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Aquinas on Virtue

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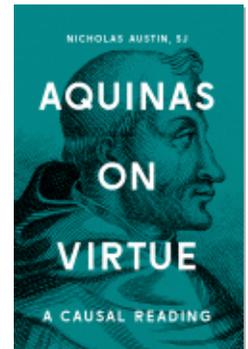
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CHAPTER 6

End and Agent

Suggested reading: *Summa Theologiae* I 2.3, 18.3;
I.II 1pr, 1.1–8, 14.2, 21.2 ad 2.

The final cause is an especially controversial yet crucial issue in causal virtue theory. Aquinas explains the overall agenda in theological ethics in final-causal terms: “In the first place we must consider the ultimate end of human life, and then those things by which a human can advance towards this end, or deviate from it. For the rationale of what is ordained to the end must be taken from the end” (I.II 1pr).¹ Aquinas’s ethics, therefore, presuppose a naturally and indeed supernaturally given end to human life and that the actions and virtues by which we advance toward that end are conceived teleologically. The modern scientific worldview, in contrast, is often understood to be incompatible with a cosmology of natural and supernatural finality. In the modern era, final causes were expunged from physical science as having no explanatory value, and in the one kind of scientific endeavor where teleology remained plausible—biological science—Charles Darwin’s theory of evolution offered an alternative account of the genesis of complex life forms, thereby apparently eliminating the need for appeal to final causes. Today philosophers often assume that teleological talk must either be eliminated or interpreted in terms of efficient causes. Can the kind of causal approach to ethics and virtue theory found in Aquinas, one that takes final causality seriously, be sustained today?

EXTRINSIC FINALITY

Margaret Osler has argued that while many of the early modern figures such as Francis Bacon and René Descartes did make a point of explicitly rejecting final-causal explanation in scientific investigation, their rejection of teleology

was not done as wholesaley as is generally thought.² Even those who rejected teleological explanation in scientific and philosophical argument struggled to do without it altogether. More important, many key figures, such as Pierre Gassendi, Robert Boyle, Gottfried Leibniz, and Isaac Newton, retained some kind of appeal to final causation in their theories of natural philosophy. Final causality was not eliminated as such, only the final causality immanent to the natural world.

A confirmation of this historical interpretation is found in the tendency of seventeenth-century philosophers to compare the cosmos to a machine, usually a clock or watch. A watch, though made of pieces of inert matter with no inherent purposes of their own, nevertheless possesses a function deriving from the mind that made it. Notwithstanding their skepticism about immanent finality, the mechanistic philosophers saw the natural world as possessing a kind of extrinsic teleology derived from the creator. As Osler explains, “With the mechanical reinterpretation of final causes, the idea of individual natures that possess immanent finality was replaced with the idea of nature as a whole which is the product of the divine artificer. Nature becomes a work of art.”³ The design argument for God’s existence, as advanced most famously by William Paley, is therefore a modern one. Just as the complex ordering of an artifact to a single function is evidence of the artisan, so the complexity of living beings is evidence of the divine artificer. This argument is the ancestor of intelligent design theory, which argues that the “irreducible” or “specified” complexity of the world indicates an ordering by a divine intelligence.⁴

Once this move has been made, it is difficult to find a way back. The elimination of immanent final causation, while not initially meant to deny divine teleology, opens the door to wholesale skepticism about final causes. Any inference to a divine intelligence as the best explanation of complexity in the universe is always vulnerable to the possibility of a still more-successful scientific explanation. For many this is precisely what Darwin provides. Adaptation and evolution do not occur in order to produce organisms better-suited to their environment. Rather, of the different traits that arise in individuals through variation, those more suited to survival and reproductive success tend to be inherited. Evolution by natural selection is an efficient-causal, not a final-causal process. As Richard Dawkins puts it, “If [natural selection] can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the *blind* watchmaker.”⁵

Intelligent design theorists infer the existence of a divine watchmaker; Dawkins asserts that evolution is a blind watchmaker; for Aquinas there is no watchmaker, blind or otherwise. As Christopher Martin comments, “In the eight million words Thomas Aquinas definitely wrote, and the three million words he may have written besides, the universe is never compared to a clock.”⁶

INTRINSIC FINALITY

Modern thinkers tend to acknowledge (at most) two kinds of finality: rational finality and design. Rational finality is the intrinsic finality exhibited by rational agents that are capable of freely aiming at goals; design is a purely extrinsic finality, such as that exhibited by artifacts. The advantage of this dualism is that one can be explained in terms of the other: the extrinsic finality of a clock or a computer is something imposed on inert matter by a purposive mind.

