Aquinas on Virtue

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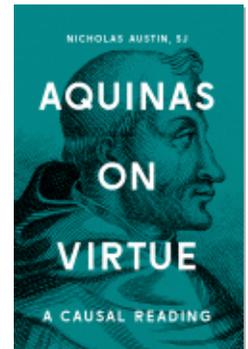
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Virtue's Definition

Suggested reading: *Summa Theologiae* I.II 55.4;
On the Virtues 1.2

A hologram has the surprising property that each of its constituent parts encodes information about the entire three-dimensional image. Even were only a fragment to remain, all would not be lost: when a single piece is illumined with a laser light, astonishingly, the full image unfolds.

If the recent history of interpretation of Aquinas's ethical thought suggests anything, it is that the image of a building constructed on a foundation is a misleading one. There is no basic or central idea, not even the concept of virtue. A more-promising metaphor would be the hologram. As Carlo Leget comments, "The greater one's acquaintance with Aquinas' theology, the more one discovers how, in the *Summa*, every article has the nature of a hologram in which the rest of the work is reflected."[1] As with a hologram, the whole is latent within each fragment.

On what, though, should a holographic reading of Aquinas's virtue theory focus? Having examined Aquinas's argument that virtue is a good operative habit (I.II 55.1–3), we are now in a position to look at the culminating article regarding the essence of virtue (55.4). If the focused light of sustained attention illumines that single article, does an image of Aquinas's virtue theory as a whole emerge?

THE DEFINITION OF VIRTUE

The article defining virtue, I.II 55.4, is a puzzling one. Aquinas presents himself as defending the formula found in Peter Lombard's *Sentences*, a theological compilation written around the mid-twelfth century. This work was considered a reader in theology and the first point of reference for medieval scholastic

theologians. In a chapter titled "On Virtue: What It Is, and What Its Act Is," the master offers his definition: "Virtue, as Augustine said, is a good quality of the mind, by which we live rightly, and which no one uses badly, which God alone works in a human being."[2] This is not a direct quotation from Augustine but a patchwork gathered from various of his works, especially *On Free Choice of the Will* and *Retractions*. With the Bishop of Hippo's unrivaled authority behind it, and its presence in the primary scholastic textbook, this definition became the received formula for centuries.

Aquinas's early theological masterwork was a commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*, so it is unremarkable that there he defends the definition.[3] Even in his late writings on virtue, in both *On the Virtues* (1.2) and indeed in *Summa Theologiae* (I.II 55.4), when Aquinas is no longer constrained by the text of the *Sentences*, he again strongly endorses it.

The first puzzle about the choice of definition in the *Summa* is why Aquinas thinks it is necessary, given that he has already apparently provided one. In strict Aristotelian fashion, Aquinas has identified virtue's genus (habit), its more general difference (*operative* habit), and the specific difference that ultimately constitutes virtue as virtue (*good* operative habit).

A second puzzle is why Aquinas indicates a preference for Lombard's definition, since he has clearly memorized a number of worthy alternatives, notably those found in Aristotle and Cicero. A virtue is described as "a habit in the mode of nature, in harmony with reason," "what makes its possessor good and its possessor's work good," "the limit of a power," and "a disposition of the perfect to the best, but I call 'perfect' what is disposed according to nature." Moral virtue, in particular, is described by Aristotle as "an elective habit, lying in the mean relative to us, determined by reason insofar as the prudent one determines it."[4] Given these alternatives, why does Aquinas prefer to follow Lombard?

Aristotle or Augustine?

Consider how contemporary interpreters would solve this puzzle. Martin Rhonheimer's approach is to dismiss the significance of the article: "Thomas Aquinas bases his doctrine of virtues—against the trend of his time—not on the Augustinian definition but on the Aristotelian."[5] For Rhonheimer, Lombard's definition "contains almost no relevant ethical or action-theoretical elements."[6] He even refers to Aquinas's "rejection" of this formula.

