from reason in any of his works before the *Prima secundae*,"<sup>731</sup> which is dated to 1270-1270.<sup>732</sup> We would have to

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<sup>727</sup> *By Knowledge and by Love*, 40. Lonergan also argued that Thomas did not conceive of the distinction between the specification and the exercise of the act of the will" until after the *De Veritate*; see, *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan. Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, Vol. 1 (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 96.

<sup>728</sup> As we saw above, the early Thomas both granted the will a kind of primacy (see footnote # 638) and also referred to an individual freely *exercising* his will as early as the *Scriptum: appetitus qui habet bonum et finem pro objecto, movet seipsum et vim cognitivam in actum: ex desiderio enim actus vel finis provenit quod aliquis aliquem actum exerceat, dummodo non sit ex necessitate naturae* (*Super Sent.*, bk. 4 d. 49 q. 3 a. 5 qc. 3 ad 2).

<sup>729</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 34.

<sup>730</sup> See *Goodness and Rightness*, 43 and Dewan, 156-157.

<sup>731</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 27.

<sup>732</sup> Torrell dates it to 1271 in *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, 336 (see 244-245 as well); nevertheless, that is solely because he defers to Lottin's thesis which would place I-II questions 9-10 sometime after the December 1270 condemnations. Strictly speaking, then, part of I-II could have been written in 1270 if Torrell is correct to use Torrell's theory as a basis for determining the dating of this section of the *Summa*.

agree that such a teaching is not found in those works because even if the earlier writings make it possible to speak of the will as autonomous in some way, they do not permit us to speak of it as autonomous *from reason*. It is certainly true that the earlier Thomas would not have said the will has this kind of autonomy in regard to reason (and especially in regard to the natural reason /synderesis) because any kind of 'autonomy' would have to ultimately be subordinated to the cognitive power. However, the later Thomas, who considered the rational specification of every act of the will to be essential for the freedom of choice (since reason is the "proper principle of human acts"<sup>733</sup>) would not have said so either. In Keenan's contention, then, we encounter a concept of competitive causality that appears to be foreign to the actual teaching of Aquinas.

One wonders where, exactly, Keenan would locate the radical change. He mentioned the *Prima Secundae*, but even there, the priority of the intellect is unequivocal:

Every act of the will proceeds from some act of the intellect although some act of the will is prior to some act of the intellect; for the will tends to the final act of the intellect, which is happiness.<sup>734</sup>

The intellect *always* precedes the will on some level even if "some act" of the will is prior to some particular act of the intellect. That does not mean the appetite is not also a principle of

<sup>733</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c.: *Cum autem humani mores dicantur in ordine ad rationem, quae est proprium principium humanorum actuum*. See also, II-II q. 157 a. 2 c.

<sup>734</sup> I-II q. 4 a.4 ad 2: *omnis actus voluntatis procedit ab aliquo actu intellectus: aliquis tamen actus voluntatis est prior, quam aliquis actus intellectus: voluntas enim tendit in finalem actum intellectus, qui est beatitudo: et ideo recta inclinatio voluntatis praeexigitur ad beatitudinem: sicut rectus motus sagittae ad percussionem signi*. Deferrari gives 'presuppose' and 'prerequisite' as the definitions of *praeexigo*. See, Roy J. Deferrari, *A Lexicon of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 872.

A similar sentiment is expressed in the following. *Super Sent.*, bk.2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2: *voluntas ut ... natura... sequitur iudicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis*.

One could possibly argue regarding I-II q. 4 that it is prior to question 9 where the supposed shift takes place. We could have, however, pointed out texts subsequent to question 9 such as I-II, q. 19 a. 10 c., which argues that the will necessarily *follows* the apprehension of the reason. See also, I-II, q. 19 a. 3 ad 1, I-II, q. 74 a. 7 ad 1 and I-II, q. 100 a.1c. (which calls reason the proper principle of human actions).

action,<sup>735</sup> but it does indicate that the foundational principle is reason. To demonstrate this, we need look no further than the first nineteen questions of the *Prima Secundae* from which all the following quotes in this paragraph are taken. He approvingly cites Augustine's aphorism that "nothing is loved unless it is known" to make it clear that love (which is the "first act of the appetitive power"<sup>736</sup>) is preceded by knowledge, which "leads the way" in attaining the understandable end. The intellect, in other words, "apprehends the end before the will does"<sup>737</sup> and the will, as a rational appetite, "follows the apprehension of the reason or the intellect"<sup>738</sup> because the desirable object "first pertains to the reason under the *ratio* of true before it pertains to the will under the *ratio* of desirable."<sup>739</sup> Actually, the will never acts without a preceding act of the intellect because, "in order that something come about for the sake of an end, some knowledge of the thing is required."<sup>740</sup> Even though man is able to move himself to willing

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<sup>735</sup> I-II, q. 58 a. 3 c.: *Principium autem humanorum actuum in homine non est nisi duplex, scilicet intellectus sive ratio, et appetitus, haec enim sunt duo moventia in homine*. That both appetite (including the rational appetite of the will) and reason are principles of action is also clear from the commentary on the *Ethics*: *duo sunt principia humanorum actuum, scilicet intellectus seu ratio, et appetitus* (*Sententia Ethicorum*, librum 1 lectio 1 # 8).

<sup>736</sup> II-II q. 47 a. 1 ad 1: *primus autem actus appetitivae virtutis est amor*.

<sup>737</sup> I-II, q. 3 a. 4 ad 3: *finem primo apprehendit intellectus, quam voluntas*.

<sup>738</sup> I-II, q. 19 a. 10 c.: *voluntas sequatur apprehensionem rationis, vel intellectus, secundum quod ratio boni apprehensi fuerit communior, secundum hoc et voluntas fertur in bonum communius*.

<sup>739</sup> I-II, q. 19 a. 3 ad 1: *appetibilis ... per prius pertinet ad rationem sub ratione veri, quam ad voluntatem sub ratione appetibilis: quia appetitus voluntatis non potest esse de bono, nisi prius a ratione apprehendatur*.

<sup>740</sup> I-II, q. 6 a. 1 c.: *Ad hoc autem quod fiat aliquid propter finem, requiritur cognitio finis aliqualis: quodcumque igitur sic agit, vel movetur a principio intrinseco, quod habet aliquam notitiam finis, habet in seipso principium sui actus, non solum ut agat, sed etiam ut agat propter finem*.

"this or that," he does so specifically "through the reason."<sup>741</sup> Finally, the "appetite for the fitting end presupposes the right apprehension of the end, which comes through reason."<sup>742</sup>

Clearly, there is no radical move towards voluntarism. Moreover, we saw above that the following doctrine from I-II, q. 9 a. 1 was at least implied in earlier texts:

The will moves the intellect in regard to the exercise of the act because the true itself, which is a perfection of the intellect, is contained under the universal good as a certain particular good.<sup>743</sup>

For Keenan, St. Thomas' goal in this article is to "prove that the will is the mover of all powers including itself and the intellect, and that its self-movement takes precedence to all other movements."<sup>744</sup> This would certainly seem to be a departure from previous teaching; however, as Dewan handily proves:

Keenan's interpretation is incorrect. The meaning of 1-2.9.1 is not that first there is exercise by the will and then it accepts or does not accept some specification proposed by the intellect.<sup>745</sup>

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<sup>741</sup> I-II, q. 9 a.6 ad 3: *Deus movet voluntatem hominis, sicut universalis motor, ad universale objectum voluntatis, quod est bonum; et sine hac universali motione homo non potest aliquid velle: sed homo per rationem determinat se ad volendum hoc, vel illud, quod est vere bonum, vel apparens bonum.* For a discussion of this text in view of the intellectualist controversy, see David M. Gallagher, "The Will and Its Acts (Ia IIae, Qq. 6–17)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 76.

<sup>742</sup> I-II q. 19 a.3 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod Philos. ibi loquitur de intellectu practico, secundum quod est consiliativus, et ratiocinativus eorum, quae sunt ad finem: sic enim perficitur per prudentiam: in his autem quae sunt ad finem, rectitudo rationis consistit in conformitate ad appetitum finis debiti: sed tamen et ipse appetitus finis debiti praesupponit rectam apprehensionem de fine, quae est per rationem.*

<sup>743</sup> I-II, q. 9 a. 1 ad 3: *voluntas movet intellectum quantum ad exercitium actus: quia et ipsum verum, quod est perfectio intellectus, continetur sub universali bono, ut quoddam bonum particulare: sed quantum ad determinationem actus, quae est ex parte objecti, intellectus movet voluntatem, quia et ipsum bonum apprehenditur secundum quamdam specialem rationem comprehensam sub universali ratione veri.*

<sup>744</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 45.

<sup>745</sup> Dewan, 157.

Thomas' goal seems to simply be to acknowledge that the intellect and will move each other in different orders or on different levels. Accordingly, even if the will has precedence in the order of exercise, the "intellect moves the will as presenting its object to it," which is to specify the act. The principle of the will's motion, moreover, is from the end (*ex fine*) since "every agent acts for an end." Additionally, the notion or *ratio* of the end, which is the object of the will, relies upon the intellect's activity. As Dewan rightly observes, "as soon as 'object' is mentioned (and it must come into play to provide the will with its own peculiar dominance), the *intellect* has already come into play insofar as it is the source of all objectification."<sup>746</sup> Presuming the intellect's presentation of the object, the "object moves by determining the act" inasmuch as the "good itself is apprehended according to a special notion (*rationem*) comprehended under the universal notion of the true. In this way, "the intellect moves the will."<sup>747</sup>

Looking to other texts in the later Thomas also leads to the conclusion that there was no significant shift in Thomas' thought. Keenan argues he uses "even more significant forms of expression to highlight the independence of the will's efficiency."<sup>748</sup> He presents two texts in particular to defend this claim. The first is that the will is the "principle of movement." Interestingly, he neglects to mention the words that immediately follow: "*nevertheless* according to the command and direction of the reason" (emphasis added).<sup>749</sup> The other text is, "*movere absolute pertinet ad voluntatem*" which the Dominican Fathers render as "simply to move belongs to the will" and Keenan renders as "to move pertains absolutely to the will."<sup>750</sup> The context demands the former translation because the contrast being made is between motion

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<sup>746</sup> Ibid.

<sup>747</sup> See, I-II, q. 9 a. 1c. and ad 3.

<sup>748</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 45.

<sup>749</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 9 ad 1: *motus quidem pertinet ad vim appetitivam, sicut ad principium movens.*

<sup>750</sup> See, *Summa Theologica*, (the translation of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province) and Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47.

considered on its own and motion together with an act of ordering, which pertains to command. The more important point, though, is that the reply is presuming what was said in the objection; namely, that when the will moves, it moves inasmuch as it "has the end for its object." Since we learn elsewhere in the later part of the *Summa* that this end that is the object of the will is the "understood good" since the "will cannot be rightly directed to the good, unless there already be some knowledge of the truth,"<sup>751</sup> the will's movement is certainly not "independent of and prior to reason" as Keenan would have us think.<sup>752</sup>

Time and again, the later Thomas says things to the effect that the intellect "absolutely and of itself (*secundum se*) precedes the will as moving it"<sup>753</sup> or that "every act of the will proceeds from some act of the intellect"<sup>754</sup> since the will's nature is to tend "towards that which is judged by the reason"<sup>755</sup> and the "intellect apprehends the end before the will does."<sup>756</sup> As the proper interior moving principle of human acts,<sup>757</sup> that is also their "rule and measure,"<sup>758</sup> the intellect permeates all human activity from the time of its inception. Even the very freedom which *liberum arbitrium* enjoys arises precisely because of reason,<sup>759</sup> which he calls the cause of

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<sup>751</sup> II-II, q. 8 a. 4c.: *voluntas autem non potest recte ordinari in bonum, nisi praeexistente aliqua cognitione veritatis, quia objectum voluntatis est bonum intellectum.*

<sup>752</sup> Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47.

<sup>753</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 7 c.: *Sciendum est autem, quod intellectus tam speculativus quam practicus potest perfici dupliciter aliquo habitu. Uno modo absolute et secundum se, prout praecedit voluntatem, quasi eam movens.*

<sup>754</sup> I-II q. 4 a. 4 ad 2: *omnis actus voluntatis procedit ab aliquo actu intellectus.*

<sup>755</sup> I-II, q. 74 a. 7 ad 1: *voluntas tendit in id quod est ratione iudicatum.*

<sup>756</sup> I-II, q. 3 a. 4 ad 3: *finem primo apprehendit intellectus, quam voluntas.*

<sup>757</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1c.: *Cum autem humani mores dicantur in ordine ad rationem, quae est proprium principium humanorum actuum.* See also, II-II q. 157 a. 2 c.

I-II, q. 68 a. 1c.: *in homine est duplex principium movens, unum quidem interius, quod est ratio: aliud autem exterius, quod est Deus.*

*De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 c.: *... non attingunt perfectam rationem actus moralis, cuius principium est ratio.*

<sup>758</sup> I-II q. 90 a. 1c.: *regula et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est primum principium actuum humanorum.*

<sup>759</sup> I-II, q. 6 a. 2 ad 2: "since the deliberating reason is open to opposites (*se habeat ad opposita*), the will can be inclined to either." See also, *SCG*, bk. 2, ch. 48: *Omnia igitur intellectualia liberam voluntatem habent ex iudicio intellectus venientem. Quod est liberum arbitrium habere, quod definitur esse liberum*



freedom (*causa libertatis*)."<sup>760</sup> There is, therefore, no compelling reason to posit a sweeping revision in Thomas' thought that would, in effect, denude the intellect of its role vis-à-vis volition.

### C. The Intellect's Causality and Freedom

If the will is not independent of reason, what does it mean to say free will is "related indifferently to choosing well or badly" because it is "related indifferently to many things"?<sup>761</sup> If the "root of the whole of liberty is constituted in the reason,"<sup>762</sup> is the will able to be indifferent even to reason since, according to I-II q. 17, it is the "first mover among the powers of the soul in regard to the exercise of the act" and is responsible for the very fact that "reason moves by commanding"?<sup>763</sup>

The import of volitional activity in practical actions is especially evinced in *De Virtutibus* (dated to 1271-1272<sup>764</sup>), where the will is said to even determine the end of prudence, which is an

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*de ratione iudicium.*

<sup>760</sup> I-II, q. 17 a. 1 c.: *ex hoc enim voluntas libere potest ad diversa ferri, quia ratio potest habere diversas conceptiones boni: et ideo philosophi definiunt liberum arbitrium, quod est liberum de ratione iudicium, quasi ratio sit causa libertatis.*

<sup>761</sup> I, q. 83 a. 2 c.: *Liberum autem arbitrium indifferenter se habet ad bene eligendum vel male.*  
*De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 14 c.: *Sed voluntas hominis non est determinata ad aliquam unam operationem, sed se habet indifferenter ad multas.*

I-II, q. 10 a. 4 c.: *voluntas est activum principium non determinatum ad unum, sed indifferenter se habens ad multa.*

*De Malo*, q. 6 ad 3: *naturam voluntatis motae, quae indifferenter se habet ad diversa, non inducitur necessitas, sed manet libertas.*

<sup>762</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 2 c.: *Iudicare autem de iudicio suo est solius rationis, quae super actum suum reflectitur, et cognoscit habitudines rerum de quibus iudicat, et per quas iudicat: unde totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta. Unde secundum quod aliquid se habet ad rationem, sic se habet ad liberum arbitrium.*

<sup>763</sup> I-II, q. 17 a. 1c.: *Primum autem movens in viribus animae ad exercitium actus est voluntas, ut supra dictum est (q. 9. art. 1.). Cum ergo secundum movens non moveat nisi in virtute primi moventis, sequitur, quod hoc ipsum quod ratio movet imperando, sit ei ex virtute voluntatis.* The act of commanding, which is the third act of the practical reason and the chief act of prudence (see, II-II, q. 47 a. 8c.) only takes place in virtue of a presupposed act of the will, whose influence is also highlighted inasmuch as it is said to move the reason itself in its act of deliberating about a particular good.

<sup>764</sup> See Torrell, 336.

intellectual habit that "depends upon the will as upon that from which it receives its beginning: for in operations, the end is the beginning."<sup>765</sup> We have already seen many instances of the reason being labeled "the proper principle of human acts"<sup>766</sup> so it seems there must be two ends that are beginnings - one that is rational and one that is volitional. In fact, that is what Thomas says: "there are two principles of human acts; namely, the intellect or reason, and the appetite."<sup>767</sup>

If the appetite (whether rational or sensitive) is disordered, problems arise because there is then no harmony between the perfect good appointed by nature / synderesis and the end appointed by the reason that has been influenced by inordinate appetites. When this happens, the will itself is moved in part by reason (on the side of the universal reason) and in part by the lower appetites.<sup>768</sup> Thomas explains in *De Malo*:

The will is not moved by the good except inasmuch as it is apprehended; accordingly, it cannot withdraw (*deficere*) from the appetite for the good unless some defect in the apprehension is present - not, certainly, as regards universal principles, about which synderesis is, but in regard to particular choosable things.<sup>769</sup>

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<sup>765</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 7 c.: *prudencia vero est in intellectu sive ratione practica, ut dictum est: non quidem ita quod ex voluntate determinetur obiectum prudentiae, sed solum finis; obiectum autem ipsa perquirat: praesupposito enim a voluntate fine boni, prudentia perquirat vias per quas hoc bonum et perficiatur et conservetur... Aliquis vero habitus intellectus dependet a voluntate sicut a qua accipit principium suum: nam finis in operativis principium est; et sic se habet prudentia.*

<sup>766</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c.; see also, I-II, q. 68 a. 1 c., *De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 c., et passim.

<sup>767</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk.1 lect. 1 # 8: *Circa primum, considerandum est, quod duo sunt principia humanorum actuum, scilicet intellectus seu ratio, et appetitus; I-II, q. 58 a. 3 c.: Respondeo dicendum quod virtus humana est quidam habitus perficiens hominem ad bene operandum. Principium autem humanorum actuum in homine non est nisi duplex, scilicet intellectus sive ratio, et appetitus, haec enim sunt duo moventia in homine, ut dicitur in III de anima.*

<sup>768</sup> I-II, q. 9 a. 2 ad 3: *irascibilis et concupiscibilis possunt in contrarium movere voluntatem. Et sic nihil prohibet voluntatem aliquando ab eis moveri.*

<sup>769</sup> *De Malo*, q. 16 a. 6 ad s. c. 6: *Ad sextum dicendum, quod voluntas non movetur a bono nisi in quantum est apprehensum: unde non potest deficere ab appetitu boni, nisi etiam subsit defectus aliquis circa apprehensionem; non quidem quantum ad universalia.*

This is the only time there is a kind of dichotomy between the end that is appointed by the natural reason / synderesis / understanding on the one hand and the cogitative power / particular reason<sup>770</sup> on the other.

## 1. Twofold Understanding

When a "defect in the apprehension is present,"<sup>771</sup> we have defective reasoning appointing a merely apparent good that is a false application of universal principles instead of the right reasoning of prudence. Thomas accepts Aristotle's principle that the "intellect does not move except through the will"<sup>772</sup> and concludes that when the will is not upright, the result is frequently an invalid practical syllogism.<sup>773</sup> He explains that to act rightly, a "twofold knowledge" is necessary for acting well; namely, a universal and a particular kind. When the will is disordered and someone is moved by passion, he fails to "consider in particular that which he knows in the universal, inasmuch as passion impedes such a consideration thereby impeding the reason."<sup>774</sup> In cases like this, "the judgment of free will is perverted" in virtue of an error "in choosing" despite

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<sup>770</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk.4 d. 50 q. 1 a. 3 ad s. c. 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod intellectus practicus ad hoc quod de singularibus disponat, ut dicitur in 3 de anima, indiget ratione particulari, qua mediante, opinio quae est universalis (quae est in intellectu) ad particulare opus applicetur: ut sic quidem fiat syllogismus, cujus major est universalis, quae est opinio intellectus practici; minor vero singularis, quae est aestimatio rationis particularis, quae alio nomine dicitur cogitativa: conclusio vero consistit in electione operis.*

<sup>771</sup> See *De Malo*, q. 16 a. 6 ad s. c. 6.

<sup>772</sup> *De Unitate Intellectus*, ch. 3: *intellectus non moveat nisi per voluntatem, ut probatur in tertio de anima.*

*Quodlibet VI*, q. 2 a. 1 s.c.: *intellectus autem non agit nisi per voluntatem.*

*De Potentia*, q. 6 a. 9 arg. 8: *Praeterea, intellectus non est principium operationis nisi mediante voluntate.* See also, *De 108 articulis*, q. 22.

<sup>773</sup> Prudence ensures a proper application whereas passion can hinder such an application in an incontinent or vicious man. II-II, q.47 a.6 c.: *prudencia, applicans universalia principia ad particulares conclusiones operabilium.* I-II, q. 94 a. 6c.: *Quantum ergo ad illa principia communia, lex naturalis nullo modo potest a cordibus hominum deleri in universali. Deletur tamen in particulari operabili, secundum quod ratio impeditur applicare commune principium ad particulare operabile, propter concupiscentiam vel aliquam aliam passionem.*

<sup>774</sup> See, I-II, q. 77 a. 2 c.: *ad recte agendum homo dirigatur duplici scientia, scilicet universali et particulari... passio trahit rationem ad iudicandum in particulari contra scientiam quam habet in universali.*

the fact that the judgment of conscience or of the natural judging power is not.<sup>775</sup> As Thomas explains in the commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, prudence perfects the particular reason for rightly estimating about singular practical actions (*pertinet prudentia, per quam perficitur ratio particularis ad recte aestimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilium*).<sup>776</sup> But without the lower appetites having already been habitually moved towards their fitting ends, the particular reason will appoint unfitting ends thus precluding the possibility of prudence, as Thomas says in question fifty-seven of the *Prima Secundae*:

For prudence, which is right reason about doable things, it is required that a man be well disposed about ends, which is certainly through right appetite. And therefore prudence requires the moral virtues through which right appetite comes about.<sup>777</sup>

This, of course, points back to the vicious circle on the one hand but also to something more germane to our present purposes; namely, the two texts speaking about the need for both the universal reason and the particular reason to be correct.

In the text we encountered in the introduction from the *Secundae Secundae*, we saw that universal reason or understanding (the intellectual virtue) is cognizant of universals such as "one should do evil to no one" whereas the second kind of understanding (which is considered a quasi-integral part of prudence<sup>778</sup>) is cognizant of contingent principles."<sup>779</sup> When there is no

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<sup>775</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem iudicium conscientiae... Et sic aliquis errat in eligendo, et non in conscientia; sed contra conscientiam facit: et dicitur hoc mala conscientia facere, in quantum factum iudicio scientiae non concordat. De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 arg. 1: *Naturale enim iudicium nunquam errat.*

<sup>776</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk.6 lectio 7 # 21.

<sup>777</sup> I-II, q. 57 a. 4c.: *Et ideo ad prudentiam, quae est recta ratio agibilium, requiritur quod homo sit bene dispositus circa fines: quod quidem est per appetitum rectum. Et ideo ad prudentiam requiritur moralis virtus, per quam fit appetitus rectus.*

<sup>778</sup> See the heading of II-II, q. 49 and article two for the qualification 'quasi-integral.'