In the following passage from *On Truth*, Aquinas seems to propose a similar dualism: “Something may be ordered or directed to something, as to an end, in two ways: in one way, *by itself*, as a human being who directs himself to the place to which he tends; in another way, *by another*, as an arrow that is directed by the archer to a determinate place” (emphasis added).⁷ However, Aquinas subdivides the finality that comes from a directing intelligence into two species, one of which is purely extrinsic or “violent,” and one which is not:

Sometimes that which is directed into an end is only impelled and moved by the director, without acquiring any form from the director by which such a direction or inclination belongs to it; and such an inclination, as when an arrow is inclined by the archer to a determinate mark, is “violent.” Sometimes, however, what is directed or inclined into an end acquires from the director or mover some form by which such an inclination belongs to it; and such an inclination will be “natural,” as having a natural principle, just as he who gave gravity to the stone inclined it to be borne down naturally. . . . It is in this way that all natural beings are inclined to what is fitting for them, having in themselves some principle of inclination, by reason of which their inclination is natural, so that in a way they go about their own way to their due ends, and are not merely led.⁸

Here, then, is where Aquinas differs from the early moderns: he sees the basis for the final causality of natural beings in the formal causality of nature. It is because of what they are—that is, because of their substantial forms—that natural beings have a directedness toward an end. Natural finality is intrinsic, not extrinsic. As the Aristotelian maxim has it, “Nature acts for an end.”⁹

If Aquinas sees finality as intrinsic to nature, how can he argue from natural finality to the existence of God, as he does in the famous Fifth Way (I 2.3)? Edward Feser has pointed out that this teleological argument is not a design argument as some would have it. Aquinas’s argument starts by establishing the existence of finality on the basis that natural bodies always act, or nearly always act (unless prevented from doing so by some defect or intervening circumstance), in a certain way so as to obtain the best result. Feser makes the observation, which is obvious once made but otherwise easily missed,

that “Aquinas is not referring here to an intelligent designer; he does not get to God until the second half of the argument.”¹⁰ Finality is established on the basis of how things tend to behave, and an argument still has to be made for the existence of a divine intelligence responsible for this already established intrinsic finality. Aquinas’s argument for God proceeds *from* finality, not *to* finality.

While the universe for Aquinas is not like a clock with its purely extrinsic finality, Aquinas does draw an important analogy between created beings and artifacts. In one of his most important characterizations of nature he states: “And so it is clear that nature is nothing other than the rationale of a certain art, namely, the divine art, instilled in things, by which the things themselves are moved to a determined end, just as if a shipbuilder were to be able to bestow on the timbers that by which they could move themselves to take on the form of a ship.”¹¹ Natural telic activity for Aquinas arises from an internal source (*principio intrinseco*), which itself is derived from an external source (*principio extrinseco*) (cf. I 104.5). Where Aristotle sees a purely intrinsic principle, Aquinas goes further and traces the origin of this intrinsic principle back to God’s intelligence and power.

The recovery of this kind of cosmology of immanent finality is attractive to theological ethics in part because of its ability to address certain modern problematics. On the “divine watchmaker” viewpoint, the divine will is purely extrinsic and heteronomous, and we risk reducing God to a manipulator who uses humans for His own purposes. Nature, lacking any intrinsic finality, becomes devoid of its own intrinsic moral status and is therefore open to human domination. Immanent finality, in contrast, opens up the possibility of reconciling human autonomy with divine heteronomy, as the moral life fulfills God’s wise plan precisely by fulfilling human desires instilled into human nature. A nature invested with finality is also one with meaning and its own good and therefore not lacking any moral status of its own, as “Green Thomism” contends.¹² If we are in search of a moral basis on which to resist attributing to God the instrumentalization of humanity and a simultaneous instrumentalization of nature by humanity, the recovery of immanent final causation may well be a good place to begin.

