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Actual, Virtual, and Habitual Intention in St. Thomas Aquinas

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ACTUAL, VIRTUAL, AND HABITUAL INTENTION

IN ST. THOMAS AQUINAS

by

Edmund R. Skrzypczak, S.J.

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

October 1958
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INTRODUCTION

The moralist is interested in human acts. His first task, of course, is to determine what constitutes a moral or human act. From there he proceeds to establish the division of moral action into the good and evil. This task is not easy. Prescinding from the fine points of judging about any concrete act, it is difficult enough merely to untangle in thought all of the elements which enter into the make-up of a human act considered abstractly. Besides the object of the act its circumstances must be taken into account; and among these circumstances the most important is the end for which the action was performed.\(^1\) Now it is an act of the will which has received the name intention which brings this modifying circumstance into the structure of a human act. Consequently the moralist must be especially interested in the act of intention. He can be interested in it from either of two viewpoints. Since it is itself an act, he may consider its goodness or malice, and in this case he asks himself what follows if an intention is good and what follows if the intention is evil. Thus the first viewpoint regards the moral state of the intention and the influence this has upon the moral state of an act. The second, however, focuses on the entitative state of the intention to ask what effect this has upon the moral value of an act. Then the moralist considers what follows when an intention is actual, or virtual, or habitual.

\(^1\)S.T., I-II, 7, 3 c.
The consideration of the act of intention from this second viewpoint forms the content of this thesis. A study of the first consideration falls outside its scope, and the conclusions of that consideration will be presumed throughout the thesis.

Though the physical nature of the act of intention in all of its three states will be investigated and determined, the principal aim of this thesis is to establish the nature of the virtual intention. What does it mean to say that an act is produced under the influence of a virtual intention? Thus runs the question which was uppermost in the mind of the author when he began his search through the works of St. Thomas. Nevertheless, this question could not possibly be answered without a knowledge of the nature of intention pure and simple, much less without knowing what is meant by an actual intention. Nor could one feel satisfied that he knew clearly and distinctly the nature of a virtual intention as long as he felt uncertain about the physical nature of the habitual intention. Therefore this thesis lends itself to a natural division into three parts: a consideration of the actual intending of an end, a consideration of an habitual intention of an end, and finally a consideration of a virtual intention of an end.

The influence of the habitual and virtual intention upon the morality of an act will also be studied, because this seems a natural corollary to verify the conclusions made about the physical nature of those types of intention and to clarify those same conclusions. In point of fact, it seems that the original question motivating research into this whole problem of virtual intention could not be completely satisfied unless the moral influence were also explained. The discussion, on the other hand, of the moral influence of the actual
intention could not be included in this study for the aim both at brevity and at unity. As mentioned, the viewpoint which would consider intention according to its goodness or badness was purposely excluded from this thesis; to consider the moral influence of the actual intention would be nothing else, however, but a study of the consequences of a good or a bad intention on the morality of an act—a study which in itself can involve more than a thesis-length exposition.

In addition to intention other acts of the will, namely, volition, fruition, and election, will briefly enter the picture in order to highlight the nature of intention. Attention and intensity also, the nature of habit, of prudence and the other moral virtues, and a discussion of the interpretative intention figure in the explanation of the subject of the thesis. But, interesting as it might be to delve further into each one of these topics, and many others, their place in this study has to be limited. Thus, one could pursue a comparison of the various acts in which the will and the reason mingle, such as counsel, election, command, and intention; or one could trace the growth and subsequent use of the term interpretative intention. The various usages of the word intention offer fruitful prospects of inquiry. A discussion of the different types of attention which one might conceivably exercise (explicit and implicit, reflexive and direct, etc.) is another intriguing question. All of these problems, if they are brought in at all, will be kept carefully in their proper relation to the subject matter of this thesis.

No one, to the knowledge of the author, has as yet conducted a complete inquiry into the physical nature of the three kinds of intention traditionally called actual, virtual, and habitual. Suarez, surely, made some study of these
three, but his was not a complete one. In recent times there have been some investigations of St. Thomas' use of intention, taken in general. The first was a study by H. D. Simonin of the various meanings of the word, together with short explanations of the difference between St. Thomas' early usage of the term and his later usage. Then Fr. André Hayen, S.J., undertook a study of intentional being, which pertains to the activity of the intellect rather than to that of the will; however, intention, the act of the will, was explained at great length and its closeness to the intention involved in intellection indicated. Finally, Dom Odon Lottin, O.S.B., has made an historical review of Scholastic efforts, from Abelard to St. Thomas, to explain the moral effect of good and bad intentions. The treatment of the three types of intention as found in the Catholic Encyclopaedia and other dictionaries, in various textbooks of psychology and ethics, and in a variety of moral theology manuals further justifies the claim that no other author has as yet undertaken a satisfactorily complete exposition of the act of intention.

The author hopes that the following chapters will as far as lies within his competence serve that function.

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2 De Ultimo Fine Hominis, disp. II, sectio 4; De Bonitate et Malitia Humannorum Actuum, disp. VI, sectio 5. Found in the Opera Omnia, ed. D. M. André (Paris, 1856), IV.


5 Odon Lottin, O.S.B., Psychologie et Morale aux XIIe et XIIIe Siècles (Gembroux, Belgium, 1954), IV, 309-486.
CHAPTER I

INTENTION AND ACTUAL INTENTION

At least from Socrates on philosophers have found it useful to begin an investigation by examining the meaning of the term or terms to be used. Therefore it is fitting to begin the present inquiry into the nature of intention with some indications of the general meaning of the term.

First of all, the word intention etymologically signifies a directing toward, a stretching toward, an inclination toward. To intend equivalently is saying to tend to something else.¹ Consequently two notes are included in the concept: the first, that of a dynamic disposition; the second, that of direction. The first characteristic provides the clue which leads to a knowledge of the principle of this act. The second, signified by the prefix in, determines the dynamic disposition, not only by explicitly denying of it motion away from its object, but also by implying that this object is separated from the dynamic principle by some distance.² This implication later will serve as a reminder that intention differs from certain other operations of the same dynamic principle.

¹In II Sent., 30, 1, 3 sol.: "Intendere enim dicitur quasi in alium tendere." S.T., I-II, 12, 1 c: "Respondeo dicendum quod intento, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat in aliquod tendere."

²De Ver., 22, 13, obj. 15: "Praesterea, intentio est distantis a fine; haec enim praepositio in distantiam importat."
One might liken the act of intention to a pursuit of a thing. For the subject intending is striving to arrive at or reach something. Again because of the notion of distance implied in the preposition in, one is not said to intend if the effort to attain is directed to the object immediately: "Per hoc autem quod dicitur in aliquid tendere, importatur quaedam distantia illius in quod aliquid tendit; et ideo quando appetitus fertur immediate in aliquid, non dicitur esse intentio illius, sive hoc sit finis ultimus, sive sit aliquid ad finem ultimum; sed quando per unum quod vult in aliquid pervenire nititur, illius in quod pervenire nititur dicitur esse intentio." 4

An analysis of the term itself leads to yet another bit of information. For inclining or tending toward something can refer to two types of subjects. The action of the agent tends toward a thing, as well as the motion of that which the agent moves. Because the latter's manifestly depends upon the agent's motion or action, intending is primarily the function of the agent, secondarily that of the mobile being. 5

Now though St. Thomas proceeds from this distinction to deduce the dynamic source of intention, his principle might serve another purpose. For, since the notion of directing or being directed toward is general enough, it is not surprising to find that the word is employed to express various ideas. Therefore some natural scheme of division will help to classify and order those

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3In II Sent., ibid.: "Intendere autem in aliquid est illius potentiae ad quam pertinet prosequi vel fugere aliquid." De Ver., ibid., 2 in contr.: "Praeterea, intendere est quoddam prosequi."

4In II Sent., ibid.

5S.T., ibid.
usages. An initial division can be made into proper application and derived application, where by "proper" is meant "in accord with the general sense," and by "derived" is meant "according to a figure of speech." Then, if one utilizes the distinction between primary and secondary application, where "primary" refers to an active subject and "secondary" indicates a passive subject, the proper application of the term intention further divides into primary and secondary. This scheme of division arranges the various senses in which St. Thomas employs the word intention. What these senses are will now be indicated briefly.

St. Thomas uses intention in a proper and primary sense to mean attention, intensity or intension, and the will’s act of intending. In each of these instances the term is properly used, for by attention is meant a directing towards of the cognitive faculty of the soul, by intension is meant a vehement directing towards, and by intention is meant the directing towards of the appetitive faculty of the soul. Since each of the three involves the notion of an active subject, the application in all is also primary.

Intention is used in a proper but secondary sense when it signifies instrumental motion, or instrumental virtue. For here a direction towards is indicated, but the subject is considered as a passive subject. So, for example, the saw in the hands of a carpenter possesses an intention, but only inasmuch as it is being wielded by the arm and hand of the carpenter.

The derived application occurs when intention stands for that which is in

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6 Cf. Hayen, pp. 48, 161-164, 170-174; Simonin, pp. 447-448. The former seems to take intension and intensity as two specifically different usages, but the two terms are related as the concrete and the abstract are related.

7 Hayen, pp. 48, 167; Simonin, pp. 448-451.
some way the object of an inclination, rather than in inclination itself. Under this usage belong those cases in which St. Thomas speaks of cognoscitive species and the purpose, or goal, of the will. For the intentional species do not receive their name because they are inclined to something else. Nor does an author's intention in writing a book incline to something else; rather, it draws on the author by its appetibility.

This thesis is interested directly in studying only one of these six different types of intention as St. Thomas conceived them. Yet all of the others will increase in intelligibility as a result of the restricted effort, and two of them, attention and intention, approach so nearly the act of intention that they must enter the complete psychological picture of that act. The remainder of the present chapter will be devoted to explaining this act of intending by an analysis of St. Thomas' description of it.

He expressly deals with the matter in three works which range over a large portion of his writing career. The Commentary on the Sentences, written from 1254 to 1256, formulates his first discussion of the subject. He returns to the act of intention in the Disputed Questions on Truth, which are dated at the

8Hayen, pp. 177-189; Simonin, pp. 456-460.

9Hayen, p. 48; he discerns enough difference between "design, purpose" and "thought, sense (what the author wants to say)" to make of them separate applications of intention. This seems an unnecessary refinement. In II Sent., 38, Exp. textus explains: "Intentio, proprie loquendo, actum voluntatis significat, ut dictum est; sed finem non significat nisi materialiter nomen sumatur, ut scilicet sumatur intention pro re intenta, sicut et fides sumitur pro re credita."

10De Ver., 21, 3, ad 5: "[C]um dicitur: 'Finis prior est in intentione,' intentio sumitur pro actu mentis, qui est intendere. Cum autem comparamus intentionem boni et veri, intentio sumitur pro ratione quam significat definitio; unde aequivoce accipitur utrobiqve."
period from 1256 to 1259. Finally, in the two years 1269 and 1270, he summarized and ordered his thought in the *Prima Secundae* of the *Summa Theologica*.  

The *Commentary* asks in two articles whether intention is an act of the will, and whether the will in one and the same act wills the end and the means to the end. The *Disputed Questions* consider almost the identical two questions, except that the second is rephrased thus: "Does the will in the same motion intend the end and will the means?"  

The *Summa* inquires about five points: whether intention is the intellect's act or the will's, whether it is only of the last end, whether a man can intend two things at once, whether intention of the end is the same act as the volition of a means, and whether intention belongs to brutes.  

All three locations, then, begin with the fundamental question, "Is intention an act of the will, or not?" The words of the *Summa* give a clear answer: "[I]ntentio, sicut ipsum nomen sonat, significat in aliquid tendere. In aliquid autem tendit et actio moventis, et motus mobilis. Sed hoc quod motus mobilis in aliquid tendit, ab actione moventis procedit. Unde intentio primo et principaliiter pertinet ad id quod movet ad finem: unde decimus architectores, et omem praesipientem, movere suo imperio alios ad id quod ipse intendit. Voluntas"

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11 The dating here is as found in Wals's chronology, given in Vernon J. Bourke's *Introduction to the Works of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York, 1948), pp. xii-xiii.

12 In the standard editions consulted, the title to the article (De Ver., 22, 14) is given as: "Utrum voluntas eodem motu velit finem et intendat ea quae sunt ad finem." That this statement contains an accidental inversion of verbs is clear from the entire text of the article, where the question really discussed is as translated above. The phrasing in the other locations: "Utrum intenti finis sit idem actus cum voluntate eius quod est ad finem," (*S.T.*, I-II, 12, 4); "Utrum voluntas uno et eodem actu velit finem et ea quae sunt ad finem," (*In II Sent.*, 38, 1, 3).
autem movet omnes alias vires animae ad finem, ut supra habitum est. Unde manifestum est quod intentio proprie est actus voluntatis.\textsuperscript{13} Here the proof is taken from the will's primary role, its primacy, among man's powers as the source of action.\textsuperscript{14} The etymological roots of the word have directed the inquiry to some dynamic principle. In the human supposi, this clearly describes the capacity and function of the will.\textsuperscript{15}

The Commentary offers the same explanation. For again the very name of this act points out the power to which it pertains. Intending something belongs to the same faculty which dictates flight and pursuit. Now which faculty is responsible when we flee or pursue something? Certainly not the speculative intellect. If, however, you answer that the practical intellect dictates flight or pursuit, such a reply does not express the truth exactly. No, the practical intellect judges the advisability of either action, but it belongs to the appetite or will to execute flight or pursuit.\textsuperscript{16}

The same conclusion to the question, but from a different point of view, is reached in the De Veritate, in which the argument proceeds in terms of the object of the intention. The object is the good which is an end. But good is also the proper object of the will. Thus an act (intention) and a power (the will) have the same object. Now, since a power is related to an object only

\textsuperscript{13}\textit{S.T.}, ibid.

\textsuperscript{14}Ample proven in other locations: e.g., \textit{S.T.}, I-II, 9, 1.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{De Ver.}, 22, 12 c: "Sed movere per modum causae agentis est voluntatis, et non intellectus . . . actus voluntatis est quaedam inclinatio in aliquid, non autem actus intellectus. Inclinatio autem est dispositio moventis secundum quod efficiens movet."

\textsuperscript{16}In II Sent., 38, 1, 3 sol.
through its act, if the two agree in their object, the act in question belongs to that power. Therefore one must conclude that intention is an act of the will. 17 St. Thomas is not raising here a completely new argument; in an argument to the contrary preceding his reply in the Commentary he already had referred to the same point. 18 But in this passage he has seen fit to expand the idea.