If Rhonheimer is right, Aquinas has found a strange way to reject the Augustinian definition by constructing an argument in its defense. Admittedly, Aquinas does amend the definition. Yet Aquinas also states, "This definition completely embraces the whole rationale of virtue" (55.4c).[7] Rhonheimer's

Aristotelian approach to Aquinas's ethics offers no explanation of the weight Aquinas gives to it.

This thought lends support to the diametrically opposed reading provided by theologian Mark Jordan and others. Jordan suggests that Aquinas is motivated by the search for a properly theological definition that applies strictly only to the "infused" virtues that come to us as a gift from God and direct us to eternal life: virtues such as faith, hope, and charity. On Jordan's reading of Aquinas, "virtue" is an analogous term that applies to some virtues in a fuller sense than it does to others. Since infused virtue is "the first and clearest member of the analogy," this definition is given for that.[8] Similarly for Eleonore Stump, the Augustinian definition adopted by Aquinas is "manifestly an un-Aristotelian definition" since it refers only to virtues that are infused.[9]

Yet if Aristotelian Thomism is an interpretive risk, anti-Aristotelian Thomism can be an overcorrection. Jordan's reading has the merit of taking the final article on virtue's essence seriously; the explanation of why Aquinas opts for Lombard's definition is not persuasive. Aquinas comments that by omitting the final clause, "which God works in us without us," the definition will apply to all the virtues, both infused and acquired.[10] So Aquinas sees the final clause as something that needs to be excised to serve the purpose of the article—that is, the provision of a definition of virtue in general that extends to all virtues, whether infused or not. As Bonnie Kent observes, "Thomas wants his definition to cover both the human virtues acquired through our own natural resources and the superhuman virtues Christians have through God's grace."[11] Aquinas adopts Lombard's definition not because, but *despite* the fact that it strictly applies only to infused virtue. As Matthew O'Brien warns, a "rhetorical commitment" to the "non-Aristotelian" nature of Aquinas's ethics leads to its own hermeneutical distortions.[12]

If the Aristotelian approach eclipses the Augustinian definition because it does not fit its interpretive presuppositions, the Augustinian approach misuses the definition for its own overcorrective agenda. Neither approach allows the most important text in Aquinas's account of virtue, the one that defines virtue, to speak for itself.

The Search for a Comprehensive Definition

There is an alternative explanation provided by Aquinas himself. In the *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas defends Lombard's definition against its rivals on the following basis: "If, by a definition of something, we mean one that embraces its whole being, insofar as it is constituted from all its causes, that is, a complete definition, then there can only be one definition for one thing.

The aforementioned definition [namely, Lombard's] of virtue embraces all its causes."[13] Aquinas notes that competing definitions express different causes of virtue without encompassing them all. For example, Aristotle's description of virtue, as "a disposition of the perfect to the best," expresses the final cause alone. While it is accurate, it is incomplete. Lombard's definition is preferable because it alone, of all the contenders, offers an account of all the causes of virtue.

This explanation, offered by the early Aquinas, remains valid for the *Summa Theologiae*. Aquinas begins the body of the article with a methodological principle: "The complete rationale of anything is gathered from all its causes" (55.4c).[14] We find the principle in the commentaries on Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics, Metaphysics,* and *Physics*: "Sometimes many definitions are assigned to one thing according to diverse causes; but the complete definition is gathered from all the causes."[15] There is, then, an alternative to the standard definitional procedure of identifying genus and difference—that is, using a "causal" method that gathers the formal, material, final, and efficient causes of what is to be defined. Only a definition in terms of all four causes will be all-embracing.

Aquinas does not forget this principle in his theology. For example, Robert Pasnau shows that *The Treatise on Human Nature* (I.II 75–89) is structured according to the four causes.[16] As Clifford G. Kossel notes, it is by "causal analysis" that Aquinas arrives at his comprehensive definition of law.[17] Jacobus Ramírez notes that the *Treatise on Habits* (49–54) is largely divided according to the schema of the four causes.[18]

On this basis it is necessary to turn on its head the standard reading of the article defining virtue. Aquinas's concern is not merely to defend a definition already given but rather to offer a four-causal account that is more comprehensive than a definition in genus and difference (which only gives the formal cause). In the body of the article, and even in the objections and replies, Aquinas goes systematically through the four causes of virtue, correlating each, more or less adequately, with each part of the Augustinian definition. Indeed, Lombard's formula is hallowed by Augustine's authority, but it also happens to be the one that fits the causal method of definition best (or, rather, least inadequately). Where the Augustinian definition does not quite supply the right answer, Aquinas adapts it to fit the causal schema. Were it not for Aquinas's characteristic reverence for Augustine, the article "Whether the customary definition is fitting?" could have been titled "What are the causes of virtue?"