Immanent teleology is attractive to more than theologians alone. Philippa Foot, for example, begins with the “natural goodness” of living beings, which is distinguished from any goodness they possess merely in reference to human concerns. In her view this natural goodness has to do with what serves the natural teleology of the species to which an individual belongs, although she is careful to distinguish this teleology from conscious purpose, whether of living beings or some creator deity. If living beings have a natural goodness, then moral goodness can be understood in terms of the natural goodness specific to

the human species.¹³ How tenable is it, though, to see nature, including human nature, as permeated by natural finality?

ASSESSING INTRINSIC FINALITY

Immanent finality is controversial. It is seen by its opponents as unscientific and as a projection of mental qualities onto mere things, and as a philosophical concept its problems involve an ontologically mysterious backward causation. Let us briefly examine these three problems in turn.

The main scientific challenge to immanent teleology comes from evolutionary theory. Darwin's theory of natural selection is widely interpreted as doing away with the need for design or final-causal explanation. According to Darwin, evolution by natural selection occurs when there is variation in a species that fits individuals better or worse for surviving and reproducing, together with the possibility of inheriting such variable traits. The origin of the different species, then, is accounted for not by the direct intervention of a deity but by a purely natural process.¹⁴ Since natural selection is an entirely nonteleological process that accounts for the *apparent* teleology of the evolution of a species' traits, it is often inferred that natural selection does away with the need to posit immanent teleology or a divine creator.

From a Thomistic perspective, there is little problem in seeing evolution as having natural causes. For Aquinas, God gives creatures causal powers and endows them with the dignity of being agents in their own right: the divine primary causality operates, therefore, through creatures' secondary causality without bypassing it (I 105.5 ad 1). As Armand Maurer points out, Darwin himself, at points in his career, appealed to the idea of secondary causation as an alternative to the view that God creates individual species by a singular intervention.¹⁵ Furthermore, while the rejection of final-causal explanation in the generation of the species seems incompatible with a William Paley design argument, it is less clear that Darwinian natural selection is incompatible with immanent teleology.¹⁶

Many philosophers of biology do see teleological concepts as an ineliminable part of biological explanation. As Ernst Mayr points out, biologists frequently employ teleological language to talk about organs' functions, physiological processes, and the behavior of individuals and species; they often insist that "they would lose a great deal, methodologically and heuristically, if they were prevented from using such language."¹⁷ On this basis, Thomists such as Jean Porter have argued that Aquinas's "teleological conception of the human person" remains defensible as a grounding for ethics. Porter argues that even to conceive of a particular kind of creature it is necessary to form a conception

of the way of life proper to a mature instance of that kind. She shows that this viewpoint receives support from scientists and philosophers who, independent of particular moral or theological concerns, take a stance on teleology that differs from that of Dawkins.¹⁸ While the philosophical interpretation of teleological language within the biological sciences remains contested, it is at least plausible to reject as too hasty the widespread assumption that the Darwinian theory of evolution, and its contemporary inheritors, has ruled out immanent teleology as inherently unscientific.

There are other objections to final causality, however. Is Aquinas's idea of intrinsic finality not an anthropomorphic projection of mental qualities onto nonrational and even nonconscious beings?

One should not be misled by Aquinas's language. Terms such as appetite (*appetitus*) and intention (*intentio*) in their common English translations, "appetite," "desire," and "intention," convey consciousness. Aquinas, however, adopts a very general definition of both. An appetite is simply an inclination toward something on the part of its bearer (I.II 81.1c); to intend is nothing other than to tend toward something (I.II 12.5 arg 3). Aquinas claims that all natural things manifest appetite or intention in the sense of directedness or inclination toward some goal; he is not thereby attributing some conscious end to them.¹⁹ Paul Hoffman distinguishes in Aquinas a "full-bodied notion of final causation" from a "stripped-down understanding."²⁰ The former is applicable to rational agents, whereas the latter extends to all natural beings. While the deliberate, self-directive agency of humans requires acting for something viewed as a good, finality in nonrational and even inanimate beings requires merely tending to a certain effect. Aquinas does not project the kind of finality characteristic of human agency onto natural beings.

More can be said against the accusation of anthropomorphism, however. Aquinas understands himself not to be attempting to understand nature in terms of human consciousness but rather the opposite: rational agency is seen as a special case of a more general phenomenon of telic agency. As Robert Pasnau explains: "Rather than attribute to human beings an obscure volitional power, and leave it at that, Aquinas wants to account for the will in terms of concepts that play a familiar role elsewhere. In the case of the will, as in so much else, it is important to Aquinas that he situate his theory within a broader account of the workings of nature."²¹ When Aquinas writes of a natural inclination of the will (*naturalis inclinatio voluntatis*) toward the good (I 1.8 ad 2), natural philosophy is being used to throw light on human psychology, not vice versa.