Nor has it been completely taken for granted that the object of the intention is an end. True enough, a whole tradition had preceded St. Thomas in which philosophers used intention to describe the inclination of the will to an end, and in which they measured the moral goodness of an intention partly from the end. 19 It may have been in the context of this tradition that St. Thomas formulated his division of the acts of the will to be considered in Questions Eight to Seventeen in the Prima Secundae. 20 However, in his Commentary on the Sentences he has undertaken some justification for this common or traditional understanding of the word. There he begins with what the preposition in implies, namely, some distance from the object to which something tends; on this basis one cannot properly be said to intend unless one seeks to attain something through another thing which one wills. An intention is made of that object one seeks to attain, not of that which one immediately wills. Since the immediately desired object is serving as a means to the other, the latter is an end. "Id

17De Ver., 22, 13 c.

18In II Sent., 38, 1, 3, 2 in contr.

19Lottin, Psychologie et Morale, IV, 309-486.

20S.T., I-II, 8, prologus: "Actus autem voluntatis in finem videntur esse tres..." "They seem to be three," as if to say that analysis and traditional doctrine have not uncovered more nor less.
autem quod est propter se bonum et volitum, est finis.\textsuperscript{21} Thus intention designates an act of the will for an end.\textsuperscript{22}

This is not to be understood as saying that an act of intention must look to the last end in all instances. Otherwise how explain the diversity of intentions found among men? No, there are two kinds of ends for the will. One end, called the last end, is arrived at when the motion of the will is completed. The other type of end is reached at the completion of a part of the total motion.\textsuperscript{23} Thus God is the last end of every man in the universe; but each also has his own particular end to desire.\textsuperscript{24}

Consequently intention is always of an end, though not necessarily always of the last end. But other acts of the will also have the end as their object; intention must not be confused with these. Before marking the difference between intention, volition, and fruition, however, another important element in the act of intention must be examined. It belongs to the essence of the full act, and without it the will's act of intending an end cannot take place. For intention is "actus voluntatis in ordine ad rationem"; \textquoteleft{}\textquoteright{}\textsuperscript{25}\textquoteleft{}\textsuperscript{2}omnium tamen est actus voluntatis absolute, sed in ordine ad rationem.\textsuperscript{25}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{21}\textit{S.T.}, I-II, 8, 2 c.
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{In II Sent.}, 38, 1, 3 sol.
\textsuperscript{23}\textit{S.T.}, I-II, 12, 2 c. For St. Thomas the ultimate, or last, end was not distinguished into ultimate simply and ultimate relatively, as is often done by authors today.
\textsuperscript{24}\textit{In II Sent.}, 38, 1, 1 sol.: \textquoteright{}\textquoteright{}\textsuperscript{2}icut rerum omnium unus est finis ultimus, scilicet Deus, ita et voluntatum omnium est unus ultimus finis, scilicet Deus; nihilominus tamen sunt alii fines proximi.\textquoteright{}
\textsuperscript{25}\textit{De Ver.}, 22, 13 c.
\end{flushleft}
The Commentary briefly explains and proves this requisite role of reason; the text in the De Veritate enlarges on this point to the extent that the entire Reply is concerned with this aspect; the Summa seems to presume that the matter needs no further explanation or proof. From the fact that the will tends to the end through something else which is directed to the end, says St. Thomas in the Commentary, intention implies in its meaning an ordering of one thing to another. The function of ordering, however, pertains to the intellect. Thus intention is not an act of the will absolutely, but as subordinated to and ordered by reason.

An ordering of one thing to another is essential to intention. To intend, again, is to tend from what one wills to something else as to an end. The end is that to which the means are referred; in willing the means, the will also is referred to the end. But what arranges this reference of means to end? Nothing else but the intellect, which sees that a certain thing, to which other things lead, is a good. Therefore when the will begins to act, its object is some sort of ordered object. Since ordering does not stem from the will's nature, but from the intellect's, the act of intending proceeds from a will which is guided by reason.

26 In II Sent., 38, 1, 3 sol.; De Ver., 22, 13 c.

27 In II Sent., 38, 1, 3 ad 5.

28 De Ver., 22, 13 c: "Cum enim voluntas moveatur in sumum objectum sibi propositum a ratione, diversimode movetur, secundum quod diversimode sibi proponitur. Unde, cum ratio proponit sibi aliquid ut absolute bonum, voluntas movetur in illud absolute; et hoc est velle. Cum autem proponit sibi aliquid sub ratione boni, ad quod alia ordinentur ut ad finem, tunc tendit in illud cum quodam ordine, qui inventur in actu voluntatis, non secundum propriam naturam, sed secundum exigentiam rationsis."
This function of the intellect, obvious as it seems and casually as it may be presented, assumes great importance in future discussion. The explanation of the natures of habitual and of virtual intention will depend a great deal on a closer insight into the role of reason in the will's act of intending. Further inspection of this function will be worth while.

First of all, the intellect has the ability to order a number of things into some unity. The given in this case is the fact that men do understand a number of things at the same time, a phenomenon which is impossible unless one intelligible species, containing the plurality of objects obscurely, were informing the intellect. For the intellect to know two things at once, it has to know the two as related, or under the aspect of related beings. 29

As a consequence of this capacity of the intellect the will also can be inclined to two or more things at once. Thus the will can desire a means for itself (i.e., not as a means but as a thing) and an end for itself. Or it can desire the means and the end at the same time, willing the means for the sake of the end. When it acts in this manner, its motion does not stop with the means and then resume its momentum toward the end, as though there were here two acts. One continuous motion carries the will from its original point of rest through the means and up to the end. 30

It is clear then that the intellect orders both the means to the end, and the will also to the end. 31 The two arrangements are not made, however, in

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29 S.T., I, 12, 10; 58, 2; 85, 4; In II Sent., 38, 1, 4 sol.
30 In II Sent., 38, 1, 4 sol. and ad 2; S.T., I-II, 12, 3 and 12, 4.
31S.T., I-II, 12, 3 ad 2: "Sed in quibusdam intellectus ordinans appetitum in finem est conjunctus ipsi appetitu." Cf. also in II Sent., 38, 1, 3 sol.
the same way, as is known from a general acquaintance with the operations of the intellect and its relation to the will. The intellect 'works with', 'deals with' the intelligible aspects of things, learning of things as they are, and, finally, becoming one with the real existing beings through a dynamic intentional identification. Thereupon the will can desire what is intentionally represented in the intellect. Since the will and intellect belong to the same supposit,32 and both will and intellect are capable of reflection, the will has the capacity to desire those things which exist intentionally in the intellect.33 Thus by conceiving the end the intellect can propose the end to the will. By seeing a means and its end the intellect can propose this composite ordered object to the will. In this manner, then, the intellect orders the means to the end and the will to the end, for the will follows the apprehension of reason.34

It was stated above: "By seeing a means and its end the intellect can propose this composite ordered object to the will." Two aspects of the operation of the intellect must be noted and distinguished in this statement. One, the

\[32\text{De Ver., 22, 13, ad 7: "Non tamen oportet quod intendere et velle sint actus eiusdem potentiae, cuius est cognoscere, sed eiusdem suppositi; non enim proprie dicitur cognoscere vel intendere potentia aliqua, sed suppositum per potentiam."}\]

\[33\text{Cf. De Ver., 22, 12 c; S.T., I, 82, 4; I-II, 9, 1 and 3. The intentional aspects of intellectum described in this paragraph should not be confused with the act of intention of the will. For an extended analysis of the intellect's intentional activity, the reader is referred to Fr. Hayen's book cited in the Introduction of this paper.}\]

\[34\text{De Ver., 22, 4 c: "Quod autem aliquid determinet sibi inclinationem in finem, non potest contingere nisi cognoscat finem, et habitudinem finis in ea quae sunt ad finem; quod est tantum rationis. Et ideo talis appetitus non determinatus ex aliquo alio de necessitate, sequitur apprehensionem rationis; unde appetitus rationalis, qui voluntas dicitur, est alia potentia ab appetitu sensibili."}\]
intellect sees a means and its end. That is, it orders into one composite object. Two, the intellect sees. That is, the intellect is attending to the object; it is paying attention. The first of these two aspects is considered here. Later, attention, which is a property of any conscious act of the intellect, will be considered. It need only be observed here that ordering necessarily is performed attentively, but that attention can be given without the intellect necessarily ordering. Thus there is a distinction between the two aspects.

This mutual relation of intellect and will was an important problem in St. Thomas' eyes. The article on intention in the *De Veritate* seems at pains to emphasize the point. One could easily presume that the intellect's function in the act of intention is finished when it proposes to the will an intentional representation of the thing to be willed. But knowledge of this sort must precede every act of the will, and so intention seems no different in this respect from other acts of the will. St. Thomas foresaw the difficulty and answered it.35 His reply in the *De Veritate* has already been seen, namely, that something which is proper to reason appears in the act itself of the will. The act of the will is ordered; it tends to its object with a certain order.36

St. Thomas goes on to explain this certain type of reason-directed order. He notes the difference between active relation and passive relation; an active relation to an end is the function of reason, for reason orders and directs; to the will belongs the function of being ordered to the end, and so its relation

35De *Ver.*, 22, 13, obj. 3.

36Ibid., corpus; cf. the quotation on p.9 above.
is passive. Since intention is properly an act of the will, it is the passive relation that is found in intention.

At this juncture it is possible to witness a development in the theory of St. Thomas. Whereas in the De Veritate he verges frequently on the notion of intention as an act not only of the will but also of the intellect, he does not do more than repeat constantly that, although something of the intellect is present in the act of intending, nevertheless intention is an act of the will. On the one hand he will say, "Intending is an act of the will in subordination to reason," and "the will has a type of act which belongs to it inasmuch as the influence of reason is left in the will," and "there appears in the act of the will what is proper to reason," and "nothing prevents a single act from belonging to both reason and will, to one immediately, to the other mediately." On the other hand, he hopes all this will be satisfactorily explained by the difference between the active and the passive relations. In the Prima Secundae of the Summa his explicit statement once again goes no farther than to say the intention is an act of the will. But, as for the influence of the reason left in the act of the will, and the subordination to reason, and the other descriptions of the role of reason which are found in the De Veritate, there is no mention made. At least three times St. Thomas says the ordering of reason precedes in some way the act of the will, but that is all he says. In each

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37 De Ver., 22, 13, ad 4: "[R]elatio in finem activa est rationis: eius enim est reterre in finem; sed relatio passiva potest esse cuiuscumque directi vel relati in finem per rationem: et sic potest esse voluntatis. Et hoc modo relatio in finem pertinent ad intentionem." Cf. also ibid., ad 10 and ad 14.

38 Ibid., ad 3.

39 S.T., I-II, 12, 1 ad 1; ad 3; 3 ad 2.
case he is indicating that what is ordered is the will's object, but not the will's act. Thus he has changed his original picture of the will's act as having in it something of the intellect. Now his picture portrays the intellect's function as presupposed to the act of the will.

Comparison often serves to clarify uncertainty and to verify understanding. Since all of the elements essential to the will's act of intending an end have now been delineated, the task of comparing this act with other acts of the will regarding the end for the purposes of enlightenment and verification presents no problem. Now the question hinted at previously can be raised again and answered: "How does intending differ from volition and fruition?" After this has been duly settled, a possible source of confusion, namely, the act of election, will be taken up and explained.

St. Thomas indicates very clearly the difference between volition and intention. In the former the end is willed immediately, in the latter some medium intervenes between the will and the end. "Respondeo dicendum, quod actus voluntatis potest fieri in finem dupliciter. Vel immediate in ipsum finem . . . et talis actus proprie dicitur voluntas finis ut velle beatitudinem. Alio modo fertur actus in finem mediante eo quod est ad finem, et hoc proprie dicitur

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40 The temptation is strong to apportion to intention St. Thomas' explicit doctrine on election, on use, and on command, as stated in the Prima Secundae. What he explains about these three, especially election, seems to fit intention also, particularly after one has read De Veritate, 22, 13-15. Yet, the treatment of intention in I-II, 12, 1-5, is strikingly silent about the notion of composite act; nor is there any implication of it. For St. Thomas, in the opinion of this author, intention remains a simple act of the will, and thus another difference marks it from the composite act of election. For a discussion of composite act in St. Thomas, the reader is referred to the fine article by George P. Klubertanz, S.J., "The Unity of Human Activity," The Modern Schoolman, XXVII (January 1950), 75-103.
Again, the act of the will in the first case is said to be of the will absolutely; in the second case the act of the will has something in it which is proper to reason. For example, the man who desires health or any other thing is said to be willing absolutely, and his act is volition. But if he desires to attain health through something else, then his act is intention.

Should, however, the will rest in the acquisition of an end, the act of the will is called fruition. Consequently fruition does not imply an ordering, as intention does, but absolute repose in the end. Further, fruition properly is had of the last end, whereas intention is of any end.

These few statements suffice to prevent confusion between intention and either volition or fruition. Since intention not only regards the end, but necessarily includes some consideration of means, it will be helpful for clarity's sake to explain also the difference between intention and election.

Election, or choice, naturally occupies an important place in the study of human acts, and consequently there is no dearth of passages in St. Thomas' works dealing with this operation of the will. The aim at present is not to sketch the essence and properties of the act, but only to compare and contrast it with

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41 In II Sent., 38, 1, 5 sol.; also, Ibid., 3 sol.; S.T., I-II, 12, 1, ad 4; 8, 2 c; De Ver., 22, 13 c and 15 c (ad fin.).
42 In II Sent., 38, exp. textus; 38, 1, 3, ad 5; De Ver., 22, 13 c (ad fin.).
43 S.T., I-II, 12, 1 ad 4; De Ver., 22, 14 c (ad fin.).
44 S.T., I-II, 12, 5 ad 2: "[F]ruitio non importat ordinationem alicuius in aliquid; sicut intentio; sed absolutam quietem in fine." Ibid., 11, 4 c: "Quod ergo est simpliciter ultimum, in quo aliquid delectatur sicut in ultimo fine, hoc proprie dicitur fructus; et eo proprie dicitur alicuius frui. . . . Non autem quiescit [voluntatis motus] simpliciter nisi in ultimo: quia quandiu aliquid expectatur, motus voluntatis remanet in suspense, licet iam ad aliquid pervenerit." Cf. also 12, 1, ad 4.
the act of intention. The principal difference lies in their respective objects: intention is of the end, election is of the means to an end. The principal similarity between the two lies in their reliance on the ordering of reason, though in choice that which is proper to reason—comparing and ordering—makes election a composite act. Whereas in intention the means are ordered to the end, in the act of choice the means are compared one with the other, or are ordered one before the other. After a man has intended a certain end, if there is more than just a single means for the end he will next have to weigh the means and prefer one to the other. Thus intention precedes choice, and need not always be followed by choice. In certain instances, though, an act of the will could be considered either as choice or as intention, depending on one's point of view. However, enough has already been sketched to show that these two acts of the will ordered by the intellect are clearly distinct and ought not to be confused.

