Understanding Ethics in Aquinas: how and why it exists

Lonergan Institute for the "Good Under Construction"

To know about how we get to the question of ethics, let us attend to the kind of order which exists within our different acts of human inquiry. As questions begin to arise within us when we ask about ourselves as human beings (as opposed to our asking about the being of other things), a shift inevitably occurs as we move into a new context or a new horizon of meaning and being. We, for instance, move beyond questions which pertain to whether or not we can have this or that degree of technical competence into a new world of meaning that can now be possibly revealed to us for perhaps the first time as we question ourselves: how we can possibly and freely change ourselves through initiating interior, inner actions of one kind or another, or by ordering or reordering our differing hopes and desires through acts and activities which attend to a different kind of good and a different kind of perfection which would belong to this different good: one which pertains to the good or the excellence of that which exists as moral virtue (*aretê*, in Greek) which, as a quality, forms and builds us as human beings in a way that leads us toward authentic forms of human living which indicate how we can more joyfully and lovingly live as human beings.[1] How better can we live and work with each other as human subjects? The changes that are needed appear to be none too obvious (since, initially, they are not too external to us as things that others can so easily perceive and see) although, on the other hand, they are far more profound because, gradually, through acquiring habits which exist as the good or as the virtue of our engaging in acts of foresight, prevision, or prudence[2] through sound judgments about what we should do, say, or think in a given human situation (by way of an acquisition which exists as the good of "practical wisdom" or as the good of "practical deliberation," *prudentia* in Latin, *phronēsis* in Greek), changes of outlook or attitude emerge in ways which immediately affect us as, within us, they point to an order of major psychological changes. A "healthy frame of mind" replaces a contrary frame of mind as a new species of interpretive hermeneutic. Through a new scheme or effective form, a reorganization befalls us with respect to the contents and the data of our human consciousness. We begin to experience ourselves and our world in a different way as a "robust mental outlook" sublates or as it re-contextualizes our prior actions and deeds where, before perhaps, they had been limited to technical concerns and questions that had asked about how we can possibly improve our external acts and functions: improving our implementation of procedures and techniques if we are to produce and to make things that are other than ourselves in ways that would be more efficient and possibly less costly.[3]

1*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 4; q. 58, a. 5; in the *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 2, 1135, Aquinas speaks about "active operation."

2*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 1. See also Francis Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 144. In q. 49, a. 6, ad 1, when Aquinas speaks about the meaning of prudence, the Latin term which he uses to give prudence its principal or formal meaning is *providentia*: translated as foresight or prevision. Providence refers to exercises of due foresight or prevision in what one does and this meaning gives prudence its basic meaning and, by doing so, turns it into an aspect or a derivative of providence. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 55, a. 7, ad 2: "due foresight of the future belongs to prudence."

3*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 4. In the Prologue to q. 53 in the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, Aquinas speaks about what qualities of human behavior accrue if persons, in their living, lack a healthy frame of mind or a good attitude that is so necessary if actions are to emerge that are truly prudent. If technical competence stands by itself, alone, people can behave in ways which can be

If, as a habit or as a customary way of acting and behaving, the measure or the worth of every virtue is judged or it is determined by some kind of inherent reasonableness (through a conformity which should exist between our engaging in new, prospective acts and actions and the exigencies and the demands of our right acts of thinking and reasoning),[4] as the requirements and the demands of our acts of thinking and reasoning are used to form or to reform our desires and inclinations into new, customary ways of thinking, reasoning, and behaving (that, in turn, lead to new, specific acts that are good and right in themselves within the context of their instantiation), the ordering of our desires which live within the constitution of our interior life presents itself to us as both a special task and as also an achievement of our understanding which belongs to the order of our practical human wisdom which exists as the good and as the excellence of our human prudence.[5] Prudence, as a specific type of discerning wisdom, orders our affective and cognitive life: not only the desires of our feeling, wanting, and willing (our hearts and wills) but also those acts which are constitutive of us in our different acts of human reasoning as this type of knowledge decides when we should shift from one type of act to another species of act (whether we refer to acts which exist as cognitional acts or acts which exist as other specifications of act).[6] A flexible form of patterned order or a series or sequence of steps is to be found and observed within the ordering of our prudential human judgments within a logic of discovery that is peculiar to our acts of prudent human judgment. The order is intelligible because it is intelligently creative (it exists as an intelligent act in its own right), and it decides when we need to make changes within ourselves as we move among and through our different human activities: introducing an order among them which is distinctive of the kind of cognition which belongs to the hope and the good of our human acts of wise prudence (pointing to how we can grow in it in some way or to how we can be moved by it in a way which notices that, in its own way, as a species of reception, our prudence also exists as a gift). As much as we might want it and work toward it (cultivating it), there is something about it that we cannot simply produce or make through our mere willing and seeking of it.

In terms of provenance and with a degree of repetition: our making or producing as *facere* (in Aristotle,

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described in terms of "worldly prudence, cunning and slyness, and over-anxiety" (Thomas Gilby, *St. Thomas Aquinas Philosophical Texts*, p. 335, n. 978). Human selfishness leads to forms of prudence that are based on forms of calculation which are not really prudent since selfish, self-interested understanding exists as a form of understanding that limits itself. The understanding is not open; it is not fully understanding and appreciating all the factors which should be considered if, in fact, we want to make a prudent decision. And so, when understanding limits or restricts itself, it becomes inconsiderate. It is more easily inconsistent and negligent; it exists more easily as a victim of our passions and emotions that are more grounded in impulses than in reasoning and understanding.

4*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 61, a. 2; q. 62, a. 3; q. 63, a. 2; a. 4; q. 64, a. 1, ad 1; ad 2; q. 71, a. 6; q. 17, a. 1, ad 1; 2a2ae, q. 141, a. 6. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae De uirtutibus*, a. 12, ad 16um, as cited by Martin Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 81.

5*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 47, a. 5. See also James F. Keenan, S.J., "The Virtue of Prudence (IIa IIae, qq. 47-56)," *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), p. 267; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 54, a. 3.

6*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 61, aa. 2-4; q. 66, a. 1; Keenan, p. 260. See also Gregory M. Reichberg, "The Intellectual Virtues (1a 2ae, qq. 57-58)," *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 139, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 4.

poiēsis), as a kind of subordinate thing, differs from our acting, doing, or conducting as *agere* (signified by Aristotle as *praxis*).[7] The two are not the same. However, as our technical skills are joined to changes in our mental attitudes which create a new context to effect a new view and way of living for us as human subjects, our skills enter into a larger context of meaning and being which is defined by how we relate to ourselves and to others as human subjects through acts which are constitutive of who and what we are as human beings.[8] Our human nature or form exists as one thing. But, how we behave towards our ourselves and others either adds or it can subtract from how we exist as human beings: enhancing our humanity or perhaps detracting from it. Through prudent actions and activities which combine or which reorder our many acts into new relations which come to exist among them, the different moral virtues that inform our human living all emerge and arise in ways that move into the expressiveness of outer, external dimensions. Hence, where art, skill, competence, or technique refers to our "right reason about things to be made" (as *recta ratio factibilium*), on the other hand however, prudence as a proximate rule and measure refers to our "right reason about things to be done" as *recta ratio agibilium*.[9] The good which is to be brought into being through our various prudent acts (through our judgments and decisions) pertains to the whole of our lives[10] as this arises within us as human persons. It acts as an agent to perfect the proper form of our humanity which belongs to us as human subjects: what it means for us to be fully good and human.[11] The good of our actions as they arise initially from within ourselves in the end becomes who we are as subjects and agents.[12] Moral determinations of meaning transcend and supplant technical determinations of meaning without our having to reject the good that belongs to any technical determinations of meaning and the rightful place that these enjoy within a larger, general scheme of things that is constitutive of our human world in terms of how it exists as its own species of order and cosmos.