<sup>779</sup> II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1: *...qui est cognoscitivus universalium; quod pertinet ad intellectum, qui ponitur virtus intellectualis, qua naturaliter nobis cognita sunt non solum universalia principia speculativa, sed*

prudence, there is no second kind of understanding (that which 'a quasi-integral part' of prudence<sup>780</sup>) even though the first kind of understanding (the one equated with synderesis) remains.

In the last chapter, we saw the other text speaking of the two kinds of understanding. It asserts that the particular ends act in the manner of a final cause once they are cognized and it seems to suggest the other ends (or extremes) also act in that manner:

There are two kinds of understanding. One of them is about first and immutable principles in demonstrations, which proceed from immutable and first terms (that is from indemonstrable principles) that are first known and unchangeable because the knowledge about them is not able to be removed from man. But the understanding which pertains to practical things is from another kind of extreme, namely a singular and contingent one that has another proposition; i.e., not a universal one that is as the major premise in a practical syllogism, but the singular which is as the minor premise. As to why an extreme of this sort is called 'understanding,' it is evident because understanding treats of principles. Now these singulars about which this kind of understanding is concerned are principles that are done for the sake of something (*cuius gratia*); that is, they are principles in the manner of a final cause (*per modum causae finalis*).<sup>781</sup>

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*etiam practica; sicut: Nulli esse malefaciendum... alius autem intellectus est, qui, ut dicitur in 6. Ethic. (cap. 11.), est cognoscitivus extremi, idest alicujus primi singularis, seu principii contingentis operabilis propositionis, scilicet minoris, quam oportet esse singularem in syllogismo prudentiae, ut dictum est (q. 47. art. 3. et 6.): hoc autem principium singulare est aliquis singularis finis, ut dicitur ibidem; unde intellectus, qui ponitur pars prudentiae, est quaedam recta aestimatio de aliquo particulari fine. As explained in Sententia Ethicorum, bk. 6 lectio 7 # 21, prudence perfects the particular reason for rightly estimating about singular practical actions (pertinet prudentia, per quam perficitur ratio particularis ad recte aestimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilium) and adds that it is called a natural estimative power in animals.*

<sup>780</sup> That it is a quasi-integral part is evident by looking to the title for question 49: *De singulis prudentiae partibus quasi integralibus, in octo articulos divisa.*

<sup>781</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum, bk. 6 lect. 9 n. 13-14: Est autem duplex intellectus. Quorum hic quidem est circa immobiles terminos et primos, qui sunt secundum demonstrationes, quae procedunt ab immobilibus et primis terminis, idest a principiis indemonstrabilibus, quae sunt prima cognita et immobilia, quia scilicet eorum cognitio ab homine removeri non potest. Sed intellectus qui est in practicis, est alterius modi extremi, scilicet singularis, et contingentis et alterius propositionis, idest non universalis quae est quasi maior, sed singularis quae est minor in syllogismo operativo.*

This text, which is from the commentary on the *Ethics* (dated by Torrell to 1271-1272),<sup>782</sup> seems to link the understanding (*intellectus*) of either kind of extreme with final causality.<sup>783</sup> The reason, presumably, is that these extremes are moral *principia* (i.e., beginnings) and in practical affairs, that which comes first is the end. In any event, the understanding that is cognizant of a particular and contingent extreme merely provides the minor premise in a practical syllogism and is necessarily less final than the universal premise.

## 2. The Intellect's Causality

Why then, does Thomas not explicitly say in the later part of the *Summa* that the intellect acts in the manner of a final cause? First, he comes very close to doing so in response to the following objection of II-II, q. 47 a. 1:

Man exceeds irrational things in virtue of his reason whereas he has other things in common with them. As, then, the other parts of man are related to his reason, so are other creatures related to man. But man is the end of irrational creatures, as is said in the

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*Quare autem huiusmodi extremi dicatur intellectus, patet per hoc, quod intellectus est principiorum; haec autem singularia, quorum dicimus esse intellectum huiusmodi, principia eius sunt quod est cuius gratia, id est sunt principia ad modum causae finalis.*

Thomas clarifies in the *Scriptum* that the second kind of *intellectus* is the cogitative power or the particular reason:

*Ad tertium dicendum, quod intellectus practicus ad hoc quod de singularibus disponat, ut dicitur in 3 de anima, indiget ratione particulari, qua mediante, opinio quae est universalis (quae est in intellectu) ad particulare opus applicetur: ut sic quidem fiat syllogismus, cuius maior est universalis, quae est opinio intellectus practici; minor vero singularis, quae est aestimatio rationis particularis, quae alio nomine dicitur cogitativa: conclusio vero consistit in electione operis. (Super Sent., bk. 4 d. 50 q. 1 a. 3 ad s. c. 3).*

<sup>782</sup> Torrell, 329.

<sup>783</sup> Which, of course, Thomas did earlier regarding the intellect in general in the following two texts: *intellectus movet per modum finis; hoc enim se habet bonum apprehensum ad voluntatem (De Veritate q. 22 a 12 ad 3); intellectus autem voluntatem per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectum est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem (Summa Contra Gentiles, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22).*

*Politics*. Therefore, all doable things are ordered to prudence as to an end. It must, therefore, appoint the end to the moral virtues.<sup>784</sup>

He responded to this objection by succinctly saying "the natural reason, which is called synderesis, appoints the end to the moral virtues."<sup>785</sup> Given that the argument suggested prudence is the end of practical actions and thus must appoint the end to moral virtues, the implication is that since synderesis is that which appoints the end, synderesis must either be the end of practical actions or act in the manner of an end when it appoints their end to them. Thomas said something similar in the *Contra Gentiles* when he said, "understanding is the proper operation of the intellectual substance: and it is its end as a consequence."<sup>786</sup>

The fact remains that he apparently never explicitly said the intellect acts in the manner of a final cause in his later works, however. One response to this fact could be to simply observe there is no need to deny that the intellect also can be said to act in the manner of a formal cause even if the intellect or reason also acts in the manner of an end in some sense. The intellect specifies, and specifies with respect to the nature of the end and gives the end in this manner. We might simply grant, in fact, that the later Thomas was more precise because strictly speaking, it is the end itself that moves owing to the presentation of the end through knowledge (in other words, the intellect is that *whereby* the final cause may specify the will) and due to this close

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<sup>784</sup> *Praeterea. Homo excedit res irrationales secundum rationem: sed secundum alia cum eis communicat; sic ergo se habent aliae partes hominis ad rationem, sicut se habet homo ad creaturas irrationales: sed homo est finis creaturarum irrationalium, ut dicitur in 1. Polit. (cap. 5. et bk. 2. Phys. tex. 24.); ergo omnes aliae partes hominis ordinantur ad rationem sicut ad finem: sed prudentia est recta ratio agibilium, ut dictum est (art. 2. huj. q.); ergo omnia agibilia ordinantur ad prudentiam sicut ad finem; ipsa ergo praestituit finem omnibus virtutibus moralibus.*

<sup>785</sup> In II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1, he said the reply to the first objection was a sufficient reply to the second: *virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis, ut in 1. habitum est (q. 79. art. 12.), non autem prudentia, ratione jam dicta. Et per hoc patet responsio ad secundum.*

<sup>786</sup> *SCG*, bk. 3, ch. 25: *Intelligere autem est propria operatio substantiae intellectualis. Ipsa igitur est finis eius.*

connection, the shorthand of speaking of the final causality of the intellect is intelligible. So it is not the intellect *simpliciter*, but the good present by way of the intellect that takes on a "final" role because of the nature of that which is apprehended (the cognized good that acts as an end) in relation to the nature of the human person. Accordingly, whatever is put forward intellectually as a good is inseparable from final causality, but not everything that is put forward intellectually is put forward as an end (because not everything put forward is a good). Without intellectual specification making it clear to the will what is – or appears to be – a good, there can be no final causality. It is thus strictly the good preexisting in the mind as specifying the will which exerts final causality. My endeavor has simply been to argue there was no radical transition in Aquinas on this point and that any shift in terminology that took place is no indication of a shift towards de-emphasizing the causal fecundity of the intellect. For Dewan, this "issue is subtle enough"<sup>787</sup> and this is evinced by the fact that there are places in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* where the intellect's causality is described in terms of formal causality<sup>788</sup> and places in *De Malo* where it is described in terms of final causality (as Flannery observes).<sup>789</sup> Be that as it may, Dewan seems correct to affirm that the presentation of the object by the intellect is, in fact, a presenting of the end that necessarily implies it has "a final causal role" even though speaking of the intellect's causality as 'formal' actually emphasizes that which is peculiar to the intellect's contribution even more incisively inasmuch as the intellect thereby has "its own universal formal character

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<sup>787</sup> Dewan, 160.

<sup>788</sup> One example might be *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1 ch. 72 n. 6: *Forma per intellectum considerata non movet nec aliquid causat nisi mediante voluntate, cuius obiectum est finis et bonum, a quo movetur aliquis ad agendum*, in which the form that is apprehended by the intellect is affirmed to be that which moves, though it does not do so without the influence of the will. If Thomas refers to the intellect in terms of final causality in virtue of the end that is apprehended, this text may lead us to affirm that the intellect moves in the manner of a formal cause in virtue of the form that is apprehended. Perhaps both manners of causality can be attributed to the intellect if we say that in the fully practical realm, the intellect moves as a formal cause and if it proposes a naturally desired end (or an end intimately related with that end) and does so in a quasi-speculative manner, it acts in the manner of an end or final cause.

<sup>789</sup> See *Acts Amid Precepts*, 115.



stressed, and thus one can see its *omnipresent* determination."<sup>790</sup> Given that "voluntariness requires an act of knowledge"<sup>791</sup> it is not merely the case that the intellect appoints the end and then leaves the will to its own devices – which the notion of final causality might suggest. Instead, the intellect informs the rational appetite by not only presenting first principles to it but also by formally specifying it during any particular act it engages in. The implication, therefore, is that Thomas did not turn to speaking more of the intellect's formal causality in order to distance himself from an intellectualist mindset, but rather to highlight more accurately the intellect's robust 'omnipresent' causality. The insight of Denis Bradley is helpful on this point:

The views of Lottin and others notwithstanding, there is no radical spontaneity of will apart from intellect: in regard to its object, the will is always formally determined by the intellect. Even in the case of choosing whether or not to consider thinking about (and, consequently, necessarily desiring) the perfect good (happiness or some necessary constituent thereof), the will's freedom is grounded upon the intellectual judgment that "Now is *not* the time to think about happiness!"<sup>792</sup>

We have seen in this chapter that regardless of how the causality of the intellect is explained (whether in terms of final or formal causality), its causality remains paramount. The intellect is the ultimate root of freedom - whether we speak of the liberty of the will in choice (i.e., the impossibility that the will could be compelled by finite good) - or the perfective sense of freedom Pinckaers so adeptly spoke of in terms of *liberté de qualité*.<sup>793</sup> In either case, the

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<sup>790</sup> Dewan, 170.

<sup>791</sup> I-II, q. 6 a. 3 ad 3: *requiritur ad voluntarium actus cognitionis*.

<sup>792</sup> Denis J.M. Bradley "Reason and the Natural Law: Flannery's Reconstruction of Aquinas's Moral Theory." *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 124.

<sup>793</sup> See, *Sources of Christian Ethics*, 329. Simon Francis Gaine provides the original French of the phrase 'freedom for excellence' in '*Will There Be Free Will in Heaven?*': *Freedom, Impeccability, and Beatitude* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 88. See *Les sources de la morale chrétienne* (Fribourg: University Press, 1993).

intellect is the *radix libertatis*. The question we are now ready to investigate, then, is how the intellect's causality plays out in regard to the ends of the moral virtues. Synderesis, prudence and conscience all pertain to the intellect. How do we explain them in terms of the appointing of ends? We turn now to the final chapter to consider this question in detail.

## Chapter Three

### What Appoints the End?

In the introduction, we saw that Thomas De Vio Cajetan (1469-1534) suggested the two texts respectively saying prudence does and does not appoint the end to the moral virtues—*ST I-II*, q. 66, a. 3, obj. and ad 3 and *ST II-II*, q. 47, a. 6, ad 3—appear to be "repugnant" to each other while adding that a serious challenge arises when one attempts to reconcile them.<sup>794</sup> We will introduce the respective texts in turn.

#### A. First Text (I-II, q. 66 a. 3 obj. & ad 3)

##### I-II, q. 66 a. 3 obj. 3

The end is more noble than those things which are for the end: but, as it is said in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, moral virtue makes the intention of the end right whereas prudence makes the choice of those things that are for the end right. Moral virtue, therefore, is more noble than prudence, which is the intellectual virtue pertaining to moral matters.<sup>795</sup>

##### I-II, q. 66 a. 3 ad 3

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<sup>794</sup> "Dubium arduum occurrit in via Auctoris, et simpliciter: quomodo scilicet sit verum prudentiam dirigere morales virtutes etiam in praestituendo finem... hoc repugnare videtur [to what was said] ... in *II-II* loco allegato." Thomas Aquinas, *Opera Omnia, Tomus Sextus: Prima Secundae Summae Theologiae... cum Commentariis Thomae De Vio Caietani Ordinis Praedicatorum* (Romae: 1891), loc. cit (I-II, q. 66 a. 3, p. 433).

<sup>795</sup> I-II, q. 66 a. 3 obj. 3: *Praeterea. Finis est nobilior his, quae sunt ad finem: sed, sicut dicitur in 6. Ethicor. (cap. 12. in med.), virtus moralis facit rectam intentionem finis, prudentia autem facit rectam electionem eorum quae sunt ad finem ergo virtus moralis est nobilior prudentia, quae est virtus intellectualis circa moralia.*

To the third it should be said that prudence does direct the moral virtues not only in choosing those things that are for the end, but also in appointing (*praestituendo*) the end: for the end of any given moral virtue is to attain the mean in its proper matter; which mean is certainly determined according to the right reason of prudence.<sup>796</sup>

In what appears to be an effort to defend the nobility of prudence, Thomas says here that prudence is not completely passive in regard to the end. Indeed, even if the objection is correct in stating that “moral virtue makes the intention of the end right” (which he affirms later in the *Summa*),<sup>797</sup> and even though prudence does have jurisdiction over the means, it also appoints the end. Interestingly, the end being discussed is that of attaining the mean so this response may not appear all that convincing. If the end prudence appoints is merely a mean between two extremes in the appetitive part and it relies upon the end having been rectified by moral virtue in the first place, is not the nobility of prudence lacking somewhat in comparison with that habit that appoints moral principles insofar as prudence is so closely tied up with the appetites? In commenting on the *Ethics*, Thomas suggests moral virtue brings about the right intention of the end:

There are two things necessary in the act of any virtue. One of which is that a man must have a right intention of the end which, indeed, moral virtue brings about inasmuch as it inclines the appetite towards the fitting end. The other is that a man is well disposed (*bene se habeat*) about the means - and prudence, which deliberates well and judges and commands about the means brings this about. Therefore prudence (which is perfective of

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<sup>796</sup> I-II, q. 66 a. 3 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod prudentia non solum dirigit virtutes morales in eligendo ea quae sunt ad finem, sed etiam in praestituendo finem: est autem finis uniuscujusque virtutis moralis attingere medium in propria materia; quod quidem medium determinatur secundum rectam rationem prudentiae, ut dicitur in 2. Ethicor. (cap. 6.) et in 6. (cap. ult.).*

<sup>797</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 c.: II-II q. 47 a. 6 s. c. *Sed contra est quod philosophus dicit, in VI Ethic., quod virtus moralis intentionem finis facit rectam, prudentia autem quae ad hanc. Ergo ad prudentiam non pertinet praestituere finem virtutibus moralibus, sed solum disponere de his quae sunt ad finem.*

the reason essentially) joins together with moral virtue (which is perfective of the appetitive part which is rational by participation) in bringing about a work of virtue.<sup>798</sup>

Prudence, no doubt, remains indispensable because one must deliberate well about means if he is to attain the end, but given the indisputable axiom that the end precedes the means in moral matters, how is this congruous with the notion that prudence appoints the *end*? It almost appears to be an affront to the meaning of the word, 'end' to say the virtue that directs the *means* towards an end appoints that end simply because it makes it possible for the individual to attain it.

Nevertheless, one way we can understand this is in view of what we saw about the nobility of man partially consisting in the ability to appoint ends himself thanks to the power of deliberative reason. At the very least, if a prudent man were to act in accordance with the inclinations of appetites, he would be making the ends founded in the appetites to be his own. We have seen this concept in Thomas already, but here is a text we have not yet encountered, from book II of the *Scriptum*:

Nothing acts except inasmuch as it is in act and, for this reason, it is necessary that every agent be determined to one thing [instead of another] because whatever has itself equally disposed to both is somehow in potency with respect to both. Accordingly, as the Commentator<sup>799</sup> says in regard to the second book of the *Physics*, nothing follows from that which is equally disposed to either of two things unless it be determined. But for an

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<sup>798</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6 lect. 10 # 13: *Duo enim sunt necessaria in opere virtutis, (scilicet) quorum unum est ut homo habeat rectam intentionem de fine; quod quidem facit virtus moralis, inquantum inclinatur appetitum in debitum finem. Aliud autem est quod homo bene se habeat circa ea quae sunt ad finem: et hoc facit prudentia quae est bene consiliativa et iudicativa et praeceptiva eorum quae sunt ad finem. Et sic ad opus virtutis concurrunt et prudentia quae est perfectiva rationalis per essentiam, et virtus moralis quae est perfectiva appetitivae quae est rationalis per participationem.*

<sup>799</sup> The "Commentator" here is apparently Avicenna. See *In II phys.*, lec. 2, no. 3, where he mentions Avicenna and says: *sicut potentia motiva, quae est ad utrumlibet, non exit in actum nisi per potentiam appetitivam determinetur ad unum; ita nihil quod est ad utrumlibet exit in actum nisi per aliquod determinetur ad unum: quia id quod est ad utrumlibet est sicut ens in potentia; potentia autem non est principium agendi, sed solum actus. Unde ex eo quod est ad utrumlibet nihil sequitur, nisi per aliquid aliud quod determinat ad unum, vel sicut semper vel sicut frequenter. Et propter hoc in iis quae fiunt, praetermisit ea quae sunt ad utrumlibet.*

agent to be determined to do some action, the determination must arise from some knowledge appointing (*praestituente*) the end of that action. But the knowledge determining the action and appointing the end is connected to some agents as is the case with man, who appoints the end of his action to himself. Such knowledge is separate from others, however. Take, for instance, those things that act by nature. Due to the fact that the actions of natural things are not in vain (as is proved in the second book of the *Physics*) but are arranged by the Intellect instituting nature, the whole work of nature is, in a certain way, a work of intelligence, as the Philosopher says. It is, therefore, clear that the difference among agents is that some determine both the end and the act for themselves and some do not. Nor is a given agent able to appoint the end unless it knows the end and the order of that which is for the end itself, which cannot occur except in those having understanding. For this reason, the judgment of one's own action is only in those having understanding since their power has been established in such a way that they may choose this or that action. Accordingly, they are said to have dominion over their acts and, due to this, free will is only found in those having understanding and not in those whose actions are not determined by the agents themselves but by certain other prior causes.<sup>800</sup>

From this point of view, the prudent man can be said to appoint an end for himself in the sense of making that end to be his own and deliberating about how to attain it. The last sentence of the

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<sup>800</sup> *Super Sent.*, liber 2 dist. 25 q. 1 a. 1 c.: *Nihil agit nisi secundum quod est in actu; et inde est quod oportet omne agens esse determinatum ad alteram partem: quod enim ad utrumlibet est aequaliter se habens, est quodammodo potentia respectu utriusque: et inde est, quod, ut dicit Commentator in 2 Phys. ab eo quod est ad utrumlibet, nihil sequitur, nisi determinetur. Determinatio autem agentis ad aliquam actionem, oportet quod sit ab aliqua cognitione praestituente finem illi actioni. Sed cognitio determinans actionem et praestituens finem, in quibusdam quidem conjuncta est, sicut homo finem suae actionis sibi praestituit; in quibusdam vero separata est, sicut in his quae agunt per naturam: rerum enim naturalium actiones non sunt frustra, ut in 2 Physic. probatur, sed ad certos fines ordinatae ab intellectu naturam instituyente, ut sic totum opus naturae sit quodammodo opus intelligentiae, ut philosophus dicit. Sic ergo patet quod haec est differentia in agentibus quia quaedam determinant sibi finem et actum in finem illum, quaedam vero non: nec aliquod agens finem sibi praestituere potest nisi rationem finis cognoscat et ordinem ejus quod est ad finem ipsum, quod solum in habentibus intellectum est: et inde est quod iudicium de actione propria est solum in habentibus intellectum, quasi in potestate eorum constitutum sit eligere hanc actionem vel illam; unde et dominium sui actus habere dicuntur: et propter hoc in solis intellectum habentibus liberum arbitrium invenitur, non autem in illis quorum actiones non determinantur ab ipsis agentibus, sed a quibusdam aliis causis prioribus.*

quote mentions not being determined by certain other prior causes. Aquinas certainly does not mean to say man is not constrained by the eternal or natural law. Just as he sometimes speaks of 'will as will' to distinguish it from 'will as nature,' even though he usually is referring to the former without saying so explicitly, here too, he seems to be presupposing that man is subject to prior causes on one level even if in the realm of deliberating about means, he is free.

The other way it makes some sense to speak of prudence appointing the end to the moral virtues is simply because the end *is* the mean. As strange as it might sound to equate the mean with the end prudence appoints (as would especially occur if we think of ends in terms of objective principles rather than a mean between two passions),<sup>801</sup> it is nearly an indemonstrable principle that virtue is a habit enabling someone to do exactly what he sets out to do as an end without being swayed towards one extreme or another. And this is exactly what prudence is responsible for bringing about. Moreover, since prudence is a rational habit and it is the reason that appoints things, it is fitting on some level to say it appoints this end.<sup>802</sup> This appointing, certainly, is a subordinated kind of appointing since it is properly an enacting of what was fixed in the reason by synderesis and since the latter (which is also said to appoint) is said to be that which "moves prudence."<sup>803</sup> Nevertheless, it is intelligible to speak of prudential activity in terms of 'appointing' so long as this appointing retains its secondary status in virtue of the fact that the "reasoning of prudence" proceeds from the *intellectus principiorum*.<sup>804</sup>

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<sup>801</sup> The mean of justice would not be this sort of mean, but often times the mean is between two inordinate passions.