DOES VIRTUE EXIST?

We have seen how Aquinas defines virtue in general in terms of its four causes. Before we examine these causes in more detail, it is necessary to raise a

question that has been held in abeyance for some time namely—the question not of essence but of existence. Does anyone actually possess virtues? The question is far from trivial. Due to the challenge from situational psychology, the question is a live one in contemporary virtue theory, with some authors claiming empirical evidence that people do not exhibit the stable, global dispositions that would constitute the virtues.[19]

Aquinas on Existence

Aquinas's usual method is to establish existence before essence. He does not believe essences exist in some abstract Platonic realm, independent of the individuals that possess them. So one cannot strictly know *what* something is unless one knows *that* it is: "There are no definitions of what does not exist."[20] The correct method of investigation is to begin with the question "*An est?*" (whether something exists), and only when that has been answered may one legitimately move to the question "*Quid est?*" (what something is in its essence).

Aquinas sees the apparent vicious circularity: how to prove *that* something exists before one knows *what* is to be shown to exist? To circumvent this catch-22, Aquinas distinguishes the preliminary knowledge of what something is from the scientific knowledge of its essence provided by a definition. One begins, then, with a nominal definition, proceeds to establish existence, and then finally arrives at a real definition or statement of what a thing is in its essence (I 2.2 ad 2).[21]

Why, then, does Aquinas begin the *Treatise on Virtue* with the definition of virtue, bypassing the prior question of whether there are any virtues?[22] The commentators often found this apparent lacuna difficult to explain.[23] There are various possible reasons for the omission.

One possibility is that Aquinas supposes he has demonstrated the virtues' existence in what has gone before. Aquinas has already argued that habits are "necessary" (I.II 49.4c). Here he is employing the idea of the "necessity of the end" (*necessitas finis*).[24] Something is necessary-simply-speaking when it cannot not be; something is necessary-for-the-end when the end cannot be attained, or attained well, without it (I 82.1c). In this sense, water is necessary for plants and making honey is necessary for bees.[25] For Aquinas, the virtues are necessary to human beings with the necessity of the end: without them a human being cannot attain the rational, human good to which she is oriented by nature. This, indeed, is the reason Aquinas considers the virtues at such length in his moral science. The virtues are the interior principles required to perform those actions by which we may arrive at beatitude (I.II 6 pr; 49 pr). We need the virtues.

Does virtue's necessity-for-the-end answer the question of its existence? Perhaps indirectly, at least within the framework of Aquinas's overall theology. For Aquinas, it is inconceivable that God should create humans and also make it systemically impossible that they find what they need to attain their good (110.2). The existence of virtue as a habit realistically attainable by human beings is an implication of his understanding of the created order as ruled by a provident God.

Aquinas would also acknowledge the direct scriptural testimony to the virtues, as in Paul's hymn to love (1 Corinthians 13). However, for Aquinas there is also a more empirical route to knowing virtues exist. In the *Summa Theologiae* he explicitly refers to virtue as one of those things that are known to us by experience (*nobis per experientiam nota*) (II.II 145.1 ad 2). In the *Commentary on the Sentences* he notes that, while we have no direct knowledge of habits, we can recognize their existence in others or in ourselves when we perceive that someone acts in such a way that she could not have done so without the corresponding habit.[26] So scripture, theology, and daily experience all point to the existence of the virtues. For these reasons, Aquinas may simply have assumed there was no need for a proof.