In the context of a metaphysics and in its transcendence, a moral determination of meaning or a moral determination of significance enjoys its own type of completeness. Acts of sensing, understanding, and willing, when they are all done well, properly, or "fittingly"[13] (the excellence or the fittingness of a performance defines the goodness or the virtue of a particular activity) – these acts all impart a further, inherent completeness or a perfection that redounds to the good of ourselves as acting and receiving agents who exists as the subject of these same acts since these same acts, in each their own way,

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7*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 4, 282; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 1, 2; 2, 24, 5; 3, 10, 11; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 18, a. 3, ad 1;1a2ae, q. 57, a. 4; cf. Reichberg, "The Intellectual Virtues," p. 138; Bernard Lonergan, "Theology and Praxis," *A Third Collection: Papers by Bernard J. F. Lonergan, S.J.*, ed. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J. (New York/Mahweh: Paulist Press, 1985), p. 184.

8*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 104, a. 1, ad 3.

9*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 4; a. 5, ad 1; cf. *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 3, 1151; *De Veritate*, q. 5, a. 1; Keenan, p. 259; Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 274; p. 322.

10*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, q. 4, ad 3. Later in the *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 137, a. 1, ad 1, Aquinas distinguishes between an end or a good which is the term of a particular action versus an end or good which is the term of one's entire life. This last term subsumes all other actions and all corresponding ends or objects.

11*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 12, 2627; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 4, 282. In the *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 2, 1136, Aquinas refers to "rightly desiring" as an example of an ethical interior action which changes a person from within although this "rightly desiring" can have significant external consequences.

12*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 4, 282.

13*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 3; 2, p. 224; *Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 6, 82.

possess a completeness or a perfection which intrinsically belongs to them and whose actuation works for the actuality or our perfection as agent subjects as a kind of end which belongs to us as agent subjects (the good exists, in its own way, as a *finis operantis*).[14] In general, in every single, distinct act of sensing, understanding, or willing, the act in question is fully united to what is being experienced, understood, or willed.[15] Act is coincident with end and it is not really distinct from it. It is not something which somehow exists apart from what is being enjoyed and experienced. It is not something which is on its way toward some desired end through some kind of continuous although, at times, intermittent kind of motion or process which would consist of different parts or steps that succeed one another in a series as we would determine measurements and lengths of time whenever we note, for instance, that this act comes later after this other act.[16] A "movement" (as in instances of

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14Reichberg, "The Intellectual Virtues," p. 138. As Reichberg argues, the same act can engage in activities that are both transitive and intransitive. If a person drinks wine, the wine can slacken a person's thirst and so the drinking ranks as a transitive act. However, when the wine is consumed also for the sake of its enjoyment, the same act can be viewed as an intransitive act.

15*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 12, 766.

16*Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 6, 82; 10, 162; *Peri Hermeneias*, 1, 14, 19; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 10, a. 1: "time ...is nothing but the numbering of movement by before and after." Cf. Patrick H. Byrne, "The Thomist Sources of Lonergan's Dynamic World-view," *The Thomist* 46 (1982): 124-125.

For a detailed explanation about what the above means, in Bernard Lonergan's *Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 112, when explaining the difference between an incomplete action and a complete action in Aquinas, Lonergan explains how this distinction derives from Aristotle in an analysis that was later used by Aquinas for the purposes of his own analysis. As Lonergan argues:

> One cannot at once be walking a given distance and have walked it, be being cured and have been cured, be learning something and have learned it. But at once one is seeing and has seen, one is understanding and has understood, one is alive and has been alive, one is happy and has been happy. In the former instances there is a difference between action and end, and we have either what is not properly action or, at best, incomplete action - such are movements. In the latter instances action and end are coincident - such are operations.

See also *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 3, 4, 385 which refers to acts of intellect and will which have ends that function as goals of operation without being goals or ends which serve as causes that are needed to explain motion. Motion or movement, as a change of location or place (i.e., local motion), is an inappropriate hermeneutic for understanding the changes that occur within us as human beings as we engage in acts of experiencing, understanding, and willing which lead us toward a transition that moves from a condition of potency to a condition of act. As Aquinas has argued in the *In 3 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 22, q. 3, a. 1, ad 1 (as cited by the editor, H. Daniel Monsour, in "Bernard Lonergan's Draft Pages for Chapter 3 of His Doctoral Dissertation, "*Gratia Operans*: A Study of the Speculative Writings of St. Thomas of Aquin," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 22 (2004): 127, n. 5:

locomotion) points to "an act of something that is incomplete [in itself] (existing as a *motus est actus imperfecti*)" while, on the other hand however, an "operation" exists as a subjective act that already possesses its full being and actuality (hence, an *operatio est actus perfecti*).[17] While the first kind of act exists as an act which exists in a condition of potentiality (it exists more specifically as an active potency and not as a passive potency), the second kind of act exists not in any kind or condition of potentiality but entirely within a condition of act.[18] It exists as an *actus existentis in actu*.[19] It exists as an act of something that is already fully in a condition of act and so, as something that is fully realized, it would have to lack any kind of potentiality that would belong to it although it could then exist as a basis or a point of departure from which it would be possible that we can experience other kind of acts and so engage in other kinds of actions and activities (whether we should speak about things that we do or about things that could be given to us as gifts or receptions).

Two types of action (and so two types of being or reality) accordingly differ from each other.[20] Movements as a continuous type of motion (as imperfect movements) are to be clearly distinguished from discontinuous motions or perfect movements which exist in their own right as operations.[21] To cite some examples, "reasoning is a movement but understanding is an operation; weighing the evidence is a movement but grasping the sufficiency of the evidence is an operation."[22] "Reason is to understanding as motion is to rest."[23] In understanding something, for instance, either we understand something or we fail to understand it.[24] No middle ground exists between our understanding and in our failing to understand something; and so our understanding moves and progresses in an intermittent, discontinuous fashion from one act to another in a way which reveals both the autonomy and the completeness of each act of understanding as it occurs and as it is given to us in the context of a given reception. Understanding emerges discontinuously within a larger context which exists in terms of many motions and movements; hence, within a setting that is both remotely and proximately shaped and conditioned by continuous presentations of sensed data to the apperception of our human senses before and while these apperceptions are changed and transformed as we begin to ask questions and so to engage in inquiries which look for suggestive images or clues that would be apt if they exist as fertile images: if they move our consciousness in a way which turns a chance into a probability that in fact, now, we will experience an act of understanding that is being given to us (an act of understanding that we have been desiring and wanting through our prior acts of questioning and inquiry).[25] A solution solves a problem; an answer, a question.