45 De Ver., 22, 15 c; 22, 13, ad 9; In II Sent., 38, 1, 3, ad 5; 38, exp. textus ("et ideo in III Ethic. . . ."); S.T., I-II, 13, 3 c.

46 De Ver., 22, 15 c: "Est tamen electio actus voluntatis non absolute, sed in ordine ad rationem, eo quod in electione apparet id quod est proprium rationis, scilicet conferre unum alteri, vel praeferre." Cf. also: In II Sent., 24, 1, 2 sol. and 3 sol.; S.T., I, 83, 3 c; I-II, 13, 1 c.

47 De Ver., 22, 13, ad 16: "[I]ntentio est actus voluntatis in ordine ad rationem ordinantem ea quae sunt ad finem, in finem ipsum; sed electio est actus voluntatis in ordine ad rationem comparantem ea quae sunt in finem ad invicem: et propter hoc intentio et electio differunt."

48 S.T., I-II, 12, 4 ad 3: "Motus qui est unus subjecto, potest ratione differre secundum pricipium et finem, ut ascensio et descensio, sicut dicitur in III Physic. Sic igitur inquantum motus voluntatis fertur in id quod est ad finem, prout ordinatur ad finem, est electio. Motus autem voluntatis qui fertur in finem, secundum quod acquiritur per ea quae sunt ad finem, vocatur intentio. Cuius signum est quod intentio finis case potest, etiam nondum determinatis his quae sunt ad finem, quorum est electio."
To summarize and at the same time corroborate the exposition given it will be profitable to consider other texts bearing on the topic, texts drawn from locations other than the principal three.

First the notion of intention was found to signify in general some tendency or inclination. Indicating this general meaning are such passages as: "Non autem intentio et appetitus materiae est ad privationem sed ad formam"49 and "[O]mne agens habet aliquam intentionem et desiderium finis,"50 in which the conjoined words appetite and desire seem merely to repeat the same idea (much as one might praise "the peace and quiet of the country").

Next it was seen that intention is an act of the will, which is proved from the fact that its object is the end. "Intentio autem est actus voluntatis, ut supra habitum est: quia intentio est de fine, qui est voluntatis objectum."51 "Necesse est igitur dicere, quod in productione creaturarum a Deo sit aliquis finis intentus. Invenitur autem agere propter finem et voluntas et natura, sed aliter et aliter. Natura enim . . . non potest sibi praestituere finem, nec se in finem movere aut ordinare vel dirigere; quod quidem competit agenti per voluntatem, cuius est intelligere et finem et omnia praedicta. Unde agens per voluntatem sic agit propter finem, quod praestituit sibi finem, et seipsum quodammodo in finem movet, suas actiones in ipsum ordinando."52

But the will does not produce an act of intention completely by itself, and

49 C.G., III, 4 (in med.).
50 In I Sent., 35, 1, 1 sol.
51 S.T., II-II, 180, 1 c.
52 De Pot., 3, 15 c.
it requires the assisting functions of the intellect, both to have an object to will, and to will an object that is ordered. Further, it was said that the interaction of will and reason stems from their roots in a common supposit. Regarding these three points, St. Thomas says: "De agentibus autem per intellectum non est dubium quin agant propter finem: agunt enim praecoconcipientes in intellectu id quod per actionem consequuntur, et ex tali praecoceptione agunt; hoc enim est agere per intellectum";\(^{53}\) "Manifestum est autem quod ratio quodammodo voluntatem praecedit, et ordinat actionem eius: inquantum scilicet voluntas in suum objectum tendit secundum ordinem rationis, eo quod vis apprehensiva appetitivae suum objectum representa";\(^{54}\) and "[Q]uius actus voluntatis et rationis supra se invicem possunt ferri, prout scilicet ratio ratiocinatur de volendo, et voluntas vult ratiocinari; contingit actum voluntatis praeviniri ab actu rationis, et everso. Et quia virtus prioris actus remanet in actu sequenti, contingit quandoque quod est aliquis actus voluntatis, secundum quod manet virtute in ipso aliquid de actu rationis, ut dictum est de usu et de electione; et everso aliquis est actus rationis, secundum quod virtute manet in ipso aliquid de actu voluntatis."\(^{55}\)

Finally, through comparison and contrast St. Thomas clarifies the differences between intention and the other acts of the will, both those whose object is the end and one in particular whose object is the means. For the prior com-


\(^{54}\) S.T., I-II, 13, 1 c.

\(^{55}\) Ibid., 17, 1 c.
parison the following passage, treating of the passions of the concupiscible appetite, will be useful because it illustrates the direct parallel in a lower appetite of the acts of the higher appetite. "Prima ergo imutatio appetitus ab appetibili vocatur amor, qui nihil est aliud quam complacentia appetibilis; et ex hac complacentia sequitur motus in appetibile, qui est desiderium; et ultimo quies, quae est gaudium." 56 The following passage indicates the basic difference between intending and choosing. "Respondeo dicendum, quod voluntas dupliciter potest considerari: vel secundum quod est intendens, propt in ultimum finem fertur; vel secundum quod est eligens, propt fertur in objectum proximum, quod in finem ultimum ordinatur." 57

The preceding review of texts has summarized briefly the main elements necessary for a proper understanding of what it is to intend. Hence one might say that all of the essential notes, all that one needs in order to formulate a clear definition of intention, have been proposed thus far. However, since an act of the will is, in its physical reality, a very definite activity, it, like other acts of the human soul, is capable of two types of circumstantial modification. The first type springs from the operation of the intellect, the second derives from the motion of the will. Both together modify every act of intention; both can so fuse with the act of intention and with each other as to defy separate identification within that act; both often pass under the name intention. Furthermore, and most important, the element of attention must necessarily enter the picture of intention at this point. For up till now the entire aim of

56 Ibid., 26, 2 c.
57 In II Sent., 40, 1, 2 sol.
this chapter has not been achieved. A full explanation of an actual intention has not yet been seen, for the attention which is a property of the conscious activity of the intellect and which consequently accompanies the ordering of means to end is worthy of some discussion. For all these reasons, then, it will be necessary to continue the explanation of the act of intention with a consideration of attention and intensity.

Attention, for present purposes, allows of five statements. First of all, attention in man is an activity of, property of, and consequence of the operation of the cognoscitive powers, especially the intellect. When a man is paying attention, as we say, to some object, he is not willing it nor desiring it. He is knowing it, and knowing it in act. That is, his cognitive faculties are operating on that object consciously. Because man's intellect is limited in its operation to a single object, a man can attend only to one thing or many things related into a unity. As proof of this, the intellect must turn its attention from sensible activity to busy itself with more intellectual pursuits; as, for a common example, in the case of musicians, whose attention is directed to the music and not to their fingers. Also, since it is the intellect that attends, a man's efforts to learn, to memorize, to contemplate, to reason, and so on, can be hindered by anything distracting or otherwise impeding the use of the intellect.

Secondly, the intellect and the other cognoscitive powers are ordinarily

58 De Ver., 13, 3 c.
59 Ibid., obj. 10; In IV Sent., 15, 4, 2, 5, obj. 2.
60 S.T., I-II, 37, 1 c and ad 3; 77, 1 c; 33, 3, ad 3.
moved to attend by the will, but an object can in certain circumstances attract the cognosecitive powers so strongly that the will's control is neutralized. The will's role is illustrated by the fact that a man can have an habitual knowledge of the science of geometry and yet not attend to this knowledge at all. 61 On the other hand, a man actually can be so engrossed in a passionate activity that his will cannot divert the attention of the intellect from its object. 62 The following text demonstrates some of the correlative functions of intellect and will in this act of attention: "Vis cognoscitiva non cognoscit aliquid actu nisi adsit intentio; unde et phantasmata in organo conservata interdum non actu imaginamur, quia intentio non fertur ad ea; appetitus enim alias potentias in actum movet in agentibus per voluntatem. Multa igitur ad quae simul intentio non fertur, non simul intuemur. Quae autem oportet sub una intentione cadere, oportet simul esse intellecta: qui enim comparationem duorum considerat, intentionem ad utrumque dirigat et simul intuetur utrumque." 63

Thirdly, just as, properly speaking, it was the whole soul that inclines toward, or intends, so too it is the whole soul that somehow becomes involved in attending and intending at once. So much so, that in describing the phenomenon St. Thomas sometimes does not try to make the two acts clearly distinct, and

61Ibid., 77, 2 c: "Quod autem homo non consideret in particulari id quod habitualiter scit, quandoque quidem contingit ex solo defectu intentionis: putamus homo scirens geometriam, non intendit ad considerandum geometrias conclusiones, quas statim in promptu habet considerare." Also, De Malo, 3, 10 c.

62S.T., I-II, 77, 1 c: "Unde videamus quod homines in aliqua passione existentes, non facile imaginationem avertunt ab his circa quae afficiuntur. Unde per consequens judicium rationis plerumque sequitur passionem appetitus sensitivitatem et per consequens motus voluntatis, qui natus est sequi judicium rationis. Cf. also 33, 3 ad 2 and De Malo, 3, 10 c.

63C.G., I, 55.
employs attendere and intendere interchangeably. "[A]d actum cuiuscumque cognoscitivae potentiae requiritur intentio, ut probat Augustinus in lib. de Trinit. Intentio autem unius non potest ferri ad multa simul, nisi forte illa multa hoc modo sint ad invicem ordinata, ut accipientur quasi unum; sicut nec alicuius motus vel operationis possunt esse duo termini non ad invicem ordinati. Unde, cum sit una anima, in qua omnes cognoscitivae potentiae fundantur unius et eiusdem intentio requiritur ad omnium potentiarum cognoscitivarum actus: et ideo, cum totaliter anima intendat ad actum unius potentiae, abstrahitur homo ab actu alterius potentiae."64 In similar vein and to the same effect: "[Q]via omnes potentiae animae in una essentia animae radicantur, necesse est quod, quando intentio animae vehementer trahitur ad operationem unius potentiae, retrahatur ab operatione alterius: unius enim animae non potest esse nisi una intentio. Et propter hoc, si aliquid ad se trahat totam intentionem animae, vel magnum partem ipsius, non compatitur secum aliquid aliud quod magnam attentionem requirat."65 Again, it surely is we who attend: "Ea quibus vehementius intendimus, magis in memoria manent."66

Fourthly, despite the proximity of the two, attention is not the same as intention, the act of the will. The reason is that the intellect can reflect upon, and consequently attend to, every act of the will, including intention of

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64De Ver., 13, 3 c.
65S.T., I-II, 37, 1 c. Also, ibid., II-II, 175, 5 ad 3: "[V]ires animae vegetabilis non operantur ex intentione animae, sicut vires sensitivae, sed per modum naturae. Et ideo non requiritur ad raptum abstractio ab eis, sicut a potentiss sensitivis, per quarum operationes minueretur intentio animae circa intellectivam cognitionem."
66In de Mem., 5 (ad fin. lae par.).
the end. For if the "voluntas vult intellectum intelligere," it is equally true that the "intellectus intelligit voluntatem." Further proof of this lies in the fact that the object of intention is that good (the end) to which certain means are ordered, whereas the object of attention can be any good or any truth.

In the fifth place, if all that has been said in the first four points is true, it follows that, when the attention of the intellect focuses on the object of the will which is an end to which are ordered means, and the will desires that object, then the intention of the end is what is called an actual intention. The power does not act without its object. But the object of the will requisite for an act of intention must be intentionally represented and proposed by the intellect, which cannot occur unless the intellect is attending to the object. Consequently actual intention of an end requires and is distinguished from other types of intention by the attention of the intellect paid to the end and to the means as for that end. Attending to this composite object, the agent wills the end—this is actual intention.

Just as attention, so intension is a modifying characteristic of intention. Intension, or the increasing of velocity to a peak, is opposed to remission, or the decreasing of velocity once the peak has been reached, or at least once some higher point has been reached. Stricly, it would be correct to say that an operation which began from rest and is just on its way to gaining some momentum has some intensity. But usage seems to prefer that intensity signify an inclination or movement with a certain vehemence. Hence to operate with a small

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67 S.T., I, 16, 4 ad 1; cf. also 82, 4 ad 1; De Ver., 22, 12 c.
68 In de Caelo, II, 8 and 9; De Spe, q. un., 1, ad 16.
outlay of effort would be to act remissly or half-heartedly or moderately, but to act with intensity is to act with vigor, with vehemence. 69 So the human agent can exercise in his activity a range of degrees of intensity, depending on the energy with which the soul inclines toward some object or some one of its own acts. 70 The following enunciates aptly St. Thomas' view of intention and the soul's powers: "Praeterea, quando una virtus multum intenditur in sua operatione, alia potentia abstrahitur a suo actu: sicut illi qui vehementer intendunt ad aliquid audiendum, non percipiant visu ea quae coram ipsis fiunt"; "[Q]uando mens intenditur in suo actu circa absentia, quae sunt a sensibus remota, tunc propter vehementiam intentionis sequitur alienatio a sensibus." 71

The dynamic source of this greater or less degree of energy exerted is, of course, the whole supposit united by a single soul, but again, since the soul's rational inclination is called a will and its other inclinations are given the names of other appetitive powers, the energy is often attributed to the motion of the will and the other appetites. Thus it is averred that the sensitive appetite moves with intensity to the consequent detriment of the will's motion, 72

69 S.T., I-II, 35, 6 c: "Nam omnis motus naturalis intensor est in fine... Unde et inclinatio appetitivae virtutis, per se loquendo, vehementius tendit in delectationem quam fugiat tristitiam." Ibid., 37, 1 c: "quando intentio animae vehementer trahitur ad operationem unius potentiae..."

70 De Ver., 13, 3 c; De Malo, 3, 9 c; S.T., I-II, 77, 1 c and 2 c.

71 S.T., II-II, 173, 3, obj. 2 and ad 2.

72 S.T., I-II, 77, 1 c: "Et secundum hunc modum, per quandam distractionem, quando motus appetitus sensitivi fortificatur secundum quamcumque passionem, necesse est quod remittatur, vel totaliter impediatur motus proprius appetitus rationalis, qui est voluntas."
and that the will can desire intensely a sinful act\textsuperscript{73} or a good act.\textsuperscript{74}

Since the will is capable of desiring intensely any act, it can intend intensely also. \textquoteleft'[\textit{I}ntensio actus interioris vel exterioris potest referri ad intentionem ut objectum: puta cum aliquis intendit intense velle, vel aliquid intense operari.\textquoteleft\textsuperscript{75} Thus intensity modifies intention as it does other will acts.