The Situationist Challenge

Does Aquinas's virtue theory survive the situationist challenge, which claims that there is empirical evidence that there are no virtues? The "situationist critique" of classical virtue theory is a philosophical argument based on interpretations of a body of empirical social psychology. It finds that social situation, not trait of character, has a greater role in explaining human behavior.[27] A strong version of the situationist critique is offered by Gilbert Harman, who claims that our attributions of character "tend to be wildly incorrect and, in fact, there is no evidence that people differ in character traits."[28] Other situationist critiques are more circumscribed. John Doris, for example, argues that the "robust traits" of classical virtue theory do not exist but that fine-grained "local traits" may: someone may be repeatedly helpful in one situation and repeatedly unhelpful in another rather similar situation.[29]

For Harman, as for Aquinas, our ability to affirm the existence of a virtuous habit depends on its success in explaining action. We can say a virtue, rather than situation alone, is the cause of an action only when the stable, operative quality we call a virtue is the best explanation for what is done. A contemporary virtue theory cannot remain hermetically sealed against situationist work that provides empirical evidence that situation plays a stronger role than character in explaining action. Robert Adams is one author who takes the evidence

seriously in conceding that human virtue is "fragmentary and frail in various ways."[30] Similarly, we should question, on both theoretical and empirical grounds, one of Aquinas's claims, that a virtue must be extensionally perfect; that is, it must rightly dispose its bearer in regard to its objective matter globally rather than partially (see chap. 10 for a discussion). Doris may be right that our virtues are often "local" rather than "global."

At the same time, a more robust defense of virtue is possible.[31] To begin, it is necessary to ask what traits the situationist psychologists are testing for since they may have misunderstood the nature of the virtues that ethicists like Aquinas believe exist. The situationists often understand character traits in terms of behavioral dispositions, and they tend to assume, for example, that someone possesses the virtue of compassion only if she always helps those in need. Yet, as we have seen, for Aquinas virtues are not to be understood as ready-made behavioral responses to stimulus; they are situationally more sensitive than that. For Aquinas the possession of the virtue of mercy, say, does not require helping every time a person in need appears but rather being disposed to help another when, where, and how it is fitting to help, as judged by the practically wise person; the assessment will not always lead to helping (see II.II 33.2c). Testing for the existence of a virtue is a complex matter since the absence of a helping behavior on a particular occasion is not necessarily evidence of the nonexistence of the corresponding virtue.

A further complicating factor for situationist testing for character is that, as Aquinas points out, a virtuous person may sometimes fail to act on that virtue even when acting is a fitting response (I.II 74.1c). The failure to display a particular behavior is not proof that a person lacks a character; it may simply indicate that a person sometimes acts out of character or that her character trait is as yet imperfectly possessed. It is also worth pointing out that the possession of virtue, for Aquinas, is a relatively rare achievement and gift (35.5 ad 1). Even proving the absence of character in most people would not outright contradict Aquinas's virtue theory. Situationist evidence may point to the notion not that the are no virtuous people, only that virtue, for most of us, is of the germinal and imperfect kind that still needs to grow into complete virtue.

AQUINAS ON THE FOUR CAUSES

Having briefly looked at the question of the existence of the virtues, let us return to the question of essence. If Aquinas defines virtue in terms of its causes, how does he understand "cause"? Here Aquinas is undoubtedly indebted to Aristotle and the Arabic commentators.[32] The Aristotelian causes, however, are put to theological work to understand things in heaven and on earth undreamt of

by the philosopher, such as creation, grace, and the sacraments. In the process, there is a resharpening and even retooling that takes place. Jordan is undoubtedly right to state, "The theologian's [Aquinas's] notion of causality both embraces more kinds of causes and deepens the accounts of causes already recognized."[33] What, then, is a cause?