This approach is more scientifically respectable than one that views teleology as a projection of the human mind. As Robert Spaemann notes, the rejection of natural teleology "allows the dimension of finality in man to suddenly,

so to speak, appear, and it excludes man from the natural context.”²² Simon Oliver makes a similar point: “Ascribing teleological orientation to human intentionality—in other words, to mind—presents a particular problem [for the naturalist] for it renders ‘mind’ or ‘consciousness’ anomalous in the face of an otherwise inert and non-teleological material universe.”²³ It would be odd were the naturalist to claim that teleology springs *ex nihilo* with the evolutionary emergence of humankind. The Thomistic claim of immanent finality, according to which human intentionality is a specific and developed instance of a more generally observable phenomenon in nature, is therefore more conducive to modern scientific assumptions than the supposedly naturalistic viewpoints that see natural finality as the projection of human attributes onto a purposeless natural world.

A more radical philosophical objection to final causation sees the very concept of finality as incoherent. How can the end of an action, which by definition does not exist before the agent acts, move it to act? It seems odd to ascribe causation to possible future existents, which may or may not come to be.

Aquinas recognizes this problem of backward causation: “A cause is naturally prior [to the effect]. But the end has the rationale of last, as its very name implies” (I.II 1.1 arg 1).²⁴ He resolves the problem by making a distinction: “The end, even though last in execution, is nevertheless first in the intention of the agent. And in this latter way it has the rationale of cause” (ad 1).²⁵ A child wants to build a model helicopter and sets about doing so. After much labor she completes her task. But the end as it exists at the temporal end point of the process is not a *cause* of the child’s action; it is its *effect*. The helicopter that rests in all its glory on the bedroom floor is the result of intentional action, not its principle. The final cause of the child’s hard work is not the end as a future real existent but the end as the object of desire and thought, which as such temporally preexists the helicopter. There is no backward causation.

TELEOLOGICAL ETHICS

How does the final-causal viewpoint affect ethics? As we have seen, for Aquinas it is from the final cause that the causality of all the other causes derives: “The final cause is the first among all the causes” (I.II 1.2).²⁶ Correspondingly, the idea of the *finis* or end of human life is the primary, if not the solitary, organizing principle of Aquinas’s moral thought: right action, the virtues, and the law all derive their nature from order to the end. As he says, “The principle of the entire moral order is the last end” (I.II 72.5).²⁷ Without its orientation to the overall end of human life, Aquinas’s ethics would collapse like a decorative mobile that has come loose from its hook and fallen in a tangled heap on the floor.

To say that Aquinas's ethics is teleological can leave it open to misinterpretation because of an unfortunate tendency to conflate "teleological" and "consequentialist" ethics. Aquinas's ethics is teleological in that morality concerns the ordering of actions to the overall end of human life. "Good and evil [in moral acts and habits] are said in relation to the end."²⁸ However, this ethics is not consequentialist, since it does not locate morality in the value of the overall effects of an action. A foreseen consequence affects the morality of an action primarily because it is a sign of the goodness or badness of the will: the "input" of an action is therefore more important, morally speaking, than its "output" (I.II 20.5, 73.8).²⁹

If the effect does not specify an action, what is left of Aquinas's thesis that an action is specified by the end or terminus of an action (1.3)? As we saw above (see chap. 5), an action's effect is the beneficiary, rather than the benefactor, of existence and nature, so it cannot be the cause of the act's species. Poinsett explains, however, that the end or terminus of an action can indeed specify an action, not as its effect but only insofar as it "clothes itself in the rationale of cause, or principle, or object." "For the terminus to specify an action, it must be considered, not as executively proceeding from the action, but as contained in the causative power and principle of the action: for there the terminus is itself contained virtually and radically, and as in the principle; and thence, primarily and immediately, the action takes its species."³⁰ As Aquinas himself puts it, "The end, insofar as it is prior in intention, in this respect pertains to the will; and in this way it gives species to a human act" (I.II 1.3 ad 2).³¹