One final point deserves notice: the mutual influence of attention and intensity. Attention stimulates intensity; intensity, on the other hand, fosters attention. That St. Thomas recognized this fact seems apparent from the various passages cited already in discussing attention and intention. However, one additional text will bring out the interaction: \textquoteleft'Manifestum est enim quod quandocumque una potentia intenditur in suo actu, alia potentia vel impeditur vel totaliter avertitur a suo actu; sicut cum aliquis intentus est ad aliquem audiendum, non percipit hominem pertransseuntem. Et hoc ideo contingit, quia omnes potentiae radicantur in una anima, cuius intentio applicat unamquamque potentiam ad sumum actum: et ita cum aliquis fuerit fortiter intentus circa actum unius potentiae, minuitur eius intentio circa actum alterius. Sic ergo cum fuerit concupiscientia fortis, aut ira, aut aliquid huiusmodi, impeditur a consideratione scientiae.\textquoteleft\textsuperscript{76}

With the elements that belong to the act of intention (hence especially to an act of actual intention) known, the next two chapters investigate the nature of habitual and virtual intention.

\textsuperscript{73}\textit{Ibid.}, 6 c (ad fin.) and ad 3. 
\textsuperscript{74}\textit{Ibid.}, 24, 3, ad 1. 
\textsuperscript{75}\textit{S.T.}, I-II, 19, 8 c. 
\textsuperscript{76}\textit{De Malo}, 3, 9 c.
CHAPTER II

HABITUAL INTENTION

The subject of this chapter will be the habitual intention. Though an enumeration of the three types of intention has acquired the more or less customary sequence of actual, virtual, and habitual, the order here to be followed inverts the last two. For this study's chief concern is directed to virtual intention, with the other two subordinated to it as much as possible. Fittingly, therefore, the explanation of the habitual intention should precede discussion of the virtual. Also, this choice of arrangement places immediately after the study of actual intention what is more sharply contrastable with it. The contrast will not only aid in understanding the two types, but will in turn prepare for an easier understanding of the nature of virtual intention.

Knowing what an habitual intention is has its difficulties. First of all, the differences between it and actual intention seem to overwhelm any resemblances between the two. For, whereas the actual is defined as an elicited act of the will regarding an end, in which reason enters by ordering and also by attending to the end in the act itself, the habitual even by its name professes not to be an act, and rules out as a consequence the possibility of accompanying attentiveness. The difference strikes a person as so considerable, in fact, that one can justifiably raise into question the propriety of calling the habitual intention an intention at all. In what sense, then, does "habitual inten-
signify an intention? In the sense that the act of intention has been repeated many times? Such an interpretation of the sense of the words is possible, but this is not what St. Thomas means by an habitual intention, or rather, by intending habitually (for he seems never to have used the phrase *habitual intention* as it was used by later philosophers and theologians). 1 Perhaps, then, the phrase means that an intending of an end exists in the will neither in actuality nor in potentiality only, but in some intermediate stage? This could indeed be the case, for quite unmistakably St. Thomas often so describes a habit. 2

However, one ought not answer too hastily. It can further be asked whether this habitual intention, if it truly is a habit, is really a habit or disposition of the will, or may it not rather be a habit of the intellect? For it would seem that it cannot belong to the will. First of all, St. Thomas states explicitly that the will's nature is completely adequate for its proper operation, and consequently needs no habits, i.e., needs no qualities which dispose it for operation. 3 *[D]uplici ratione aliqua potentia habitu indiget. Primo quidem, quia operatio quae est per potentiam educenda, excedit vim potentiae, quamvis non excedat vim totius naturae humanae. Alio modo quia totius naturae vim excedit. . . . Primo autem modo indiget habitu intellectus; eo quod intelligere aliquid non potest nisi assimiletur ei per speciem intelligibilem. . . .

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1 In *S.T.*, III, 61, 8 ad 3 St. Thomas uses the phrase to mean virtual intention. This unusual usage will be explained in the next chapter.

2 *S.T.*, I, 79, 6 ad 3; 87, 2 c; I-II, 50, 4 ad 2; 71, 3 c; et al.

3 *S.T.*, I-II, 49, 1 c.
tem superior non indiget hoc modo aliquo habitu, quis naturaliter tendit in bonum sibi connaturale sicut in proprium objectum. Unde ad hoc quod velit bonum, non requiritur nisi quod ostendatur sibi per vim cognitivam.⁴ Again, "per habitum virtutis potentia quae ei subjicitur, respectu sui actus complementum acquirit. Unde ad id ad quod potentia aliqua se extendit ex ipsa ratione potentiae, non est necessarius habitus virtutis. Virtus autem ordinat potentias ad bonum; ipsa enim est quae bonum facit habentem, et opus eius bonum reddit. Voluntas autem hoc quod virtus facit circa alias potentias, habet ex ipsa ratione suae potentiae; nam eius objectum est bonum. Unde tendere in bonum hoc modo se habet ad voluntatem sicut tendere in delectabile ad concupiscibilem, et sicut ordinari ad somum se habet ad auditum. Unde voluntas non indiget aliquo habitu virtutis inclinante ipsam ad bonum quod est sibi proportionatum.⁵

These words describe, however, the will's operation with regard to its formal object, the good in general. Hence St. Thomas shows just as well that the will nevertheless requires habits for operating promptly, easily, firmly, and with pleasure in regard to this or that particular good.⁶ Still, the difficulty remains, because the habits that St. Thomas is speaking of are virtues,

⁴De Ver., 24, 4, ad 9. Cf. also S.T., I-II, 62, 3 ad 1 and c.
⁵De Virt. in Comm., 5 c. The objections make certain that there is no mistaking St. Thomas' mind; e.g., the first: "[A]d imperandum sufficit voluntati judicium rationis; nam voluntas appetit naturaliter quod est bonum secundum rationem, sicut concupiscibilis quod est delectabile secundum sensum."
⁶S.T., I-II, 50, 5 ad 1: "Sed quia necessarium est ad finem humanae vitae, quod vis appetitiva inclinetur in aliquid determinatum, ad quod non inclinatur ex natura potentiae, quae se habet ad multa et diversa; ideo necesses est quod in voluntate, et in aliis viribus appetitivis, sint quaedam qualitates inclinantes, quae dicuntur habitus." Also: 49, 4; 56, 3 c; II-II, 58, 12 c.
namely, the virtues of charity and justice.\footnote{De Virt. in Comm., 5 c: "Sic ergo duas virtutes sunt in voluntate sicut in subiecto; scilicet caritas et iustitia." Cf. also S.T., I-II, 56, 6 c.} But an intention of the end is not a virtue, as is evident from the fact that a man with many virtues can have a bad intention, and on the other hand a man with vicious habits can at the same time act with a good intention. \"Et ideo sicut potest contingere quod aliquis habens habitum vitiosum, prorumpat in actum virtutis, eo quod ratio non totaliter corrumpitur per malum habitum, sed aliquid eius integrum manet, ex quo venit quod peccator aliqua operatur de genere bonorum.\"\footnote{S.T., I-II, 78, 2 c; other pertinent passages: 3 c and ad 2, ad 3; 4 c.} \"[P]eccatum comparatur ad virtutem sicut actus malus ad habitum bonum. Aliter autem se habet habitus in anima, et forma in re naturali. Forma enim naturalis ex necessitate producit operationem sibi convenientem . . . . Sed habitus in anima non ex necessitate producit suam operationem, sed homo utitur eo cum voluerit. Unde simul habitu in homine existente, potest non uti habitu, aut agere contrarium actum. Et sic potest habens virtutem procedere ad actum peccati.\"\footnote{Ibid., 71, 4 c.} Not only does it seem that the habitual intention cannot be a habit of the will, but, judging from the words of the Angelic Doctor himself, a habitual intention seems to be a habit of the intellect, similar to the habitual knowledge of first principles or of a science, and existing thus as nothing else but a species in the intellectual memory. In the first place intelligible species in the memory constitute some kind of habit: \"Species intelligibilis aliquando est in intellectu in potentia tantum: et tunc dicitur intellectus esse in poten-
tia. Aliquando autem secundum ultimam completionem actus: et tunc intelligit actu. Aliquando medio modo se habet inter potentiam et actum: et tunc dicitur esse intellectus in habitu. Et secundum hunc modum intellectus conservat species, etiam quando actu non intelligit."\textsuperscript{10} This habit is some kind of actuality but not a perfect kind: "Nec tamen sequitur quod semper intelligatur secundum illam speciem, sed solum quando intellectus possibilis perfecte fit in actu respectu illius speciei. Quandoque vero est imperfecte in actu eius quodammodo medio inter puram potentiam et purum actum. Et hoc est habitualiter cognoscere: et de hoc modo cognitionis reducitur in actum perfectum per voluntatem."\textsuperscript{11}

Then, from the following text, it appears that an habitual intention would be numbered among the species in the intellectual memory, considering that an act of the will can be retained in the memory: "\textsuperscript{[S]}icuit Augustinus probat XIV de Trin., intelligere dicimur et velle seu amare aliqua, et quando de his cogitamus, et quando de his non cogitamus. Sed quando sine cogitatione sunt, ad solam memoriam pertinent; quae nihil est aliud, secundum ipsum, quam habitualis retention notitiae et amoris."\textsuperscript{12}

Further evidence of St. Thomas' mind comes from a comparison of texts: "Habitualiter enim referunt in Deum et qui nihil agit, nec aliquid actualiter intendit, ut dormiens,"\textsuperscript{13} and "\textsuperscript{[E]}o quod habitualiter inest, quandoque aliquis uti non potest propter aliquod impedimentum: sicut homo non potest uti habitu

\textsuperscript{10}S.T., I, 79, 6 ad 3. Cf. also I, 84. 7 ad 1.
\textsuperscript{11}De Ver., 10, 2, ad 4.
\textsuperscript{12}S.T., I, 93, 7 ad 3.
\textsuperscript{13}De Carit., 11, ad 3.
scientiae propter somnum. Et similiter puer non potest uti habitu intellectus principiorum, vel etiam lege naturali, quae ei habitualiter inest, propter defectum aetatis.14 Considering the two, and knowing how, inevitably, St. Thomas will give as instances of habitual intention the disposition of a man who is asleep, or insane, or in venial sin, the conclusion follows easily that the habitual intention resides in the memory of a man who is asleep, etc., in the same way that the man's habitual knowledge is retained in his memory, or, to be more precise, in his possible intellect.

Every-day experience rallies to the support of this conclusion, for does not a man who wakes from sleep have to turn back to his memory to remember what he had intended to do first thing on rising? Men, also, who regain consciousness after having suffered an unexpected loss of it, for a time are at a loss to do anything, until they have "gotten their bearings" as they say; that is, until they have recalled either what they were doing previously or have situated themselves in their present circumstances. Unlike the man who has deliberately surrendered himself to slumber, these have not had the opportunity to foresee their situation upon return of consciousness, and thus they could not have 'pre-intended' the actions they would perform in that situation. Hence, a person in this predicament is temporarily unable to act for any deliberate end, until he remembers what his last intention was and discovers the identity of his environment.15 The point to be stressed here is that the habitual intention seems, from both the words of St. Thomas and the testimony of experience, to consist in

14 S.T., I-II, 94, 1, ad 1 in contr.

15 The person might very well execute instinctive acts, certainly, such as rubbing his head or eyes, or casting about for some clues to his location, etc.
nothing else but a vestige in the possible intellect.

However attractive these arguments may be, the truth is that St. Thomas understands the habitual intention as somehow a disposition of the will. One encounters no ambiguity in such texts as: "In amentibus autem et dormientibus potest esse voluntas contraria habitualis, quamvis non sit actualis. Et ideo si ante somnum vel furiam fuerunt contrariae voluntatis, non recipiunt sacramentum, quia adhuc illa voluntas habitualiter manet,"¹⁶ and "[S]icut modus praesentis vitae non patitur ut homo semper actu feratur in Deum, ita etiam non patitur quod actu feratur in omnes proximos singillatim: sed sufficit quod feratur commune in omnes in universali, et in singulos habitualiter et secundum animi praeparationem."¹⁷ The "ferri" of which St. Thomas speaks in this second passage refers to the activity of loving, the object of which is either God or the neighbor; since both the objection and the reply given here accept the phrase to love habitually as said of God, and since loving God must necessarily be done at least sometimes only by loving intentions, this second quotation implicitly states what the first expresses in clear terms.

Nevertheless, what has been said about the species in the possible intellect is not to be rejected as misinterpretation or a mistake. Rather, it fills in one aspect of the picture. For, let it be recalled, an actual intention is of an end, and consciously of an end. That means that the intellect was presenting to the will an object, was being directed by the will to attending to the object, and was therefore by reflexion seeing itself as doing these things

¹⁶In IV Sent., 6, 1, 3, 3 ad 2.
¹⁷S.T., II-II, 184, 2 ad 3. Cf. also 44, 4 ad 2.
and seeing the will as willing that object. Now all that the intellect has apprehended can be retained by it, in the memory or possible intellect, in the form of intelligible species. This it is that enables a man to reflect back upon his memory to recall his intention. For what he can see there is not only the object of his intention (i.e., the end), but also the fact that he had made an intention. Therefore the intention does reside in the intellect as a habit of the intellect, as a particular species in the possible intellect representing the will's act of intending a certain end. But if this were all that is necessary to constitute an habitual intention, then the term very clearly is misleading, and St. Thomas has erred often in his conception of habitual intention, to take the above-quoted texts as only two examples.

On the other hand, if St. Thomas understands the habitual intention as a quality of the will, how can he meet the objection based on his own words; namely, that the only habits of the will are charity, in the supernatural order, and justice, in the natural order?

At this point the author of this thesis wishes to propose his own solution to a problem which he thinks St. Thomas nowhere formulates explicitly. And he wishes to solve the problem in the only manner he thinks possible: by advancing the explanation as he sees it from clues found in St. Thomas' words on habits and the moral virtues, and then by presenting afterwards the passages where St. Thomas speaks of habitual intention in order to verify the solution advanced.