Cause in General

Aquinas's concept of cause is broader than ours. "Explanation" may be a more accurate, if cumbersome, translation since the four causes correspond to four ways of answering the question, Why? As Aquinas puts it, "This question, Why? or, On account of what? asks about a cause."[34] The four causes are really the four *becauses*.[35] Robert Pasnau and Christopher Shields therefore suggest that Aquinas's account of the four causes may best be understood as a "framework of explanation."[36] For, "We do not think that we scientifically know anything, unless we grasp the *Why*, which is to grasp the cause."[37]

However, the doctrine of the four causes is not *merely* a methodological principle. For Aquinas we can explain things only by their causes because the causes themselves are real principles that genuinely influence the nature and existence of their effects. Aquinas's account of cause is not merely methodology; it is metaphysics.

Is it possible to define cause? Since "cause" is so basic a concept, it may be that a genus-difference definition is not possible. Nevertheless, Aquinas seems to identify origin or principle (*principium*) as the quasi-genus of cause. In its general sense a principle is simply "that from which something proceeds" (I 33.1c).[38] It is a "first" in a sequence.[39] Principle is therefore a more general concept than cause: all causes are principles, but not all principles are causes (33.1 ad 1). There are some common-sense reasons for the distinction. As night precedes day, a privation is a "principle" or starting point of change because privation necessarily precedes the acquisition of a new form; clearly, however, night does not cause day. Aquinas is unhappy with what he perceives as Aristotle's loose way of speaking when Aristotle says that every principle is a cause and vice versa.[40] For Aquinas, a cause is only one kind of principle.

Trinitarian theology helps to further refine the idea of causality. Aquinas claims that the Father is the principle but not the cause of the Son, since "this name of cause seems to imply diversity of substance, and dependence of one on the other, which the name of principle does not imply" (I 33.1 ad 1).[41] So a cause is not a mere principle, because it involves a relation of *dependency* between two *distinct* terms. As Aquinas explains in *On the Power of God*, this dependency obtains whether we are talking of material, formal, efficient, or

final causation, because dependency is implied in the very concept of cause: "For the effect must depend on its cause. For this belongs to the rationale of effect and of cause."[42] So if C is the cause of E, then C is the *principle* of E, C is *distinct* from E, and E *depends in its being* on C.

Finally, there is another concept that seems to enter into Aquinas's characterization of cause. In the commentary on the *Metaphysics* we find the following statement: "This name of 'cause' implies a certain influence on the being of the caused."[43] A cause, then, is an *influxus*, or "influence." By this term, Poinsot observes, Aquinas distinguishes a cause from a mere necessary condition (*sine qua non*) since a cause is not merely something concomitant or required but rather is a positive influence on the effect.[44] It is therefore necessary to differentiate Aquinas's theory from that of J. L. Mackie, who famously sees a cause as an INUS condition: an insufficient but necessary part of an unnecessary but sufficient condition. Despite the danger of definitional circularity in using the term "influence," Aquinas does seem to be getting at something missed in Mackie's account. A privation, such as the absence of a captain of a ship, may have a real consequence, such as a shipwreck. Yet Aquinas would regard such a privation as an accidental cause only: it causes only in virtue of other *per se* causes—that is, causes that themselves have a causal influence, such as the wind, tide, and rocks.

Aquinas nowhere offers a systematic account of cause. But by piecing his disparate comments together we come to this conclusion: a cause is a principle that influences the being of another, entailing a dependency of the latter on the former. Or, as Poinsot reconstructs Aquinas's view: "A cause is a principle of something by influence or derivation, of such a nature that something follows from it with dependence in being."[45]

The Causal Nexus

How should we understand the four modes or genera of causation? The standard textbook account introduces them via a hackneyed example, albeit one that Aquinas himself employs.[46] The bronze, the being with potential for being shaped, is the *matter*; what makes this bronze into a statue of Socrates rather than, say, a canon, Aquinas calls *form*. For the statute to come into being, an efficient or agent cause is required: the sculptor. Since nothing acts unless it "intends" something, an *end* or *final cause* is needed. The danger in this example is that we take human artifice as the paradigm of causation, whereas for Aquinas natural causation is primary.