<sup>802</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 18 a. 3: *supra talia animalia sunt illa, quae movent seipsa, etiam habito respectu ad finem, quem sibi praestituunt. Quod quidem non fit, nisi per rationem, et intellectum, cujus est cognoscere proportionem finis, et ejus, quod est ad finem, et unum ordinare in alterum.*

<sup>803</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 2: *synderesis movet prudentiam.*

<sup>804</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 2 ad 1: *ratio prudentiae ex duplici intellectu procedat: quorum unus est, qui est cognoscitivus universalium; quod pertinet ad intellectum, qui ponitur virtus intellectualis, qua naturaliter nobis cognita sunt non solum universalia principia speculativa, sed etiam practica; sicut: Nulli esse malefaciendum; ut ex dictis patet (q. 47. art. 2. et 3.):*

In the *Scriptum*, Thomas clarifies that when prudence is said to appoint the end to the moral virtues, it is specifically the *proximate* end of each virtue which is appointed. In other words, ultimate ends are not properly appointed by prudence. The mean that is sometimes spoken of as an end, moreover, is the mean proper to the given virtue<sup>805</sup> and is thus different for different virtues.<sup>806</sup> This mean is so closely related to reason that in the preceding question of the *Scriptum*, he said the proximate end—the one appointed by prudence—is simply "the good of reason."<sup>807</sup>

The existence of any virtue (and of actual adequated motion to the end) is predicated upon some kind of participation in prudence as is manifest by the definition of it found in Aristotle and frequently referred to by Aquinas: it is "a habit, resulting from choice, lying in the middle relative to us and determined by reason as the prudent man would determine it."<sup>808</sup> Without sharing in *recta ratio agibilium* (i.e., prudence), the mean would not be attained and there would be no virtue. Prudence is consequently "somehow effective" of moral virtue because

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<sup>805</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 5 c.: *Et per hunc modum oportet quod per rationem, quam perficit prudentia, et rectam facit, praestituatur finis aliis virtutibus, non solum communis, sed etiam proximus, qui est attingere medium in propria natura.* It is clear in view of the rest of the *Scriptum* that he must be saying the *natural* reason appoints the common end.

<sup>806</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a 6c.: *oportet quod ratio practica perficiatur aliquo habitu ad hoc quod recte diiudicet de bono humano secundum singula agenda. Et haec virtus dicitur prudentia, cuius subiectum est ratio practica; et est perfectiva omnium virtutum moralium quae sunt in parte appetitiva, quarum unaquaeque facit inclinationem appetitus in aliquod genus humani boni: sicut iustitia facit inclinationem in bonum quod est aequalitas pertinentium ad communicationem vitae; temperantia in bonum quod est refrenari a concupiscentiis; et sic de singulis virtutibus. Unumquodque autem horum contingit multipliciter fieri, et non eodem modo in omnibus; unde ad hoc quod rectus modus statuatur, requiritur iudicii prudentia.*

<sup>807</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 c.: *Bonum autem ad quod humanae virtutes proxime ordinantur, est bonum rationis, contra quam esse est malum hominis, ut dicit Dionysius in Lib. de Divin. Nom. Et quia non in omnibus materiis moralibus eodem modo invenitur rationis bonum, ut patet; ideo oportet diversas virtutes morales esse specie diferentes.*

<sup>808</sup> ἡ ἀρετὴ ἕξις προαιρετικὴ, ἐν μεσότητι οὖσα τῇ πρὸς ἡμᾶς, ὀρισμένη λόγῳ καὶ ᾧ ἂν ὁ φρόνιμος ὀρίσειεν; *Nicomachean Ethics (Greek)*, ed. J. Bywater (Medford, MA: Perseus Digital Library, 1894), Bk. 2, ch. 6 (1107a.1).

"moral virtue is nothing other than a certain participation in right reason in the appetitive part."<sup>809</sup>

Thomas speaks to the close relationship between the mean and right reason in II-II, q. 47 a. 7:

To be conformed to right reason is the proper end of every moral virtue, for temperance intends this lest man be diverted from reason by carnal desires and, similarly, fortitude [intends this] lest he be diverted from the right judgment of reason due to fear or temerity. And thus the end is appointed (*praestitutus*) to man in accordance with natural reason, for natural reason dictates to each one that he act in accordance with reason. But how a man attains the mean of reason according to natural reason, and through which things, pertains to the disposition of prudence. For although to attain the mean is the end of moral virtue, the mean is found through the right disposition of the means.<sup>810</sup>

One could conclude from this that the "common end" appointed by reason *qua* natural reason is no more nor less than the principle that each one act in accordance with reason. Since synderesis undeniably also "always inclines to good"<sup>811</sup> one would have to link this in some way to the good in order to be faithful to Thomas, but one would still be left on this account with a natural intellectual habit consisting of little else than empty space. Jean Porter's analysis is along these lines. She argues that the principle that one ought to act in accordance with reason and the first principle of the practical reason found in the second article of I-II, q. 94 ("the good is to be done

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<sup>809</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 12 ad 16: *ratio recta prudentiae non ponitur in definitione virtutis moralis, quasi aliquid de essentia eius existens; sed sicut causa quodammodo effectiva ipsius, vel per participationem. Nam virtus moralis nihil aliud est quam participatio quaedam rationis rectae in parte appetitiva, ut in superioribus dictum est.*

<sup>810</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 7c.: *hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae, est finis proprius cuiuslibet virtutis moralis: temperantia enim hoc intendit, ne propter concupiscentias homo divertat a ratione: et similiter fortitudo, ne a recto iudicio rationis divertat propter timorem, vel audaciam: et hic finis praestitutus est homini secundum naturalem rationem: naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique, ut secundum rationem operetur: sed qualiter, et per quae homo in operando attingat medium rationis, pertinet ad rationem [al. dispositionem] prudentiae: licet enim attingere medium sit finis virtutis moralis: tamen per rectam dispositionem eorum quae sunt ad finem, medium invenitur.*

<sup>811</sup> *S.Th.*, I, 79 a. 12 s.c. *synderesis autem non se habet ad opposita, sed ad bonum tantum inclinatur.*



and pursued and evil to be avoided"<sup>812</sup>) are practically identical and also that there is no substantial content to this principle:

From Aquinas' claim that synderesis includes the principle that the human good consists in acting in accordance with reason, we should not conclude that Aquinas holds that all persons naturally know the substance of his anthropology. This principle is universally known in the same sense as the first principle of practical reason is universally known. Not everyone could formulate it (that would indeed presuppose theoretical knowledge that not everyone shares), but everyone necessarily acts upon it... The first principle of practical reason and the dictum that the good of the human soul is to be in accordance with reason, are really two ways of expressing the same principle from different perspectives....

While Aquinas holds that it is self-evidently true that the good is to be pursued, and evil is to be avoided, this principle does not take on substantive content apart from an account of what the concrete specific good of the human creature is. And that account is not self-evident to us, because it presupposes a particular theory of goodness in general.<sup>813</sup>

She concludes that all substantive content is due to prudence:

Natural reason, functioning as synderesis, generates the principle that the good of the human person is to be in accordance with reason. Prudence, which takes account of the specifics of an individual's own character and circumstances, determines what, concretely, it means for this individual to be in accordance with reason... that is to say prudence determines what amounts to a substantive theory of the human good.<sup>814</sup>

On this account, there appear to be no general precepts with substantive content because the onus of determining the content is on prudence. Since Thomas often describes prudence in terms of

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<sup>812</sup> I-II, q. 94 a. 2 c.: *primum praeceptum legis, quod bonum est faciendum, et prosequendum, et malum vitandum*.

<sup>813</sup> Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster/ John Knox, 1990), 161-162.

<sup>814</sup> Ibid., 162.

applying "universal principles" to particular works,<sup>815</sup> Porter's description of prudence in terms of determining what it means to be in accordance with reason (which II-II, q. 47 a. 7 made clear is the *end* of moral virtue) raises some questions. Does prudence determine the end as if heuristically inventing it *de novo*? Or does it merely determine it *qua applicatio* similar to the way an act might be said to determine a potency (and in accordance with the nature of the potency)?

If prudence determines the end that is a mean,<sup>816</sup> it seems we have to distinguish between the end *qua* mean that needs to be felt out, as in Yves Simon's estimation,<sup>817</sup> or heuristically pursued, according to James Keenan's,<sup>818</sup> and the end *qua* universal principles to be applied. Porter yokes the precept to do good and avoid evil to the precept to act according to reason. Since Thomas says "synderesis is said to instigate towards the good and to murmur about evil inasmuch as we proceed by first *principles* to discovering and judging what we have discovered,"<sup>819</sup> one might wonder whether there is, in fact, some preceptively significant content

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<sup>815</sup> II-II q.47 a.6 c.: *prudentia, applicans universalia principia ad particulares conclusiones operabilium*; II-II, q. 47 a. 16 ad 3 *prudentia principaliter consistit non in cognitione universalium, sed in applicatione ad opera*; I-II q.76 a.1 c.: *ratio prudentiae terminatur, sicut ad conclusionem quamdam, ad particulare operabile, ad quod applicat universalem cognitionem, ut ex dictis patet (q. 47. art. 3. et 6.)*; see also, II-II q.49 a.5 ad 2; II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1.

<sup>816</sup> I-II, q. 66 a. 3 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod prudentia non solum dirigit virtutes morales in eligendo ea quae sunt ad finem, sed etiam in praestituendo finem: est autem finis uniuscujusque virtutis moralis attingere medium in propria materia; quod quidem medium determinatur secundum rectam rationem prudentiae.*

<sup>817</sup> See, Simon, *The Definition of Moral Virtue*, 108-109.

<sup>818</sup> See James Keenan, "The Virtue of Prudence (IIa IIae, Qq. 47—56)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 259–71, at 261: "The ends of the moral virtues appointed naturally by *synderesis* are thus the principles that prudence heuristically pursues." See also 264: "Prudence as directive expresses the overarching way through which it perceives the end, provides the heuristic means to the self-disposed moral virtues, and directs them in their operations as they express those means to that end."

<sup>819</sup> Emphasis added. *S.Th.*, I, q. 79 a. 12c.: *synderesis dicitur instigare ad bonum, et murmurare de malo, inquantum per prima principia procedimus ad inveniendum, et judicamus inventa.*

contained by "the habit of the first *principles* of doable things naturally implanted in us."<sup>820</sup> We will revisit this issue below.<sup>821</sup>

Keenan has a similar approach to Porter's. He does not explicitly unite the two principles and thus occasionally speaks of the inclination to act according to reason as the end of the moral virtues<sup>822</sup> and sometimes as the precept to do good and avoid evil.<sup>823</sup> In either case, though, there is not much content:

Furthermore, the end appointed by *synderesis* is not the proximate end that specifies a moral virtue, but the first principle, to do good and avoid evil. Thus, though *synderesis* appoints the general end of moral virtue, yet the moral virtues cannot tend to that end abstractly. Rather, they still need specific objects toward which to tend. They need prudence to "prepare the way," to present the right objects to the moral virtues.<sup>824</sup>

For him, too, then, the end provided by *synderesis* seems to be a somewhat nebulous inclination practically devoid of content.

Thomas speaks of an order of natural law that is "according to the order of natural inclinations" and Keenan rightly argues that "all of the inclinations of human nature" are reduced to the one first precept ("do good, etc.) inasmuch as they are ruled by reason."<sup>825</sup> Since he seems to equate "reason" with prudence and *not* natural reason, though, and since *synderesis* has no

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<sup>820</sup> Ibid.: *principia operabilium nobis naturaliter indita non pertinent ad specialem potentiam, sed, ad specialem habitum naturalem, quem dicimus synderesim.*

<sup>821</sup> See "The Content of *Synderesis*" below (section D).

<sup>822</sup> Keenan argues that, in *ST* II-II, q. 47, a. 7, "synderesis appoints the end of each moral virtue, which ends are still the same: to act according to reason," and that "the 'good' is what reason appoints as a mean" ("Virtue of Prudence," 260).

<sup>823</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 103: "the last end of the moral virtues, which is to do good and avoid evil."

<sup>824</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 102.

<sup>825</sup> See 261 of "The Virtue of Prudence." The text he refers to is I-II, q. 94 a. 2 ad 2, in which Thomas responds to an objection saying that if human nature is one, natural law should have one precept by saying the sensitive appetites are, in fact, made subject to the principle "do good and avoid evil" inasmuch as they are ruled by reason. What Keenan overlooks, of course, is that the body of the article spoke of more than that first principle. There is a whole order of precepts based upon the order of natural inclinations.

substantive content without prudence on his account, everything seems to come down to prudence. In other words, there is no accounting for the preceptive character of *natural* law because prudence is not natural but acquired (or infused). It is as if that law is practically invented by *ratio ut ratio* and as if there are no universally applicable norms known in virtue of *ratio ut natura*.

Moreover, while Keenan attributes a great deal to prudence, it is actually stripped of its ability to be truly reasonable, since universal precepts do not factor into its ratiocination about means. It has to "heuristically" pursue the good as if by trial and error and even when it is said to direct and to appoint the end to the moral virtues, this means it "provides the heuristic means to the *self-disposed* moral virtues, and directs them in their operations as they express those means to that end" (emphasis added).<sup>826</sup> The consequence is that the end which is the mean in addition to the means to that end are both heuristically sought out. He does say at one point that "any end *other than* the last end is unformed, that is, it has no particular object and therefore no determinative form"<sup>827</sup> thereby apparently imputing some formed content to synderesis, but since he thinks the mature Thomas came to see "the will's movement is independent of and prior to reason's presentation of its object,"<sup>828</sup> even the natural inclination to the good cannot be attributed

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<sup>826</sup> "The Virtue of Prudence," 264.

<sup>827</sup> Emphasis added. The full quote from *Goodness and Rightness*, 79 is: "In terms of the distinction between formal and final causality, the object gives the form of specification; it no longer gives the end. The end is no longer in the object, but in the will. Yet for Thomas any end other than the last end is unformed, that is, it has no particular object and therefore no determinative form."

<sup>828</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 47.

to the intellect.<sup>829</sup> On this account, then, Thomas is essentially a proto-Humean when it comes to the principles of human action.<sup>830</sup>

### **B. Second Text (II-II, q. 47 a.6 ad 3)**

Possibly in an effort to exclude the possibility that he could be read as subordinating all cognition to appetite, Thomas says in II-II, q. 47 a.6:

The end does not pertain to the moral virtues, as if they appoint the end, but because they tend to the end appointed by the natural reason, to which they are helped by prudence which prepares the way for them by disposing of the means. Thus it remains that prudence is more noble than the moral virtues and moves them: but synderesis moves prudence as the understanding of principles moves [the virtue of] knowledge.<sup>831</sup>

According to Keenan, Thomas went from saying "the end was the mean that prudence appointed" in I-II, q. 66, to saying, "the end is now something different than the mean," in II-II, q. 47.<sup>832</sup> My own reading of Thomas coincides exactly with Keenan's on this specific point,

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<sup>829</sup> This, though, would be contrary to Thomas' assertion that even the *voluntas ut natura* follows the judgment of reason: *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 2 a. 2 ad 2: *voluntas ut ... natura... sequitur iudicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis, quia in operabilibus finis habet locum principii, ut in 6 Ethic. dicitur. Unde illud quod finis est hominis, est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura.*

<sup>830</sup> For Hume, as John Cahalan observed, "reason cannot dictate to desires about values since desires determine what things are values and what are not. When reason makes value judgments, it is a "slave" of desire; it only reports what desires do." See, John C. Cahalan, "Natural Obligation: How rationally known truth determines ethical good and evil" in *The Thomist* 66 (2002), 101.

<sup>831</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.6 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod finis non pertinet ad virtutes morales, tamquam ipsae praestituant finem; sed quia tendunt in finem a ratione naturali praestitutum: ad quod juvantur per prudentiam, quae eis viam parat, disponendo ea quae sunt ad finem; unde relinquitur, quod prudentia sit nobilior virtutibus moralibus, et moveat eas: sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam.*

<sup>832</sup> James F. Keenan, "The Virtue of Prudence," 260.

although the meaning and import of what he says remains questionable. Cajetan says something similar to Keenan but adds essential clarification. For him, when Thomas "expressly says prudence directs the moral virtues even in appointing the end," the meaning is "that the end of moral virtue is to attain the mean which is determined by prudence." His way of reconciling the two texts provides helpful nuance because he insists that "[prudence] does not dictate what the end is; in truth, natural reason sufficiently dictates the end and prudence dictates what the means to the end are."<sup>833</sup> It does not, then, "prescribe [the end to] moral virtue simply, but only by disposing of the means."<sup>834</sup> This coincides with Keenan's reading inasmuch as it implies that the end prudence appoints must only equivocally be an end whereas in the latter text from the *Secunda Secundae* the end in question is truly an end. For Cajetan, though, such an end is not subject to deliberation because it is only prudence that determines the end *qua* the mean (and "we do not deliberate about ends, but about means"<sup>835</sup>). Because it does not determine the end *de novo*, it "directs moral virtue by appointing the end to it, not first and absolutely, but by applying it to some particular matter."<sup>836</sup> His reading (and mine) accordingly departs from Keenan's inasmuch as Cajetan says prudence *sufficiently* dictates the end, whereas Keenan thinks the end must be discovered by prudence. One wonders what knowledge of the end would be based on if

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<sup>833</sup> Commenting on II-II, q. 47 a. 6: *expresse dicit quod prudentia dirigit virtutes morales etiam in praestituendo finem. Et probat, quia finis virtutis moralis est attingere medium, quod prudentia determinatur... prudentia, non tamen prudentia dictativa de fine: sed sufficit naturalis ratio dictativa de fine, et prudentia dictativa de mediis ad finem. See, Opera Omnia, Tomus Sextus: Secunda Secundae Summae Theologiae... cum Commentariis Thomae De Vio Caietani Ordinis Praedicatorum (Romae: 1895), Tomus Octavus, loc. cit.*

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*: *utitur siquidem prudentia fine, applicando ipsum ad id quod est ad finem.... prudentia, not tamen prudentia dictativa de fine: sed sufficit naturalis ratio dictativa de fine, et prudentia dictativa de mediis ad finem.*

<sup>835</sup> *Sententia Libri Ethicorum*, Bk. 3, Lectio 8: *non consiliatur de finibus, sed de his quae sunt ad fines; sicut in speculativis non inquiritur de principiis, sed de conclusionibus.*

<sup>836</sup> On I-II, q. 66 a. 3 (section XIII of commentary): *utitur siquidem prudentia fine, applicando ipsum ad id quod est ad finem.... Quinto quod, comparando prudentiam ad virtutem moralem in fieri, sic simpliciter verum quod prudentia dirigit virtutem moralem praestituendo illi finem, non primo et absolute, sed applicando illum ad specialem materialem.*

prudence were to rely upon the moral virtues for its ends and if the appetitive part of the soul were absolutely independent from the rational part and acted antecedently to it. Moreover, if prudence discovers the end (as Keenan says) or establishes its substantive content (as Porter does), one would be hard pressed to explain the reason that in the first reply of II-II 47 a. 6, prudence is eliminated as a candidate for appointing ends:

The natural reason, which is called synderesis (as was related in the *Prima Pars*) appoints the end to the moral virtues. Prudence, however, does not.<sup>837</sup>

There is obviously an important role for prudence in the later Thomas, but it does not strictly appoint the ends that stand as premises in a practical syllogism. As we have seen, he explains in II-II, q. 49 that the reasoning of prudence proceeds from a twofold understanding, one of which pertains to universals such as "one should do evil to no one" and the other of which pertains to some "singular and contingent minor premise." Although it proceeds from both of them, the latter kind is "a part of prudence" because it is a right estimate of a particular end.<sup>838</sup> The other kind of understanding that the ratiocination of prudence proceeds from, however, seems to be directive of it in the sense of being distinct from it and appointing the end to it in a cognitive mode. By providing universal practical principles such as "one should do evil to no one," this *intellectus* (or natural reason/synderesis) allows prudence to be on a solid footing when performing one of its primary roles – that of deliberating about means.

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<sup>837</sup> *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis, ut in 1. habitum est (q. 79 art. 12), non autem prudentia.*

<sup>838</sup> II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1: *ratio prudentiae ex duplici intellectu procedat: quorum unus est, qui est cognoscitivus universalium; quod pertinet ad intellectum, qui ponitur virtus intellectualis, qua naturaliter nobis cognita sunt non solum universalia principia speculativa, sed etiam practica; sicut: Nulli esse malefaciendum; ut ex dictis patet (q. 47. art. 2. et 3.): alius autem intellectus est, qui, ut dicitur in 6. Ethic. (cap. 11.), est cognoscitivus extremi, idest alicujus primi singularis, seu principii contingentis operabilis propositionis, scilicet minoris, quam oportet esse singularem in syllogismo prudentiae, ut dictum est (q. 47. art. 3. et 6.): hoc autem principium singulare est aliquis singularis finis, ut dicitur ibidem; unde intellectus, qui ponitur pars prudentiae, est quaedam recta aestimatio de aliquo particulari fine.*

Although we will consider what principles synderesis contains in further detail in section 'D' below ("The Content of Synderesis"), we can note for now that Thomas certainly thinks it dictates a significant variety of substantive precepts which do not seem to require the presence of prudence in order to be apprehended. Among them are the precepts that man ought to do nothing against a divine precept and do no injustice to anyone (*nulli injuriam faciat*)<sup>839</sup> and the first two precepts of the natural law (namely, the precepts to love God and to love one's neighbor) and even the ten Commandments, which are "*per se nota* to human reason" and conclusions of the first two precepts.<sup>840</sup> As he explains in I-II, q. 100, the commandments are said to "pertain to the natural law" in such a way that "the natural reason of any man whatever *per se* and without mediation judges" them to be done or not to be done. Precepts such as these are "absolutely from the law of nature"<sup>841</sup> and do not seem to be dependent upon prudence. This is most evident from a text wherein the Angelic Doctor explains why it is that there is no commandment pertaining to prudence. He says that that the "commandments of the decalogue.... fall into the judgment (*in existimatione*) of everyone, as pertaining to the natural reason" and adds:

The ends of human life especially pertain to the dictate of the natural reason and in [practical] things to be done they are like the principles that are naturally known in the speculative order, as was said above (q. 47, a. 6). Prudence, though, is not about the end,

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<sup>839</sup> I-II, q. 100, a. 5 ad 4: *statim ratio naturalis homini dictat, quod nulli injuriam faciat* (also found in *Quodlibet*. III, q. 12 a. 1 c., which also mentions *nihil esse faciendum contra praeceptum divinum*); I-II, q. 100, a. 3 c.: *homo nulli debet malefacere*.

<sup>840</sup> In I-II q. 100 a. 3 ad 1, he speaks about the precepts *Diliges Dominum Deum tuum* and *Diliges proximum tuum* as mentioned in the first objection. He says: *Illa duo praecepta sunt prima et communia praecepta legis naturae, quae sunt per se nota rationi humanae, vel per naturam, vel per fidem; et ideo omnia praecepta decalogi ad illa duo referuntur, sicut conclusiones ad principia communia*. It is certainly noteworthy that he mentions faith in this context (presumably due to the clouding of the intellect that took place after the fall of Adam). Nevertheless, the fact remains that nature is able to make these principles/precepts known and that he calls them *per se nota*.

<sup>841</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c.: *omnia praecepta moralia pertineant ad legem naturae, sed diversimode. Quaedam enim sunt quae statim per se ratio naturalis cuiuslibet hominis diiudicat esse facienda vel non facienda, sicut honora patrem tuam et matrem tuam, et, non occides, non furtum facies. Et huiusmodi sunt absolute de lege naturae*.



but about the means, as stated above ([again, q. 47, a. 6]). It was not fitting, therefore, that a commandment pertaining to prudence be placed among the commandments of the Decalogue.<sup>842</sup>

In view of these texts, the habit of the principles of the natural law known as *synderesis* certainly has substantive content for Aquinas. Since, moreover, prudence presupposes the ends provided by the natural reason, substantial precepts are evidently available to man's understanding even without the presence of prudence.