> ....it ought to be said that local motion, as the Philosopher says in *VIII Physics*, 7 [261a 20], does not change something within a thing, but only that which is external. Hence, local motion does not mean emergence from potency to any internal actuality of the thing, but to an extrinsic actuality. For this reason, local motion does not imply some imperfection according to this: that of those things that ought to be present in a thing, something is lacking. But local motion does imply some imperfection according to this: that while something is in this place, it is not in another place.

17*Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 6, 82; 3, 12, 766; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 18, a. 1. In *Verbum*, pp. 114-115, Lonergan cites a number of definitions for a perfect act that are taken from different texts by Aquinas which all emphasize the actuality or the lack of potentiality which exists in a given subject when it is engaged in a particular operation that is already complete and so not needing or requiring anything more that can make an operation more real than what it already is.

While our perfect movements tend to refer to internally immanent operations which remain within us as agents or subjects, imperfect movements or actions tend to have to do with the reality and the condition of our bodies and with changes of position and location in shifts which are endemic to the life of our bodily, physical movements.[26] In imperfect movements, as these exist for example in our acts of questioning, reasoning, and imagining, or in our acts of finding and weighing any evidence that is given to us prior to our making any judgments, as conscious human subjects, we continually interact with bits and pieces of externally sensed data. A desired end or object does not exist *per se* within our own actions or our own activities. It is not included since, instead, the desired end or object exists outside of our actions or motions. It is that for the sake of which we engage in our acts, actions, and motions. A movement, as a species of being or reality, accordingly exists in its partial actuality and its partial potentiality as a species of in between. In its imperfection (in its kind of being), we say that it exists as an incomplete type of being, as *esse incompletum*;[27] hence, as a "mean between potency and act."[28] First the act and then the potency (a condition of being pointing to a condition of possibility) since we can only know about the potency of any given thing (or the potency of a given movement) if, first, a given thing or act first exists in a particular kind of way. In, for instance, a given situation, when something is being done to a given being (to another) by a prior, first party or actor that is itself within a condition of act[29] (where here, "a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act"[30]), we refer to a being or to a reality that is incomplete or which is imperfect in itself since whatever is subject to its being acted upon by a given act or cause is but partially actual with respect to the being which, already, it happens to have.[31] As we have already been noting, such a thing is neither simply potential nor is it simply actual. Being or act always precedes potency. Operation precedes motion or movement;

18*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 2; 1a2ae, q. 31, ad. 2.

19*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 18, a. 3, ad 1; 1a2ae, q. 31, a. 2, ad 1; 3a, q. 21, a. 1, ad 3. See also Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 114; J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), p. 96.

20*In 1 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 19, q. 2, a. 1; *Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 2, 287; *De Veritate*, q. 8, a. 6; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 23, 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 18, a. 3, ad 1; 3a, q. 62, a. 4, ad 2.

21*Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 10, 60; Byrne, "Thomist Sources," *Thomist*: 137.

22Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 96. See also *De Veritate*, q. 4, a. 1, ad 1 on the act of understanding as an operation and not as a motion.

23Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 66.

24Byrne, "Thomist Sources," *Thomist*: 137 & n. 74.

25Byrne, "Thomist Sources," *Thomist*: 137-138.

26*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 13, 10; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 54, a. 2. See also *Sententia super Physicam*, 5, 2-4; 8, 4-6, as cited by Lonergan, *Verbum*, p. 113, n. 30. When referring to Aristotle's ten categories of predication for the purposes of scientific explanation, Lonergan notes that movement only occurs with respect to "place, sensible quality, and physical size."

27Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 221.

28*Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 3, 296; 3, 3, 285.

29*De Veritate*, q. 27, a. 4, ad 5; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 13, 1-4.

30*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3.

31*Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 3, 292; 3, 4, 298; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3; q. 53, a. 1, ad 2.

motions or movements, if, in a given context, movements exist for the sake of operations that have yet to exist with the kind of being and fullness which belongs to acts which exist as operations.[32]

A kind of ordination and order accordingly exists between imperfect and perfect acts (movements and operations) as, transitively and efficiently, imperfect acts exist for the sake of perfect acts (for instance, our reasoning for the sake of our understanding) while, at the same time too although differently, as our perfect acts exist for the sake of other perfect acts, perfect acts in their way exist for the sake of imperfect acts which would exist as fit means or instruments if improvements and additions of one kind or another are to exist through instigations of motion or movements which would be directed toward ends or objectives that would exist as acts or as realizations which belong to the transcendent type of act which specifically exists as an operation (as the reception of an operation). A temporality of sorts belongs to the kind of act which exists as a motion, action, or movement but not so if we refer to the immediacy and the fullness of an experienced operation where, in one act *or instantly*, everything is given to us in a way which points to how, in an operation and through the reception of an operation, a transcendence of time and space exists (a transcendence which points to why, for instance, insights and acts of understanding which belong to us as human subjects exist with a lack of relativity which points to why a form of timelessness properly belongs to them: a timelessness which precludes our having to think and to believe that, necessarily, our human cultures and achievements exist in a way which is purely or entirely relative). Within the order of our human acts of willing (and as another example), as much as we can take steps to do this or that action or deed to help other persons, an experience of love and gratitude can be given to us in a way which transcends ourselves in our actions and movements as, now, in a way that is not expected (it escapes our conscious control), something interiorly comes to exist within ourselves in a way and as a happening which points to elements or conditions of fortuity if, in fact, no imperfect act on our part, or no number of imperfect acts will necessarily lead us to the kind of act which would exist for us as the completeness or the fullness of an operation where here, in an operation, as sensing, knowing, willing subjects,[33] a passive aspect exists. Something is being sensed, something is being understood, and something is being willed and loved as something which exists as the givenness of a reception; hence, why, in all of our acts of sensing, understanding, and willing, and more as passive subjects than as active subjects, we speak about ourselves in a way which points to our "suffering or [our] being acted upon."[34] The suffering endures. It perennially belongs to us as subjects although in terms of determinations of meaning that are not limited to experiences of pain, privation, and deprivation.

Hence, as we move from a metaphysical type of analysis and a metaphysical type of language into a

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32In the *Sententia super Physicam*, 3, 2, 285, Aquinas uses the following example to illustrate what he means when he distinguishes between potencies, acts, and incomplete acts (or incomplete potencies).

> ....when water is hot only in potency, it is not yet moved. On the other hand, when it is already heated, the motion of heating is finished. But when it participates in something of heat although imperfectly, then it is being moved to heat.

33*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 2, 1, 2.