For Aquinas the four causes form a nexus. That is, an interrelationship exists among the four causes as expressed in the axiom, "Causes are causes of each

other."[47] Matter and form, the "intrinsic" causes, are causes of each other: they both exist only as co-constituents of some whole, and they mutually depend on each other in the exercise of their respective roles in constituting the whole. The relation between efficient and final causes, the "extrinsic" causes, is also mutual. Aquinas argues that all agency is telic: "Every agent acts for an end, otherwise *this* more than *that* would not follow from the action of the agent, unless by chance" (I 44.4c).[48] Not just anything can follow from anything: that would be randomness, not causation. The efficient cause must "intend" the end; that is, it must have an inclination toward that specific end, otherwise it could not act (I.II 1.2c). The end enters into the definition of agency, as the term toward which it tends.

One important aspect of the causal nexus is therefore expressed in the axiom that "every agent acts for the end." In Aquinas's view all efficient causality, whether exercised by conscious beings or not, is telic. This may appear to be a glaring example of the "pathetic fallacy" that ascribes features of human consciousness to nonhuman beings. Yet Aquinas is not guilty of such a blunder. To "intend" is simply "to tend towards some other" (12.5c).[49] His point, then, is that even inorganic things exhibit inclinations toward some activity or end, as, according to now obsolete Aristotelian physics, fire has a natural inclination to rise (I 80.1c). It can be argued that, with current scientific understandings, even inorganic teleology in this very general sense is not implausible.[50] Agency and its correlative final causality is more obviously seen in nonconscious living beings (plants), sensate beings that are capable of acting for an end presented to them by their senses (animals), and rational beings capable of presenting to themselves their own ends (humans). For Aquinas there are degrees of agency that correspond to the degree that the principle of agency is internal to the agent (I 18.3c). Rational agents are self-directing in that they choose the ends for which they act; they exhibit a fuller kind of telic agency than other living beings (I.II 1.2).

In addition to viewing the four causes as a nexus, Aquinas claims that the final cause has a unique priority within this interrelated system. Admittedly, the efficient cause temporally precedes the end: I must exercise before I can become fit and healthy. However, I would not go for my regular jog unless I already had an end in view, such as increased health and fitness. So for Aquinas the final cause, as the object of appetite or desire, is what explains why an efficient cause in potency becomes an efficient cause in actuality. Similarly, the causality of the matter and form are also subsequent to that of the end: "The matter would not receive a form unless through the end, and a form would not perfect the matter unless through the end."[51] Aquinas concludes that the final cause is the cause of the causes (*causa causarum*) because it is "the cause of the causality" in all the other causes.[52]

For Aquinas, then, the ultimate explanation of why anything comes into being is final-causal since it is through the causality of the end that the other causes are causes at all. While the end is the *final* cause temporally speaking, it is the *first* cause causally speaking: "The final cause is the first among all the causes" (1.2c).[53] As will be seen, this thesis of the causal priority of the final cause within the causal nexus is an important element of Aquinas's relentlessly telic virtue theory.

The Causal Reading

How legitimate is it to read Aquinas's account of virtue through the lens of the four causes? Despite appearances to the contrary, his explicit structuring of the *Treatise on Virtue* reflects the nexus of the causes quite closely. The first question defines virtue in terms of the four causes. The second question looks at the subject, which is a material cause. The section on the division of virtue and the specification of the virtues examines the formal differentiation of virtue through the interplay of formal and material causes. Then follows a question on the efficient cause. Finally, while the section on the "properties" of virtue follows on the sections defining its "essence," the properties are explored largely in terms of the formal and material causes of virtue. Admittedly, the final cause is lacking from the schema, but this may be because Aquinas has already largely dealt with this cause in the questions on beatitude, which is the end of virtue (I.II 1–5), or because the proximate end of virtue coincides with its (extrinsic) formal cause (see chap. 7). Furthermore, four-causal explanation permeates the detailed argument of the articles on virtue in general, such as in the description of the way prudence and moral virtue dance together, as it were, in directing a person toward a good end (58.5). Aquinas does not slavishly follow the four-causal schema in structuring his *Treatise on Virtue in General*, but on a deep level causal analysis permeates the whole treatise.