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18 The term habit is being employed in the applied sense described in S.T., I-II, 9a, 1 c: "[A] liquid potest dici esse habitus dupliciter. Uno modo, proprie et essentialiter: et sic lex naturalis non est habitus. . . . Alio modo . . . id quod habitu tenetur: sicut dicitur fides id quod fide tenetur."
Accordingly, he proposes first of all that the habitual intention is not
to be conceived as a separate habit in the soul, but as the resultant of, or the
product of, a number of habits in the soul—not an actual product, of course,
because it is something habitual that is being sought, but one which exists
virtually in those habits. A single habit will not explain habitual intention.
Natural charity, or natural dilection as St. Thomas calls it, cannot explain;
for the will needs no habit to operate in regard to objects which it can will
naturally. Given that the intellect has presented the will with evidence
that God is its chief good, the will responds immediately. Consequently natural
charity is not a habit of the will. Nor can justice, the only habit assigned
by St. Thomas to the will itself, explain completely the habitual intention.
For the virtue of justice aids a man to act in only one field of action: the
exercise of correct relationships with the neighbor. Thus if we were looking
for an habitual just intention, we would find it in the will's habit of justice.
But the quest is for an habitual intention of any good, not merely that good
which pertains to the neighbor. Hence justice is not the source of habitual
intention.

On stronger grounds neither can the virtues of fortitude and temperance,

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19 Cf. S.T., I, 60, 2 c, 3 c, 4 c; I-II, 49 4 c and ad 3; 56, 6 c.
20 In S.T., II-II, 58, 12 c St. Thomas is answering that justice is more
excellent than the other moral virtues; legal justice clearly is so, and particu-
lar justice is so for two reasons: "Quarum prima potest sumi ex parte subjecti:
quia scilicet est in nobiliori parte animae, idest in appetitu rationali, scili-
cet voluntate; alis virtutibus moralibus existentibus in appetitu sensitivo, ad
quem pertinent passiones, quae sunt materia aliarum virtutum moralium. Secunda
ratio sumitur ex parte objecti. Nam aliae virtutes laudantur solum secundum
bonum ipsius virtuosi. Justitia autem laudatur secundum quod virtuosus ad alium
bene se habet: et sic justitia quodammodo est bonum alterius." Cf. also: Ibid.,
2 c and 3 c; I-II, 56, 6 c: 100, 2 ad 2: De Virt. in Comm., 5 c.
the habits found in the irascible and concupiscible powers respectively, satisfy our search. These virtues are really only a well-established conformity of the two sensitive appetites to the dictates of reason.21

Though the possibilities for finding a habit for the will have seemingly been exhausted, two remain. The first is that of prudence, the virtue of the practical intellect whose object is the proper mean leading to an end. The second possibility is that of a combination of the moral virtues. The author of this thesis thinks that the answer will be found in the latter choice, with prudence necessarily numbered among them.

He proposes that, when St. Thomas uses the term habitual intention, he has in mind that state of the soul in which the practical intellect is informed with prudence (or with the corresponding vice of imprudence), the sensitive appetites are possessed of the moral virtues of fortitude and temperance (or the contrary vices), and the will is possessed of the moral virtue of justice22 (or injustice), so that, with the soul so disposed, the will has been also disposed in a very definite manner to intend an end in accordance with right reason (or against right reason). The virtue of justice is included in this state of the soul because its presence in the will is necessary, even though it may not be exercised in every human action. One's habitual intention can be the result of one's last

21S.T., I-II, 56, 4 c: "In his igitur circa quae operatur irascibilis et concupiscibilis secundum quod sunt a ratione motae, necesse est ut aliquis habitus perficiens ad bene agendum sit non solum in ratione, sed etiam in irascibili et concupiscibili. Et quia bona dispositio potentiae motentis motae, attenditur secundum conformitatem ad potentiam motentem; ideo virtus quae est in irascibili et concupiscibili, nihil aliud est quam quaedam habitualis conformitas istarum potentiarum ad rationem." Cf. also DE Virt. in Comm., 4 c.

22Justice in the proper sense, not the metaphorical, as noted above (p.31, n. 20) is what is meant throughout this section.
deliberate act with regard to one's self, in which case prudence and temperance and fortitude are involved (and these three are always involved), but not justice. Nevertheless, at the time of that act the will had to have the virtue of justice, for if prudence and the other moral virtues are present, justice must be also present, and, vice versa, if injustice prevails instead of justice, then the man is not truly ordered to his proper end, and so does not have the other moral virtues.

Prudence and the moral virtues are interlinked in dependence. The one requires the others. Thus, when a choice of action is offered to a man, the process that takes place before he chooses is somewhat the following: the practical intellect examines the object (be it a thing or an external or internal action), sees its relation to the end, and proposes the object in its relation to the end to the will; the will then is free to desire this object for that end, or not to desire it; meanwhile, the sensitive appetites have been attracted to or repulsed from the same object (which, be it noted, is now modified, or informed,

23 S.T., I-II, 65, 1 c: "nulla virtus moralis potest sine prudentia haberi, quod autem virtutis moralis est facere electionem rectam. ... Similiter etiam prudentia non potest haberi nisi habantur virtutes morales: cum prudentia sit recta ratio agibilium, quae, sicut ex principiis, procedit ex finibus agibilium, ad quos aliquis recte se habet per virtutes morales." Cf. also: De Virt. Cardinal., 2 c; S.T., I-II, 58, 4 c and ad 3; 61, 3 c; 61, 3 and 4; and, finally, 58, 5 c: "[A]d rectam rationem agibilium, quae est prudentia, requiritur quod homo habeat virtutem moralum."

24 Besides the locations in the Summa given in the preceding note, especially pertinent is the section in De Virt. Cardinal., 2 c (ad fin.).

25 S.T., I-II, 57, 5 c: "[F]rudentia est virtus maxime necessaria ad vitam humanam. . . . Cum autem electio sit eorum quae sunt ad finem, rectitudo electio-nis duo requirit: sollicit debitem finem; et id quod convenienter ordinatur ad debitum finem. Ad debitum autem finem homo convenienter disponitur per virtutem quae perficit partem animae appetitivam, cuius objectum est bonum et finis. Ad id autem quod convenienter in finem debitum ordinatur, oportet quod homo directe disponatur per habitum rationis: [prudentia]."
by the end, as matter by its form\textsuperscript{26}, and they are either aiding or conflicting with the will and the reason.\textsuperscript{27} Now, this process takes place in preparation for every actual intention, for the will has a choice of intending or not intending. In other words, the act of intention is itself the matter for choice.

But an actual intention is thought of as issuing from some habitual disposition since habits are the sources of acts. "Unde virtus quae facit bene agere in actu, non solum in facultate, oportet quod vel sit in ipsa voluntate; vel in aliqua potentia secundum quod est a voluntate mota."\textsuperscript{28} Hence, if in the process described above the practical intellect is disposed either for good or for bad, and the sensitive appetites are correspondingly disposed, then the will itself going to be disposed either to good or to bad,\textsuperscript{29} and should an occasion for intending a good end present itself, the will would conaturally tend to the end if it is well disposed, or avoid the end, if ill disposed toward it. The will's freedom is not taken from it; but it truly is disposed as if by a habit of its own to pursue a certain end more easily, firmly, and pleasantly than to pursue

\textsuperscript{26} \textit{S.T.}, II-II, \textit{4}, 3 c: "\textit{[A]ctus voluntarii speciem recipiunt a fine, qui est voluntatis objectum. Id autem a quo aliquid speciem sortitur se habet ad modum formae in rebus naturalibus. Et ideo cuiuslibet actus voluntarii forma quodammodo est finis ad quem ordinatur: tum quia ex ipso recipit speciem; tum etiam quia modus actionis oportet quod respondet proportionaliter fini."

\textsuperscript{27} \textit{Ibid.}, 56, \textit{4} ad \textit{3}: "\textit{Sed irascibilis et concupiscibilis non ad nutum obedienti rationi, sed habent propios motus suos, quibus interdum rationi repugnant.}" Cf. also \textit{De Virt. in Comm.}, 4 c.

\textsuperscript{28} \textit{Ibid.}, 3 c. Cf. also 88, 3 c; I, 93, 7 c; I-II, 71, 3 ad 2.

\textsuperscript{29} \textit{Ibid.}, 56, \textit{4} ad \textit{4}: "\textit{In electione duo sunt: scilicet intentio finis, quae pertinet ad virtutem moralem; et praecceptio eius quod est ad finem, quod pertinet ad prudentiam; ut dicitur in \textit{VI Ethic. Quod autem habeat rectam intentionem finis circa passiones animae, hoc contingit ex bona dispositione irascibilis et concupiscibilis. Et ideo virtutes morales circa passiones, sunt in irascibili et concupiscibili.}" Also: \textit{Ibid.}, 58, \textit{4} and \textit{5}.}
the contrary end. Therefore, before it acts for an end, the will is already predisposed one way or the other, for the good end or the bad. This condition is, to a certain extent, its own doing. Since it lay within the will's power to allow these dispositions to remain in the soul or to rid the soul of them, merely by clinging to or refusing the end proposed, the last act of intention has given the practical intellect and the sensitive appetites their orientations. Hence moral imputability is referred to the will and, through the will, to the supposit.

In other words, the habitual intention we have been seeking refers, from one aspect, to an intention which is not actually being produced by the will, but which would most likely be produced by the will, because that is the way the will is disposed. It would proceed from the will inevitably, except that the will enjoys the freedom to choose the contrary. From another aspect the habitual intention refers to the habitual disposition of the soul, which then includes not only the will but also the faculties which channel the will and whose present states abide as signs of the will's last deliberate choice.

30 St., I-II, 18, 6 c sums up briefly the thought of many previous articles on the will's role in the moral act: "Ita autem quod est ex parte voluntatis, se habet ut formale ad id quod est ex parte exterioris actus: quia voluntas utitur membris ad agendum, sicut instrumenti; neque actus exteriores habent rationem moralitatis, nisi inquantum sunt voluntarii." Later, in 20, 1 c, where the goodness or malice of external acts is discussed, the same conclusion is upheld. Many other texts could be cited: I-II, 1, 1; 7, 1; De Ver., 24, 1 c (where emphasis is laid upon the supposit as the principle of human acts).

31 Nor "potentially"; a virtuous man's will is either habitually or actually intending a good end, retaining, however, ordinarily, the potency to intend an evil end.

32 In the De Ver., 24, 10 St. Thomas has much to say about free choice and obstinacy that has special reference to this matter of habitual action. He states that a man can remedy the surges of passion by being rightly disposed regarding the end; that a false judgement of reason about a particular object can stem from passion or a bad habit; that sin can become 'natural' to the will.
Habitual intention, nevertheless, must not be made entirely equivalent to habitual disposition. The habitual intention is an habitual disposition, but an habitual disposition need not be an habitual intention. A man, or the soul, or the will, may be said to be habitually disposed toward any good or any evil; thus, a man may have an habitual disposition to steal, to lie, to be lazy, etc. But the habitual intention seems to stand chiefly for an habitual disposition of the will as seen in regard to the proper end of man; thus, one's habitual intention is either good or bad. Yet it may also be considered with regard to any end, and thus one might be said to have an habitual intention of stealing, of lying, etc., after one has determined to steal or lie, but at present must attend to other tasks in no wise connected with the projected wrongdoing. In this case of an habitual intention of some misdeed, one's will is indeed disposed with a habit, or better, is disposed in a manner similar to being disposed by a habit (for this seems why the disposition is habitus and not habitus). The habitual intention is more a disposition than a habit in the strict Thomistic terminology. Also, the habitual disposition seems more a 'physical' reality, the habitual intention more a 'metaphysical' reality; that is, if both terms are applied to the soul, the former describes the soul with its inclinations both rational and sensible, while the latter describes the soul and its powers as orientated to the end. Thus, for example, a tramp steeped in vicious habits makes an act of love of God just before lapsing into unconsciousness; his intellect and irascible and concupiscible powers are, in one way, habitually disposed to evil, and are also, so to speak, poor physical wrecks; but thanks to the good actual intention of his will before he lost consciousness, his powers are habitually referred or orientated, to their proper end.
It is possible now to return to St. Thomas himself for an explanation of the influence of an habitual intention on the morality of an act. But before this return is made, how much can be concluded from the nature of an habitual intention, as this nature has been explained by the author of this thesis?

Because, for a man to perform moral acts, he must will them deliberately, and because a man’s habitual intention in no wise is an act, either of reason or of will, then it follows that a man should not merit according to his habitual intention, but only according to his actual intentions. The sleeper, the drunk, the mad man do not merit or lose merit for their actions in their respective states. The man who transgresses the moral law only slightly does not merit for his good habitual intention, and loses merit for his bad actual intention. In a different relation, however, the habitual intention does have moral consequences. For the habitual intention indicates the bent of the will, its present inclination, its last chosen orientation to the end of right reason. Though the sleeper and the drunk, on regaining their use of reason, could change their present disposition because of their free will, their will in its disposition now remains fixed in the direction (either for or against its proper end) last deliberately decided upon.

Will the words of St. Thomas substantiate the preceding efforts to express his understanding of habitual intention? It seems that they will. The passages in which St. Thomas mentions habitual intention or matters related are not numerous, and none of them describe it at length. But the few that can be gathered suffice to indicate St. Thomas’ conception and use of the term.

33 Both actual and virtual intentions are here designated by the one phrase.
This first text assists in understanding what St. Thomas meant by the word habitual. "Omnis autem intellectus in habitu per aliquas species intelligit: nam habitus vel est habilitatio quaedam intellectus ad recipiendum species intelligibles quibus actu fiat intelligens; vel est ordinata aggregatio ipsarum specierum existentium in intellectu non secundum completum actum, sed medio modo inter potentiam et actum. Non est igitur in ipso [Deo] habitualis scientia. Praeterea, habitus quaedam qualitas est. Deo autem non potest nec qualitas nec aliquid accidentem accidere. . . . Quia vero dispositio qua quis est habitu tantum considerans aut volens vel agens assimilatur dispositioni dormantis, hinc est quod David . . . [removit] habitualem dispositionem a Deo." 34

Next, one finds him referring to the habitual disposition of the mind, which frequently means for him the higher faculties of the soul, both intellective and appetitive. "Habitui vero proprium est ut inclinet potentiam ad agendum quod convenit habitui inquantum facit id videri bonum quod ei convenit, malum autem quod ei repugnat. Sicut enim gustus diiudicat sapores secundum suam dispositionem, ita mens hominis diiudicat de aliquo faciendo secundum suam habitualem dispositionem: unde et Philosophus dicit, in III Ethic. quod 'qualis unusquisque est, talis finis videtur ei'." 35 Another time he describes the effect of a habit of virtue: "[H]abitus virtutis inclinat hominem ad recte agendum, secundum quod per ipsam homo habet rectam aestimationen de fine; quia, ut dicitur in III Ethic., qualis unusquisque est, talis et finis videtur ei. Sicut enim gustus iudicat de sapore, secundum quod est affectus aliqua bona vel mala dispositione,

34 C.G., I, 56.
35 S.T., II-II, 24, 11 c.
It was said that habitual intention seems to stand chiefly, though not exclusively, for an habitual disposition of the will as seen in regard to the proper end of man. The preceding two texts carry some hint of what St. Thomas' mind will be in that regard, for in both he has connected the notion of habitual disposition with the notion of end. He has not spoken yet of the habitual intention, but when he does it will necessarily be in terms of an end.