Aquinas's ethics is teleological in the legitimate, nonconsequentialist sense that sees the final cause of human life as the governing principle of the moral order. The moral goodness and badness of acts are therefore defined in terms of their due or undue relation to this end: "In morals, where what matters is the order of reason to the overall end of human life, sin and evil are understood in terms of deviation from the order of reason to the overall end of human life" (21.2 ad 2).³² The same can be said for habits: "True unqualified virtue is that which orders to the principal good of the human being" (II.II 23.7).³³

TELIC AGENCY

A final-causal approach also affects the understanding of agency and therefore, once again, has ramifications for ethics. The dominant theory of agency is what is termed the "causal" theory, which analyzes intentional action in terms of the efficient causality of internal psychological states, such as desires and beliefs. The best-known proponent of this account is Donald Davidson, according to whom "an action is performed with a certain intention if it is caused in the

right way by attitudes and beliefs that rationalize it.”³⁴ One problem of this reduction of intentional agency to the efficient causality of psychological states is that of the vanishing of the agent: actions, on the efficient-causal viewpoint, seem to be events that happen to us rather than things we actively do ourselves.³⁵ As Stefaan E. Cuypers has proposed, Aquinas can be seen as offering an account that is simultaneously “agent-causal” and teleological and is therefore an attractive alternative to the causal theory; it is more successful in accounting for what it means to act *actively*.³⁶

Aquinas holds a teleological theory of agency: to act is to act for some end (I.II 1.2c). However, he contrasts the way humans and nonrational animals tend to the end: “It is characteristic of a rational nature that it tend into the end *as acting*, or *as leading oneself to the end*; whereas it is characteristic of irrational nature to tend into the end *as acted or led by another*” (1.2c, emphasis added).³⁷ The telic nature of active agency comes out in a contrast between animal and human agency. The agency of nonrational animals is a mixture of agency and passivity. A robin does act when it builds a nest to shelter its young, but it does not actively choose this end over another. The agency of humans, in contrast, is more purely active: humans act for an end and actively choose the end(s) for which they act. Whereas animals tend to the end “as acted,” humans tend to the end “as acting.”

For Aquinas the scale of agency goes from the minimal agency of plants through growth to the perfect agency of God, whose activity involves no passivity at all (I 18.3c). Once again, teleology is the key. On this scale, animals are more perfectly agents than plants because they can move toward objects perceived by the senses—that is, by pursuing food, or a mate, or escape from enemies. However, the ends of their actions are not determined by the animals themselves, but by nature: a sheep cannot choose to befriend a wolf instead of fleeing it. For humans, it is different: “Above such [non-rational] animals are those that move themselves *even in regard to the end, which they determine in advance for themselves*. This only happens by reason and intellect, which knows the proportion of the end and of what is for the end, and to order the one in regard to the other” (18.3c, emphasis added).³⁸ One might put it this way: animals are *self-moving*, but only humans are *self-directing* and able to choose the end for which they act.

What is the root of the difference between merely animal and self-directive human agency? Aquinas says, “Those beings that lack reason tend to the end by a natural inclination, as if moved by another, and not by themselves, since they do not think about the rationale of the end, and therefore cannot order anything to the end, but only are ordered by another to the end” (I.II 1.2c).³⁹ The difference between nonrational and human agents, then, lies in the fact that, “whatever a human being desires, he desires under the rationale of the good”

(1.6c).⁴⁰ Humans, because of their capacity for reason, can evaluate different potential goals and choose to direct themselves to one or other accordingly.

This conception of human agency as truly active because self-directive is equally evident in Aquinas's analysis of deliberation. Aquinas accepts the Aristotelian thesis that deliberation is always about the means, or "those things that are for the sake of the end," rather than about the end itself (14.2). Deliberation has to begin from an end that is already "given" and proceed to determine how best to realize that end: if an agent did not already have some end in mind, there would be no start to the process of reasoning. Yet Aquinas does nevertheless claim that there can be deliberation about the end: "Having apprehended the end, someone can, deliberating about the end and about the means, be moved or not be moved to the end" (6.2c).⁴¹ What does Aquinas mean, then, by "deliberating about the end"?

There are at least two ways in which means-end reasoning takes place: one is about what would *constitute* a given end, and one is about what *steps* need to be taken to realize that end. Take the example of someone wanting to have an enjoyable day of leisure. The primary question here is what would constitute such a day: would it be hiking a mountain, or meeting friends, or reading a book, or some combination of these? Once this prior question has been answered, it is possible to determine the steps that need to be taken (pack a rucksack or take a certain train). Both processes are examples of means-end reasoning, but the first step concerns what constitutes the end to be achieved, while the second concerns the actions that can realize that end.