Causal analysis does not impose an arbitrary schema on Aquinas's virtue theory; it has a prominent place in his method of investigation in general and the understanding of virtue in particular. The causal approach to reading Aquinas on virtue therefore yields a promising new way into the riches of his account.

NOTES

1. Carlo Leget, *Living with God: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Life on Earth and "Life" after Death* (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 18.

2. "Virtus est, ut ait Augustinus, bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, et qua nullus male utitur, quam Deus solus in homine operatur." Peter Lombard, *Sententiae in IV Libris Distinctae*, 3rd ed. (Rome: Editiones Collegii S. Bonaventurae, 1971), Liber II, Dist. XXVII, Cap. 1, 480.

3. *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 27 q. 1 a. 2

4. For Aquinas's references to these characterizations see II.II 56.5, 56.3c, 56.1sc; I.II 110.3; and II.II 57.5 arg 1.

5. Martin Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 197.

6. Ibid., 197n18.

7. 55.4c: "ista definitio perfecte complectitur totam rationem virtutis." Compare *On the Virtues* 1.2.

8. Mark D. Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 238.

9. Eleonore Stump, "The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions," in *Faith, Rationality, and the Passions*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 93.

10. Here Aquinas apparently paraphrases Lombard's definition, replacing the final clause, "quam Deus solus in homine operatur," with the more or less equivalent, "quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur."

11. Bonnie Kent, "Habits and Virtues (Ia IIae, qq.49–70)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 119.

12. Matthew B. O'Brien, "Review of 'The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts' by Andrew Pinsent," *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (December 2010).

13. *Super Sent.*, lib. 2 d. 27 q. 1 a. 2 ad 9: "si accipiatur definitio rei quae complectitur totum esse rei, secundum quod ex omnibus causis constituitur, quae est perfecta definitio, tunc unius rei non potest esse nisi una definitio. Dicta autem definitio virtutis complectitur omnes causas ejus."

14. 55.4c: "Perfecta enim ratio uniuscuiusque rei colligitur ex omnibus causis eius."

15. In *Posterior Analytics*: *Expositio Posteriorum Analyticorum*, lib. 1 l. 4 n.5: "Oportet igitur scientem, si est perfecte cognoscens, quod cognoscat causam rei scitae"; ibid., lib. 1 l. 8 n.4.; l. 13 n.8.; l. 13 n.8: "scire est causam rei cognoscere." In *Metaphysics*: *Comm. Metaph.*, lib. 8 l. 4 n.11: "Et oportet causas cognoscere ad hoc quod aliquid sciatur, quia scire est causam cognoscere." In *Physics*: *Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 5 n.7: "aliquando unius rei assignantur plures definitiones secundum diversas causas; sed perfecta definitio omnes causas complectitur."

16. Robert Pasnau, *Aquinas on Human Nature*, 10.

17. Clifford G. Kossell, SJ, "Natural Law and Human Law (Ia IIae, Qq. 90–97)," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 170.

18. Jacobus Ramírez, *De Habitibus*, 1:4–5.

19. For a summary of the debate see Candace L. Upton, "Virtue Ethics and Moral Psychology: The Situationism Debate," *Journal of Ethics* 13, no. 2/3 (2009): 103–15. For strong critiques of classical virtue theory from the situationist perspective see the references to John Doris and Gilbert Harman later in the chapter.

20. *Expositio Posteriorum*, lib. 1 l. 2 n.5: "non entium non sunt definitiones."

21. For a lucid exposition see Christopher F. J. Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 32–49.

22. In a similar way he finds no need to discuss whether habits exist but proceeds directly to the question of their substance or essence (I.II 49); he does the same with vice and sin (I.II 71). When he discusses good and bad human action, he jumps straight to the question of what makes an action morally good or bad without asking whether there are any good human actions in the first place (I.II 18).

23. Salamancans, *Cursus Theologicus*, Tract. 12, *De Virtutibus*, Disp.1 (6:196); Cajetan, in I.II 49.1, n.1.

24. See Aquinas's characterization of "*necessitas finis*" and "*finis rei generatae*" in *De principiis naturae*, cap. 4.