The next passage demonstrates that habitual disposition sometimes could be replaced directly by habitual intention, and points out that the habitual intention or disposition is the result of the last choice. "[F]er baptismum etiam adulti gratiam suscipere possunt in dormiendo; quia quamvis non ad sit acutalis dispositio ex actuali motu voluntatis, adest tamen habitualis dispositio ex motu liberis arbitrii praeecedente." 37

A great number of St. Thomas' references to an habitual intention occur in connection with his explanation of the meaning of the words, "Thou shalt love the lord they God with thy whole heart." Inevitably St. Thomas will distinguish the various ways in which a person can love God:

Ex parte vero diligentis caritas dicitur perfecta quando aliquis secundum totum suum posse diligit. Quod quidem contingit tripliciter. Uno modo, sic quod totum cor hominis actualiter semper feratur in Deum. Et haec est perfectio caritatis patriae; quae non est possibilis in hac vita, in qua impossibile est, propter humanae vitae infirmitates, semper actu cogitare de Deo et moveri dilectione ad ipsum. Alio modo, ut homo studium

36 De Carit., 12 c.
37 In IV Sent., 17, 1, 3, 2, ad 3.
sum deputet ad vacandum Deo et rebus divinis, praeitermissis aliiis nisi quantum necessitas praeconsensae vitae requirit. Et ista est perfectio caritatis quae est possibilis in via: non tamen est communis omnibus caritatem habentibus. Tertio modo, ista quod habitualiter aliquis totum cor suum ponat in Deo: ita scilicet quod nihil cogitetur vel velit quod sit divinae dilectioni contrarium. Et haec perfectio est communis omnibus caritatem habentibus.38

In another place he makes only a twofold distinction: "Terto quidem modo, in actu, idest ut totum cor hominis semper actualiter in Deum feratur. Et ista est perfectio patriae. Alio modo, ut habitualiter totum cor hominis in Deum feratur: ita scilicet quod nihil contra Dei dilectionem cor hominis recipiat."39 An often used phrase is the statement that "quod enim amatur in pecunia veniali, propter Deum amatur habitu, et si non actu."40 In these statements, particularly the third, where more express mention than in the previous texts is made of an habitual reference, or direction, or intention ("propter Deum") of one's love, St. Thomas is plainly thinking of an habitual intention which is an habitual disposition of the will with regard to God, the last end of man.

The idea of habituality occurs in other contexts also. "[F]omiter dicitur dupliciter: scilicet secundum actum, et secundum habitum. Actu quidem impossibile est quod homo continue poenitentiae: quia necessae est quod actus poenitentialis, sive interior sive exterior, interpoleatur, ad minus sumo et aliis quae ad necessitatem corporis pertinent. Alio modo dicitur poenitente secundum habitum. Et sic oportet quod homo continue poenitentiae: et quantum ad hoc quod homo nunquama aliquum contrarium faciat poenitentiae, per quod habitualis dispositio
poenitentis tollatur; et quantum ad hoc quod debet in proposito gerere quod sem-per sibi peccata praeterita displiceant. ¹¹ Denying the necessity of actual penitence for the remission of venial sins, St. Thomas adds: "Non tamen sufficit habitualis displicentia, quae habetur per habitum caritatis vel poenitentiae virtutis: quia... Unde sequitur quod requiratur quaedam virtualis displicentia." ¹² In both of these contexts the acts described are not intentions of the will; however, these acts are products of the intention and signs of it. The passages, therefore, help illustrate St. Thomas' understanding of habituality.

Concerning the influence exercised by the habitual intention on moral acts, St. Thomas is explicit. "[I]n pueris non potest esse contraria voluntas neque actu neque habitu. Et ideo non requiritur voluntas vel intentio in eis, qua prohibens removeatur. In amantibus autem et dormientibus potest esse voluntas contraria habitualis, quamvis non sit actualis. Et ideo si ante comum vel furias fuerunt contrarias voluntatis, non recipiunt sacramentum, quia adhuc illa voluntas habitualiter manet." ¹³ Again, "[N]on sufficit omnino habitualis ordinatio actus in Deum: quia ex hoc quod est in habitu, nullus meretur, sed ex hoc quod actu operatur. Nec tamen oportet quod intentio actualis ordinans in finem ultimum sit semper conjuncta cuilibet actioni quae dicitur in aliquam finem proximum; sed sufficit quod aliquando actualiter omnes illi fines in finem ultimum referantur." ¹⁴ Though this position may seem on first glance to contradict what

¹¹Ibid., III, 84, 9 c.
¹²Ibid., 87, 1 c.
¹³In IV Sent., 6, 1, 2, 3, ad 2. Cf. also DeVer., 24, 12 c.
¹⁴In II Sent., 40, 1, 5, ad 6.
he has said about the habitual love of God being enough for a man, the opposition disappears when it is noted that St. Thomas was saying that the habitual love of God is enough to keep a man from sinning; it does not, however, merit for him.

The final text justifies the stand that the habitual intention of the will, marking the most recent deliberate choice of the will, determines the man's moral state. Here St. Thomas points out the fact that in a certain sense men merit by habits also, for habits are the principles of acts; with this basis he can go on to assert, as in In IV Sent., 6, 2, 1, 2, 3, ad 2 (quoted just above) and 17, 1, 3, 2, ad 3, that a man's will has moral influence even when he is asleep or insane. "[N]onemur et habitibus et actibus; sed actibus quasi instrumentis merendi, quia merita essentia[li]ter sunt actus; sed habitibus quasi principiis meritorum, et sic virtutibus mereri dicimus." 45

This chapter began with some real problems. To all appearances the habitual intention was far removed from being a habit at all, and even farther from being a habit of the will. Nevertheless, according to the mind of St. Thomas as expressed in the few explicit references to the habitual intention, by habitual intention is not meant that vestige representing the actual intention which is preserved in the possible intellect. It must somehow be a habit or disposition of the will.

At this stage of the investigation the author suggested a solution in terms of a disposition of the will which was the resultant of the habits of the intellect and the sense appetites and the will itself. This explanation seemed to

45 In III Sent., 23, 1, 3, 3, ad 1.
accord fully with the mind of St. Thomas as far as can be determined by his
treatment of the moral virtues, the habits of the will, and, finally, the habit­
ual disposition of the will. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the
moral influence of the habitual intention. Consistently with its nature, it
was shown to have no influence whatever upon the goodness or malice of an act,
though the habitual intention of the last end represents the will's own disposi­
tion with regard to the proper end of human action.
CHAPTER III

VIRTUAL INTENTION: ITS NATURE

This third chapter is to deal primarily with the nature of virtual intention. Preceding, however, will be a brief presentation of the notion of virtual, together with the varying manners in which St. Thomas used it in connection with the act of intention.

Several different phrasings of the notion of virtual intention recur frequently. One of the most popular with St. Thomas is "to refer virtually", as in: "[O] uod omnia virtute referantur in Deum, hoc pertinet ad perfectionem caritatis ad quam omnes tenentur";\(^1\) "Aliud est habitualiter referre in Deum, et aliud virtualiter."\(^2\) "To intend virtually" occurs in the same passage: "[N] e dicus, dum colligit herbam actu, intendit conficere potionem, nihil fortassis de sanitate cogitans, virtualiter tamen intundit sanitatem, propter quam potionem dat."\(^3\) Very popular with St. Thomas, too, is his explanation of the virtual intention in terms of "the force (or virtue) of the first intention", as in: "[N] on oportet ut semper aliquis cogitet de ultimo fine, quandocumque aliquid appetit vel operatur: sed virtus primae intentionis, quae est respectu ultimo finis, manet in quolibet appetitu cuiuscumque rei, etiam si de ultimo fine actu

\(^1\)De Carit., 11, ad 2.

\(^2\)Ibid., ad 3.

\(^3\)Ibid., ad 2.
non cogitetur. Sicut non oportet quod qui vadit per viam, in quolibet passu
cogitetur de fine, \textsuperscript{4} \textit{Manet autem [attentio in oratione] secundum virtutem . . .
nisi tanta fiat evagatio, quod omnino depereat vis primae intentionis,\textsuperscript{5} and
(where St. Thomas is speaking of virtual intention and baptism), \textit{Unde, si postea in ipso exercitio actus cogitatio eius ad alia rapiatur, ex virtute primae intentionis perficitur sacramentum.}\textsuperscript{6}

Let it be noticed that the phrase \textit{to make a virtual intention} does not occur. To \textit{intend virtually} most nearly approaches its equivalent, or perhaps to \textit{refer virtually}. But, strictly speaking, one does not \textit{make a virtual intention}, as one might correctly be said to make an actual intention. One \textit{acts with a virtual intention}, or one \textit{has a virtual intention in his action}.\textsuperscript{7}

Those who are familiar with the vocabulary of St. Thomas might well wonder whether or not he here uses \textit{virtual} no differently from his use of it in such phrases as: \textit{each thing exists virtually in its principle},\textsuperscript{8} \textit{both matter and form preexist virtually in God, as in the primordial cause of both},\textsuperscript{9} and \textit{when the form of an effect is virtually in its cause, it is like its active cause as regards all that over which the power of that cause extends}.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{4}S.T., I-II, 1, 6 ad 3.
\textsuperscript{5}In IV Sent., 15, 4, 2, 4 sol.
\textsuperscript{6}S.T., III, 6a, 8 ad 3.
\textsuperscript{7}Cf. \textit{ibid.} Here \textit{habitualis intentionis} is used for \textit{virtual intention}.
\textsuperscript{8}S.T., I, 93, 7 c.
\textsuperscript{9}Ibid., 117, 3 c.
\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 105, 1 c.
St. Thomas' own explanation is found best in the Commentary on the Sentences. He is answering two difficulties about prayer: the first contends that apparently a man is to pray without ceasing; the second argues that actual attention seems a necessity in prayer. His reply to the first begins by stating two ways in which any act is said to endure: "aut secundum essentiam; aut secundum virtutem, sive effectum suum: sicut motio ejus qui lapidem projicit, durat per essentiam actus cum manum lapidi movendo apponit; sed virtus motionis manet dum lapis ex vi impulsionis priuam movetur."\(^1\) Then he applies the principle to the problem of prayer, which is of interest here because it exemplifies how the principle will be applied to other situations also. "Similiter etiam dico quod orationis duratio potest dupliciter considerari. Vel secundum essentiam actus. Et sic non debet aliquis continue orare vel semper, quia oportet etiam interdum circa alia occupari. Vel secundum virtutem. Et sic ejus virtus praeceps quantum ad sui initium manet in omnibus operibus alius quae facimus ordinate, quia omnia ad vi- tum aeternam habendam ordinare debus. Et ideo desiderium vitae aeternae quod est orationis principium, manet in omnibus operibus bonis secundum virtutem. Et propter hoc dicitur in Glossa I Thess.: 'Non cessat orare qui non cessat bene agere.'\(^2\)

To reply to the second difficulty St. Thomas returns to the distinction he has made, and now introduces a third element to complete the picture, namely, existing in habit. "Sicut enim dictum est, aliquis actus manet per essentiam et virtutem quandoque; sed quandoque transit actu et manet virtute, sicut in exem-

\(^1\) In IV Sent., 15, 4, 2, 3 sol.
\(^2\) Ibid.
plo de projectione lapidis patuit. Et sic manere actum in virtute est quidam medium modus inter ipsum esse in habitu et in actu; quia quod in habitu est, neque virtute neque per essential actus est. Secundum hoc ergo dico quod attentio in oratione manere debet semper secundum virtutem, sed non requiritur quod semper maneat per essential actus.\textsuperscript{13}

Immediately he proceeds to the objections, and his third and fourth responses give further clarification of his understanding of this virtuality. "Ad tertium dicendum quod ascendit intellectus in Deum, quando orationem ad Deum ordinavit, et virtus illius ascensus in tota oratione manet. Ad quartum dicendum quod in oribus virtutis non oportet quod semper actualis electio adsit, sicut non oportet quod ille qui eleemosynam dat, semper de eleemosyna cogitet; sed sufficit semel cogitasse, dum eleemosynam dare disposit; nisi contraria cogitatione praecedens intitio interrupatur."\textsuperscript{14}

Therefore, how does St. Thomas understand a virtual intention? He sees it as the continued existence of the actual intention in its effect. The actual intention is not present itself, but its influence and causation remains. The intitio is virtualis because the actual intention is leaving its impress on the

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., 4 sol. In the same book of the Commentary, 16, 2, 2, 2 sol., St. Thomas uses the triple division for the act of contrition; but there the application differs slightly, and the middle (virtute) seems an example of an interpretative intention: "[C]ontritio potest accipi tripliciter: vel actu, vel habitu, vel medio modo. Habitu quidem contritio existens non sufficit ad peccati venalis dimissionem . . . Nec iterum requiritur quod semper sit actualis contritio; quia sequeretur quod peccatum quod quis in membris vel in cognitione non habet, remitti non posset. Et ideo dicendum quod requiritur contritio medio modo, quando scilicet et si actu peccatum non displiceat explicite, displicet tamen implicite; quia ex virtute actus quam agit, sequeretur displicentia explicita peccati venalis, si cogitatio ad illud ferretur."

\textsuperscript{14}In IV Sent., 15, 4, 2, 4, ad 3 and ad 4.
action at hand. A virtual intention then (if the term may be used, for St. Thomas seems to have avoided the term) designates the causative influence of the actual intention. To say, "All one needs is a virtual intention," is to mean that "All one needs is for the force, or influence, of the actual intention to remain." Thus, "virtually to refer something to God" (e.g., an act of almsgiving) signifies that, though one does not now have an actual intention of God as the end, still one's choice, deliberation, use, and other acts of the will and of the intellect are truly being referred to God because of the influence of the actual intention. In an habitual reference of an act of almsgiving to God, on the other hand, the giving of alms is in no wise being referred to God. Better to say that the will once had referred the act to God, but now the will is only disposed in a certain way toward directing the act of almsgiving to God.