Keenan comments that it in II-II, q. 47, "*synderesis* appoints the end of each moral virtue, which ends are still the same: to act according to reason."<sup>843</sup> Cajetan would likely agree on some level. However, whereas Keenan says "the end appointed by *synderesis* is not the proximate end that specifies a moral virtue, but the first principle, to do good and avoid evil,"<sup>844</sup> Cajetan argues it goes beyond that. Although the latter does not, to my knowledge, get into great detail about the precepts enumerated in the last paragraph as related to *synderesis*, he at least maintains that *synderesis* judges and proposes "not only the ultimate end, but the proper ends of the moral virtues while it judges how one should live in accordance with reason in regard to passions and actions."<sup>845</sup> Because it does, so, prudence, for him, is able to exist because it supplies the foundation of a right deliberation about means:

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<sup>842</sup> II-II, q. 56 a. 1 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est cum de praeceptis ageretur, praecepta Decalogi, sicut data sunt omni populo, ita etiam cadunt in aestimatione omnium, quasi ad naturalem rationem pertinentia. Praecipue autem sunt de dictamine rationis naturalis fines humanae vitae, qui se habent in agendis sicut principia naturaliter cognita in speculativis, ut ex supradictis patet. Prudentia autem non est circa finem, sed circa ea quae sunt ad finem, ut supra dictum est. Et ideo non fuit conveniens ut inter praecepta Decalogi aliquod praeceptum poneretur ad prudentiam directe pertinens.*

<sup>843</sup> "The Virtue of Prudence," 260.

<sup>844</sup> *Goodness and Rightness*, 102.

<sup>845</sup> On I-II, q. 66 a. 3.: *synderesi igitur in intellectu iudicante et proponente non solum finem ultimum, sed fines proprios virtutum moralium dum in passionibus et operationibus secundum rationem vivendum iudicat.*

With the appetite incipiently inclined to these ends, - namely, the good of reason in actions, the good of reason in times of fear or boldness, the good of reason amidst delights - one discursively reasons from firm principles of this sort that are fixed in the intellect and incipient in the appetite, by subsuming some less universal (such as to abstain from venereal delights for the sake of defending the republic) ... Now, this discourse is that which generates prudence.<sup>846</sup>

For Cajetan, then, there are firm natural beginnings in both the intellect and the appetite. Since prudence needs both universal and particular knowledge and "is not only in the reason since it is in the reason as moved by the appetite ... right reason about doable things depends upon both kinds of rectitude about ends; namely, the rectitude on the side of the apprehensive part and on the side of the appetitive part."<sup>847</sup> This, of course, reconciles perfectly with the notion that "there are two principles of human actions; namely, the intellect or the reason, and the appetite." We turn now to considering how Cajetan explains the "difficult question" the *dubium arduum*, in view of this principle.

### **Cajetan's Resolution to the *Dubium Arduum***

Although Cajetan addresses this issue in his exposition of II-II, q. 47, the most substantial treatment is in his commentary on I-II, q. 66. He has many pages on the matter, but a key selections read as follows:

<sup>846</sup> On I-II, q. 66 a. 3 (section XII of commentary): *Appetitu inchoative inclinato ad hos fines, scilicet bonum rationis in operationibus, bonum rationis in timoribus et audaciis, bonum rationis in delectationibus, etc.: et discurritur ex huiusmodi principiis firmatis in intellectu et inchoatis in appetitu, subsumendo aliquod minus universale, puta abstinere a delectationibus venereis, republicam defendendam; et concluditur modus in delectationibus, et sic de aliis. Hic autem discursus prudentiae generativus est.*

<sup>847</sup> Thomas says in *Sententia Ethicorum* bk. 6, lect. 7 # 7, *prudentia non est in ratione solum, sed habet aliquid in appetitu*. Referring to Aristotle himself, Cajetan here (on I-II, q. 65 a. 1), says, *prudentia non est in ratione solum, ut dicitur in VI Ethic: quia est in ratione ut mota ab appetitu*. He goes on, *recta ratio agibilium pendeat ex utraque rectitudine circa fines, scilicet ex rectitudine partis apprehensivae et appetitivae*.

In response to the third objection of this article, a challenging question arises, . . . which is simply: how is it true that prudence directs the moral virtues even in appointing the end? This will be discussed in a cursory manner in the commentary on II-II. 47. . . [This position] seems to be in tension with what was said above [in I-II, q. 58 a. 5<sup>848</sup>] and also to what is said below in II-II in the place brought forward [q. 47 a. 6]. After all, it was said above [in I-II, q. 58 a. 5] that the principle which is the end is had from moral virtue because, as each one is, so does the end seem to him. And the idea that prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues will be expressly denied below [in II-II, q. 47 a. 6]. . . In order to make the difficulty of this question more clear, we should keep before our eyes our reasoning process so that we might be able to evaluate the rationale for the things said and so that we might be able to judge what is said simply and what is said in a qualified manner.<sup>849</sup> The first thing in our mind is synderesis, by which we naturally judge not only that every good ought to be done and every evil fled from— and that happiness ought to be desired and misery fled from—but also that the good of reason ought to be pursued and the evil that is opposed to it ought to be fled from. And from this source there is also in the appetite not only an inclination for pursuing good and avoiding bad, for desiring happiness and fleeing misery, but also a certain imperfect inclination for living according to right reason. And although synderesis is a virtue<sup>850</sup> because it is the understanding of

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<sup>848</sup> ST I-II, q. 58, a. 5, corp. argues that the moral virtues set the stage for prudence because the desire for the end precedes the reasoning process regarding the means, which is what prudence pertains to: “Ita ad hoc quod recte se habeat circa principia particularia agibilia, quae sunt fines, oportet quod perficiatur per aliquos habitus, secundum quos fiat quodammodo homini connaturale recte judicare de fine: et hoc fit per virtutem moralem: virtuosus enim recte iudicat de fine virtutis: quia qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei, ut dicitur in 3. Ethic. (cap. 5. a med.); et ideo ad rectam rationem agibilia, quae est prudentia, requiritur quod homo habeat virtutem moralem.” See also ad 1: “Ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitum finis: sed appetitus finis praecedit rationem ratiocinantem ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam: sicut etiam in speculativis intellectus principiorum est principium rationis syllogizantis.”

<sup>849</sup> I-II, q. 66 ad 3: *Responsione ad tertium eiusdem articuli, dubium arduum occurrit in via Auctoris, et simpliciter: quomodo scilicet sit verum prudentiam dirigere morales virtutes etiam in praestituendo finem. Et simpliciter quidem in II-II, loco allegato. Superioribus quidem, pro quanto dictum fuit, quod prudentia principium, quod est finis, habet a virtute morali, quia qualis unusquisque est, talis ei finis videtur. Inferioribus autem, quia expresse negabitur ex proposito, prudentiam praestituere finem moralibus virtutibus...* Ad huius difficultatis evidentiam, ponendus ante oculos est progressus nostrae mentis in istis, ut ex eo rationem dictorum sumere et reddere valeamus: et quid simpliciter, et quid secundum quid intelligatur, discernamus” (Leonine ed., 6, 433).

principles, this inclination of the appetite is, nevertheless, not a virtue because it is imperfect.<sup>851</sup>

Cajetan goes on to explain that prudence is generated by the virtue of synderesis, which enables one to "frequently discourse about the end" just as moral virtue is generated thanks to prudence since it is in virtue of prudence that one is able to frequently choose the right mean.<sup>852</sup> For him, this is the reason Thomas says "prudence is more noble than the moral virtues and moves them: but synderesis moves prudence as the understanding of principles moves [the virtue of] knowledge."<sup>853</sup> Accordingly, "the absolutely first end of moral virtue is not from prudence, but from synderesis."<sup>854</sup> The natural reason is "the first of all the things in our mind" and, through it (Cajetan says), "we naturally judge not only that every good ought to be pursued and every evil fled from—and that happiness ought to be desired and misery avoided—but also that the good of reason ought to be pursued and the evil opposed to it ought to be shunned."<sup>855</sup> Through synderesis, moreover, we also know "not only the ultimate end but also the proper ends of the

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<sup>850</sup> It is striking that he calls it a 'virtue' because it is clearly a natural habit that is neither acquired nor infused. Nevertheless, in II-II, q. 49 a. 2 ad 1, Thomas says "the understanding which is an intellectual virtue" is that whereby we know "practical universal principles such as, 'one should do evil to no man, as shown above' and he is thus clearly referring back to II-II, q. 47 a. 6, which speaks about synderesis. Synderesis, therefore, can be called a virtue even if it is a natural virtue.

<sup>851</sup> *In mente nostra primo omnium est synderesis, qua non solum omne bonum prosequendum et malum fugiendum, felicitatem appetendam et miseriam fugiendam; sed bonum rationis prosequendum, et malum oppositum vitandum, iudicamus naturaliter. Et hinc in appetitu etiam naturaliter inest non solum inclinatio ad bonum prosequendum et malum vitandum, ad beatitudinem appetendam et miseriam fugiendam; sed imperfecta quaedam inclinatio ad vivendum secundum rectam rationem. Et licet synderesis sit virtus, quia est intellectus principiorum; inclinatio tamen haec appetitus non est virtus, quia imperfecta est.*

<sup>852</sup> *sicut prudentia generatur frequenti discursu ex fine, sic praeexistente et concludente medium; ita virtus moralis generatur ex frequenti electione subsequente* (on q. 66 a. 3).

<sup>853</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.6 ad 3: *prudentia sit nobilior virtutibus moralibus, et moveat eas: sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam.*

<sup>854</sup> Cajetan on q. 66 a. 3: *finis virtutis moralis absolute praestituitur primo, non a prudentia, sed a synderesi.*

<sup>855</sup> *In mente nostra primo omnium est synderesis, qua non solum omne bonum prosequendum et malum fugiendum, felicitatem appetendam et miseriam fugiendam; sed bonum rationis prosequendum et malum oppositum vitandum, iudicamus naturaliter* (on I-II, q. 66 a. 3; XII, 433); cited in Farrell, 104.

moral virtues in things we undergo as much as in things we do (*in passionibus et operationibus*).<sup>856</sup> Cajetan adds that we reason "discursively from principles of this sort that have been made firm in the intellect."<sup>857</sup> Examples he gives of such principles are that "the good of reason ought to be followed in matters pertaining to fears and similarly in matters of bodily desires and those pertaining to anger and operations." Synderesis, for him, appoints these ends whereas "one looks to prudence to make use of these principles."<sup>858</sup>

All of this is remarkably consonant with Thomas' own view. The naturally known beginnings (*principia*) that are the ends of the moral virtues preexist, Aquinas says, in the reason.<sup>859</sup> Moreover, the natural reason appoints the end to man that he ought not to divert from reason on account of the appetites.<sup>860</sup> Prudence remains essential as a *sine qua non* for attaining the mean of reason in practical matters,<sup>861</sup> but the impetus to attain the mean of reason in the first place is due to the dictate of synderesis/natural reason. For this reason, Cajetan says "prudence

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<sup>856</sup> *Synderesi igitur in intellectu iudicante proponente non solum finem ultimum, sed fines proprios virtutum moralium, dum in passionibus et operationibus, secundum rationem vivendum iudicat.* Cajetan on I-II, q. 66 a. 3.

<sup>857</sup> On I-II, q. 66 a. 3 (XII, 433): *synderesi igitur in intellectu iudicante et proponente non solum finem ultimum, sed fines proprios virtutum moralium.*

<sup>858</sup> On II-II, q. 47 a. 7: *virtuti morali finis praestituitur a synderesi: quia naturalis ratio dictat quod in timoribus bonum rationis, et similiter in concupiscentiis, et similiter in ira et operationibus sectandum est.... ad prudentiam spectat uti principiis his.* For a discussion of this text, see Farrell, 105.

<sup>859</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6c.: *fines moralium virtutum praeexistunt in ratione ... in ratione practica praeexistunt quaedam, ut principia naturaliter nota: et huiusmodi sunt fines virtutum moralium: quia finis se habet in operabilibus, sicut principium in speculativis, ut supra habitum est (q. 23. art. 7. ad 2. et q. 26. art. 1. ad 1. et 1-2. q. 13. art. 3.); et quaedam sunt in ratione practica, ut conclusiones: et huiusmodi sunt ea quae sunt ad finem, in quae pervenimus ex ipsis finibus: et horum est prudentia, applicans universalia principia ad particulares conclusiones operabilium; et ideo ad prudentiam non pertinet praestituere finem virtutibus moralibus, sed solum disponere de his quae sunt ad finem.*

<sup>860</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 7c.: *hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae, est finis proprius cujuslibet virtutis moralis: temperantia enim hoc intendit, ne propter concupiscentias homo divertat a ratione: et similiter fortitudo, ne a recto iudicio rationis divertat propter timorem, vel audaciam: et hic finis praestitutus est homini secundum naturalem rationem: naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique, ut secundum rationem operetur.*

<sup>861</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 7c., continued: *sed qualiter, et per quae homo in operando attingat medium rationis, pertinet ad rationem [al. dispositionem] prudentiae: licet enim attingere medium sit finis virtutis moralis: tamen per rectam dispositionem eorum quae sunt ad finem, medium invenitur.*

directs moral virtue" by applying the end made known by synderesis to some particular matter."<sup>862</sup> Farrell, accordingly, observes that Cajetan can be understood to be saying synderesis sets the ends for the cardinal-moral virtues by dictating what it means for the appetites to follow the good of reason.<sup>863</sup>

It is, in a sense, more accurate to say synderesis appoints the end because it appoints the ultimate ends and makes possible the "discourse... which generates prudence."<sup>864</sup> Since this discourse requires "principles fixed in the intellect" and not only "inchoate in the appetite" due to the natural ordering towards reason, the prudent man is not solely reliant upon appetite. At the same time, presupposing the appetites being moved in the appropriate way thanks to their natural inclination to follow reason, prudence appoints the mean that is the end of the moral virtues and thus appoints the end in this qualified sense.

Cajetan's perceptive reading of the *Summa* led him to understand Thomas as maintaining that there must be an antecedent apprehension of natural reason that stands as a foundation of the moral life. We now turn to the text of the *Scriptum* that takes head on the question of the appointing of ends vis-à-vis the roles of prudence and synderesis.

### **C. *Scriptum*, Book III, Distinction 33**

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<sup>862</sup> *simpliciter verum est quod prudentia dirigit virtutem moralem praestituendo illi finem, non primo et absolute, sed applicando illum ad specialem materiam occurrentem* (Cajetan on I-II, q. 66 a. 3).

<sup>863</sup> See Farrell, 104. He cites comments of Cajetan on I-II, q. 58 a. 5 (*Prima praemissa et propositio spectans ad synderesin, verbi gratia, 'Bonum rationis tam in passionibus et operationibus, est prosequendum'*) and II-II, q. 47 a. 6 (*Auctor enim sentit quod virtuti morali finis praestituitur a synderesi: quia naturalis ratio dictat quod in timoribus bonum rationis, et similiter in concupiscentiis, et similiter in ira et operationibus sectandum est*).

<sup>864</sup> Cajetan commentary on ST I-II, q. 66, a. 3 (no. 12): *discurritur ex huiusmodi principiis firmatis in intellectu et inchoatis in appetitu, subsumendo aliquod minus universale, puta abstinere a delectationibus venereis, republicam defendendam; et concluditur modus in delectationibus, et sic de aliis. Hic autem discursus prudentiae generativus est*. Fr. Flannery's translation of this passage speaks of reasoning "discursively from such principles fixed in the intellect and inchoate in the appetite, subsuming something less universal." This discourse precedes prudence and thus the prudent man is not solely reliant upon appetite. Farrell, 105.

For St. Thomas, prudence is about “the means which we gather from the *ends* themselves” (II-II q.47 a.6 c.); whatever the ends are, prudence does not strictly pertain to them. As we saw in Cajetan, this seems to mean that it relies upon the natural habit of synderesis for those ends and that it does not deliberate about them as if it has some say over them and can simply invent them on its own after having consulted the appetites. We mentioned in the introduction that Bradley referenced I-II, q. 66 as "one exception" to Thomas' usual deference to "the original Aristotelian dichotomy between wishing for ends and deliberating and choosing (solely) about the means."<sup>865</sup> For Bradley, the *Prima Secundae* text is an exception to his reiteration of Aristotle's "narrow view of deliberation and choice"<sup>866</sup> for if prudence can appoint the end, it must be able to deliberate about it. Is this necessarily so?

Nearly everything we have seen thus far has suggested there is no deliberation about the ends appointed by synderesis since it is not subject to free will.<sup>867</sup> If by saying prudence appoints the end, Thomas meant to suggest there is deliberation about ultimate ends, this would indeed be noteworthy, but given Aquinas' consistency elsewhere, we should not expect such a significant alteration. Actually, Thomas occasionally makes it known when he changes his mind or wishes to add further nuance. In the *Secunda Secundae*, for example, he diverged from his own earlier position found in the *Prima Secundae* when he revisited the question of the scope of the gift of

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<sup>865</sup> Denis J.M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good*, 206-207.

<sup>866</sup> Bradley, 207.

<sup>867</sup> *Liberum arbitrium* is distinguished from the judgment of synderesis in *DV*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 15: *Ad decimumquintum dicendum, quod iudicium est duplex, scilicet in universali, et hoc pertinet ad synderesim; et in particulari operabili, et est hoc iudicium electionis, et hoc pertinet ad liberum arbitrium, unde non sequitur quod sint idem.*

*Liberum arbitrium* is distinguished from the judgment of conscience in *DV*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *Differt autem iudicium conscientiae et liberi arbitrii, quia iudicium conscientiae consistit in pura cognitione, iudicium autem liberi arbitrii in applicatione cognitionis ad affectionem: quod quidem iudicium est iudicium electionis.*

understanding. He recalled what he had said earlier and then said it is better to say it applies to both practical and speculative matters as opposed to only the former.<sup>868</sup> There is no reason we should not expect something similarly clear in this case if he somewhat suddenly decided that prudence is able to deliberate about ends themselves. There must, therefore, be another way of interpreting Aquinas' intention when he said prudence appoints the end. As it turns out, the following *Scriptum* texts addresses this issue while also calling to mind the role of natural reason/synderesis:

For the perfection of moral virtue, three things are necessary. First is the appointing of the end. Second is the inclination to the end appointed. Third is the choice of the means (*ea quae sunt ad finem*). Now the proximate end of human life is the good of reason in general (*in communi*). For this reason, Dionysius says that man's evil is to be against reason and therefore in all the moral virtues, it is intended that passions and actions be reduced to the rectitude of reason. Now rectitude belongs to the natural reason.

Accordingly, in this way the appointing of the end pertains to the natural reason and precedes prudence just as the understanding of principles precedes science. And therefore the Philosopher says in the sixth book of the *Ethics* that prudence has the ends of the virtues as its principles. But this good of reason is determined inasmuch as the mean is constituted in actions and passions by a fitting commensuration of circumstances, which prudence brings about (*facit*). Thus the mean of moral virtue, as it is said in the second book of the *Ethics*, is according to right reason, which is prudence. And thus prudence in a certain measure appoints the end to the moral virtues and is mixed in with their acts. But the inclination to that end pertains to moral virtue which consents in the good of reason by way of nature. And this inclination to the end is called choice inasmuch as the proximate end is ordered to the ultimate end. And therefore the Philosopher says in the second book of the *Ethics* that moral virtue brings about right choice. But the discrimination of those things by which we are able to attain this good of reason in

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<sup>868</sup> See, II-II, q. 8 a. 6.



actions and passions is the act of prudence. Accordingly, the appointing of the end precedes the act of prudence and of moral virtue. But the inclination to the end, or the right choice of the proximate end, is principally an act of moral virtue though it is from prudence as from an origin. Thus the Philosopher says that rectitude of choice is in the other virtues from prudence just as the rectitude in the intention of nature is from the divine wisdom directing nature. And in this way, an act of prudence can even be said to be mixed in with the acts of the other virtues. For as the natural inclination is from the natural reason, so the inclination of moral virtue is from prudence. Now inasmuch as choice implies the precept of reason about things to be pursued, choice pertains to the means. But the act of prudence is its own and distinct from the acts of the other virtues.<sup>869</sup>

Though Thomas also grants here that prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues (as he did in I-II q. 66 a. 3), there is no indication one prudentially deliberates about ends. Actually, the natural reason is responsible for the natural inclination. Pursuant to that natural inclination, prudence has a guiding power over the inclination of moral virtue and is, in fact, a source of it. It

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<sup>869</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 3 c.:

*Respondeo dicendum, quod ad perfectionem virtutis moralis tria sunt necessaria. Primum est praestitutio finis; secundum autem est inclinatio ad finem praestitutum; tertium est electio eorum quae sunt ad finem. Finis autem proximus humanae vitae est bonum rationis in communi; unde dicit Dionysius, quod malum hominis est contra rationem esse: et ideo est intentum in omnibus virtutibus moralibus, ut passiones et operationes ad rectitudinem rationis reducantur. Rectitudo autem rationis naturalis est; unde hoc modo praestitutio finis ad naturalem rationem pertinet, et praecedit prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam; et ideo dicit philosophus, 6 Ethic., quod prudentia habet principia fines virtutum. Sed hoc bonum rationis determinatur secundum quod constituitur medium in actionibus et passionibus per debitam commensurationem circumstantiarum, quod facit prudentia. Unde medium virtutis moralis, ut in 2 Ethic. dicitur, est secundum rationem rectam, quae est prudentia; et sic quodammodo prudentia praestituit finem virtutibus moralibus, et ejus actus in earum actibus immiscetur; sed inclinatio in finem illum pertinet ad virtutem moralem quae consentit in bonum rationis per modum naturae: et haec inclinatio in finem dicitur electio, inquantum finis proximus ad finem ultimum ordinatur. Et ideo dicit philosophus, 2 Ethic., quod virtus moralis facit electionem rectam. Sed discretio eorum quibus hoc bonum rationis consequi possumus et in operationibus et in passionibus, est actus prudentiae: unde praestitutio finis praecedit actum prudentiae et virtutis moralis; sed inclinatio in finem, sive recta electio finis proximi, est actus moralis virtutis principaliter, sed prudentiae originaliter. Unde philosophus dicit, quod rectitudo electionis est in aliis virtutibus a prudentia, sicut rectitudo in intentione naturae est ex sapientia divina ordinante naturam: et secundum hoc actus etiam prudentiae immixtus est actibus aliarum virtutum. Sicut enim inclinatio naturalis est a ratione naturali, ita inclinatio virtutis moralis a prudentia; electio autem eorum quae sunt ad finem, secundum quod electio importat praeceptum rationis de his prosequendis. Sed actus prudentiae sibi proprius est, et distinctus ab actibus aliarum virtutum.*

brings about a "fitting commensuration of circumstances" by ensuring there is a "right choice of the proximate end." Accordingly, what Bradley refers to as the "narrow view" of choice remains. Prudence appoints the end inasmuch as it enables one to choose well about proximate ends - which are strictly means. In other words, the appointing of the end by the natural reason (to which rectitude belongs more originally), is prior to deliberation and choice and its act of appointing precedes both prudence and moral virtue.