It is reasonable to think that, when Aquinas says that we can deliberate about ends as well as means, he means that we can deliberate about what constitutes some end.⁴² Poinsett puts it in the following way. Admittedly, one may not deliberate about the end *formally speaking*, since there is no doubt, and therefore no deliberation, that the good in general is to be desired and willed. Yet it is possible to deliberate about the end *materially speaking*—that is, about what happens to constitute the end: "Thus all desire to live happily, but many doubt about where that happiness may be found: whether in riches, or in pleasure, or in God. And many desire to establish life rightly, but whether that life is to be chosen in celibacy or marriage, or in studies, or in the military, is the subject of deliberation."⁴³ The chosen constitutive means to happiness then, whether it be wealth, honor, pleasure, or knowing and loving God, may in turn become the organizing goal of one's life.

Aquinas's teleological account of human agency as self-directive and deliberate helpfully sets morality within an overall teleological context. Moral theologians today rightly critique the old moral manuals for focusing exclusively on acts in an atomistic way—that is, divorced from a broader context of a person's orientation toward the overall goal of human life.⁴⁴ One of the contributions

of the return to virtue has been to set human actions within this narrative context rather than focusing exclusively on the “freeze frame” of a specific action. Aquinas avoids the trap of the atomistic approach precisely because of his teleological vision of agency. The moral manuals invariably begin with a treatment of human action and omit the *Treatise on Beatitude*, whereas Aquinas situates his definition of human action within a consideration of the overall end of human life (I.II 1–5). His account of human agency is teleological from the beginning, in seeing that human action is the motor of the journey of the dynamic *imago Dei* toward God. For him, truly human moral agency flows from deliberation about ends, as well as how best to realize those ends. Ethics must therefore begin not with the question of what to do but with the deeper final-causal question of what ends are worth pursuing in the first place.

ASSESSING CAUSAL ETHICS

A full-scale evaluation of Aquinas theory of causation, one that engages contemporary science, philosophy of science, and metaphysics, is beyond the professional competency of the ethicist. Yet at the same time it is not possible for the ethicist to ignore these questions altogether. It has been rightly observed that, for Aquinas, “there is no fundamental separation between metaphysics and ethics.”⁴⁵ Causal concepts such as those of exemplar, object, end, and agent all have significant contributions to Aquinas’s ethics. My aim has been to make these ideas intelligible today and to indicate their potential contribution to contemporary theological and philosophical ethics.

Alfred J. Freddoso and Edward Feser have boldly argued that Thomistic and scholastic theories of causation stand up well in relation to alternative accounts.⁴⁶ A less defensive and more dialogical approach is also possible. As observed above, the diversity of theories of causation “can lead one to suspect that no univocal analysis of the concept of causation is possible.”⁴⁷ One strength of Aquinas’s theory is that it is not a univocal, reductionistic account, and so it is able dialectically to acknowledge the insights of different perspectives. Aquinas’s account has something in common with pluralistic accounts, as it recognizes more than one form of causation; it also resembles “primitivist” accounts in some way because it recognizes causation as a basic concept that, while to some extent is analyzable, nevertheless resists strict definition. Michael Rota has argued that Aquinas’s account of efficient causation has much in common with contemporary “dispositional” accounts. Gabriele De Anna argues that the four causes can be seen as at least INUS conditions; he thereby draws connections with J. L. Mackie’s analysis of causation.⁴⁸ Michael Dodds identifies “burgeoning expansion of the idea of causality in contemporary science”

as conducive to Thomistic understandings.⁴⁹ We should not expect the dialogue between Aquinas and contemporary theories of causation to leave Thomistic understandings unchanged, but it is a strength that Aquinas's analogically nuanced account is open to dialogue on these and many other fronts.

Finally, it is worth returning to the initial consideration: the four causes are simply four ways of answering the question, "Why?" A cause, for Aquinas, is some principle in virtue of which something can be understood or explained. The explanatory framework of the four causes opens up a number of interrelated, promising lines of investigation into the nature of virtue. To Aquinas's causal inquiry into virtue, therefore, we now turn.