25. See the discussion of "Aristotelian necessity" in Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15.

26. *Super Sent.*, lib. 3 d. 23 q. 1 a. 2c.

27. For more on situationist psychology see Lee Ross and Richard E. Nisbett, *The Person and the Situation: Perspectives of Social Psychology* (London: Pinter & Martin, 2011).

28. Gilbert Harman, "Moral Philosophy Meets Social Psychology: Virtue Ethics and the Fundamental Attribution Error," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 99 (January 1, 1999): 330.

29. John M. Doris, *Lack of Character: Personality and Moral Behavior* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 25.

30. Robert Merrihew Adams, *A Theory of Virtue: Excellence in Being for the Good* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 115.

31. A strong defense of classical virtue theory against situationism is offered by Rachana Kamtekar, "Situationism and Virtue Ethics on the Content of Our Character," *Ethics* 114, no. 3 (April 1, 2004): 458–91.

32. See especially Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* (*Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 5 nn.2–8; *Comm. Metaph.*, lib. 1 l. 4 n.2; lib. 5 l. 2 nn.1–13). There is an early systematic account by Aquinas in his own voice in *On the Principles of Nature*. Treatments of other topics in his theological works often also manifest his understanding of causation.

33. Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy," 247–48.

34. "haec quaestio quare, vel propter quid, quaerit de causa" (*Comm. Metaph.*, lib. 5 l. 2 n.9; cf. lib. 1 l. 4 n.2).

35. Compare Gregory Vlastos, "Reasons and Causes in the Phaedo," *Philosophical Review* 78, no. 3 (July 1, 1969): 291–325.

36. Robert Pasnau and Christopher John Shields, *The Philosophy of Aquinas* (Oxford: Westview, 2004), chap. 2.

37. *Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 5 n.1: "nos non opinamur nos scire unumquodque, nisi cum accipimus *propter quid*, quod est accipere causam."

38. I 33.1c: "id a quo aliquid procedit." Compare De principiis naturae, cap. 3.

39. *De principiis naturae*, cap. 3.

40. *De principiis naturae*, cap. 3.

41. I 33.1 ad 1: "hoc nomen causa videtur importare diversitatem substantiae, et dependentiam alicuius ab altero; quam non importat nomen principii."

42. *De potentia*, q. 5 a. 1c: "Effectum enim a sua causa dependere oportet. Hoc enim est de ratione effectus et causae."

43. *Comm. Metaph.* lib. 5 l. 1 n.3: "Nam hoc nomen principium ordinem quemdam importat; hoc vero nomen causa, importat influxum quemdam ad esse causati."

44. *Cursus Philosophicus* part 1, *De Ente Mobili in Communi* Q.10, and *De Causa in Communi* Art.1 (2:199).

45. Ibid., 2:198: "Causa est principium alicujus per modum influxus seu derivationis, ex qua natum est aliquid consequi secundum dependentiam in esse."

46. *De principiis naturae*, cap.3.

47. See, e.g., *Comm. Physic.* lib. 2 l. 5 n.7 and *De principiis naturae*, cap. 4, in *Metaphysics* 5, lec.2.

48. I 44.4c: "omne agens agit propter finem, alioquin ex actione agentis non magis sequeretur hoc quam illud, nisi a casu."

49. 12.5c: "intendere est in aliud tendere."

50. David Oderberg argues for the existence of inorganic teleology. See Oderberg, "Teleology: Inorganic and Organic," in *Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Law: Natural Law as a Limiting Concept*, ed. Ana Marta González (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 259–79.

51. *De principiis naturae*, cap. 4: "materia non suscipiat formam nisi per finem, et forma non perficiat materiam nisi per finem."

52. De principiis naturae, cap. 4: "Unde finis est causa causalitatis efficientis, quia facit efficiens esse efficiens: similiter facit materiam esse materiam, et formam esse formam, cum materia non suscipiat formam nisi per finem, et forma non perficiat materiam nisi per finem. Unde dicitur quod finis est causa causarum, quia est causa causalitatis in omnibus causis."

53. 1.2c: "Prima autem inter omnes causas est causa finalis."

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