Thomas' own explanation and resolution of the difficulty is practically identical to Cajetan's even though the latter did not seem to be aware of this text. For both of them, the appointing of the end precedes the inclination of the appetite, which prudence must necessarily look to. At the same time, prudence appoints the end to the moral virtues since it is their origin in the sense that it specifies what the commensurate act is in actions and passions given various circumstances; in other words, it appoints the end that is the mean.

### **Capreolus on the *Scriptum***

Capreolus, the fifteenth-century commentator of Aquinas who has been called the "Prince of the Commentators," quoted *the Scriptum* text in full and then explained its meaning as follows.

Thus this is what he says. He posits something similar in II-II 47 q. 6 a. 6, except that he says there that it does not pertain to prudence to appoint the end to the moral virtues, but only those things that are for the end; for the natural reason, which is called synderesis, appoints the end to the moral virtues; and, although the moral virtues tend to the end appointed by natural reason and not by prudence, they are nevertheless helped in this regard by prudence, which prepares the way for them by disposing those things that are for the end. And this last argument seems more probable. But whatever is the case with

this, it appears from the foregoing that the habit of prudence is not able to be generated in someone through whichever dictates of the understanding or of reason (from which moral virtue is generated), unless the acts of the appetite concur, as was related above about I-II, q. 58 a. 5 in the solution to the first objection, where he speaks thus: "Reason, inasmuch as it apprehends the end precedes the appetite of the end; but the appetite for the end precedes reason reasoning for the sake of choosing those things that are for the end; which pertains to prudence,"<sup>870</sup> and so on.<sup>871</sup>

Although Capreolus and Cajetan are similar, the former takes a stand and says the II-II q. 47 text was "more probable." All things considered, this seems the best solution. Although prudence can be said to appoint the end to the moral virtues inasmuch as it presupposes the ends appointed by God, nature, and natural reason, still the ends it appoints are properly speaking the mean between two vicious extremes. In moral matters, the ends are the first principles and there seems no denying that since the appointing of the end precedes prudence, that which most truly appoints the end is synderesis.

#### D. The Content of Synderesis

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<sup>870</sup> I-II, q. 58 a. 5 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitum finis: sed appetitus finis praecedit rationem ratiocinantem ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam: sicut etiam in speculativis intellectus principiorum est principium rationis syllogizantis.*

<sup>871</sup> Joannis Capreoli Tholosani Ordinis Praedicatorum, Thomistarum Principis: *Defensiones Theologiae, De Novo Editae Cura Et Studio Paban et Pegues, Tomus V* (Turonibus: Cattier; 1904), Distinction 36, q. 1 p. 431. *Simile ponit, 2ae 2ae, q. 47, art. 6; nisi quod ibi dicit quod ad prudentiam non pertinet praestituere finem virtutibus moralibus, sed solum de his quae sunt ad finem; finem autem virtutibus moralibus praestituit ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis; et, licet virtutes morales tendant in finem praestitutum a ratione naturali, et non a prudentia, tamen ad hoc juvantur per prudentiam, quae eis viam parat, disponendo ea quae sunt ad finem. Et hoc ultimum videtur probabilius. Quidquid autem sic de hoc, apparet ex praemissis quod habitus prudentiae non potest in aliquo generari per quaecumque dictamina intellectus vel rationis, nisi concurrant actus appetitus, ex quibus generatur virtus moralis; sicut supra allegatum fuit (b) de I-II, q. 58, art 5, in solutione primi, ubi sic dicit: "Ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitus finis; sed appetitus finis praecedit rationem ratiocinantem ad eligendum ea quae sunt ad finem; quod pertinet ad prudentiam, etc."*

We have seen that as noble as prudence is, it is subject to the appointing that comes from synderesis. What is it that is appointed though? It is not always clear if Aquinas has *one* thing in mind, such as the precept to obey reason or pursue the good, or alternatively, whether it is actually many, such as the prohibition against harming anyone<sup>872</sup> and the principle that "God ought to be obeyed."<sup>873</sup> In book three of the *Scriptum*, Thomas speaks of the prudence as proceeding "to choice and deliberation" from the ends of the other virtues" that are its principles. These ends are said to "preexist in the reason essentially," and so the reason in question seems to be the natural reason known as synderesis.<sup>874</sup> As a consequence, these "ends" too (which are multiple since "the good of reason is not found in all matters of morality in the same way"<sup>875</sup>), seem to pertain to the content of synderesis. But are there any other ends pertaining to the habit of synderesis?

In the *Scriptum* passage, Thomas seemed to identify the end of the moral virtues as the good of reason and Cajetan speaks of it in these terms frequently.<sup>876</sup> Actually, in the example he gives of a practical syllogism, the first premise he gives is "the good of reason is to be pursued as

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<sup>872</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 5 ad 4: *statim ratio naturalis homini dictat, quod nulli injuriam faciat*; II-II q.49 a.2 ad 1: *...qui est cognoscitivus universalium; quod pertinet ad intellectum, qui ponitur virtus intellectualis, quae naturaliter nobis cognita sunt non solum universalia principia speculativa, sed etiam practica; sicut: Nulli esse malefaciendum.*

<sup>873</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 3 a. 2 c. *Respondeo dicendum, quod sicut ex praedictis patet, prima principia, quibus ratio dirigitur in agendis, sunt per se nota; et circa ea non contingit errare, sicut nec contingit errare ipsum demonstrantem circa principia prima. Haec autem principia agendorum naturaliter cognita ad synderesim pertinent, sicut Deo esse obediendum, et similia.*

<sup>874</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 5 ad 6: *Ad sextum dicendum, quod sicut ratio speculativa procedit ad conclusionem ex principiis per se notis, ita ratio prudentiae procedit ad electionem et consilium de his quae sunt ad finem, ex fine; et ideo dicuntur fines aliarum virtutum esse principia prudentiae. Hi tamen fines praeexistunt in ratione essentialiter: quia ad hoc tendit virtus moralis ut appetitus rationi concordet; unde his finibus maxime prudentia quae rationem perficit, est affinis.*

<sup>875</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 1 a. 1 qc. 1 c.: *quia non in omnibus materiis moralibus eodem modo invenitur rationis bonum, ut patet; ideo oportet diversas virtutes morales esse specie differentes.*

<sup>876</sup> Commenting on I-II, q. 55 a. 2, he says the "proximate end of moral virtue itself" is "the good of reason in such matter, which is the mean in some matter determined by reason."

much as in passions as in operations "<sup>877</sup> and he refers to this good of reason as the "beginning of prudence"<sup>878</sup> and the "one end of temperance."<sup>879</sup> He also explains II-II, q. 47's contention that the end is appointed to the moral virtues by prudence in virtue of synderesis dictating "what the good of reason that should be followed is."<sup>880</sup> If we were to prescind from Thomas' assertions elsewhere pertaining to synderesis' content, we might agree with Porter and others that "the end ... appointed to man according to natural reason" consists of nothing else than that it "dictates to each one that he act according to reason,"<sup>881</sup> Though this conclusion is evidently contrary to the thought of Thomas when considering it as a whole, it may be helpful to further consider the foundations and implications of such a claim.

For Thomas, synderesis is not open to opposites because it is "determined to one."<sup>882</sup> If we were to apply Ockham's razor here, synderesis would be really reduced to some hard to identify principle pertaining to reason in some way. Sherwin speaks of "some cognitive understanding of human flourishing" and happiness<sup>883</sup> whereas Keenan and Porter speak of

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<sup>877</sup> On I-II, 58 a. 5c.: *Prima praemissa est propositio spectans ad synderesin, verbi gratia: Bonum rationis tam in passionibus quam operationibus, est prosequendum.*

<sup>878</sup> Ibid.: *bonum rationis, quod est principium prudentiae.*

<sup>879</sup> On I-II, q. 69, article 2: *bonum rationis in delectationibus tactus est finis unus temperantiae, et in timoribus et audaciis finis unus fortitudinis, et sic de aliis; ita bonum rationis in universo genere agibilibus, est finis unicus prudentiae.*

<sup>880</sup> On II-II, q. 47 a. 6: *virtuti morali finis praestituitur a synderesi: quia naturalis ratio dictat quod in timoribus bonum rationis, et similiter in concupiscentiis, et similiter in ira et operationibus sectandum est.*

<sup>881</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 7 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae est finis proprius cuiuslibet moralis virtutis, temperantia enim hoc intendit, ne propter concupiscentias homo divertat a ratione; et similiter fortitudo ne a recto iudicio rationis divertat propter timorem vel audaciam. Et hic finis praestitutus est homini secundum naturalem rationem, naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique ut secundum rationem operetur. Sed qualiter et per quae homo in operando attingat medium rationis pertinet ad dispositionem prudentiae. Licet enim attingere medium sit finis virtutis moralis, tamen per rectam dispositionem eorum quae sunt ad finem medium invenitur.*

<sup>882</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 3 s. c. 1: *Sed contra, potentia rationalis se habet ad opposita. Sed synderesis se habet determinate ad unum, quia nunquam errat. Ergo videtur quod non sit potentia, sed habitus.*

<sup>883</sup> See, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 19-20.

following reason. Other options might be the precept to "pursue the perfect good as known by reason."

The first observation to be made, however, is that synderesis can pertain to either the higher or the lower reason:

Synderesis names neither the superior nor the inferior reason, but is related commonly to both. For in the habit itself of universal principles of law, certain things pertaining to eternal concepts (*rationes*) are contained, as, for instance, this principle: that God ought to be obeyed. Some precepts, however, pertain to inferior concepts; as, for instance, that one ought to live according to reason.<sup>884</sup>

For this reason, man is exhorted in virtue of his natural reason to turn himself to God as soon as he hits the age of reason. It pertains to the rational creature's nature itself that God ought to be obeyed because there is a twofold law in man; namely, human reason and the eternal law - and the natural law is a participation in the later that, as one might expect, comes naturally to a rational creature.<sup>885</sup> In a sense, therefore, the natural law is not "something different from the eternal law because it is nothing but a certain participation in it."<sup>886</sup> Although Thomas sometimes refers to the distinction between the proximate rule that is reason and the "first rule, namely the eternal law, which is as the reason of God"<sup>887</sup> in terms of the natural and supernatural orders,<sup>888</sup>

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<sup>884</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 ad 9: *Ad nonum dicendum, quod synderesis neque nominat superiorem rationem neque inferiorem, sed aliquid communiter se habens ad utramque. In ipso enim habitu universalium principiorum iuris continentur quaedam quae pertinent ad rationes aeternas, ut hoc quod est Deo esse obediendum; quaedam vero quae pertinent ad rationes inferiores, utpote secundum rationem esse vivendum.*

<sup>885</sup> I-II, q. 91 a. 2 c. speaks of the natural law as a participation of the rational creature in the eternal law.

<sup>886</sup> I-II, q. 91 a. 2 ad 1: *ratio illa procederet, si lex naturalis esset aliquid diversum a lege aeterna: non autem est nisi quaedam participatio ejus, ut dictum est.*

<sup>887</sup> I-II q.71 a.6 c.: *Regula autem voluntatis humanae est duplex: una propinqua, et homogenea, scilicet ipsa humana ratio: alia vero est prima regula, scilicet lex aeterna, quae est quasi ratio Dei.*

<sup>888</sup> In the following text from II-II, q. 17 a. 1 c., the context is the supernatural virtue of hope: *Humanorum autem actuum, sicut supra dictum est, duplex est mensura, una quidem proxima et homogenea, scilicet ratio; alia autem est suprema et excedens, scilicet Deus. Et ideo omnis actus humanus attingens ad rationem aut ad ipsum Deum est bonus.*

the eternal law can at least in part<sup>889</sup> be known by man naturally and to the extent that it can be, we might think of that as pertaining to the realm of the 'higher reason.'

Synderesis consequently pertains to both higher and lower principles. So when Keenan asserts "*synderesis* appoints the end of each moral virtue, which ends (sic) are ... to act according to reason,"<sup>890</sup> he is, at the very least, not being specific enough because one of those kinds of reason we naturally know to act according to is the *eternal* reason. In virtue of our rational participation in it, even the commandments themselves are reduced to natural law.

Thomas even refers to the principles of the Decalogue as *per se* known,<sup>891</sup> so there must be more than one principle that is an end appointed by synderesis or natural reason. At the same time, a distinction needs to be made between the certitude one is able to have about the Ten Commandments:

Every judgment of the practical reason proceeds from certain naturally known principles.... It is necessary that all the moral precepts pertain to the law of nature, but in diverse ways. For there are some, which the natural reason of any man immediately judges to be done or not to be done, such as, "Honor your father and mother," "You shalt not kill," and "You shalt not steal." And these are absolutely of the law of nature... However, there are some that human reason requires divine instruction to make

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<sup>889</sup> That nature does need assistance in knowing the eternal law is evident from I-II q. 19 a.4 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum, quod licet lex aeterna sit nobis ignota, secundum quod est in mente divina; innotescit tamen nobis aliquantulum vel per rationem naturalem, quae ab ea derivatur, ut propria ejus imago, vel per aliqualem revelationem superadditam*; See also, I-II q. 71 a.6 ad 5 ("The eternal law directs us in many things that surpass human reason, e.g. in matters of faith" [*per legem aeternam regulemur in multis, quae excedunt rationem humanam; sicut in his, quae sunt fidei*]);

I-II q. 19 a.4 c. ("*Multo magis dependet bonitas voluntatis humanae a lege aeterna, quam a ratione humana: et ubi deficit humana ratio, oportet ad rationem aeternam recurrere*").

<sup>890</sup> James F. Keenan, "The Virtue of Prudence (IIa IIae, Qq. 47–56)," 260.

<sup>891</sup> II-II, q. 170 a. 2 ad 1 says this of all Ten Commandments: *praecepta Decalogi, quae sunt prima principia per se nota*.

judgments about.... as, "you shall not make to yourself a graven thing, nor the likeness of anything" and "You shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."<sup>892</sup>

On the one hand, this text makes it clear that Aquinas maintains there is more than one principle. On the other, however, one wonders whether any of the Commandments absolutely pertain to indemonstrable naturally known principles known by everyone. In other words, even though the "dictate" of synderesis necessarily moves prudence since the "natural reason" appoints "the ends of human life, which in things to be done are as the naturally known principles in speculative things,"<sup>893</sup> the reality is that someone who has freely developed a habit of turning more towards the good of the sensitive appetites than the good proposed by the natural reason need not be perfectly directed by synderesis, as we will see.

In question ninety-four of the *Prima Secundae* (among other places), Thomas distinguishes between principles that are *per se* known in themselves and those which are *per se* known to us. In that same article, he speaks of the "order of natural inclinations" corresponding to the "order of the precepts of the natural law."<sup>894</sup> The "natural inclination to the fitting act and

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<sup>892</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c.: *Sicut autem omne iudicium rationis speculativae procedit a naturali cognitione primorum principiorum, ita etiam omne iudicium rationis practicae procedit ex quibusdam principiis naturaliter cognitis, ut supra dictum est.... necesse est quod omnia praecepta moralia pertineant ad legem naturae, sed diversimode. Quaedam enim sunt, quae statim per se ratio naturalis cujuslibet hominis dijudicat esse facienda, vel non facienda; sicut: Honora patrem tuum, et matrem; et: Non occides: Non furtum facies: et hujusmodi sunt absolute de lege naturae: quaedam vero sunt, quae subtiliori consideratione rationis, a sapientibus judicantur esse observanda: et ista sic sunt de lege naturae, ut tamen indigeant disciplina, qua minores a sapientibus instruantur, sicut illud: Coram cano capite consurge, et honora personam senis, et alia hujusmodi: quaedam vero sunt, ad quae judicanda ratio humana indiget instructione divina, per quam erudimur de divinis: sicut est illud: Non facies tibi sculptile, neque omnem similitudinem: Non assumes nomen Dei tui in vanum.*

<sup>893</sup> II-II, q. 56 a. 1 c.: *praecepta decalogi sicut data sunt omni populo, ita etiam cadunt in existimationem omnium, quasi ad naturalem rationem pertinentia: praecipue autem sunt de dictamine rationis naturalis fines humanae vitae, qui se habent in agendis, sicut principia naturaliter cognita in speculativis.* As the previous footnotes makes clear, even at this time, synderesis is equated with natural reason.

<sup>894</sup> I-II, q. 94 a. 2 c.: *secundum igitur ordinem inclinationum naturalium est ordo praeceptorum legis naturae.*



end" that is possessed by all creatures is possessed in a special way by the rational creature.<sup>895</sup>

This means there is a teleological order written in nature itself and in the way the intellect and will and all the appetites are naturally ordered. Thanks to his nature, man participates in the eternal law in a more perfect way simply by dint of being a man because he has reason and will. In virtue of these rational faculties, man's nature is well ordered to universal truths and some truths can even be said to come naturally to him in some way. Unfortunately, though, the consequence of the Fall is that the order to objective truth has been hindered somewhat and principles that are "naturally known" seem to be less than natural for some. This is not necessarily all that problematic, however, because nature can only be expected to procure its effects only "more often than not" and thus need not do so in every instance.<sup>896</sup> "Natural things," in other words, only definitively tend to determinate ends "for the most part"<sup>897</sup> so it is enough that these principles are found in the majority of men. The question remains though: what are these principles?

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<sup>895</sup> I-II, q. 91 a. 2 c.: *omnia participant aliquantulum legem aeternam; in quantum scilicet ex impressione ejus habent inclinationes in proprios actus, et fines. Inter caetera autem rationalis creatura excellentiori quodam modo divinae providentiae subjacet, in quantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi, et aliis providens: unde et in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum, et finem: et talis participatio legis aeternae in rationali creatura lex naturalis dicitur.*

<sup>896</sup> *S.Th.*, I q.63 a.9 c.: *Natura enim consequitur suum effectum vel semper, vel ut in pluribus.*

<sup>897</sup> Thomas frequently speaks of nature in terms of acting 'always or for the most part' and thus the natural reason does so as well. I emphasize 'for the most part' because that is all we can definitively expect from nature. One place this is clear is in the *Contra Gentiles*, bk. 1, ch. 44 n. 8: *Omne quod tendit determinate in aliquem finem, aut ipsum praestituit sibi finem, aut praestituitur ei finis ab alio: alias non magis in hunc quam in illum finem tenderet. Naturalia autem tendunt in fines determinatos: non enim a casu naturales utilitates consequuntur: sic enim non essent semper aut in pluribus, sed raro.* Another text is found in the commentary on the *Physics*, in which Thomas says things that come about from nature do not necessarily always come about: *fiunt a proposito vel a natura, fiunt propter finem; et ea quae fiunt propter finem, fiunt semper aut frequenter* (*In Physic.*, bk. 2, lectio 8 n. 8). See also, *De Veritate*, q. 5 a. 2c., which links the notion that natural things can only definitively happen "for the most part" with the appointing of the end: *videmus autem huiusmodi convenientias et utilitates accidere in operibus naturae aut semper, aut in maiori parte; unde non potest esse quod casu accidant; et ita oportet quod procedant ex intentione finis.* Finally, see also the end of the body of *S.Th.*, I, q. 2 a. 3 and q.63 a.9 c.

Thomas says the commandment against stealing is said to be immediately known to the natural reason (otherwise known as synderesis<sup>898</sup>) of every individual<sup>899</sup> because it is *per se nota*<sup>900</sup> even though he also said someone could reason badly on this point and deem stealing to be licit due to bad customs, inordinate passion, or bad dispositions of nature (he gave the *Germani* as an example since, despite the fact that stealing is “clearly contrary to the law of nature,” they used to think it was morally licit).<sup>901</sup> This “natural habit of the ... universal principles of natural law”<sup>902</sup> can, therefore, become clouded in any individual just as it was historically “clouded through the profusion of sins” which necessitated the revealing of the Decalogue.<sup>903</sup> He similarly teaches that the love of God above all things (even more than himself)<sup>904</sup> is something that is “connatural”<sup>905</sup> to humans and implanted in them naturally even

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<sup>898</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1: *virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis.*

<sup>899</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c.: *Sicut autem omne iudicium rationis speculativae procedit a naturali cognitione primorum principiorum, ita etiam omne iudicium rationis practicae procedit ex quibusdam principiis naturaliter cognitis, ut supra dictum est.... necesse est quod omnia praecepta moralia pertineant ad legem naturae, sed diversimode. Quaedam enim sunt quae statim per se ratio naturalis cuiuslibet hominis diiudicat esse facienda vel non facienda, sicut honora patrem tuum et matrem tuam, et, non occides, non furtum facies. Et huiusmodi sunt absolute de lege naturae.*

<sup>900</sup> II-II, q. 170 a. 2 ad 1 says this of all the Commandments: *praecepta Decalogi, quae sunt prima principia per se nota.*

<sup>901</sup> I-II, q. 94 a. 4 c.: *aliquam habent depravatam rationem ex passione, seu ex mala consuetudine, seu ex mala habitudine naturae; sicut apud Germanos olim latrocinium non reputabatur iniquum, cum tamen expresse contra legem naturae.*

<sup>902</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1c.: *est quidam habitus naturalis primorum principiorum operabilium, quae sunt universalis principia iuris naturalis.*

<sup>903</sup> I-II, q. 98 a. 6 c.: *Ex parte vero bonorum lex data est in auxilium; quod quidem tunc maxime populo necessarium fuit, quando lex naturalis obscurari incipiebat propter exuberantiam peccatorum: oportebat enim huiusmodi auxilium quodam ordine dari, ut per imperfecta ad perfectionem manuducerentur; et ideo inter legem naturae, et legem gratiae oportuit legem veterem dari.*

<sup>904</sup> See *S.Th.* I, q. 60 a. 5, which says it pertains to the natural law to love God more than oneself in the *sed contra* and that man loves God by a natural love (*naturali dilectione*) and even more than and before himself. Evidently, he is referring to integral nature since I-II, q. 109 a. 4 ad 3 is clear that man cannot fulfill the commandments without healing grace. Besides, I-II, q. 109 a. 3 maintains that healing grace is necessary for fallen man to not love his own apparent private good ahead of the common good.