NOTES

1. I.II 1pr: "Ubi primo considerandum occurrit de ultimo fine humanae vitae; et deinde de his per quae homo ad hunc finem pervenire potest, vel ab eo deviare, ex fine enim oportet accipere rationes eorum quae ordinantur ad finem."

2. Margaret J. Osler, "Renaissance Humanism, Lingering Aristotelianism and the New Natural Philosophy: Gassendi on Final Causes," in *Humanism and Early Modern Philosophy*, ed. Jill Kraye and Martin William Francis Stone (London: Routledge, 2000), 193–208.

3. *Ibid.*, 194.

4. William A. Dembski, *The Design Revolution: Answering the Toughest Questions about Intelligent Design* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2004); and Michael J. Behe, *The Edge of Evolution: The Search for the Limits of Darwinism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008).

5. Richard Dawkins, *The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe Without Design* (New York: Norton, 1996), 5.

6. Christopher Martin, *Thomas Aquinas: God and Explanations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1997), 180.

7. *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 1 c: "Dupliciter autem contingit aliquid ordinari vel dirigi in aliquid sicut in finem: uno modo per seipsum, sicut homo qui seipsum dirigit ad locum quo tendit; alio modo ab altero, sicut sagitta quae a sagittante ad determinatum locum dirigitur."

8. *De Veritate*, q. 22 a. 1 c: "Sed ab alio possunt dirigi in finem determinatum etiam quae finem non cognoscunt sicut patet de sagitta. Sed hoc dupliciter contingit. Quandoque enim id quod dirigitur in finem, solummodo impellitur et movetur a dirigente, sine hoc quod aliquam formam a dirigente consequatur per quam ei competat talis directio vel inclinatio; et talis inclinatio est violenta, sicut sagitta inclinatur a sagittante ad signum determinatum. Aliquando autem id quod dirigitur vel inclinatur in finem, consequitur a dirigente vel movente aliquam formam per quam sibi talis inclinatio competat: unde et talis inclinatio erit naturalis, quasi habens principium naturale; sicut ille qui dedit lapidi gravitatem, inclinavit ipsum ad hoc quod deorsum naturaliter ferretur;

per quem modum generans est motor in gravibus et levibus, secundum philosophum in Lib. VIII Physic. Et per hunc modum omnes res naturales, in ea quae eis conveniunt, sunt inclinata, habentia in seipsis aliquod inclinationis principium, ratione cuius eorum inclinatio naturalis est, ita ut quodammodo ipsa vadant, et non solum ducantur in fines debitos.”

9. *Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 15 n.1.

10. Edward Feser, “Teleology: A Shopper’s Guide,” *Philosophia Christi* 12, no. 1 (2010): 156.

11. *Comm. Physic.*, lib. 2 l. 14 n.8: “Unde patet quod natura nihil est aliud quam ratio cuiusdam artis, scilicet divinae, indita rebus, qua ipsae res moventur ad finem determinatum: sicut si artifex factor navis posset lignis tribuere, quod ex se ipsis moverentur ad navis formam inducendam.”

12. Christopher Thompson, “Perennial Wisdom: Notes Toward a Green Thomism,” *Nova et Vetera* 10, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 74. English edition.

13. Philippa Foot, *Natural Goodness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

14. For an explanation of Darwinian and modern theories of natural selection, see Ernst Mayr, *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology: Observations of an Evolutionist* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), chaps. 6, 12, 13.

15. Armand A. Maurer, “Darwin, Thomists, and Secondary Causality,” *Review of Metaphysics* 57, no. 3 (2004): 491–514.

16. André Ariew, “Teleology,” in *The Cambridge Companion to the Philosophy of Biology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 160–81.

17. Mayr, *Toward a New Philosophy of Biology*, 38–41.

18. Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 82–103.

19. Michael Rota, “Causation,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 105–14 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 107.

20. Paul Hoffman, “Does Efficient Causation Presuppose Final Causation? Aquinas vs. Early Modern Mechanism,” in *Metaphysics and the Good: Themes from the Philosophy of Robert Merrihew Adams*, ed. Samuel Newlands and Larry M. Jorgensen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 295–312.

21. Robert Pasnau, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature: A Philosophical Study of Summa Theologiae 1a* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 201.

22. Robert Spaemann, “The Unrelinquishability of Teleology,” in *Contemporary Perspectives on Natural Law: Natural Law as a Limiting Concept*, ed. Ana Marta González (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2008), 288.