34Bernard Lonergan, *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript translated 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), p. 171; p. 199.

form of analysis which prefers to speak about the subjectivity of our human acts (our human behavior), through our prudent or our circumspect acts of decision making which exist as the fruit of our rational acts of judgment (which enjoy their own kind of perfection), as human beings and subjects we find that we can make wise decisions and choices which govern our subsequent acts of human behavior in terms of how, properly, we should respond to concrete problems and difficulties as we encounter them within the course of our daily lives[35] and so, as a result of an architectonic ordering function which belongs to us in our exercises and displays of "practical wisdom" which belong to us in our acts of human prudence, other virtues can begin to arise in a way which inevitably points to the primacy of prudence which knows about how many different virtues are to be related to each other and which can then determine when a particular virtue should be employed or used in a given situation (when here or now its cultivation should be encouraged, enhanced, or protected in some way).[36] As a perfection of our practical acts of human reasoning and thinking, our "prudence [as a supremely operative virtue] opens the way for the possible being of [many] other virtues."[37] It is more excellent than the moral virtues which specifically exist not as the perfections of our reasoning and thinking but, instead, as the perfections of our human desires, appetites, and willing.[38] As our prudence perfects the operations of our human acts of reasoning, it informs and it perfects all of the moral virtues that happen to pertain to us with respect to the right ordering of our human desires and our consequent acts of human willing and doing.[39] It exists as the principle not only of all our moral virtues in general but of all our human virtues in general, be they specifically moral or not.[40] It can be said or it is alleged that all of our judgments are wise if they exist as prudent judgments:[41] if they are fair, apt, and just; hence, if they are right or reasonable.[42] In prudence there exists the greatest kind of goodness which exists in terms of our acts of understanding and judgment since, from it, it can be argued that all else flows or can possibly flow.[43] Prudent judgments allow us to experience or to move toward other kinds of judgments that can be given to us since, as a matter of prudence, we can begin to realize at a certain point that we need to move into apprehensions of meaning and being which differ from the practicable kind of knowledge which belongs to prudence if, with respect to our prudence, we should think about the kind of knowledge which belongs to the exigencies and the practicalities of our commonsense: what immediately we must now do to solve a given urgent problem or to meet an unexpected emergency. Prudential judgments can serve as catalysts or, more strongly, they serve as catalysts: to encourage a creating of new conditions which change or which can alter an order of possibilities and probabilities: turning possibilities into probabilities, or adding to this or that probability by increasing the likelihood that this or that event will occur or perhaps will not occur. If, for instance, we can create a viable economic order that is equitable and just in meeting the economic needs of a larger number of individual persons and groups, if we can make a larger number of prudent economic decisions, we can free ourselves for engaging, pursuing, and enjoying other kinds of good which can lead us (and

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35*Sententia Libri De anima*, 1, 3, 41. Referring to Aristotle, p. 17, Aquinas notes that "right action...admittedly derives from intellect perfected by prudence."

36*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 65, a. 1, ad 3; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6, ad 3.

37*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6, ad 3, as cited by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 334, n. 974; cf. 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 1.

38*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 54, a. 4; q. 63, a. 2, ad 3.

39*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 5, ad 11; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 61, a. 2; q. 66, a. 1.

40*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 61, a. 2, ad 1; a. 3; q. 66, a. 3, ad 3; 2a2ae, q. 181, a. 2.

41*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 123, a. 12.

42*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 61, a. 4; q. 63, a. 2, ad 3.

43*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 124, a. 12.

possibly others) toward other orders of good that we can possibly enjoy and which are possibly better and more satisfying than the kind of good which exists as a materially existing determination as now, and perhaps unexpectedly, we begin to know about measures, criteria, norms, or values which belong to other acts and kinds of understanding and the concomitant judgments which would belong to these other, new, different acts of understanding.

To speak now about the accumulative type of relation which exists between the good of wisdom and the good of virtue: as in time we attain or receive the gift of wisdom with respect to the practical things of our daily life, a habitual, prudential kind of understanding should grow within us through years of learning and experience which train us with respect to how we should best cope with certain types of problems and difficulties as these arise within the course of our daily lives.[44] In any given situation, the so-called "wise man" (or the so-called "wise woman") knows how to behave and how to act.[45] Less thought and deliberation is needed as in our understanding and knowing, we become laws onto ourselves (our own personal legislatures).[46] *Ipsi sibi sunt lex*.[47] From this knowledge, as our doing of good deeds proceeds from how we have had to change ourselves in our individual behavior if we are to do what is best in any given situation, as wise persons we best position ourselves to become persons who are also always virtuous. As a means toward an end as the purpose, end, or achievement of our human lives, if our lives should be given to virtuous activities of one kind or another, then this type of activity becomes its own end and objective since, by seeking and by trying to live virtuously, the goodness which already exists in our knowledge is extended as, in its transcendence, it leads to a further perfection of ourselves.[48] A virtuous or good person, or a man or woman who always acts rightly or virtuously, becomes, in his or her own life, a species of norm albeit one which is concretely, incarnately operative and so, as points of origin, we become originating sources of moral activity and goodness which, in some way, always rebound or redound to us and to the good for other human beings with whom we are related or joined in some way since, by definition, a virtuous act is done by a good human being who happens to know what is right and who happens to do whatever is right and good in any given individual case (as each case touches other human beings and as each arises within the circumstances of our daily lives).[49]

44*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 35*; Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 95, a. 1.

45*Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 4, 629. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 1, ad 3.

46*De Veritate*, q. 11, a. 2, ad 5.

47*Super Epistolam S. Pauli ad Romanos Lectura*, 2, lect. 3, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 142. As Rhonheimer goes on to quote Aquinas, "such a person is not led by others but by himself to what is good."

48*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 9, 4, 1806.

49*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 3, 10, 494; 9, 4, 1803-1804; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 1, a. 6, ad 3; q. 109, a. 4, ad 3; Bernard Lonergan, "Horizons," *Philosophical and Theological Papers 1965-1980*, eds. Robert C. Croken and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Express, 2004), p. 25. As Aristotle argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2, 3, 4; 1105b 5-8: "Actions...are called just and temperate when they are such as the just or the temperate man would do; but it is not the man who does these that is just and temperate, but the man who also does them *as* just and temperate men do them." Cf. Lonergan, p. 25. Moral virtue cannot be understood apart from the existence of morally virtuous just persons who behave in a morally virtuous just manner because they have made their own moral judgments which have recognized the good of behaving in a morally just and virtuous way, and who go on from there to behave in a morally just and moral way on the basis of their own insights that have been able to discriminate between what is good and right and what is not good and right. Cf.

A virtuous act as a modification of our desires and passions, in its truth or in its reality, accordingly exists in a way which joins two related elements. Its truth exists initially in terms of how its goodness is first grasped and affirmed through an apprehension which exists as a practicable judgment ("we should do this and not that"). The fullness of its reality exists, however, in terms of a subsequent implementation which exists in its own right as a self-transcending kind of act: hence, having a nature, a quality, a causality of its own whenever we advert to how our willing and desiring differs from our understanding and knowing as a distinct species of conation or orientation which exists, prior to our asking of any questions that could be geared toward determining how we can or should act in ways which will lead us toward actualizations of good that we concretely desire and seek.[50] A person virtuously acts on the basis of a knowledge of different things which can and which must, at times, encompass forms of inquiry and knowing that differ from than the kind of cognition which belongs to our ordinary apprehensions as these exist in common sense.[51] In general, as we have been noting and suggesting, our acts exist as good acts or they can be turned into good acts if they can attain or if they can be conformed to the rule (or the rationality) of our acts of human thinking and reasoning:[52] if, more specifically, a person acts *with reason* and not simply *according to reason* as if, in *according to reason*, our reason were to exist as some kind of external norm or standard that exists beyond or outside of ourselves.[53] In this context, we can never act for self-centered, selfish reasons. Instead, as human beings, as or if we *consistently* behave in a morally good, worthy fashion (if, invariably, we begin to act in accordance with the precepts and the exigencies of our human acts of reasoning where, here, our "intellect always chooses what is best for itself"[54]), our own individual, personal goodness soon becomes a settled, stable kind of reality and order, and if moral lapses occur, they are swiftly greeted

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Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 197. Since goodness is essentially concrete, something only exists if it is realized through what persons do. Cf. *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 4, 288.