<sup>905</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 3 c.: *diligere autem Deum super omnia, est quiddam connaturale homini, et etiam cuilibet creaturae non solum rationali, sed irrationali, et etiam inanimatae secundum modum amoris, qui unicuique creaturae competere potest.* In the reply to the first, he adds: *natura enim diligit Deum super omnia, prout est principium, et finis naturalis boni.* See also I-II, q. 100 a. 3 obj. 1 and reply. 1. The objection mentions the two first and principle precepts (“love the Lord your God and love your neighbor”;

though there are clearly people who deny God's very existence (and, moreover, despite the fact that healing grace is necessary after the Fall in order to love God above all else).<sup>906</sup>

Fallen intellectual creatures can clearly choose in virtue of their free will to reject the Commandments (which are reduced to the natural law)<sup>907</sup> and they can even lose sight of the value of keeping them. In the commentary on the *Ethics*, Thomas explained that this especially happens with evil men, for whom "that which is truly best does not appear so... because the malice that is opposed to virtue perverts the judgment of the reason and lies about the ends which pertain to practical principles."<sup>908</sup> When synderesis has become clouded by such an interposition of disordered appetite deranging particular judgment, a proximate end that is evil can appear good and the will is apt to move the reason to rationalize. Once people have become accustomed to evil principles, they more readily appoint to themselves bad ends: "the good appoint to themselves good ends; the bad, however, appoint evil ends.... as each one is so does the end seem to him."<sup>909</sup> As Thomas explains, that to which the will tends by sinning can be "apprehended as

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*Diliges Dominum Deum tuum et Diliges proximum tuum*) and the response says that they are the "common precepts (*communia praecepta*) of the natural law, which are *per se* known to the human reason." Interestingly, it adds that they are *per se* known either by nature *or* by faith. But if, as II-II, q. 2 a. 10 appears to say, the more something is known by the reason, the less it is known by faith, it seems we must conclude (if faith may be necessary) that natural reason is not actually always definitive about the truth of these two precepts despite the fact that I-II, q. 94 a. 4 c. speaks of the *communia principia* as equally known to all and I-II, q. 91 a. 3 ad 1 speaks of man's practical reason participating in the eternal law naturally by means of such common principles that, as q. 91 a.5 ad 3 adds, are common to the perfect and imperfect alike.

<sup>906</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 3 c.: *homo in statu naturae integrae non indigebat dono gratiae superadditae naturalibus bonis ad diligendum Deum naturaliter super omnia, licet indigeret auxilio Dei ad hoc eum moventis: sed in statu naturae corruptae indiget homo etiam ad hoc auxilio gratiae naturam sanantis.* This passage may be read in in two ways: 1) grace is necessary to do this at all; 2) grace is necessary to possess *the habit* of doing so.

<sup>907</sup> See, I-II, q. 100 a. 1.

<sup>908</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum*, bk. 6, lectio 10 n. 18: *malis non appareat id quod vere est optimum, patet per hoc, quod malitia opposita virtuti pervertit iudicium rationis, et facit mentiri circa fines, qui sunt circa practica principia.*

<sup>909</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 5; *Sed Contra* to arg. 2: *boni praestituunt sibi bonos fines, mali vero malos, ut dicitur in III Ethic.: qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei. Ergo requiritur ad rectitudinem voluntatis, quod sit in ea aliquis habitus virtutis ipsam perficiens.*

something good and fitting to nature inasmuch as it is fitting in virtue of some sensual delight."<sup>910</sup>

In this way, a merely apparent good may be apprehended as a true good and a corrupt habit by which "reason is constrained, lest its dictate issue into choice"<sup>911</sup> can be developed. That this amounts to a clouding of the natural reason is perhaps most clear from the fact that the malicious man is "badly disposed in respect of the *end itself*, which is the principle in matters of action." Since "a defect about the principle is the worst" defect of all, this is no insignificant matter.<sup>912</sup> Nevertheless, even if certain people can lose sight of *per se nota* principles due to personal sins or cultural depravity (as with the *Germani*), Thomas manifestly maintains that there are many foundational moral principles that most people naturally grasp in one way or another. There is no other way of explaining the fact that he considers all the precepts of the Decalogue to be known through themselves<sup>913</sup> and argues that the "common first precepts of the law of nature" need no promulgation because the natural reason makes them known.<sup>914</sup>

Nevertheless, we have encountered a number of scholars who think that the end (in the singular) is presented by synderesis solely in terms of a vague push towards the good and think the natural reason is devoid of substantive content. MacDonald refers to such interpreters of Aquinas as holding to a thin foundationalism.<sup>915</sup> They often essentially think synderesis consists

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<sup>910</sup> I-II, q. 6 a. 4 ad 3: *quod id, in quod voluntas tendit peccando, etsi sit malum, et contra rationalem naturam secundum rei veritatem, apprehenditur tamen ut bonum, et conveniens naturae; inquantum est conveniens homini secundum aliquam delectationem sensus, vel secundum aliquem habitum corruptum.*

<sup>911</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem conscientiae; sicut cum aliquis examinat aliquid quod imminet faciendum, et iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia, hoc esse malum, utpote fornicare cum hac muliere; sed quando incipit applicare ad agendum, occurrunt undique multae circumstantiae ad ipsum actum, utpote fornicationis delectatio, ex cuius concupiscentia ligatur ratio, ne eius dictamen in eius electionem prorumpat.*

<sup>912</sup> I-II, q. 78, a. 4 c.: *ille qui peccat ex certa malitia, est male dispositus quantum ad ipsum finem, qui est principium in operabilibus... semper autem defectus principii est pessimus.*

<sup>913</sup> II-II, q. 170 a. 2 ad 1: *praecepta Decalogi... sunt prima principia per se nota.*

<sup>914</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 4 ad 1: *prima praecepta communia legis naturae sunt per se nota habenti rationem naturalem, et promulgatione non indigent.*

<sup>915</sup> Scott MacDonald in "Foundations in Aquinas's Ethics" in *Objectivism, Subjectivism and Relativism in Ethics* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 350: "Commentators often suppose that Aquinas takes this

solely of the first principle, whether that centers around the good or reason. We have seen Porter and Keenan arguing along these lines, though David Nelson can be added to their number.

Farrell and Steven Long have both analyzed Nelson's position, and the former summarizes it as follows:

Nelson argues that for Aquinas synderesis possesses a thin natural knowledge of our end. Natural reason does not possess any substantial standard of moral judgment. Rather, it is only through deliberation that we discover the secondary natural law precepts, which provide us with some measure of substantial action-guidance."<sup>916</sup>

The consequence is that, for Nelson, matters pertaining to the natural law are really too vague or abstract to be "a source of concrete moral information."<sup>917</sup>

The question that arises is how proponents of a thin foundationalism can square their view with the fact that synderesis moves prudence<sup>918</sup> and with the texts we have encountered speaking of a variety of precepts that are *per se nota* to in virtue of man's rational nature. How would synderesis, an intellectual habit, move prudence if it has no specific and substantial information? Also, how would it make sense for Thomas to say "the ends of human life are from the dictate of natural reason, which are, in practical things, like the naturally known principles in

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foundationalist account of practical reasoning to license a moral theory, and in particular a theory of natural law, with thick foundations: universal, objective, self-evident, substantive moral principles from which all morality can be derived. But some foundationalisms are thinner than others, and I will argue that Aquinas's foundationalism about practical reasoning is among the thin ones and is thinner than what these interpreters suppose."

<sup>916</sup> Farrell, *The Ends of the Moral Virtues*, 110–11, and Daniel Mark Nelson, *Priority of Prudence: Virtue and Natural Law in Thomas Aquinas and the Implications for Modern Ethics* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), 91–111. For Long's assessment, see his review of Nelson's *Priority of Prudence* in *Review of Metaphysics* 46, no. 2 (1992): 413–13. See also Long, "A Note on Jean Porter's *Nature as Reason*," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 6, no. 3 (2008): 681–88.

<sup>917</sup> Nelson, *Priority of Prudence*, 72; quoted by Long on 413.

<sup>918</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.6 ad 3: *sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam*.

speculative things"<sup>919</sup> if there were really only knowledge of one relatively content-less end?

Finally, why would Thomas argue that "prudence is not about *ends* but about means"<sup>920</sup> and that the "*ends* of an upright human life are determined"<sup>921</sup> if there were no way of determining those ends besides relying upon appetite or an "athematic"<sup>922</sup> conception of the good?

If prudence were to take as its starting point merely the appetites, this would essentially be reduced to a case of the tail wagging the dog, as it were. There is no doubt that for Thomas, reason is what is highest in us and we should act in accordance with reason. But if prudence has no cognized and — at least — mostly reliable principles from which to proceed, how would man truly do that which is most proper to him well? There must, then, be some way to have intellectual knowledge about ends. Just as the speculative intellect needs solid principles from which to work, so does the practical intellect.

A clarification is called for here. The fact that synderesis is a *natural* habit does not imply that Thomas subscribes to Kantian *apriorism*. Although Thomas thinks there are naturally known principles, a "natural habit, as the understanding of principles, needs its knowledge to be determined through the senses,"... just as "the habit of faith receives a determination on our part," and in this way, even the "habit of the principles is said to be acquired through sense as regards the distinction of the principles, not as regards the light by which the principles are known."<sup>923</sup>

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<sup>919</sup> II-II, q. 56 a. 1 c.: *Respondeo dicendum, quod, sicut supra dictum est (1-2. q. 100. art. 1.), cum de praeceptis ageretur, praecepta decalogi sicut data sunt omni populo, ita etiam cadunt in existimationem omnium, quasi ad naturalem rationem pertinentia: praecipue autem sunt de dictamine rationis naturalis fines humanae vitae, qui se habent in agendis, sicut principia naturaliter cognita in speculativis.*

<sup>920</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 15 c.: *prudencia non circa fines, sed circa ea quae sunt ad finem*

<sup>921</sup> Ibid., *fines autem recti humanae vitae sunt determinati* (emphasis added).

<sup>922</sup> See Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 103.

<sup>923</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 23 q. 3 a. 2 ad 1: *Naturalis autem habitus, sicut intellectus principiorum, indiget ut cognitio determinetur per sensum, quo acquisitus non indiget: quia dum acquiritur, per actum determinationem recipit. Et similiter oportet quod fidei habitus determinationem recipiat ex parte nostra: et quantum ad istam determinationem dicitur fides acquiri per scientiam theologiae, quae articulos distinguit; sicut habitus principiorum dicitur acquiri per sensum quantum ad distinctionem principiorum, non quantum ad lumen quo principia cognoscuntur.*

Even the very first principle must, then, be attained by contact with the senses. Just as one does not know the whole is greater than the part until one has experienced a whole and a part, one does not know the good ought to be done unless he has an experience of good things, etc. Having attained sufficient sensory perception, one begins to further qualify what it means to do good and avoid evil, and thus the principles are distinguished from each other. This does not mean the sense faculty appoints the end, but it is required so that *intellectus* can.

We turn now to how one comes to grasp more particular consequences of the principles. We have seen that synderesis pertains to both the higher and the lower reason. Thomas more precisely explains their relationship by giving an example of a practical syllogism:

Synderesis administers in this syllogism that premise which is as the major premise; but the superior or inferior reason administers the minor, and its consideration is of the act itself; but the consideration of the elicited conclusion is a consideration of conscience. For example: synderesis proposes, “everything bad is to be avoided”; the superior reason assumes, “adultery is bad, because it is prohibited by the law of God,” or the inferior reason arrives at this conclusion because it is bad for the individual because it is unjust or shameful; but the conclusion, which is “this adultery ought to be avoided,” pertains to conscience, and indifferently, whether it be of the present or the past or the future, because conscience murmurs about things that have been done and contradicts things that are to be done. For this reason, conscience is named from being, as it were, with another knowledge [*cum alio scientia*], because universal knowledge is applied to a particular act.<sup>924</sup>

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<sup>924</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 24 q. 2 a. 4 c.: *Et quia universalia principia juris ad synderesim pertinent, rationes autem magis appropriatae ad opus, pertinent ad habitus, quibus ratio superior et inferior distinguuntur; synderesis in hoc syllogismo quasi majorem ministrat, cujus consideratio est actus synderesis; sed minorem ministrat ratio superior vel inferior, et ejus consideratio est ipsius actus; sed consideratio conclusionis elicita, est consideratio conscientiae. Verbi gratia, synderesis hanc proponit: omne malum est vitandum: ratio superior hanc assumit: adulterium est malum, quia lege Dei prohibitum: sive ratio inferior assumeret illam, quia ei est malum, quia injustum, sive inhonestum: conclusio autem, quae est, adulterium hoc esse vitandum, ad conscientiam pertinet, et indifferenter, sive sit de praesenti vel de praeterito vel futuro: quia conscientia et factis remurmurat, et faciendis contradicit: et inde dicitur*

Synderesis is thus distinguished in a sense from the higher and lower reason even though it pertains to them. Just as in other syllogisms "as much as with speculative ones as of practical ones, the major premise is *per se* known, as existing in a universal judgment,"<sup>925</sup> here too, the universal is indemonstrable and undeniable. At the same time, even if it is not quite 'athematic' (to use Keenan's word<sup>926</sup>), it is rather vague. A certain degree of specification is added by the higher and lower reason, though, and the judgments of either of those supply the minor premise. Interestingly, conscience here is said to supply the conclusion by applying universal knowledge so it further specifies what action should be done and, we might say, acts in the manner of an end proposing to the will what ought to be done. If the prudent man intentionally receives that which has been proposed, action ensues.<sup>927</sup>

Conscience is so closely bound up with synderesis that the two are sometimes spoken of as identical.<sup>928</sup> Just as synderesis is inseparably connected to the natural law and to whatever ought to be done or avoided, so "conscience dictates something to be done or avoided... because it believes it to be against or according to the law of God. For the law is not applied to our

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*conscientia, quasi cum alio scientia, quia scientia universalis ad actum particularem applicatur.*

<sup>925</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 c.: *in utroque syllogismo, tam speculabilium quam operabilium, et maior est per se nota, utpote in universali iudicio existens; et minor etiam in qua idem de seipso praedicatur particulariter; ut cum dicitur: omne totum est maius sua parte. Hoc totum est totum. Ergo est maius sua parte.*

<sup>926</sup> See, *Goodness and Rightness*, 103.

<sup>927</sup> This, of course, is not intended to suggest that someone who is not prudent cannot follow his conscience, but our focus at this point is on an individual who is virtuous.

<sup>928</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 79 a. 13 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod actus, etsi non semper maneat in se, semper tamen manet in sua causa, quae est potentia et habitus. Habitus autem ex quibus conscientia informatur, etsi multi sint, omnes tamen efficaciam habent ab uno primo, scilicet ab habitu primorum principiorum, qui dicitur synderesis. Unde specialiter hic habitus interdum conscientia nominatur, ut supra dictum est.* See also *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 5: *conscientia dicitur esse naturale iudicium [synderesis], in quantum tota examinatio vel consiliatio conscientiae ex naturali iudicio dependet, ut prius dictum est.* Aquinas says the natural judging power on which conscience depends is "called synderesis" in *De Veritate*, q. 17, a. 1, ad 5.



actions except by means of our conscience."<sup>929</sup> It is called the law of our intellect because it is the judgment of reason deduced from natural law<sup>930</sup> and its judgment is always binding<sup>931</sup> because of this close connection. In fact, its judgment sometimes shares in the infallibility of synderesis.<sup>932</sup> Two examples Thomas gives of this are the principles, 'evil should never be done' and 'God ought to be loved by me.'<sup>933</sup>

Of course, prudence also presupposes things like the Commandments and universal moral precepts in general<sup>934</sup> and applies them to particulars (just as conscience does). There is a difference between the judgments of conscience and prudence, however. Conscience, first of all, is temporally indifferent in the sense that it can pertain to any time period. Related to this, it judges "as yet while speculating through principles."<sup>935</sup> Since it is further removed from the actual act itself, Thomas says it is possible for its judgment not to be influenced by passion

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<sup>929</sup> *Super. Roman.* ch. 14, lect. 2: *Non enim conscientia dictat aliquid esse faciendum vel vitandum, nisi quia credit hoc esse contra vel secundum legem Dei. Non enim lex nostris actibus applicatur, nisi mediante conscientia nostra.*

<sup>930</sup> See, *De Veritate*, 17 a. 1 ad s.c. 1.

<sup>931</sup> *Ibid.*, 17 a. 4.

<sup>932</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 39 q. 3 a. 2 ad 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod conscientia dicitur naturale iudicium non per se, sed in quantum virtus synderesis in ipsa manet; sicut virtus principiorum salvatur in conclusionibus: et ex parte illa non errat.*

<sup>933</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 c.: *Sciendum tamen, quod in quibusdam conscientia nunquam errare potest; quando scilicet actus ille particularis ad quem conscientia applicatur, habet de se universale iudicium in synderesi. Sicut enim in speculativis non contingit errare circa particulares conclusiones quae directe sub principiis universalibus assumuntur in eisdem terminis, ut in hoc quod est, hoc totum esse maius sua parte, nullus decipitur; sicut nec in hoc, omne totum est maius sua parte; ita etiam nec in hoc quod est, Deum a me non esse diligendum, vel, aliquod malum esse faciendum, nulla conscientia errare potest; eo quod in utroque syllogismo, tam speculabilem quam operabilem, et maior est per se nota, utpote in universali iudicio existens; et minor etiam in qua idem de seipso praedicatur particulariter; ut cum dicitur: omne totum est maius sua parte. Hoc totum est totum. Ergo est maius sua parte.*

<sup>934</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c. speaks of the moral law in general, though the Commandments were singled out above.

<sup>935</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia.* See the following footnote for further context.

whereas the judgment pertaining to prudence, the free judgment, is, in fact, able to be corrupted by passion.<sup>936</sup> In the *Summa*, Thomas explains:

Some pleasures, especially overly vehement ones, are contrary to the order of reason, and for this reason, the Philosopher says in the sixth book of the *Ethics*, that bodily pleasures destroy the judgment of prudence, but not the speculative judgment, to which pleasure is not opposed.<sup>937</sup>

Since conscience judges as if while speculating, in the sense that anyone can act contrary to conscience by choosing to do otherwise, conscience is speculative in a sense - just as the prudence's act of judging is sometimes said to be.<sup>938</sup> The only difference is that the judgment of

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<sup>936</sup> Ibid.: *Et ideo contingit quandoque quod iudicium liberi arbitrii pervertitur, non autem iudicium conscientiae; sicut cum aliquis examinat aliquid quod imminet faciendum, et iudicat, quasi adhuc speculando per principia, hoc esse malum, utpote fornicari cum hac muliere; sed quando incipit applicare ad agendum, occurrunt undique multae circumstantiae circa ipsum actum, ut puta fornicationis delectatio, ex cuius concupiscentia ligatur ratio, ne eius dictamen in electionem prorumpat. Et sic aliquis errat in eligendo, et non in conscientia; sed contra conscientiam facit: et dicitur hoc mala conscientia facere, in quantum factum iudicio scientiae non concordat. Et sic patet quod non oportet conscientiam esse idem quod liberum arbitrium.* Although there is legitimate debate on this point, there seems no denying that Thomas distinguished the two acts. Fr. Peter Murphy names the following as those who “regard the two judgments as distinct”: Noble, Lehu, Elders, Labourdette, Lottin and McInerny. To this list can be added Delhay, who refers to the judgment of conscience as one “of liceity” and adds, “But we do not stop there. After this practical conclusion bearing on liceity, there is a second which concerns my concrete action.... It is important to insist upon this distinction of the two practical judgments.” The judgment of conscience is always about what ought to be done and it precedes the actual intention to carry it out. See, Peter Mel Murphy, *Prudence and Conscience in the Light of Veritatis Splendor: A study on the necessity of eubulia, synesis and gnome for the formation of a true and correct conscience.* (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Urbaniana): 2012, 58. For Aquinas, see *Aquinas on Human Action*, chapter 12; for Noble, see H. Noble, O.P. *La Conscience Morale*, 57-58; for a similar view, see Delhay, *The Christian Conscience*, translated from the French by Charles Quinn (New York: Desclee Co., 1968), 166-167.

<sup>937</sup> I-II, q. 33 a. 3c.: *quaedam enim delectationes, maxime superexcedentes, sunt contra ordinem rationis, et per hunc modum Philos. dicit. in 6. Ethic. (cap. 5.), quod delectationes corporales corrumpunt existimationem prudentiae, non autem existimationem speculativam, cui delectatio non contrariatur.*

<sup>938</sup> I-II, q. 57 a. 6: *circa agibilia autem humana tres actus rationis inveniuntur: quorum primus est consiliari: secundus. iudicare: tertius est praecipere. Primi autem duo respondent actibus intellectus speculativi, qui sunt: inquirere et iudicare: nam consilium inquisitio quaedam est: sed tertius actus est proprie practici intellectus, in quantum est operativus: non enim ratio habet praecipere ea, quae per hominem fieri non possunt: manifestum est autem, quod in his, quae per hominem fiunt, principalis actus est praecipere, ad quem alii ordinantur: et ideo virtuti, quae est bene praeceptiva, scilicet prudentiae, tamquam principaliori adiunguntur tamquam secundariae, eubulia, quae est bene consiliativa, et synesis,*

conscience, when applying universal principles, is not directly dependent upon upright appetite as the judgment of prudence is; the application of prudence, "does not come about without rectified appetite"<sup>939</sup> because prudence itself "is not in the reason only, but has something in the appetite."<sup>940</sup>

In *De Veritate* q. 2 a. 8, St. Thomas speaks of knowledge that is not applied to a work to be done by means of intention (*ad operandum per intentionem applicat*) as 'speculative' and in this sense, conscience is speculative and thus not directly able to be corrupted by pleasurable objects. Although the judgment of conscience can certainly be made practical by extension, as Therrien argued, it will not necessarily become so because it is further removed from the actual act.<sup>941</sup> This very fact is the reason someone can "err in choosing and not in conscience."<sup>942</sup>

The consequence of this is that even if synderesis were to be proven rather 'thin' (at least in the sense that a given individual might not have definitive knowledge of the precepts Aquinas generally attributes to it), it would still be able to have significant content in virtue of conscience

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*et gnome, quae sunt partes judicativae.*

He has the same conclusion II-II, q. 47 a. 8c.: *actus rationis agibilium... sunt tres actus: quorum primus est consiliari... secundus actus est judicare de inventis; et hoc facit [some mss. say, sistit] speculativa ratio: sed practica ratio, quae ordinatur ad opus, procedit ulterius: et est tertius actus ejus praecipere; qui quidem actus consistit in applicatione consiliatorum, et judicatorum ad operandum: et quia iste actus est propinquior fini rationis practicae; inde est quod iste est principalis actus rationis practicae, et per consequens prudentiae.*

<sup>939</sup> II-II q.47 a.4 c.: *applicatio rectae rationis ad opus, quod non fit sine appetitu recto;*

II-II, q. 47 a. 1 ad 3: *Ad tertium dicendum quod laus prudentiae non consistit in sola consideratione, sed in applicatione ad opus, quod est finis practicae rationis. Et ideo si in hoc defectus accadat, maxime est contrarium prudentiae, quia sicut finis est potissimus in unoquoque, ita et defectus qui est circa finem est pessimus. Unde ibidem philosophus subdit quod prudentia non est solum cum ratione, sicut ars, habet enim, ut dictum est, applicationem ad opus, quod fit per voluntatem.*

<sup>940</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum* bk. 6, lect. 7 # 7, *prudentia non est in ratione solum, sed habet aliquid in appetitu*

<sup>941</sup> Michel Therrien: *Law, Liberty and Virtue: A Thomistic Defense for the Pedagogical Character of Law*, 54-55: "The judgment of conscience is practical by extension, but does not have motive force, except insofar as we allow it to exercise a determinative influence on our free-decision. Right practical reasoning, therefore, always results from a decision to use and follow our conscience."