23. Simon Oliver, “Teleology Revived? Cooperation and the Ends of Nature,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 26, no. 2 (May 1, 2013): 161.

24. I.II 1.1 arg 1: “Causa enim naturaliter prior est. Sed finis habet rationem ultimi, ut ipsum nomen sonat.”

25. Ad 1: “finis, etsi sit postremus in executione, est tamen primus in intentione agentis. Et hoc modo habet rationem causae.”

26. I.II 1.2: “Prima autem inter omnes causas est causa finalis.” Compare I.38.8 arg 4 et c.; 44.4 arg 4.; In De divinis nominibus, cap. 1 l. 3.

27. I.II 72.5: “Principium [autem] totius ordinis in moralibus est finis ultimus.”

28. *De Potentia* 3.6 ad 12: “Bonum vero et malum dicuntur per comparationem ad finem.”

29. For the characterization of consequentialism as a moral theory claiming that the rightness of an action depends on its “output” rather than its “input,” see the anti-consequentialist argument of Jorge L. A. Garcia, “The Right and the Good,” *Philosophia* 21, no. 3 (1992): 235–56.

30. *Ibid.*

31. I.II 1.3 ad 2: “finis secundum quod est prior in intentione, ut dictum est, secundum hoc pertinet ad voluntatem. Et hoc modo dat speciem actui humano sive morali.”

32. 21.2 ad 2: “Sed in moralibus, ubi attenditur ordo rationis ad finem communem humanae vitae, semper peccatum et malum attenditur per deviationem ab ordine rationis ad finem communem humanae vitae.”

33. II.II 23.7: “virtus vera simpliciter est illa quae ordinat ad principale bonum hominis.”

34. Donald Davidson, *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 87.

35. J. David Velleman, “What Happens When Someone Acts?,” *Mind* 101, no. 403 (1992): 461–81.

36. Stefaan E. Cuypers, “Thomistic Agent-Causalism,” in *Mind, Metaphysics, and Value in the Thomistic and Analytic Traditions*, ed. John Haldane (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2002), 90–108.

37. 1.2c: “proprium est naturae rationalis ut tendat in finem quasi se agens vel ducens ad finem, naturae vero irrationalis, quasi ab alio acta vel ducta, sive in finem apprehensum, sicut bruta animalia, sive in finem non apprehensum, sicut ea quae omnino cognitione carent.”

38. 18.3c: “supra talia animalia sunt illa quae movent seipsa, etiam habito respectu ad finem, quem sibi praestituunt. Quod quidem non fit nisi per rationem et intellectum, cuius est cognoscere proportionem finis et eius quod est ad finem, et unum ordinare in alterum.”

39. I.II 1.2c: “Illa vero quae ratione carent, tendunt in finem per naturalem inclinationem, quasi ab alio mota, non autem a seipsis, cum non cognoscant rationem finis, et ideo nihil in finem ordinare possunt, sed solum in finem ab alio ordinantur.”

40. 1.6c: “quidquid homo appetit, appetit sub ratione boni.”

41. 6.2c: “apprehenso fine, aliquis potest, deliberans de fine et de his quae sunt ad finem, moveri in finem vel non moveri.”

42. Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study*, vol. 1: *From Socrates to the Reformation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 572.

43. *Cursus Theologicus*, in I.II, Disp. 3, Art.2, n.10 (Solesmes 5:279).

44. John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition*, Martin D’Arcy Memorial Lectures, 1981–82 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).

45. Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey, and Christina Van Dyke, *Aquinas’s Ethics: Metaphysical Foundations, Moral Theory, and Theological Context* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 188.

46. See Freddoso's extensive discussion in Francisco Suárez, *On Efficient Causality: Metaphysical Disputations 17, 18, and 19*, trans. Alfred J. Freddoso (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1994); and Edward Feser, *Scholastic Metaphysics: A Contemporary Introduction* (Heusenstamm: Editiones Scholasticae, 2014).

47. Helen Beebe, Christopher Hitchcock, and Peter Menzies, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Causation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1.

48. Gabriele De Anna, "Causal Relations: A Thomistic Account," in *Analytical Thomism: Traditions in Dialogue*, ed. Craig Paterson and Matthew S. Pugh, 79–100 (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006).

49. Michael J. Dodds, *Unlocking Divine Action* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 1.