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## Aquinas on Virtue

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## APPENDIX

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# Virtue Defined

The interpretive argument proposed herein is that the article defining virtue (I.II 55.4) is intensely “holographic” in that, from this fragment of Aquinas’s causal virtue theory, an image of the whole emerges. The following is an exegesis of the causal definition of virtue found in that holographic text.

A virtue is:

- (1) an operative habit agreeing with human nature or supernature and therefore with the twofold rule of divine and human reason / *formal cause*

in that it

- (1a) concerns some sphere of human passions and operations (and their objects) capable of rational direction / *material object*
  - (1b) and targets some aspect of the moral good in regard to that sphere / *formal object that is attained*
  - (1c) attaining that target according to some characteristic mode / *formal object by which the target good is attained*
  - (1d) participating in the goodness of God in a manner fitting to a human being / *exemplar cause*;
- (2) inhering in the powers of the soul that are rational either essentially or by participation / *subjective material cause*;
  - (3) always oriented toward morally good operation / *immediate final cause*

and thereby to

- (3a) some morally good target (*finis operis*) [=1b] / *proximate final cause*
  - (3b) and thence to the overall end of human life (*finis operantis*) / *remote final cause*;
- (4) and generated and increased either by infusion or by repeated human action / *efficient or agent cause*

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