<sup>942</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad 4: *Et sic aliquis errat in eligendo, et non in conscientia; sed contra conscientiam facit: et dicitur hoc mala conscientia facere, in quantum factum iudicio scientiae non concordat. Et sic patet quod non oportet conscientiam esse idem quod liberum arbitrium.*

which is intimately connected to it. Whereas the application of right reason that is prudence is always in the context of "matters of counsel, in which there is no definite way of attaining the end,"<sup>943</sup> the application of conscience is more abstract and more connected to necessary ends. We might say that it, too, thus acts in the manner of a final cause whereas prudence acts in the manner of a formal cause according to which the ends appointed by synderesis (and through conscience) are presupposed.

### Proposed Solution

What is it, then, that appoints the end to the moral virtues? Capreolus said the position found in II-II, q. 47 was "more probable" because even if prudence appoints on some level, in the end, prudence is subordinate to ends inasmuch it moves the moral virtues to attain them. As Thomas said in *De Virtutibus*, prudence renders actions good while looking to the end while a habit of the speculative intellect (such as synderesis can be said to be - at least *secundum quid*<sup>944</sup>) renders acts good in a more noble way in virtue of their relationship to the end itself.<sup>945</sup>

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<sup>943</sup> See, II-II, q. 47 a. 2 ad 3.

<sup>944</sup> By describing synderesis as *secundum quid* speculative, I have in mind the fact that the judgment prudence presupposes is said to be made or brought about by the "speculative reason" in II-II, q. 47 a. 8c. (see also, I-II, q. 57 a. 6). I am, however, also indebted to the work of John Naus, S.J. Though he does not say precisely that, he does say that when we speak of the first principles "of the practical order had through the habit of synderesis," these principles may represent speculative knowledge inasmuch as "an actual tendency" is not necessarily presupposed (see pp. 66-67). He goes on to provide a category of *secundum quid* practical things as opposed to "purely speculative" things. Among them, he numbers ethics and conscience (see pg. 167). Although, again, he does not explicitly label synderesis in this way in this text, because conscience is an *applicatio* of synderesis to a particular work, it seems synderesis can also be labeled as *secundum quid* speculative in the sense that one need not necessarily do the good things made known by it. An indication of this is that the Commandments can be broken even though they pertain to the natural law - and synderesis is the habit of the natural law. See Naus, *The Nature of the Practical Intellect*.

<sup>945</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 7 ad 1: *habitus intellectus speculativi ordinatur ad actum proprium, quem perfectum reddit, qui est veri consideratio: non autem ordinatur sicut in finem in aliquem exteriorem actum, sed finem habet in suo actu proprio. Intellectus autem practicus ordinatur sicut in finem in alium exteriorem actum... Et sic habitus intellectus speculativi reddit actum suum nobiliori modo bonum quam*

Considering that synderesis pertains to ends such as the Ten Commandments while prudence pertains to making judgments, deliberating and commanding about means, it is understandable Aquinas would say "synderesis moves prudence."<sup>946</sup> As we have seen, Cajetan argues synderesis is "the first of all the things in our mind" because by means of it "we naturally judge not only that every good ought to be pursued and every evil fled from—and that happiness ought to be desired and misery avoided—but also that the good of reason ought to be pursued and the evil opposed to it ought to be shunned."<sup>947</sup> He goes even further than that in his estimation of the role of synderesis, by adding that one judges through it "not only the ultimate end but also the proper ends of the moral virtues."<sup>948</sup> In other words, as Farrell observes, Cajetan suggests it sets the ends for the cardinal virtues by dictating what it means for the appetites to follow the good of reason.<sup>949</sup> This seems to be an accurate assessment of both Aquinas' meaning and the truth of the matter. As Thomas said in the *Scriptum*, both the common and the proximate end ("which is to attain the mean") is appointed to moral virtues by reason.<sup>950</sup> Things that have the "ratio of a

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*habitus intellectus practici: quia ille ut finem, hic ut ad finem.*

<sup>946</sup> II-II, q. 47 a.6 ad 3: *sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam.*

<sup>947</sup> *In mente nostra primo omnium est synderesis, qua non solum omne bonum prosequendum et malum fugiendum, felicitatem appetendam et miseriam fugiendam; sed bonum rationis prosequendum et malum oppositum vitandum, iudicamus naturaliter* (on I-II, q. 66 a. 3; XII, 433); cited in Farrell, 104.

<sup>948</sup> *Synderesi igitur in intellectu iudicante proponente non solum finem ultimum, sed fines proprios virtutum moralium, dum in passionibus et operationibus, secundum rationem vivendum iudicat.* Cajetan on I-II, q. 66 a. 3.

<sup>949</sup> See Farrell, 104. He cites comments of Cajetan on I-II, q. 58 a. 5 (*Prima praemissa et propositio spectans ad synderesin, verbi gratia, 'Bonum rationis tam in passionibus et operationibus, est prosequendum'*) and II-II, q. 47 a. 6 (*Auctor enim sentit quod virtuti morali finis praestituitur a synderesi: quia naturalis ratio dictat quod in timoribus bonum rationis, et similiter in concupiscentiis, et similiter in ira et operationibus sectandum est*).

<sup>950</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 5 c. *Virtus enim, ut dicit Tullius, movet in modum naturae, scilicet per quamdam inclinationem affectus ... oportet quod per rationem... praestituatur finis aliis virtutibus, non solum communis, sed etiam proximus, qui est attingere medium in propria natura.*

common end," though, are "happiness and things of this sort"<sup>951</sup> whereas the proper end pertains to the appetites' conformity to right reason. As Thomas explains in the *Secunda Secundae*:

The proper end of any given moral virtue is to be conformed to right reason. For temperance intends this lest a man strays from reason on account of his sensual desires and fortitude, similarly, intends this lest it stray from the right judgment of the reason on account of fear or temerity. And this end is appointed (*praestitutus*) to man in accordance with the natural reason.<sup>952</sup>

In this way, the natural reason can be said to appoint the end to the moral virtues. At the same time, since prudence relies upon and presupposes the right "disposition about ends" that are present in a moral agent due to the moral virtues,<sup>953</sup> it needs to look, at least on some level, to the moral virtues for ends, and those ends, in turn, are appointed by synderesis because even though they can be perceived by looking to right appetite, they also also "preexist in the reason"<sup>954</sup> - which seems to be a reference to the natural reason (synderesis) and even its natural extension in the speculative judgment of conscience. Synderesis, accordingly, moves prudence and does so, in part at least, by directing the moral virtues in regard to foundational principles. We will return to this below.

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<sup>951</sup> *Super Sent.*, bk. 2 d. 38 q. 1 a. 2 s. c. 1: *finem sine quo non potest esse conjunctio ad finem ultimum, oportet esse intentum sicut finem communem. Sed sine caritate et beatitudine et hujusmodi non potest esse conjunctio voluntatis hominis ad finem ultimum qui Deus est. Ergo ista omnia rationem finis communis habent.*

<sup>952</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 7 c.: *conformari rationi rectae est finis proprius cujuslibet virtutis moralis: temperantia enim hoc intendit, ne propter concupiscentias homo divertat a ratione: et similiter fortitudo, ne a recto iudicio rationis divertat propter timorem, vel audaciam: et hic finis praestitutus est homini secundum naturalem rationem.*

<sup>953</sup> See I-II, q. 57 a. 4 c.: *ad prudentiam, quae est recta ratio agibilium, requiritur quod homo sit bene dispositus circa fines: quid quidem est per appetitum rectum: et ideo ad prudentiam requiritur moralis virtus, per quam fit appetitus rectus.*

<sup>954</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod finis virtutum moralium est bonum humanum. Bonum autem humanae animae est secundum rationem esse; ut patet per Dionysium, IV cap. de Div. Nom. Unde necesse est quod fines moralium virtutum praeexistent in ratione.*

At the same time, presupposing synderesis and whatever principles we want to include in it—such as "the good is to be done and evil avoided," "God is to be obeyed," "one should act in accordance with reason," "the perfect good should be pursued as perfective," or even whatever follows necessarily from those principles and thus constitutes an end towards which the prudent man directs his actions, we might also say that prudence itself appoints the ends in the sense that the prudent man makes them his own and 'providentially' guides his path towards attaining those ends in an optimally perfective manner. As I-II, q. 91 suggests, he can be providential over himself in this way.<sup>955</sup>

He also should be guided by divine Providence, however, and for this, he needs to turn himself to God and rely upon the gracious assistance of the Creator who appoints the ends to nature itself and also graciously enlightens the created intellect so that it might appoint the supernatural end as well. We saw in chapter 1 of the present volume that just as one cannot rest in anything other than contemplating God as the truly perfect Good, one also cannot rest in merely natural aptitudes. For this reason, acquired virtues need to be developed and, more importantly, one needs to remove obstacles to grace, turn to God and ask for supernatural enlightenment. After the Fall, man's reason was clouded so all of this becomes especially crucial given the present condition of man. In *De Malo*, Thomas says:

Man would have been created frustrated and in vain if he were not able to attain beatitude.... lest it be the case that man be created frustrated and in vain since he is born with original sin, from the beginning of the human race God put forward a remedy for man through which he could be freed from this inanity - the mediator between God and

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<sup>955</sup> I-II, q. 91 a. 2: *Inter caetera autem rationalis creatura excellentiori quodam modo divinae providentiae subjacet, inquantum et ipsa fit providentiae particeps, sibi ipsi, et aliis providens: unde et in ipsa participatur ratio aeterna, per quam habet naturalem inclinationem ad debitum actum, et finem.*



man, Jesus Christ. Through faith in him, the impediment of original sin is able to be taken away.<sup>956</sup>

If man is to be "transformed by the renewal of [his] mind,"<sup>957</sup> he has to have faith. For Thomas, the "two first commandments" pertaining to the respective precepts to love God and to love one's neighbor are "*per se* known to the human reason, either by nature or by faith; and therefore all the precepts of the Decalogue are referred to those two as conclusions are referred to common principles."<sup>958</sup> One might think the words, "by nature or by faith" imply that either one is sufficient, but a few questions later, we learn that "in the state of corrupt nature, man cannot fulfill all the divine commandments without healing grace"<sup>959</sup> and after that Thomas adds that even "the natural reason became clouded" after the Fall.<sup>960</sup>

So on the one hand, healing grace is necessary in many cases to make man recognize – at least habitually – certain truths that in an unfallen world would be known naturally (such as that God ought to be loved above all else<sup>961</sup>) and on the other hand, grace is definitively necessary to

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<sup>956</sup> *De Malo*, q. 5 a. 1 ad 1: *Homo frustra et vane factus esset, si beatitudinem consequi non posset, sicut quaelibet res quae non potest consequi ultimum finem. Unde ne homo frustra et vane factus esset, cum peccato originali nascens, a principio humani generis proposuit Deus homini remedium, per quod ab hac vanitate liberaretur, scilicet ipsum mediatorem Deum et hominem Iesum Christum per cuius fidem impedimentum peccati originalis subtrahi posset. Unde in Psalm. LXXXVIII, 48, dicitur: memorare quae mea substantia; numquid enim vane constituisti omnes filios hominum? Quod exponens Glossa, dicit, quod David petit incarnationem filii, qui de sua substantia carnem assumpturus erat, et per ipsum homines erant a vanitate liberandi.*

<sup>957</sup> Romans 12:2: "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind" (καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς); See also, Eph. 4:23.

<sup>958</sup> *S.Th.*, I-II, q. 100 a. 3 ad 1: *illa duo praecepta sunt prima, et communia praecepta legis naturae, quae sunt per se nota rationi humanae, vel per naturam, vel per fidem; et ideo omnia praecepta decalogi ad illa duo referuntur, sicut conclusiones ad principia communia.*

<sup>959</sup> I-II, q. 109 a. 4 c.: *in statu naturae corruptae non potest homo implere omnia mandata divina sine gratia sanante.*

<sup>960</sup> III, q. 70 a. 2 ad 1: *obscurata etiam erat ratio naturalis per augmentum carnalis concupiscentiae usque ad peccatum contra naturam.*

<sup>961</sup> In the text that follows, Thomas says healing grace is needed in the state of fallen nature in order to love God above all else. I take it that this implies it is necessary to even know - at least habitually - that he ought to be loved above all else: I-II, q. 109 a. 3 c.: *homo in statu naturae integrae non indigebat dono*



become aware of man's most-high calling to supernatural beatitude.<sup>962</sup> As Thomas says in the *Scriptum*, "faith directs the intention for the ultimate end, but the natural reason ... is able to direct towards the proximate end."<sup>963</sup>

Commenting on the letter to the Ephesians (likely writing between 1272 and 1273),<sup>964</sup> Thomas speaks of three things man needs to be just and progress spiritually. The first is the "reason judging about particular things to be done," the second is the "understanding of universal principles, which is synderesis," and the third is the "divine law or God."<sup>965</sup> This suggests an order. Whether the reason judging about particulars is conscience or prudence, this reason should be subject to the first principles that are naturally known and, in turn, to the divine law itself.

Returning to the matter of appointing ends, those that are most properly said to be appointed seem to be remote ends about which there is no need to deliberate. They simply are those things directly pertaining to the perfect good in such a way that they are constitutive of it - in other words, the entire order of ends, from the beatific vision through the entire hierarchy of natural goods. For this reason, synderesis and faith, corresponding respectively to the natural and supernatural end, undeniably appoint the end. We did not discuss charity in great detail because the notion of appointing ends is always linked to the intellect for Thomas<sup>966</sup> and charity is in the

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*gratiae superadditae naturalibus bonis ad diligendum Deum naturaliter super omnia, licet indigeret auxilio Dei ad hoc eum moventis: sed in statu naturae corruptae indiget homo etiam ad hoc auxilio gratiae naturam sanantis.*

<sup>962</sup> See, Vatican II's *Gaudium et Spes*, 22.

<sup>963</sup> *Super Sent.* 2 d. 41, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 2: *fides dirigit intentionem in finem ultimum; sed ratio naturalis ... potest dirigere in aliquem finem proximum.*

<sup>964</sup> See Torrell, 250.

<sup>965</sup> *Super. Ephes.*, ch. 4 lectio 6: *ut homo iuste ambulet, id est spiritualiter proficiat, oportet tria, quae in ipso sunt, regulari et ordinari. In homine enim est ratio iudicans de particularibus agendis; item, intellectus universalium principiorum, qui est synderesis; tertio, lex divina seu Deus. Quandocumque ergo aliquis secundum ista tria sibi invicem ordinata dirigitur, ita quod actio ordinetur secundum iudicium rationis, et haec, scilicet ratio, iudicet secundum intellectum rectum, vel synderesim, et haec, scilicet synderesis, ordinetur secundum legem divinam, tunc actio est bona et meritoria.*

<sup>966</sup> e.g., I, q. 18 a. 3c.: *Unde supra talia animalia sunt illa, quae movent seipsa, etiam habito respectu ad finem, quem sibi praestituunt. Quod quidem non fit, nisi per rationem, et intellectum, cujus est cognoscere proportionem finis, et ejus, quod est ad finem, et unum ordinare in alterum.*

will. One may wonder, though: as the form of the virtues, is charity not able to appoint the end? The answer comes down to the kind of causality it exercises. Thomas never says it appoints the end but only that it is responsible for the movement towards the end. This must be because charity acts in the manner of an efficient cause.<sup>967</sup> It may move the virtues towards attaining the beatific vision, but even so, it presupposes faith appointing the supernatural end in the manner of a final cause as the first of all the virtues.<sup>968</sup>

Given the appointing that takes place by the habits of synderesis and faith, conscience and prudence can also be said to appoint ends. Since conscience is able to apply knowledge of either habit to particular works in a manner that is binding<sup>969</sup> - and since it precedes the activity of prudence in the sense that prudence pertains to means whereas conscience is intimately related to synderesis<sup>970</sup> and applies its judgments to particulars in a more abstract way than prudence ('as if by speculating') - it seems that conscience can be said to apply the ends more fittingly than

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<sup>967</sup> II-II, q. 23 a. 8 ad 1: *Ad primum ergo dicendum, quod charitas dicitur esse forma aliarum virtutum non quidem exemplariter, aut essentialiter, sed magis effective.*

<sup>968</sup> II-II, q. 4 a. 7 c.: *cum ultimus finis sit quidem in voluntate per spem et caritatem, in intellectu autem per fidem, necesse est quod fides sit prima inter omnes virtutes, quia naturalis cognitio non potest attingere ad Deum secundum quod est obiectum beatitudinis, prout tendit in ipsum spes et caritas.*

<sup>969</sup> Thomas says the law is not applied to our actions except by means of conscience in his commentary on Romans (ch. 14 lectio 2, which says: *lex nostris actibus applicatur, nisi mediante conscientia nostra*). Conscience, of course, is called the law of our understanding (see, I-II, q. 94 a. 1 obj. 2) and this, too, seems to imply that it is binding. More to the point, however, is I-II, q. 19 a. 5 and *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 5, which speak of conscience as binding.

<sup>970</sup> As St. Thomas says in *S.Th.* I, q. 79 a. 13 ad 3 and elsewhere, conscience is in a specific way (*specialiter*) called synderesis because of the close connection between the two. In *Super Sent.* 2 d. 39, q. 3, a. 1, ad. 1 he adds that the power of synderesis is in conscience just as the power of principles is in the conclusion. The same is not said of prudence. The close relationship between the two is also manifested by hundreds of years of agreement among certain commentators. For instance, when Capreolus speaks of a distinction between universal conscience and particular conscience, he seems to imply agreement with Bishop Anthony Fisher, who speaks of synderesis as "Conscience-1;" namely, the kind of conscience that pertains to first principles of morality. Similarly, Peter Labbe refers to synderesis as "conscientia universalis" and conscience as "synteresis singularis." See: *Johannis Capreoli Tholosani Ordinis Praedicatorum, Thomistarum Principis: Defensiones Theologiae Divi Thomae Aquinatis De Novo Editae, Tomus IV*, p. 450), *Catholic Bioethics for a New Millenium* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012; pp. 47-48), 47-48; Labbe, S.J. *Elogia Sacra, Theologica & Philosophica, Regia, Eminentia, Illustria, Historica, Poetica, Miscellanea* (Lipsig: 1686), 172.

prudence can. However, there is a sense in which the perfection of man *qua* rational consists specifically in being able to appoint ends to himself by means of deliberation. On this level, prudence seems more than anything else to appoint the kind of end the attainment of which would ensure a man has lived according to reason in the fullest sense; that is, in the sense that the appetites themselves become rational by participation and conduce to performing virtuous acts in a manner that is connatural and pleasing to the agent. By enabling man to hylemorphically perform the kind of action that is specific to him *qua* rational and to do so in the most optimal way, prudence ensures viability for attaining true happiness.

In an effort to proclaim the dignity of prudence, however, we should avoid going to the extreme of making it the final arbiter of moral goodness in the sense that we could prescind from the necessity of adhering to objective moral absolutes that have been cognized either antecedent to the activity of prudence or as a part of its activity. Yves Simon, as we have seen, is read by some as having approached this kind of error when he argued – among other things – that the judgment of prudence, "as reasoned" as it "may be, is ultimately determined not by the intellect but by the inclination of the will."<sup>971</sup> In other words, if we say prudence appoints ends, we should keep in mind that the ends it appoints presuppose the apprehension of other ends that are apprehended either by faith or by natural reason.

For Aquinas, "reason as apprehending the end precedes the appetite for the end."<sup>972</sup>

Prudence, which is usually spoken of in terms of means, "implies an order to upright appetite"

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<sup>971</sup> Yves Simon, *The Definition of Moral Virtue*, edited by Vukan Kuic (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986), 96-97: "To know what I should do here and now, I must rely on the judgment of practical wisdom [prudence]. And this judgment, reasoned as it may be, is ultimately determined not by the intellect but by the inclination of the will." See also *The Tradition of Natural Law*, 155-156, in which he argues that *whenever* "specific situations and specific regulations are involved, there is absolutely no possibility of preceding by logical connection" in regard to "particular determinations" of universal norms.

<sup>972</sup> *Ratio, secundum quod est apprehensiva finis, praecedit appetitum finis* (I-II, q. 58 a. 5 ad. 1).

because the ends of the moral virtues are its principles.<sup>973</sup> So again, the role of the appetites is absolutely crucial even if it can be exaggerated when it is not understood in tandem with (and in subordination to) the kind of reason that apprehends the end and both precedes and specifies it. We have seen that man's end can be spoken of in terms of either the natural reason (and the proportionate end) or faith (and the supernatural end). Whether or not a man is blessed with faith, his happiness will essentially require living in accordance with reason. Aquinas has the sanguine view that the natural ends which are constitutive of this happiness are "*per se nota* to the human reason" and that the "two first commandments," to which all the precepts of the Decalogue are referred, are known "by nature or by faith."<sup>974</sup> In a sense, these precepts "fall under the judgment (*existimationem*) of all, as pertaining to the natural reason" since the "ends of human life" especially pertain to the dictate of natural reason.<sup>975</sup> However, natural reason tends to fall short of even those truths that could be known by one's natural powers alone and lest such truths be only known by "a few, and after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors,"<sup>976</sup> the gift of faith has been given to man in accordance with God's merciful plan of salvation.

Faith, of course, adds knowledge of the supernatural end but it is even necessary for knowledge of the natural ends after the Fall. Whenever the natural reason falls short in regard to natural or supernatural ends, faith "directs the intention."<sup>977</sup> Prudence is at work, Thomas says,

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<sup>973</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 13 ad 2: *Prudentia importat ordinem ad appetitum rectum: tum quia principia prudentiae sunt fines operabilium, de quibus aliquis habet rectam aestimationem per habitus virtutum moralium, quae faciunt appetitum rectum; unde prudentia non potest esse sine virtutibus moralibus.*

<sup>974</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 3 ad 1: *illa duo praecepta sunt prima, et communia praecepta legis naturae, quae sunt per se nota rationi humanae, vel per naturam, vel per fidem.*

<sup>975</sup> II-II, q. 56 a. 1 c.: *Praecepta decalogi sicut data sunt omni populo, ita etiam cadunt in existimationem omnium, quasi ad naturalem rationem pertinentia: praecipue autem sunt de dictamine rationis naturalis fines humanae vitae.*

<sup>976</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 1 a. 1 c.: *veritas de Deo per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per longum tempus, et cum admixtione multorum errorum homini proveniret.*

<sup>977</sup> *Super Sent.* bk. 2. d. 41, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 2: *Ad secundum dicendum, quod fides dirigit intentionem in finem ultimum.*

"in discovering those things that lead to an upright end,"<sup>978</sup> but knowledge of both the natural and supernatural end and whatever is constitutive of them is also indispensable if the appetites are to be fully in accordance with natural reason or the *ratio Dei*.<sup>979</sup> The understanding of universal first principles (whether natural or supernatural ones) thus appears to precede the activity of prudence. Presupposing the understanding of principles, however, Simon seems correct to say in regard to any particular and contingent good which the reason presents to the will, that the inclination of the latter (precisely under some specification of reason) is the final arbiter. To cite him once more:

At the instant when the attraction of a thing good in some respect inclines the mind to utter the proposition 'this is good for me,' the infinite ambition of the will reverses the perspective. The thing which is good only in a certain respect discloses uncongenial aspects, and the proposition 'this is not good for me' fights with its contradictory for the assent of the mind.<sup>980</sup>

As an "inclination following understood form"<sup>981</sup> that "tends towards what has been adjudicated by the intellect,"<sup>982</sup> the will necessarily follows the apprehension of the intellect on the level of specification, but on the level of execution (when actions that are directed towards ultimate ends are put into effect), no finite good proposed by the intellect can compel it (though even aversion is under rational specification).