50*De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1.

51*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 9, 4, 1805: "...the virtuous man strives always to do what is reasonable"; *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 1: to be virtuous, virtuous acts need to be done "knowingly." Cf. Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputatae De uirtutibus*, 13, cited by Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas*, p. 136, n. 2: "since a human being is human, because he (or she) has reason, his good lies in being in accord with reason." More extensively, in the *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 9, 4, 1807, as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 84, Aquinas notes as follows:

> One considers the existence of man above all in relation to the intellect. Thus it is the virtuous man – the one who lives most fully in accordance with intellect and virtue – who wants to live and exist in the highest degree. This is because he wants to 'live' and 'be' in accordance to what is permanent in him. He who primarily wants to 'live' and 'be' in accordance with the body, which changes, does not truly want to live and be.

52*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 3. Cf *De Virtutibus*, a. 9, as quoted by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 313, where Aquinas apparently says that the "good of man, insofar as he is human, consists in the reason attaining to a complete knowledge of the truth, and the subordinate appetites being ordered [*ut....regulentur*] in accordance with the rule [*regulam*] of reason."

53Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 229, n. 5, citing Aristotle, *Nichomachean Ethics*, VI, 13.

54*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 9, 9, 1877.

with feelings of sorrow and sadness, in some way an act of contrition, and later acts of reparation and repentance.[55] Love for the reasonableness of our understanding of different things and for the goodness and the necessity of our possibly meeting its requirements inevitably leads us toward a healthy or healthier form of self-love as we think and act in ways which can improve how we exist and live as human subjects,[56] the communication of an exacting love of self leading to bonds of friendship, association, and construction which are constitutive of the being of new human communities. To a growing extent, we can help others to live virtuous lives in ways that would be dedicated to realizing as many possible instances of good as this can be possibly done.[57]

Hence, through our judgments, as the practical wisdom of our prudence emerges from within us to enhance or to introduce a moral dimension within us which perhaps before had not existed, this same wisdom, to the degree that it emerges as a habit, to the same degree also, it touches how we should engage in any externally directed activities which properly belong to any of our practicable arts, skills, or applicable techniques since these all come from us as acting subjects and from the creative or the intelligent kind of understanding which exists within us as attentive, questioning human subjects.[58] The degree or the skill of our differing competences fluctuate and change as, for us, better reasons or better purposes arise and exist in ways which can redirect and enhance the course of our lives. We can be encouraged to do things in a better way as, prudently, we align or as we reconfigure how, in general, we have been operating with respect to our practical acts of reasoning, knowing, and doing. Each order serves and helps the other: our competence, our prudence as, through our prudential judgments and evaluations, we move toward specific prudent decisions and choices which reveal how we are responding to a given concrete situation in a way which must be always a bit unique since no one situation exactly resembles another.[59] Our wisdom never exists as if it were entirely static or fixed (a flexibility necessarily exists within it) since, always, new additional acts of understanding are needed as changing circumstances occur with respect to determinations of space and time.

In addition, as our virtues, in their different reality, depend on the good of our prudent judgments for their emergence, formation, and development, at the same time too, our prudence - if it is to exist and to flourish - it too also needs the different moral virtues which perhaps already exist within us or which we need to create or to improve upon[60] since, by employing and by working through them as apt tools or instruments and, by a kind of interaction that exists with them, our prudence can begin to move us in a change or a growth in our awareness and sense of self. More and more, through a kind of growth and expansion, we can move from an implicit, inchoate sense of general principles and precepts that exist within us toward a sense of specific principles and precepts from which we need to select and choose

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55*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 4, 3, 681; 9, 4, 1809.

56*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 25, a. 7; cf. Matthew L. Lamb, O.C.S.O., *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians* (Albany, N.Y.: Magi Books, Inc., 1966), p. 303, n. 151: correct self-love springs from true self-knowledge.

57*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 9, 9, 1872, 1878; 10, 1899.

58"Virtue is that which makes both its possessor and its acts good" (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 56, a. 3; Reichberg, "The Intellectual Virtues," p. 135) is a principle which Aquinas employs in order to argue that the goodness which exists in the interior order of a person's life is an originating kind of goodness. From it, comes the goodness of everything else as this goodness is constructed in the created external order of the human world.

59*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 258-259.

60*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 65, a. 1.

and then adapt and apply in a given concrete, human situation.[61] The different ends or purposes which belong to our different virtues serve as first principles for us within our acts of prudence as, in their way, they move and motivate us toward prudential decisions of one kind or another that allegedly and intelligently respond to objectives and goals which can only be reached if we should make wise decisions about the means that, appropriately, we should use and apply.[62] In the shift which occurs, a prudential knowledge of individual, concrete things increasingly works from a larger, general knowledge of ends, principles, and precepts toward a further knowledge of other ends, principles, precepts, and specific acts which we must become more aware of if we are to continue to make prudent decisions and actions which are to emerge in the wake of our many deliberations.[63]

If the kind of understanding and knowledge which belongs to prudence is to be correlated to the kind of understanding and knowledge which belongs to science or, in other words, if prudence is to be regarded as *the science* that is proper to our ethical and moral life as a distinct species of activity (it would be present in our acts of moral understanding and judging), the habit of our practical reasoning can be conceptually distinguished in words which speak about how it exists as synderesis. The good of this antecedent type of habit conditions or it prepares the way for a second habit which would exist as the prudence of our practicable judgments, decisions, and choices.[64] As through the habit of synderesis we can think about ends which we should try to reach and to achieve,[65] through the habit of prudence, we can begin to think about the means which best lead us toward the ends which we would like to achieve and to reach.[66] Good means best lead to good ends in a way which precludes believing or holding that ends simply justify any choice of means that we could possibly select and then put into effect. As our prudence relies on the synderesis of our thinking and understanding, our synderesis must rely on our prudence if, in the end, a specific good is to be "known, pursued, and realized."[67] Mutual interactions determine meanings, significances, and new determinations of reality and being as our different virtues condition and lead us to questions which ask about the means of their possible, prudent fulfillment, and as our prudence relies and turns to our synderesis if determinations of meaning are to be known about purposes or objectives which need to be understood and known if they are to put into effect in terms of their possible actuation.