It would be quite possible, but also quite incorrect, to understand virtually as approaching very nearly in meaning to potentialis; in this case the intention would be virtually because it does not actually exist but is near to existence because of the existence of its cause (s). It is this second meaning which is found in the phrases quoted near the beginning of this chapter, all of which describe an effect as virtually existing in its principle. Before this chapter is ended, however, it will be clear that St. Thomas, when using virtually in connection with the intention, understands it according to the first meaning explained; that is, as the continued existence of the actual intention in its causation. The second meaning grounds what is called the interpretative intention, a type which St. Thomas did not consider, but which will shortly come up for discussion again in this and in the following chapter.

Great care must be used in interpreting any passage in which St. Thomas
employs these three terms of actually, virtually, and habitually. First of all, his contemporaries, Cajetan tells us, were using habitual when we would now say virtual, and St. Thomas sometimes accommodated himself to the current usage. Secondly, the term actual often signifies both actual and virtual. Thus St. Thomas affirms the impossibility of a man's continual actual repentance because sleep must interrupt. Again, he states that the precept "Do everything for the glory of God" can mean that an "actuallis relatio in Deum sit conjuncta actioni nostrae cuilibet, non quidem in actu, sed in virtute, secundum quod virtus primae ordinationis manet in omnibus actionibus sequentibus, sicut et virtus finis ultimi manet in omnibus finibus ad ipsum ordinatis." Thirdly, as already pointed out, the notion of virtuality can itself evoke confusion. Thus, any actual intention can "virtually" embrace under its willed object something which the mind has not attended to in its deliberation, but which is truly connected with that object. The mind could then have an interpretative intention of that object. But when the mind has attended to an end and the means to the end, then forgets the end and goes about the execution of the means, then that latter action is being executed with a "virtual" intention. Although the difference between the two meanings may not yet clearly be seen, as long as it is remembered that when "virtual" is used by St. Thomas to describe a type of intention it does not mean exactly the same as when used in other connections, confusion will be avoided regarding this particular word.

15 Opera Omnia, ed. Leonina, with Cajetan's commentary (Rome, 1888-1906), III, 53.
16 ibid., IX, 380; VI, 73: "[S]emper appetens quod est ad finem, appetit finem non habitualiter, sed actualiter, ut extendit se ad actualliter et virtualiter."
17 S. T., III, 64, 9 a.
18 In XI Sent., 40, 1, 5, ad 7.
Having noticed some aspects of the notion and a few of its usages, the next step is to examine more thoroughly the nature of virtual intention. Some conclusions could be drawn from the citations already made. But another text or two given in full at this point will assemble all the elements and occasion a subsequent analysis of all the factors in this type of intention. The texts will refer to theological subjects. Though matters of theology have no place in a philosophical study, yet their frequent intrusion cannot be entirely eliminated when one is trying to ferret out the philosophy of St. Thomas concealed in his theology. All one can do is make the necessary mental adaptations from the questions and the examples being reviewed by the Angelic Doctor.

In this first passage, the topic under discussion is that familiar theme of loving God. An objection has been raised to the effect that all our acts must be referred actually to God, and not merely habitually. St. Thomas answers:

[Sic] in causis efficientibus virtus praeae causa secundae in omnibus causis sequentibus, ita etiam intentio principalis finis virtute manet in omnibus finibus secundariis; unde quicumque actu intendit aliquem finem secundarium, virtute intendit finem principalem; sicut medicus, cum colletur herbas actu, intendit conficere potiocem, nihil fortasse de sanitate cogitans, virtualiter tamen intendit sanitatem, propter qualitatem dat. Sic igitur, cum aliquis se ipsum ordinet in Deum, sicut in finem, in omnibus quae propter se ipsum facit manet virtute intentio ultimae finis, qui Deus est: unde in omnibus mereri potest, si caritatem habeat . . . .

Ad tertium dicendum, quod alius est virtualiter referre in Deum, et alius virtualiter. Habitualiter enim referre in Deum et qui nihil agit, nec aliquid actualiter intendit, ut dormiens; sed virtualiter aliquid referre in Deum, est agentis propter finem ordinantis in Deum. Unde habitualiter referre in Deum, non cadit sub praeeptio; sed virtualiter referre omnia in Deum, cadit sub praeeptio caritatis: cum hoc nihil alius sit quam habere Deum ultimum finem. 19

The second text, also already seen in part, occurs in an explanation of the intention which a minister needs for the validity of a sacrament. It comes as

19 De Carit., 11, ad 2 and ad 3.
a reply to the objection that intention bears only on what is attended to, and lack of attention to one's words or acts is a common phenomenon (the implication being that consequently the number of valid sacraments would be small indeed). The reply: "[L]icet ille qui alius cogitat, non habeat actualem intentionem, habet tamen habitualem, quae sufficit ad perfectionem sacramenti: puta si, cum sacerdos ascendit ad baptisandum, intendit facere circa baptisandum quod facit Ecclesia. Unde, si postea in ipso exercitio actus cogitatio eius ad alia rapiatur, ex virtute primae intentionis perficitur sacramentum. Quamvis studiosse curare debeat sacramenti minister ut etiam actualem intentionem adhibeat. Sed hoc non totaliter est positum in hominis potestate: quia praefer intentionem, cum homo vult multum intender, incipit alia cogitare."20

Acting with a virtual intention involves, therefore, three psychological activities especially: an ordering of reason, a shifting of attention, and a certain continuation of the motion of the will. Each of these demands closer inspection.

Reason orders. It sees a number of means as being connected with, directed to, the end. It so arranges the means and the end for the will that the latter moves to the end if it moves to any of those means. Now, this ordering of means and end must precede the actual intention. But this ordering also grounds the possibility of a subsequent virtual intention, because if the will does not move to desire the means because of the relation of the means to the intended end, then the action of the will in no way follows "in virtue of" the "first" or actual intention. For once this move has been made, and the will proceeds to be

20S.T., III, 64, 8 ad 3.
busy about the means, the will no longer is desiring what is known to be related to the end, but desires what is, in fact, related to the end. This is what is signified by St. Thomas’ example of the doctor’s virtual intention, and by the words, "virtualiter aliquid referre in Deum, est agentis propter finem ordinantis in Deum," as these words are to be understood in the light of the first portion of that citation.

It is of the utmost importance to notice carefully the difference between saying, "the will desires what is known to be related to the end," and, "the will desires what is, in fact, related to the end." In the former instance, the soul is desiring what it at the same time sees with its intellect is referred to an end; in the second, the soul is desiring something (the brewing of a medicinal drink for example) which has de facto been ordered by the soul to the procurement of health, but neither that particular order to the end nor the end itself is at the time being seen by the intellect.

In the former instance, furthermore, the object being desired is also being ordered psychologically to the end; in the second, the object being desired is no longer psychologically (by the attention of the intellect) ordered to the end, but is somehow possessed of a new reality by reason of the previous ordination. During the psychological ordering the intellect supplants in the intentional order the proper form of the object (the means) with the form of the end, so that when the psychological awareness of the end and of the order to the end passes and the soul busies itself with the means, this latter has a different value from what it had prior to the ordering. For the sake of convenient discrimination between the two instances, let the first be designated as a psychological order of the means to the end, and let the second be designated as an
ontological order of the means to the end. From the viewpoint of the end's function, then, the first can also be designated as a psychological information of the means by the end, and the second as an ontological information. This final point deserves further discussion.

Ontologically, the end informs the means which has been ordered to it in the order of final causality, because the end is the reason for desiring the means. St. Thomas repeats this many times and in many applications. For example: "Finis autem comparatur ad id quod ordinatur ad finem, sicut forma ad materiam," and "Ex fine autem sumitur quasi formalis ratio volendi illud quod ad finem ordinatur." Because of this relation, the will can be directed to the means because it wills in them the end. The end and the means equal one object for the will. Further, when a man intends a proximate end (which is equivalent to a means to the remote end), he intends both ends at the same time;

\[21\] S.T., I-II, 4, 4 c.

\[22\] Ibid., 19, 10 c. Cf. also the application to the saying, "First in intention, etc." 1, 1 ad 1; 1, 3 c and 4 c; 18, 7 ad 2; 25, 2 c; 84, 2 c . . .

\[23\] Ibid., 8, 2 c: "Ex vero quae sunt ad finem, non sunt bona vel volitae propter seipsum, sed ex ordine ad finem. Unde voluntas in ea non furtur, nisi quatenus furtur in finem: unde hoc ipsum quod in eis vult, est finis." Ibid., 3 c: "[C]um finis sit secundum se volitus, id autem quod est ad finem, inquantum huiusmodi, non sit volitum nisi propter finem; manifestum est quod voluntas potest ferri in finem, sine hoc quod feratur in ea quae sunt ad finem; sed in ea quae sunt ad finem, inquantum huiusmodi, non potest ferri, nisi feratur in ipsum finem."

\[24\] De Ver., 22, 14, ad 2, ad 3, and ad 4; S.T., I-II, 12, 1 ad 2: "[P]inis, inquantum est res quaedam, est aliud voluntatis objectum quam id quod est ad finem. Sed inquantum est ratio volendi id quod est ad finem, est unum et idem objectum."
"as the mixing of a medicine and the giving of health."²⁵

Now again, this informing of means by the end was seen as necessary to the actual intention. How does it differ for the virtual intention? The answer, though not as St. Thomas expresses it, is that in actual intention the ontological information of the means by the end is accompanied by the psychological information of the means by the end, whereas in virtual intention the ontological ordering obtains, but not the psychological. By the ontological information, the means are desirable by reason of the desirability of the end; now the attention can remain aware of this information, so that the will wills the end in the means, or the attention of the intellect can swerve from consideration of the end and shift to the means, considering the means now as an end in its own right to which means are being ordered, in which case the will cannot will the end first intended. The presence of the psychological awareness of the end and the desire of the end mark the actual intention, in contrast to the virtual intention's absence of such psychological direction to the end.

In the words of St. Thomas the idea is stated in this manner: "[A]d hoc quod alicujus actionis finis sit Deus vel charitas, non oportet quod agendo illam actionem alicuis de Deo vel charitate cogitet; nec iterum sufficit quod aliquid in habitu tantum Deum et charitatem habeat, quia sic etiam actum venialis peccati alicuius in Deum ordinaret, quod falsum est: sed oportet quod prius

²⁵S.T., I-II, 12, 3 c. Cf. also 1, 15, 2 c; C.C., III, 17; and George P. Klubertanz, S.J., "The Unity of Human Activity," Modern Schoolman, XXVII (January, 1950), 78-79: "In all voluntary action the end is formal. . . . Consequently everything pertaining to the end is formal in the will act. And thus the same act, when ordered to one end, is under the form of virtue; when to another, under the form of vice. . . . And the act of one vice, ordered to the end of another, receives the latter's form."
fuerit cogitatio de fine, qui est charitas vel Deus, et quod ratio actiones sequentes in hunc finem ordinaverit; ita quod rectitudo illius ordinationis in actionibus sequentibus salvetur: ut patet in exemplo quod Avicenna ponit de artifice, qui, si dum opus suum exerceret, semper de regula artis cogitaret, multum in opere impediretur; sed sicut prius excogitavit per regulas artis, ita postmodum operatur." 26 The ordering to the end is the important thing. This idea was also expressed in the words, "Sic igitur, cum aliquis seipsum ordinat in Deum, sicut in finem, in omnibus quae propter seipsum facit manet virtute intentio ultimi finis, qui Deus est." 27 It is taken for granted that the attention is not focused upon the last end, God, or else there would be no talk of a virtual intention but of an actual intention.

The attention, therefore, shifts. The mind may become attentive to the means, or to what leads to the execution of the means, or to objects completely unconnected with the means. The examples of St. Thomas on this point, and even his explicit statement of the fact, seem to justify this interpretation. For example, we have seen already that the intention abides virtually when a man who begins to pray for some worthy objective soon slips off into reverie. 28 Again, it is not necessary for "one who is walking along the road," says St. Thomas,

26 In II Sent., 38, 1, 1, ad 4.
27 S.T., III, 64, 8 ad 3.
28 In IV Sent., 15, 4, 2, 1 sol.; and 6, 1, 2, 1, ad 4: "[Q]uamvis minister sacramenti debet niti ad custodiendum cor suum quantum potest, ut maxime in verbis sacramentalis formae intentionem habeat actualem, quia tamen cogitatio est valde labilis, etiam si tunc non adsit actualis intentio quando verba proferit, dummodo prius intenderit et contraria intentio non intervenerit, sacramentum non impeditur, quia operatur tunc in vi principalis intentionis. Non enim oportet quod in opere semper intentio conjungatur in actu, sed sufficit quod opus ab intentione procedat."
"to be thinking of the end at every step." As a matter of fact, men cannot physiologically and psychologically maintain control of their attention, which has them thinking in short order along divergent lines whether they will it or no. What is more, at times a man is forced deliberately to relinquish his attention to the end of right reason and allow it a distraction for the sake of right reason. "Non enim est contrarium virtuti si rationis actus aliquando intermittatur aliquo quod secundum rationem fit: alioquin, quod aliquis se somno tradit, esset contra virtutem."

Meanwhile, when the attention of the intellect shifts from the end to the means, the intelligible species of both the end and the act of intention itself are retained in the possible intellect, where they are ready for recall at any time the person wishes. To renew his intention, he has only to evoke the image of his past action, and repeat his desire of that end.

The activity of the will continues. Its conscious object no longer is the end intended actually, but the means (under which term may also be included both the exterior and the interior acts of the person). It no longer is willing the means for the end, as in actual intention, but is willing means which are, in fact, ordered to the end. It cannot will the order explicitly; this ordering is not being attended to by the intellect, and so not being proposed by the intellect to the will.

Let it be noted, in connection with this point, that the answer to a

29 S.T., I-II, 1, 6 ad 3.
30 Cf. S.T., III, 64, 8 ad 3; In IV Sent., 6, 1, 2, 1, ad 4; Ibid., 15, 4, 2, 4, in contr.
31 S.T., II-II, 153, 2 ad 2.
problem discussed many times by St. Thomas, namely, the single motion of the will to the means and to the end, has an application to virtual intention. That is, the will continues to intend the means and the end in one and the same motion, because "Quando voluntas fertur in id quod est ad finem, prout est ad finem, id quod est ad finem non est terminus ejus; et ideo non oportet quod sint ibi duo motus." St. Thomas is speaking here expressly of an actual intention, but it can also be said of the virtual intention that, "when the will is borne to that which is for the end, insofar as it is for the end, that which is for the end is not its term." The difference in the two intentions, again, consists in the fact that the actual intention involves both a psychological and an ontological movement right up to the end, whereas the virtual intention has only the ontological movement to the end. Willing what is ordered for an end because of an original desire of that end, constitutes the ontological movement. Willing what is ordered for an end together with an explicit desire of that end, constitutes ontological and psychological movement. It will be shown very soon in the next chapter that, for St. Thomas, this ontological continuity of motion grounds the moral value of the virtual intention. Without this informing of the means by the end, so that a man's will is ontologically borne to both the one and the other, the theory of St. Thomas on the moral influence of the virtual intention is unjustifiable.