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<sup>978</sup> *Super Sent.* bk. 3. d. 33, q. 1, a. 1 qc. 2 ad. 2: *prudens est activus adinveniendo ea quae ad finem rectum perducunt. Sed praeter hoc oportet ... rectam intentionem, et inclinationem in finem.*

<sup>979</sup> I-II, q. 71 a. 6 c.: *Regula autem voluntatis humanae est duplex, una propinqua et homogenea, scilicet ipsa humana ratio; alia vero est prima regula, scilicet lex aeterna, quae est quasi ratio Dei.*

<sup>980</sup> Simon, *Freedom of Choice*, 102–103 (quoted in Clifford G. Kossel, "Thomistic Moral Philosophy in the Twentieth Century," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope, Moral Traditions Series (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 393, n. 75).

<sup>981</sup> *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2: "the motion of the will is an inclination following an understood form" (*motus voluntatis est inclinatio sequens formam intellectam*). See also, the first book of the first chapter of the *Compendium Theologiae*: *appetitus autem sequens intellectum, est voluntas* and *S.Th.*, I, q. 87 a. 4c.: *actus voluntatis nihil aliud est, quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam.*

<sup>982</sup> I-II, q. 74 a. 7 ad 1: *voluntas tendit in id quod est ratione iudicatum.*

The "object of the will" is, in fact, "that which is proposed by the reason,"<sup>983</sup> but in cases pertaining to contingent doable things, the "intellect does not bring about some effect except by means of the will."<sup>984</sup> The end, as a consequence, is merely proposed and not coercively imposed, albeit whatsoever disposition of will is always according to some understanding and judgment. Worded differently, though the intellect is the "first principle of human acts"<sup>985</sup> that "first and *per se* moves the will,"<sup>986</sup> for an action to actually take place, the will must be involved both in bringing about deliberation and in causing the movement towards the end.

Prudence, Thomas says, "has something in the appetite."<sup>987</sup> In fact, "rectitude of the will belongs to the *ratio* of prudence."<sup>988</sup> Prudence, therefore, seems to be something like an inseparable accident in the process of executing good acts proposed by habits pertaining to the understanding of natural or supernatural first principles.<sup>989</sup> Actually, though, it goes beyond this because it also focuses in on these principles, as it were, enabling pursuit of them in the most ideal and fitting way. In this sense, prudence can also be said to appoint the end. It applies

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<sup>983</sup> I-II, q. 19 a. 5c.: *objectum voluntatis est id, quod proponitur a ratione*.

<sup>984</sup> *Summa Contra Gentiles*, bk. 2, ch. 23 n. 4: *Intellectus autem non agit aliquem effectum nisi mediante voluntate, cuius obiectum est bonum intellectum*. See also, *De potentia*, q. 6 a. 9 arg. 8: *Praeterea, intellectus non est principium operationis nisi mediante voluntate*. The restriction of this to the realm of the practical is my own. If we are to avoid an infinite regress, there must be some act/s of the intellect that does not require the consent of the will to be effective and we have seen in the *Summa Contra Gentiles* that the intellect is first *simpliciter*.

<sup>985</sup> I-II q. 90 a. 1 *regula et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est primum principium actuum humanorum* (the intellect and the reason, of course, are one power).

<sup>986</sup> *Contra Gentiles*, bk. 3 ch. 26 n. 22: *Quod autem quinta ratio proponit, voluntatem esse altiore intellectui, quasi eius motivam, falsum esse manifestum est. Nam primo et per se intellectus movet voluntatem*.

<sup>987</sup> *Sententia Ethicorum* bk. 6, lect. 7 # 7, *prudentia non est in ratione solum, sed habet aliquid in appetitu*.

<sup>988</sup> I-II, q. 57 a. 4 c.: *rectitudo voluntatis est de ratione prudentiae*.

<sup>989</sup> Of course, prudence is not precisely an accident since concretely adequate acts need to be adequated via prudence.

universal principles to particular contingent acts<sup>990</sup> in addition to applying them to one's affectivity.<sup>991</sup>

That said, it seems best to distinguish the kinds of appointing (*praestituens*) by using a word other than to 'appoint' to render the meaning of *praestituere* when we are speaking of prudence. Fr. Cessario has led the way in this regard by rendering *praestituere* as "to appoint beforehand" in regard to synderesis and as "to enact" in regard to prudence.<sup>992</sup> In other words, prudence enacts principles already apprehended by the habit of synderesis. An example the Dominican commentator Francisco de Vitoria provides is that synderesis provides the norm, "one ought to live temperately" whereas from that judgment, prudence syllogizes about the manner in which one ought to live temperately: "whether by drinking wine or water, or by eating such and such, etc."<sup>993</sup> This is similar to Cajetan's position, which we saw earlier in this chapter. For him, again, synderesis does not only propose "the ultimate end, but the proper ends of the moral virtues" since one reasons discursively from principles such as that the good of reason ought to be followed in matters pertaining to passions and practical operations to deciding, thanks to prudence, how to "make use of these principles."<sup>994</sup> In other words, synderesis indicates

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<sup>990</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 1 ad 3: *prudentia non est solum cum ratione, sicut ars, habet enim, ut dictum est, applicationem ad opus, quod fit per voluntatem.*

<sup>991</sup> As II-II, q. 54 a. 2 c. says, the right choice of means pertains to prudence. Since *De Veritate* q. 17 a. 1 ad 4 tells us the "judgment of free choice" consists of the "application of knowledge *ad affectionem*," we can conclude that prudence pertains to the application to affectivity.

<sup>992</sup> See, Romanus Cessario, *Introduction to Moral Theology*, 130.

<sup>993</sup> *Sic ergo prudentia dirigit alias virtutes praestituendo fines. Non quod sit iudicium prudentiale talis finis, sed quod ex illis iudiciis syllogizet prudentia; ut ex hoc iudicio, temperate vivendum est, syllogizat quo pacto temperate vivendum est, an bibendo vinum, vel aquam, vel comedendo tantum vel tantum, etc.*" Francisco de Vitoria, O.P., *Comentarios a la Secunda Secundae de Santo Tomas, Tomo II: De Caritate et Prudentia* (Salamanca: Apartado, 1932), In II-II De Prudentia, q. 47 a. 7 (p. 362).

<sup>994</sup> On I-II, q. 66 a. 3 (XII, 433): *synderesi igitur in intellectu iudicante et proponente non solum finem ultimum, sed fines proprios virtutum moralium.*

On II-II, q. 47 a. 7: *virtuti morali finis praestituitur a synderesi: quia naturalis ratio dictat quod in timoribus bonum rationis, et similiter in concupiscentiis, et similiter in ira et operationibus sectandum est.... ad prudentiam spectat uti principiis his.* For a discussion of this text, see Farrell, 105.



what the ends of the individual moral virtues are and prudence determines the means of attaining them.

One other Dominican commentator who holds a nearly identical opinion is Jerome Medices (b. 1569). In his *Formal Explication of the Summa Theologiae*, he first observes that prudence merely disposes of the means and does not appoint the ends of the moral virtues since it "applies universal principles to particular conclusions of doable things." He elaborates:

Just as the virtue of knowledge does not prove first principles, but presupposes those things that are known by the habit of understanding, so prudence does not appoint the end, but only orders those things that are for the end.

He goes on to argue that even though "reason appoints (*praestituit*) the end to the appetite," the reason that does this is "the natural reason, which is called synderesis and is a natural habit."<sup>995</sup> The addition of the notion of appointing the end "to the appetite" is striking. Medices' position is also reminiscent of Cajetan's because if synderesis appoints the ends to the moral virtues (which are in the appetites), it must appoint the end to the appetites in some way. More importantly, though, it perfectly aligns with Thomas' own position in II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1; viz., "the end does not pertain to the moral virtues as if they themselves appoint the end, but inasmuch as they tend to the end appointed by the natural reason."<sup>996</sup>

All things considered, the best way of resolving the tension Cajetan observed between our two texts is to admit that strictly speaking the end is not appointed by prudence in the sense that it is itself capable of determining ends. It relies both upon rightly ordered appetites and the habit of natural reason known as synderesis (and conscience, to which the latter is so closely

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<sup>995</sup> Hieronymus (Girolamo) Medices [also known as Hieronymus De Medicis de Camerino], *Formalis explicatio Summae theologiae S. Thomae Aquinatis*, Vol. 7, *Continens Secundae Secundae Partis Secundum Volumen* (Soler Fratres, 1861), 15 (Commenting of II-II, q. 47 a. 6).

<sup>996</sup> *finis non pertinet ad virtutes morales, tamquam ipsae praestituant finem; sed quia tendunt in finem a ratione naturali praestitutum.*



connected) to do the appointing that it does. Accordingly, Cessario's distinction between 'appointing' and 'enacting' seems to most faithfully capture the meaning and intention of Aquinas.

Although the apprehension of ultimate ends comes about either due to faith or synderesis (to which conscience is intimately related), ends such as these seem to precede reason discoursing about the choice of means, which pertains to prudence. Thus the notions that "the will's movement is independent of and prior to reason's presentation of its object"<sup>997</sup> and that the only practical knowledge one can have is "knowledge by inclination, subjectivity"<sup>998</sup> are ultimately irreconcilable with the remarkably consistent teaching of the Angelic Doctor. At the same time, the right reason about means that is prudence and the natural reason that is synderesis both remain essential if one is to be virtuous and ultimately attain the supernatural end. Time and again, then, we are led back to what Naus and McInerny fittingly called the virtuous circle.<sup>999</sup>

The intellect is responsible for the appointing of ends but men are not angels and must, therefore, look to the appetites in discerning the most fitting way to attain those ends, presuming they have decided to make them their own. The intellect *qua* natural reason must be there at the beginning pointing to the principles that are ends in the moral life and the intellect *qua recta ratio agibilium* must be there deliberating, judging and commanding. But without the appetites performing a central role, there will be no execution of anything nor attainment of that which is appointed. The rightly ordered appetites are, in a sense, the middle term that connects universal ends to the particular ones that have been discerned by prudence. Without all of these elements, there would remain something lacking in man's participation in the eternal law.<sup>1000</sup>

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<sup>997</sup> Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47.

<sup>998</sup> Simon, *ibid.*, 110-111.

<sup>999</sup> Ralph McInerny, *Ethica Thomistica: The Moral Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas*, 107; John E. Naus, *The Nature of the Practical Intellect according to Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 157.

<sup>1000</sup> One could, of course say the same about an absence of the gifts of the Holy Spirit or the other two theological virtues.

## Conclusion

Throughout these pages, we have seen that for Aquinas, reason has an unmistakably central role in the moral life. Whether we consider prudence (right reason about contingent matters that are able to be done<sup>1001</sup>), synderesis (the natural reason<sup>1002</sup>), conscience ("the judgment of reason deduced from the natural law"<sup>1003</sup>), or even the moral virtues (which "consist in the mean determined by reason"<sup>1004</sup>), the appetitive part of man must be subject to the intellective part. As Thomas explains in his work on the virtues, "since having reason is that which makes man to be a man, it is necessary that the good of man be to exist in accordance with reason,"<sup>1005</sup> which is found to be nothing if not all-pervasive when it comes to the perfection of the rational animal known as man. As chapter one evinced, even the natural desire for happiness is at least implicitly a desire for "the perfect contemplation of the highest truth."<sup>1006</sup> Indeed, Thomas goes so far as to cite Augustine with approval when the latter says that animals bereft of reason cannot

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<sup>1001</sup> See, *Sententia De Anima*, bk. 3 lectio 4 # 16; *S.Th.* I, q. 22 a 2 obj. 1; I-II, q. 57 a. 4c.; I-II, q. 65 a. 1 c.; II-II, q. 47 a. 2 s.c., II-II, q. 47 a. 8 c., *Quodlibet* XII, q. 15 c., *et passim*.

<sup>1002</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1: *ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis*.

<sup>1003</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 1 ad s. c. 1 *conscientia dicitur esse lex intellectus nostri quia est iudicium rationis ex lege naturali deductum*.

<sup>1004</sup> *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 13 c.: *virtutes morales consistunt in medio determinato per rationem*

<sup>1005</sup> *Ibid.*: *Nam cum homo sit homo per hoc quod rationem habet, oportet quod bonum hominis sit secundum rationem esse*.

<sup>1006</sup> See, *De Veritate*, q. 1 a. 5 ad 8 which also says the natural desire is for "the contemplative happiness of which the philosophers spoke."

be happy.<sup>1007</sup> The whole of the moral life, therefore, from the spark of reason<sup>1008</sup> that establishes humans as being made in the image of God<sup>1009</sup> to the perfection of the reason that comes from faith, must be imbued by reason. Since "faith directs the intention towards the ultimate end, but the natural reason or prudence is [only] able to direct us to some proximate end,"<sup>1010</sup> faith is certainly paramount. The will, in fact, cannot "tend towards God with perfect love unless there be right faith about him in the intellect."<sup>1011</sup> The more germane point for us in the context of the present work, though, is that whether we have in mind the natural or supernatural realms, the centrality of the intellect manifestly enjoys privileged instrumentality in the pursuit of beatitude throughout Aquinas' career – as chapter two made clear. In fact, the "proper beginning of human actions"<sup>1012</sup> is reason and without it, it is impossible to attain the perfect notion of a moral act.<sup>1013</sup>

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<sup>1007</sup> *ultimus finis hominum est beatitudo, quam omnes appetunt, ut August. dicit (lib. 19. de Civ. Dei cap. 1. et 13. de Trinit. cap. 4.): sed non cadit in animalia expertia rationis, ut beata sint, sicut August. dicit in lib. 83. QQ. (q. 5.).* The complete quote is "an animal which lacks reason lacks knowledge. But no animal which lacks knowledge can be happy. It therefore does not belong to animals lacking reason to be happy." See, Augustine of Hippo, *Eighty-Three Different Questions*, ed. Hermigild Dressler, trans. David L. Mosher, vol. 70, *The Fathers of the Church* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1982), 39. As Mosher observes here, "it does not follow from this that animals are therefore *unhappy*. Rather, Augustine's point is that both happiness and unhappiness are possible only for rational beings, whereas nonrational beings are incapable of such states."

<sup>1008</sup> Thomas sometimes refers to synderesis as the superior *scintilla rationis* apparently contrasting it with the lower *scintilla rationis* otherwise known as conscience (which is itself called a *scintilla*). See, for instance, *De Veritate*, q. 17 a. 2 ad 3: *Sicut scintilla est id quod purius est de igne et quod supervolat toti igni, ita synderesis est id quod supremum in conscientiae iudicio reperitur, et secundum hanc metaphoram synderesis scintilla conscientiae dicitur.*

<sup>1009</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 93 a. 6 s.c.: *esse ergo ad imaginem Dei pertinet solum ad mentem.*

<sup>1010</sup> II Sent. d. 41, q. 1, a. 2, ad. 2: *fides dirigit intentionem in finem ultimum; sed ratio naturalis vel prudentia potest dirigere in aliquem finem proximum.*

<sup>1011</sup> II-II, q. 4 a.7 ad 5: *Ad quintum dicendum, quod actus voluntatis praeexigitur ad fidem, non tamen actus voluntatis charitate informatus: sed talis actus praesupponit fidem; quia non potest voluntas perfecto amore in Deum tendere, nisi intellectus rectam fidem habeat circa ipsum.*

<sup>1012</sup> I-II, q. 100 a. 1 c. (post 1270): *Cum autem humani mores dicantur in ordine ad rationem, quae est proprium principium humanorum actuum. 'Principium,'* of course, could be translated as "principle," as well, but in this case, "beginning" seems to better capture the meaning. See also, II-II q. 157 a. 2 c. and *De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 ad 1, which calls reason the *proprium et principale activum principium humanorum actuum*.

<sup>1013</sup> *De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 c. (post 1270): *... non attingunt perfectam rationem actus moralis, cuius principium est ratio.*

Though we never entirely prescind from man's calling to supernatural beatitude, the focus of this work was largely on the natural foundation of the moral life known as synderesis and the first principles made known in virtue of it. Accordingly, in chapter three, we investigated the role of natural reason and found that as important as the appetites, prudence, and the moral virtues are, synderesis has a kind of priority. This teaching is, in a way, especially evident in the *Secunda Secundae*, in which Thomas says that synderesis appoints the end to the moral virtues (i.e., the end the moral virtues tend towards) while unequivocally denying that role to prudence,<sup>1014</sup> and that<sup>1015</sup> and that synderesis/natural reason pertains to the end whereas prudence pertains to the means.<sup>1016</sup> The *Scriptum* text that was introduced in the last chapter, however (*Super Sent.*, bk. 3 d. 33 q. 2 a. 3 c.), is also especially illustrative of the kind of primacy synderesis enjoys. In that early work, Thomas argued the order among the three things necessary for moral virtue is as follows:

- 1) The appointing of the end
- 2) The inclination of the appointed end
- 3) The choice of the means

It is because of this order that "the appointing of the end pertains to the natural reason and precedes prudence." It is true that the "inclination of moral virtue is from prudence," but since

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<sup>1014</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1: *virtutibus moralibus praestituit finem ratio naturalis, quae dicitur synderesis, ut in I. habitum est (q. 79. art. 12.), non autem prudentia, ratione jam dicta.*

<sup>1015</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 3: *finis non pertinet ad virtutes morales, tamquam ipsae praestituant finem; sed quia tendunt in finem a ratione naturali praestitutum: ad quod juvantur per prudentiam, quae eis viam parat, disponendo ea quae sunt ad finem; unde relinquitur, quod prudentia sit nobilior virtutibus moralibus, et moveat eas: sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam.*

<sup>1016</sup> II-II, q. 56 a. 1 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est cum de praeceptis ageretur, praecepta Decalogi, sicut data sunt omni populo, ita etiam cadunt in aestimatione omnium, quasi ad naturalem rationem pertinentia. Praecipue autem sunt de dictamine rationis naturalis fines humanae vitae, qui se habent in agendis sicut principia naturaliter cognita in speculativis, ut ex supradictis patet. Prudentia autem non est circa finem, sed circa ea quae sunt ad finem, ut supra dictum est. Et ideo non fuit conveniens ut inter praecepta Decalogi aliquod praeceptum poneretur ad prudentiam directe pertinens. See also the previous footnote.*

the "natural inclination is from the natural reason," prudence would have no inclinations to perfect if synderesis were not present as that which provides the kind of "appointing of the end" that "precedes the act of prudence." For this reason, the teaching of the *Scriptum* passage is essentially identical to that of II-II, q. 47 a. 6: "prudence is more noble than the moral virtues and moves them, but synderesis moves prudence."<sup>1017</sup>

In all three chapters, then, we discovered that regardless of which kind of reason we consider, reason enjoys a causal primacy that is coupled with a profound fecundity in Thomas' thought. Inclinations and appetites are doubtless essential. Actually, Thomas sometimes speaks of a twofold beginning (*principium*) of human actions; "namely, the intellect or reason and appetite, for these are the two movers in man."<sup>1018</sup> Usually, however, he singles out reason as the interior moving power in man<sup>1019</sup> since it is the *first* principle of human actions<sup>1020</sup> in which the "whole root of freedom" is located.<sup>1021</sup> The reason for this emphasis is that in the final analysis, the appetites of rational animals must be subject to reason. Indeed, even the most noble of the appetites – the one known as the *rational* appetite, must be subordinated to it. Given the qualifying adjective 'rational' and Thomas' explanation of the will as "nothing other than a certain inclination following an understood form,"<sup>1022</sup> it should be no surprise that this appetite must live

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<sup>1017</sup> II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 3: *prudencia sit nobilior virtutibus moralibus, et moveat eas: sed synderesis movet prudentiam.*

<sup>1018</sup> I-II q. 58 a. 3 c.: *Respondeo dicendum quod virtus humana est quidam habitus perficiens hominem ad bene operandum. Principium autem humanorum actuum in homine non est nisi duplex, scilicet intellectus sive ratio, et appetitus, haec enim sunt duo moventia in homine, ut dicitur in III de anima.*

<sup>1019</sup> *De Malo*, q. 10 a. 2 c.: *... non attingunt perfectam rationem actus moralis, cuius principium est ratio.* I-II, q. 68 a. 1c.: *in homine est duplex principium movens, unum quidem interius, quod est ratio: aliud autem exterius, quod est Deus.*

<sup>1020</sup> I-II q. 90 a. 1c.: *regula et mensura humanorum actuum est ratio, quae est primum principium actuum humanorum.* Emphasis added. See also, I-II, q. 90 a. 2 c., which refers to reason as the *principium humanorum actuum*, I-II, q. 18 a. 8c. (*principium actuum humanorum, quod est ratio*), and I-II q. 104 a. 1 ad 3 (*ratio, quae est principium moralium*).

<sup>1021</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 24 a. 2c.: *totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta.*

<sup>1022</sup> *S.Th.*, I, q. 87 a. 4c.: *actus voluntatis nihil aliud est, quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam.* See also, *Quaestiones Quolibet* 6, Q. 2, a. 2: *motus voluntatis est inclinatio sequens formam*

up to its name. Moreover, since virtue pertains to living in accordance with reason, the lower appetites, too, must participate in reason. In all of this, the indispensability of prudence, which ensures this participation, shines forth. At the same time, this practical virtue that is also known as *recta ratio agibilium*<sup>1023</sup> and the "charioteer of the virtues"<sup>1024</sup> must be both grounded in and informed by the foundational principles of the natural law made known by the natural reason. The latter certainly does not provide all necessary cognitive content in one's approach towards the perfect good, but it does provide the most essential content. If we were ignorant of this truth, we would have no satisfying way of understanding Aquinas when he says prudence applies universal principles to particular works<sup>1025</sup> because we would be unable to provide a cogent explanation of how such universal and objective principles are either known or retained. In sum, without an understanding of synderesis, we would inescapably find ourselves trapped in the realm of the subjective. If, on the other hand, we grasp the need for prudence to be principled thanks to the guidance provided by an understanding of ends that are not only known by inclination but also – and more importantly – by the natural reason and faith, we will be able to understand the profundity of Aquinas' teaching and the liberation that rational animals experience when living in accordance with it.

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*intellectam* and the *Compendium Theologiae*, book one, chapter one: *appetitus autem sequens intellectum, est voluntas*.

<sup>1023</sup> I-II, q. 57 a. 4c.: *Et ideo ad prudentiam, quae est recta ratio agibilium*. This is the description of prudence that I have either translated as "right reason about doable things" or "right reason about things that can be done."

<sup>1024</sup> See *Summa Theologiae*, Supplementum q.2 a.4 c.; II Sent., D. 41.1.1 obj. 3; *Summa Contra Gentiles* 3.35, *et passim*. Prudence is specifically the charioteer or driver of the moral virtues: As *De Virtutibus*, q. 1 a. 6 c. says, prudence is both *perfectiva* of the moral virtues and "the cause of all the virtues of the appetitive part, which are called moral" (*causa omnium virtutum appetitivae partis, quae dicuntur morales*).

<sup>1025</sup> See, I-II q.76 a.1 c. and II-II q.47 a. 6c.

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