In an alignment which recalls or which points to the existence of different types of goods (whether we should speak about individual goods, goods of organization and order, or goods which exist as ultimate kinds of good), different kinds of prudence can be determined in conjunction with different types of goods which we can seek to try to give to ourselves as human agents and subjects (in conjunction too with how we can be possibly more open with respect to the reception of certain goods). Solitary, individual, or a "monastic" type of prudence or ethics is directed toward private types of good and to how we can relate to ourselves as human beings; domestic prudence or ethics, the good of our families

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61*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 58, a. 5. Cf. 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 13, ad 2: "without the moral virtues, there is no prudence"; Ludwig Honnefelder, "The Evaluation of Goods and the Estimation of Consequences: Aquinas on the Determination of the Morally Good," *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 427.

62*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 181, a. 2.

63*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 15; 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 3, ad 3.

64*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6, ad 3.

65*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6, ad 1.

66*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6 & ad 1; q. 47, a. 7.

67Keenan, p. 263, citing Joseph Pieper, *The Four Cardinal Virtues* (Notre Dave, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1966), p. 125.

or the good of our households; and political or civic prudence or, in other words, political ethics or political science, the higher kind of good which exists as the good of a polity or state, the good of a political or a civic community or, in other words, that which exists as the common good of a currently functioning society (allegedly existing as a "commonwealth").[68] In this last ordering, political prudence would exist as the highest or as the most important kind of prudence which, possibly, we can have and enjoy.[69] Hence, its attainment would be most difficult. When laws are enacted by authorities or powers who are charged with attending to the good of a country's citizens, they are designed to reveal or to create correct ways of acting for the citizens of a given state who are faced with problems and difficulties which, possibly, do not exist in other states (or in other political communities). Hence, the legitimacy of any form of political rule is always defined by the kind of care that is given to meeting these kinds of needs and requirements as these exist within a given state.[70] As individuals and groups must each discover new ways of acting in a fitting and proper manner (new laws to govern the private behavior of individuals and the behavior of distinct groups in a possible coordination of them), our human communities, through the mediation of some form of self-government, must discover and propose new laws that are needed in order to regulate a form of civic behavior that is needed if individuals and groups in a society are to determine how they should best behave and respond to new circumstances and problems as, constantly, they are arising and emerging.[71]

As a point of mediation between the prudence or ethics of an individual and the prudence or ethics of a citizen, the prudence or the ethics of a family member exists as a mean between these two extremes.[72] Through our family life, we first learn about how we should live and work with other persons, and this learning of human co-operation prepares us for larger forms of co-operative activity and the good of membership which exists for us within a larger, political community which exists as the community of a polity or state. As political authority within a state, on a larger scale, tries to restrain the unethical activity of any person or group in order to serve the common good of all, it relates to different individuals and groups in the same manner as the forms and requirements of legal justice (*justitia legalis*) are related to the forms and the requirements of many different virtues as these belong to individual human persons and as they belong to persons who are acting together in a way which points to the community of a given group.[73] As this legal justice seeks to determine how relations should exist among persons and groups in a way which promotes the common good of all,[74] it evinces or it points to a general meaning for justice which, as a primary or supreme human virtue,[75] is oriented to how we can use the legislation of laws as fit means and instruments for promoting the lives of many persons and groups in a way which encourages the moral perfection of all: whether persons and groups in a context which is directed to a universal, common type of good which is to be reached by co-ordinating the particular virtues of all constituent persons and groups within an order which is formative of a given

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68*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 1, 6; 6, 7, 1196; *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 9; a. 11; q. 50, a. 2, ad 3.

69*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 9.

70*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 92, a. 1, ad 2; q. 96, a. 4.

71*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 7, 1196; 10, 16, 2175; 10, 14, 2150; 2153; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 96, a. 1, ad 2.

72*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 7, 1196.

73*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 7, 1196. See also 1, 1, 4.

74*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 103, a. 1; 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 5.

75*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 4.

society.[76] Citing Aquinas as he had noted in his *Summa Theologiae*, the "chief and main concern of law" is to promote an ordering of things that is directed toward the common good.[77] On the one hand, persons and groups each exhibit particular forms of justice when they each acknowledge the good of other persons and groups and as they seek to adjust their behavior in ways which respect the right and goodness of other persons and groups.[78] But, on the other hand too and at a higher level, to the political authority of a society belongs the promotion of a general justice for all which seeks to subsume the justices of particular persons and groups without violating the responsibilities and the prerogatives which belong to the life of individuals and groups.

In the same vein, in the relation which exists between prudence as a rational ordering of our practical acts of wisdom and wisdom as a theoretical knowledge of first causes and sources, prudence (as a lower, lessor, or subordinate kind of virtue) assists or it can work for the higher virtue which exists as the good and the gift of our metaphysical or theoretical wisdom.[79] A practical, commonsense, prudential understanding of things can prepare us for the good of our moving into a more intense form of inquiry which tries to understand all things and all causes from a larger perspective or vantage point which would exist as an operative order of first causes that are not contingent but which are necessary.[80] Prudence works with us if, prudently, we grapple with secondary causes of one kind or another in order to effect changes that would seem to lie within the ambit of our human control and realization[81] ("prudence is about human goods, concerning which one must take counsel"[82] because of a choice that we must make) but, as the science or the order of our theoretical wisdom works with realities and eternal verities that transcend any form of human realization which would exist as a form of making and doing, in the light of this kind of wisdom and its grasp of first causes and first principles, it should follow from this that prudential decisions would be more intelligently made within the ordinary course and amid the demands which belong to us in the conduct of our daily lives.[83] For any of us who are blessed with both the virtues of prudence and the good of a form of theoretical knowledge which exists as wisdom, less chance exists that the intellectual requirements of one form of inquiry will be confused with those of another. As we grow in our knowledge of different things, we should know when we can rely more on one type of science than on another. The differences which distinguish the theoretical and the practical sciences from each other should not be understood in a way which would have to emphasize a type of separation which would preclude our being able to speak about how these two types of science can mutually assist and work with each other. To understand differences is to understand also how differences of one kind or another are related to each other in

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76*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 5 & ad 2 & 3; q. 58, a. 6.

77*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 90, aa. 2-3; Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, "The Discovery of a Normative Theory of Justice in Medieval Philosophy: On the Reception and Further Development of Aristotle's Theory of Justice by St. Thomas Aquinas," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000): 9.

78*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 58, a. 7.

79*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 11, 1290; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 66, a. 5, ad 1; *Quaestiones disputatae de Virtutibus cardinalibus*, q. 1, a. 1: "moral action is like a door, through which there is an entrance to the contemplation of wisdom," as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 349, n. 55.

80*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 33.

81*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 5.

82*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 6, 1193, as quoted by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 303, n. 854.

83*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 4.

ways which point to forms and actualizations of complementary which would or which should exist between these two types of knowledge which exist as the ordering of our prudence and the ordering of our wisdom.

Through developments or a growth in our conceptuality which enhances our consciousness in ways which lead to demarcations in our understanding and knowledge of different things: as, through the habit of skills, art, or technique, we effect changes in our external world and environment, when then, through our prudent choices, we change ourselves in terms of who we are as human beings, the activities which belong to this classification fall into a form or a specification of our practical acts of reasoning and science which are referred to in general terms as the subject and the pursuit of moral science or, in other words, as that which exists as the subject and the pursuit of moral philosophy.[84] Ethics or morality or the absence of these first exists as a datum or as a condition; then moral science or the desideratum of moral philosophy where the object is a concern or focus which asks about how we can understand the nature or the intelligibility of our human moral virtues.[85] Moral science exists as a species of amalgam. As a cognitive discipline with a practical object,[86] it tries to encourage the good of our right conduct,[87] but only through a set of mediating virtues which can begin to specify what particular actions are to be performed as specific acts of virtue within any given set of circumstances.[88] Virtues are loved and desired not only for what they are in themselves but, principally, as means which lead to an order of greater, higher goods since, in the cultivation of any given virtue, passions are ordered and regulated in a way which joins them to a rational principle.[89] An intelligible form is given or it is brought into a natural or a sensitive desire or propensity in a way which turns it into a good habit which exists as the mark of a given virtue.[90] In the later doing of our good deeds, we grow in our own goodness where full concrete specificity in terms of good acts or good deeds only emerges through particular choices which we make since virtues exercise a determinative influence only as we make later, subsequent, concrete choices which must be made if any particular action is to be put into effect for purposes of realizing some kind of desired good.[91] Moral science or moral knowledge does not exist, on the one hand, as moral achievement and actualization,[92] although, on the other hand however, it is needed and, at times, it is urgently and greatly needed. Necessarily, it can begin to exist as a prerequisite if, in difficult situations, "right acting" or "right choosing" is to properly follow and to

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84*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 11, 7, 2253; *Super Boethius De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 256.

85*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 35, 2.

86*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 7, 1200.

87*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 256; 3, 6, 452; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 14, a. 3.

88Thomas Aquinas, Disputations, *de Correctione Fraterna*, 1, quoted by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 361, n. 1056; *Super Boethius De Trinitate*, q. 5, a. 1, ad 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 56, a. 4, ad 3; q. 85, a. 2.

89*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 4.

90*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 55, a. 3; 2a2ae, q. 145, a. 1, ad 1; *De Veritate*, q. 11, a.1. Hence, in the *Summa Theologiae*, q. 56, a. 5, virtue can be defined as "a perfect habit by which it never happens that anything but good is done," as quoted by Reichberg, "The Intellectual Virtues," p. 134.

91*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 7, 322: "[Moral] virtue is an elective habit that consists in a mean, determined by reason in respect to ourselves, and just as the wise person would determine it" (as cited by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, pp. 330-331).

92*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 8, a. 3, ad 3.

fully exist.[93]

To take up the question then of moral science and to speak about it as a point of departure with respect to its general direction and its proper orientation, as we have been already noting, the good initially exists as that which all things desire or want.[94] The good that is intended by us as human beings is always regarded as a good by those of us who happen to desire it (both within ethics with respect to the production of internal goods as this exists within our understanding, knowing, and loving; and within arts or techniques with respect to our production of externally existing goods) since human intentions are always directed toward some kind of good despite possible errors about what we should believe to be true and good.[95] Simply put: "end is determined for man by nature."[96] Good is always necessarily desired and willed,[97] and also any good which is necessarily needed if we are to attain any kind of ultimate end or good,[98] even if it is also true to say and to admit that our structured God given human orientation toward goods of one kind or another is an inclination that is strengthened and which is encouraged if we should move toward a possible cultivation of different moral virtues that can begin to emerge in some kind of fuller, more complete way.[99] In addition too, and as we have also already noted, our human nature and aspirations are not satisfied until we enjoy experiences or receptions of complete, ultimate kinds of good wherein our perfect happiness or beatitude exists[100] as a peace or

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93Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 331, citing *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 58.

94*De Malo*, q. 1, a. 1; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 4, 71; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 5. See also Bernard Lonergan, *Topics in Education: The Cincinnati Lectures of 1959 on the Philosophy of Education*, eds. Robert M. Doran and Frederick E. Crowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), pp. 27-33; Terry J. Tekippe, "The Crisis of the Human Good," *Lonergan Workshop,* vol. 7 (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 314.

95*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 3, 781; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 3, 11, 500; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 19, a. 9; 1a2ae, q. 85, a. 2; 3a, q. 18, a. 4; q. 21, a. 4. In 3a, q. 18, aa. 3-4, Aquinas distinguishes between *simple will* or *will as nature* and *will as reason* when he wants to distinguish between ends which are desired and means which are to be selected if any end is to be realized and achieved (see 1a, q. 83, a. 4). Human beings ultimately act for reasons that refer to some kind of good which is desired and which they wish to realize. Good is always sought (even if, at times, wrong kinds of good are sought). However, human exercises of freedom in the context of our human willing only properly occur in choices which can rationally choose between which means are to be used to achieve an end which is good because it is ordained to be good by the character and the nature of our human existence.

96*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 2, 1131.

97*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 2 & ad 2; q.13, a. 3/ See also *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 821-24; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 2, 1131; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3; q. 19, a. 7, ad 3.

98*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 2, ad 2.

99*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 10, a. 2; q. 58, a. 4.

100*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, aa. 5, 7. In the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 82, a. 1;1a2ae, q. 10, a. 2 ,and later in q. 13, a. 6, Aquinas refers to happiness as an example of perfect goodness which no human will (our willing) can really reject. All men desire to be happy in what they do even if we must admit to the fact that the limitations which attend our human performance necessarily limit the kind of happiness which we, as human persons, are able to experience through the actions which we can do as created beings (see 1a2ae, q. 5, a. 5). However, in

contentment that, as a species of by-product,[101] consciously delights in the good which has been achieved and brought into a higher order of completion[102] although admittedly, as given, our human nature does not specify how all forms of encompassing goodness will be brought into their appropriate condition of being and existence.[103] Hence, if our human desire always acts for the sake of attaining some kind of good, the burden of successfully attaining whatever is truly good for us will depend upon the rationality of our pertinent, human judgments which must decide about what goods we should intend in any given situation if fuller incidences of good are to occur and to exist.[104] Our rational desires differ. They are to be clearly distinguished from affective, emotional, or unthinking types of desire that lack a rational foundation and which are grounded in desires for pleasure which exist in a way which is more akin to desires which have a bodily nature than any desires that are specifically human, rational, or intelligent.[105] When, as human beings, we give ourselves to purely bodily desires, to satisfying our purely sensitive desires which are correlated with our acts and organs of human sensing,[106] as human beings, we will begin to live like animals (as if we are governed by instincts

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1a2ae, q. 5, a. 8, Aquinas bluntly notes that, since a man's perfect good lies in the complete satisfaction of all his desires, in this satisfaction exists our perfect happiness or beatitude as a state which is enjoyed when, as human beings, we find that we possess every kind of perfection or every kind of goodness. The enjoyment of every goodness or perfection is to be associated with the enjoyment of every kind of happiness or, in other words, with the enjoyment of happiness in general. As David M. Gallagher summarizes this conclusion in "The Will and Its Acts (Ia IIae, qq. 6-17)," *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 74, with respect to the character of our human happiness, "no good due to [a person's] nature is lacking and no inclination of the will is unsatisfied." Citing Lonergan's definition of beatitude given in the *Incarnate Word*, p. 223: "beatitude is the perfect state of all goods in the aggregate."

101*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 3, a. 4.

102*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 25, a. 2; q. 31, a. 1; q. 32, a. 1. In his *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 13, 158 and also in his *Expositio et Lectura super Epistolas Pauli Apostoli*, *In II ad Cor*. IX, 7, lect. 1, n. 332 (cf. Torrell, *Aquinas, Vol. 2*, p. 267), Aquinas notes that a life of virtue and a life of sadness and sorrow are not compatible with each other. They do not really fit. Virtuous activity brings joy and happiness into one's life and, if a person acts joyfully and gladly in doing good deeds, the happiness which one has will only reinforce the doing which is the practice of a particular virtue. Cf. *In 3 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 23, q. 1, a. 1, ad 4. It is not enough just to do good deeds but one must act also with a sense of the joy that one takes in the actions which one does and also with a sense of generosity (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 133).

103*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 83, a. 3.

104*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 3, ad 2.

105*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 7, 2522.

106In the *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 5, ad 6, ii and later in q. 23, a. 1, and then in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 80, a. 2, Aquinas clearly distinguishes between sensitive desire or appetite (*appetitus sensitivus*) and intellectual desire or appetite (*appetitius rationalis*). Sensitive desires normally belong to animals and intellectual desires, to human beings even if the human will, as an intellectual desire, incorporates the animality of sensitive desires within it in a sublation which combines and humanizes all the different desires which already exist at a vegetative and sensitive level, although, in a way which does not violate the vegetative and sensitive character of these desires (cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 4, ad 3; 3a, q. 18, a. 3; Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 76; Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas Volume 2 Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal, p. 257). Later, in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 17, a. 7, Aquinas more clearly explains why sensitive desires and desires that belong to our human acts of willing differ. Sensitive tendencies not only depend on the organs

which preclude our possibly making any choices that can only emerge through rational reflections and decisions which would opt for implementing one course of action instead of some other course of action).[107] Our human desires would lose their human character since, as we have been arguing, the humanity of our human desires is grounded in the good of its inherent reasonableness.

The condition or the quality of virtue only exists with respect to our sensitive desires if these desires habitually conform themselves to the demands of our human acts of reasoning although in a manner which must respect the fact that, to each sensitive desire, a principle of operation of its own exists: a principle which exists as an internal nature or law which properly belongs to it and which functions with an autonomy and an economy that reason or understanding cannot itself violate, ignore, or cast aside.[108] Hence, as in us each desire tries to conform itself to the demands of our reasonable demands and wants, an intelligibility which already exists within a given desire is ordered toward a higher intelligibility which would then perfect the human desires and passions which already exist in us if, by our actions, we bring these desires and passions into a larger context which sublates their functioning and activity. In the kind of government which we are to exercise through our acts of reasoning, understanding, and judging, the appropriate analogy is not one which points to a tyrant or to a master who simply tells a slave what he or she is to do.[109] A political form of government is instead exercised through a kind of persuasive cajoling that our acts of reasoning exercise since, like free subjects in a political state, our human desires cannot be simply ordered to do or to refrain from doing this or that act. In some way, the cooperation and the coordination of our human desires has to be elicited and encouraged and resourceful means must be devised to effect this goal in the conformity which, ideally, should exist between our acts of willing and our acts of understanding.

The difference or the plurality in nature which distinguishes the inclinations and the operation of one desire from that of others in turn accordingly explains why many different virtues exist and why each is perfected by a rationality or a species of virtue that properly belongs only to it. "To every definite

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which belong to our bodies (our eyes for seeing, for example), but they also exist as powers or as capabilities which belong to our corporeal organs with respect to the being of their internal or their intrinsic principles. Desires to see or hear exist as tendencies that directly belong to our organs of seeing and hearing. However, in sharp contrast, our acts of human willing have desires which do not belong to organs that possess a physiological base. On the one hand, while our human desires exist within our human cognition as we turn to our bodily organs and as we use them for purposes of attaining goods that we desire and seek, these same desires transcend our purely corporeal and sensitive desires that properly and immediately belong to us in the functioning of our bodily organs. In discussing these differences, however, which distinguish our sensitive desires from desires that belong to our human acts of willing, the general context is a distinction which Aquinas draws which identifies three different kinds of desire (see *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 6, a. 1, ad 2; q. 44, a. 4, ad 3; *De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 1; q. 25, a. 1): rational desire, sensitive desire, and natural desire which (as distinguished from any sensitive or rational desire) is the most primitive form of desire since it exists as an unconscious desire that belongs to both inanimate and animate beings, including us as human beings who can engage in actions which we are not conscious of). Everything which exists has an inner nature or an inner principle and, from it, "does one thing turn toward another" (*De Veritate*, q. 23, a. 1, as quoted by Gilby, *Philosophical Texts*, p. 111, n. 318).

107*Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, a. 2.

108*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 24, a. 3; q. 56, a. 4 & ad 3.

109*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 17, a. 17; q. 58, a. 2.

natural inclination there corresponds a special virtue."[110] Every natural inclination or every natural desire is ordered toward a particular virtue of some kind. In speaking thus about our human desires in both general and particular terms, on the one hand, we can speak about an intrinsically rational desire or an intrinsically rational appetite which is human to the degree that it is right and reasonable and, on the other hand, we can also speak about this desire as it is naturally and differentially directed toward a wide variety of different objects that are both truly noble and truly good. Differences in object specify differences in inclination and the introduction of rational requirements distinguishes how one virtue can be distinguished from another.

An example of this dynamic as it refers to the relation which exists between our desires and appetites and our acts of human reasoning comes to us from Plato's account in the *Crito* which speaks about the deliberations of Socrates, shortly before his execution. Socrates could have easily escaped death if he had allowed his friends to bribe his jailers, but Socrates responds by asking for rational arguments which can reasonably persuade and justify such a possible course of action. "We must therefore examine whether we should act in this way or not; for I am not only now but, at all times, I am the kind of man who listens to nothing within me but the argument [the reasoning] that on reflection seems best to me."[111] Or, in other words, "prove to me that this is the reasonable thing to do, and I will do it."[112] However, when his friend, Crito, is not able to prove the reasonableness of the course of action which he proposes, Socrates decides to remain where he is and so face death. Hence, as a general principle, it can then be said about Socrates that he always lived and died according to a precept which says that we should not do anything that is unreasonable and, then more specifically, that he lived and died according to a precept which says that, in moral matters also, we should not draw any conclusions apart from apprehensions of compelling evidence (to the degree that satisfactory evidence can be alluded to and given for the goodness of one possible course of action instead of some other possible course of action).[113]

110*Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 108, a. 2; 3, p. 1651. See also Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 250.

111Plato, *Crito*, 46b. See http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text%3Fdoc%3DPerseus:abo:tlg,0059,003:46b (accessed March 1, 2021).

112Terry J. Tekippe, *Bernard Lonergan: An Introductory Guide to Insight* (New York/Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2003), p. 19.

113Terry J. Tekippe, *What is Lonergan Up to in INSIGHT? A Primer* (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 1996), p. 155.