In summary, then, it has been seen that the virtual intention of an end includes several characteristic elements. Reason having ordered means and end

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32 De Ver., 22, 14; In II Sent., 38, 1, 4; S.T., I-II, 12, 4.

33 In II Sent., 38, 1, 4, ad 2.
in preparation for the actual intention, the ontological modification of the means by the end remains when the attention of the intellect has shifted from the end. The end and the act of intention, now no longer the objects of the intellect's gaze, become species in the memory. The will, faithful to its natural dependence on the intellect, busies itself with the means and with the means to these means. In doing so, however, its motion does not terminate ontologically in the means, but really embraces at the same time the end.
CHAPTER IV

VIRTUAL INTENTION: ITS INFLUENCE ON A MORAL ACT

The preceding chapter has explained the notion and the nature of virtual intention. Among the most important elements in that type of intention was found to be the matter-form relationship of the means and the end. The present chapter undertakes an explanation of the influence of the virtual intention on a man's moral acts, and will begin by showing the consequences of that same matter-form relationship. Then the study will proceed to those circumstances, already noticed, which accidentally affect the moral value of an act; namely, attention and intensity. Finally the subject of the renewal of the actual intention owing to the loss of that "force of the first intention" will be treated to indicate why and when a renewal of actual intention may be necessary.

Once again the texts of St. Thomas may be a source of difficulty. They will often speak of such things as merit, grace, charity, venial and mortal sin. The author of this thesis certainly would prefer to have nothing to do with supernatural theology; but the texts of St. Thomas have to be used. The author has tried to use only those texts which can allow of some natural equivalent of the supernatural matters contained therein. Thus, venial and mortal sin may be understood as bad moral acts which, respectively, do not destroy ordination to the last end and do destroy such order; meritoriousness in the natural order may be understood as the moral value of an act which furthers the agent's worthiness of natural beatitude; what is said of charity can be understood of natural char-
ity and may often be true of prudence. Anything said of grace, of course, cannot be reduced to a natural application, and so texts in which this reality figures heavily have been avoided. With these cautions in mind, then, the examination of virtual intention can continue.

There is a force from a first intention, St. Thomas says, which can remain in the action which follows. Now it would seem from experience that this force may perdure in one of two ways: either so that the will is continuing its action on the means with the accompanying attention of the intellect to the means and to the will's operation on the means; or so that the will continues its action on the means, without the attention of the intellect. In the latter case, it is still true that the agent acts by force of the actual intention, but his actions are carried along 'inertly' or subconsciously, or perhaps by dint of habit, in the execution of the action, rather than with the energetic motion of the former case. Thus, for example, a priest who is repeating his ceremonial prayers or performing particular ritual actions can either be paying close attention to his words and motions, or his mind can have wandered far away, leaving his habits to carry on the physical completion of his duties. In both cases the action proceeds by virtue of some original intention made by the priest before beginning the functions. But in contrast to the energetic perdurance of the force of the will in the attentive activity, the most that can be said of the inattentive type of activity is that the action itself is ordered to the end intended, the will not even being actively applied to that action, while the disposition of the will remains the same as before with regard to the end intended.

Despite such differences, the moral value of both these types of action performed by the virtue or force of an actual intention is exactly equal, of
itself, to the moral value of the same action if performed with an actual intention. *[I]n omnibus actibus meritoriis, qui ordinantur ad finem rectum, non requiritur quod intentio agentis conjungatur fini, secundum quemlibet actum; sed vis prima, quae movet intentionem, manet in toto opere . . . et haec prima vis facit totum opus meritorium, nisi interrupatur per contrariae affectionem, quae divertat a fine praedicto ad finem contrarium.¹ "Est autem tripex effectus orationis. Primus quidem communis omnibus actibus caritate informatis, quod est mereri. Et ad hunc effectum non ex necessitate requiritur quod attentio adsit orationi per totum, sed vis primae intentionis qua aliquis ad orandum accedit, reddit totum orationem meritorium: sicut in aliis meritoriis actibus accidit."²

All that St. Thomas says in these passages, it is true, is that the actions performed with a virtual intention are meritorious; he does not say that they equal the moral worth of the same actions performed with an actual intention. But, arguing from the fact that the "vis prima" is said to remain so as to have the same effect as if it were still "moving the intention" and from St. Thomas' teaching concerning the validity of certain sacraments, it seems safe to say that the action performed in virtue of an actual intention of itself equals the value of the same action under an actual intention (although accidentally, as will be seen, the latter can have more value than the former).

The reasons for this are two: one on the part of the will, and one on the part of the object willed, in this case the means. Both aspects have already been explained. The will continues its efficient motion, or at least retains

¹I ad Cor., c. 14, lect. 3 (med.).
²S.T., II-II, 83, 13 c.
its inclination to the end by not intending an opposite end. The means are still informed by the end, inasmuch as reason has subordinated the means to the end and the will has chosen the means so subordinated, with the consequence that the motion of the will to the means constitutes ontologically a single motion directed to and embracing the end also.

Now, a question arises. Since the end informs the means as a result of the operation of reason, it would seem that a man cannot act through the virtue of some actual intention unless he had, at the time of the actual intention, foreseen every one of the means he would employ for the end intended. For instance, if, before the priest begins the functions for a particular ceremony, he says to himself, "I want to perform these actions and say these prayers for this end (thanksgiving to God)," but omits to think explicitly of the preliminaries to those actions and prayers, then he does not have a virtual intention of that end when he carries out the preliminaries, for example, the washing of his hands before he steps out to the place of worship. Consequently, his washing of hands will not have moral value by the virtue of the actual intention.

In answer to this, it may be noticed that there are three possible situations to which one can apply the words acting with a virtual intention. In the first, the agent is dealing with the immediate means to the end actually intended. These are the means which must be ordered to the end in order for the actual intention to take place at all; the actual intention is of an end to which certain means are ordered. The carrying out of these immediate means to the end, therefore, when done by virtue of the actual intention, constitutes the first category, which may be called Class A, of virtual intention. Examples of this situation are the following: a man who has just made up his mind to eat
starts making a sandwich for himself; a boy who has decided to pass a test by cheating begins to write out a tiny crib-note; a man starting to pray for a certain favor (indeliberately) begins to think of other things, though he continues speaking the words of the prayer.

The second situation occurs when a retrogressive series of means to means takes place, so that the immediate means to the end actually intended becomes itself the end of certain means, which in turn require certain media for their attainment, and so on. Thus, a person desires to glorify God (the end) by working for people (the means). Having concretized the means by deciding upon a career in medicine, the person then decides for that end (being a doctor) to go to school (the means). In school, his studies become the end of his daily schedule, so that eating, social life, sleep, work, etc., are all ordered as means to the end that is study. Now, although in each successive step this aspirant to the medical profession actually orders the means to the next proximate end, he does not have an actual intention of the original end, but is acting with a virtual intention of the original end. Hence, in this Class B of virtual intentions, many units belonging to Class A appear, but each unit not directly related to the first end in the series constitutes an instance of a Class B virtual intention of the first end.

Thirdly, acting with a virtual intention describes the situation in which one makes some choice which, true enough, has been made for some particular, proximate end, but which, logically, could also be referred to some further, more ultimate end. For example, if a person chooses some action which accords with right reason (say, eating temperately to control his appetite), then he may be said to be virtually intending his proximate end, which is his human perfec-
tion and his last end simply, which is glorifying God. Conversely, were he to contradict the dictates of reason deliberately, he would virtually be intending to renounce his own perfection and the praise of God. This type of virtual intention, which may be called Class C, differs from Class B in that the latter proceeds from a previously placed actual intention of an ultimate end, and the series of means-end relations retrogresses from that end by an interlinking chain. In Class C, the activity said to be done with a virtual intention does not proceed from an actual intention of a higher end, but logically leads to such an intention. Suarez, in one work, discusses this type of intention along with the actual, virtual, and habitual, and calls it the interpretative.\(^3\)

One must notice that the word *virtual* is not used in the same sense in this third class as in the first two. In those it meant "by force of"; here it means "potentially", just as elements are said to be virtually in the compounds and an act is said to be virtually in the habits and powers.

Also, it is good to notice that the distinction made previously between a virtual intention in which the attention focuses on the means, and one in which the attention wanders completely off the matter at hand, can fit any of the three classes A, B, or C. For in any action which proceeds from a virtual intention, the mind can attend or not attend, without thereby changing the nature of the action.

Dividing the three classes of virtual intention, then, with Class A and Class B representing one distinct group and Class C another, it can be seen that the moral value of action in one group is not determined the same way as in the

\(^3\) *De Ultimo Fine*, II, 4.
Regarding Class A there is no difficulty. Performing the means with the virtual intention of the end has the same moral value as if the end were being actually intended during the operation.\(^5\) In regard to Class B the answer is the same. Each succeeding choice and intention really springs from and is directed to the exactly same end that was originally intended. It is not necessary for the agent to consider at the time of the actual intention all of the links in the chain of succeeding intentions. From his desire of this end, he wants these means. Wanting these, he directs his operations to the means of attaining them. And so on. True enough, at any time he can recall if he so wishes the first end he intended and all the subsequent steps, but this recall immediately links the means at hand with the original end in an actual intention, not a virtual intention. In the words of St. Thomas concerning this second category of virtual intention: "\(\text{[O]}\)nnis finis a ratione deliberativa intentus, pertinet ad bonum alicuius virtutis, vel ad malum alicuius vitii. Nam hoc ipsum quod aliquid agit ordinate ad sustentationem vel quietem sui corporis, ad bonum virtutis ordinatur in eo qui corpus sum ordinat ad bonum virtutis. Et idem patet in aliis."\(^6\)

"Sic igitur, cum aliquid seipsum ordinat in Deum, sicut in finem, in omnibus quae propter seipsum facit manet virtute intentio ultimi finis, qui Deus est: unde in omnibus mereri potest, si caritatem habeat."\(^7\)

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4 By moral value is meant here not only the species of good or bad, but more especially the degree or grade, if this way of conceiving might be allowed, of goodness or malice.

5 Cf. In IV Sent., 6, 1, 2, 1, ad 4; 15, 4, 2, 3 sol., and 4, ad 4.

6 S.T., I-II, 18, 9 ad 3.

7 De Carit., 11, ad 2.
About Class C, St. Thomas has nothing to say, unless one desires to call the habitual intention a sort of interpretative intention. Perhaps the reason is that the interpretative intention of an end does not have moral significance upon human action. The fact that, logically, a man is intending a certain more ultimate end by intending this or that very proximate end does not insure the fact that he would intend that ultimate end if he became aware of it. If his will remained fixed, then of course that conclusion follows. But men are often "changing their minds" when they see the logical consequences of their choices and intentions. Therefore the only morality that enters into a consideration of Class C virtual intention pertains to it as an act of intention of a proximate end, taken either as an actual intention in its own right, or as an instance of Class A virtual intention. That is, if that intention be in conformity with the dictates of right reason, the intention is good; if against right reason, the intention is bad. Therefore this class of action is judged as units in themselves, and not according to some higher intention which might have been elicited.

Conformity to right reason constitutes the norm of all human action. It specifies as good or bad every voluntary action, whether external or internal, whether of the intellect or of the will, whether choice, counsel, or intention.

Although the habitual intention indicates what a man has done last with regard to the end, not what he will do or might do.

De Malo, 2, 2, ad 9: "[N]on punitur aliquis a Deo pro eo quod facturus esset, sed pro eo quod facit."

S.T., I-II, 18, 5 c and 6 c; II-II, 23, 6 c; 47, 7 c; 157, 2 c.

Cf. S.T., I-II, 18, 9 c; 19, 1 ad 3.
Nevertheless, it is connected intimately with the act of intention, first of all because no agent acts except for some end, secondly because any action must be either directed or not directed to a due end. Hence, if the intention which must precede every action and which qualifies every action conforms to right reason, the action is good; if against right reason, the action is evil.

In another respect also the dictates of right reason come to bear upon intention. Since men naturally know that they are to act in accord with right reason, and in human action they will be aware of whether or not their action is conforming to right reason, a person will know when his present disposition toward or desire of a thing conflicts with a desire he has previously elicited. Thus, if a man has made a good intention of a certain end, and now, in dealing with the means to that end, is confronted with the opportunity to direct the means to another end which he knows is contrary to right reason, and then chooses this end, that man thereby has consciously made an intention opposed to the first one he made. Once he has done this he no longer performs actions by virtue of his first intention, but now his contrary actual intention supplies the force for all subsequent action.

The force of the original intention is broken, therefore, by an intention of a contrary end; by an intention of an end contrary to right reason if the

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12 Ibid., 16, 9 c: Necesse est autem quod vel ordinetur, vel non ordinetur ad debitum finem."

13 Good or evil, that is, so far as its moral value in the eyes of God is concerned. Cf. S.T., I-II, 19, 8 ad 1; 21, 1 c.

14 S.T., II-II, 47, 7 c.

15 This is not to say that a man needs to desire the contrary end as something bad for himself; this is a psychological impossibility: De Ver. 22, 1 ad 6.
original intention were good; by intending an end according to right reason, if it were bad. On the other hand, the force of an original good intention is merely rendered temporarily inoperative in those cases in which a man acts contrary to right reason, but without being conscious of the end. The man not having adverted to the end, his action is contrary to the good end in fact, while his will subjectively remains faithful to the end. "[q]uo enim amatur in peccato veniali, propter Deum amatur habitu, etai non actu."[18] "ILLE qui peccat venialiter, inhaeret bono temporali non ut frueas, quia non constituit in eo finem; sed ut utens, referens in Deum non actu, sed habitu."[19] In such instances the choice has no moral worth from the original good intention, for it does not fall under that intention, but stands by itself as an act of malice.

Briefly, one loses permanently the efficacy of a good actual intention by a deliberately elicited contrary intention; one temporarily loses its efficacy when performing an action which objectively opposes the good end intended but is not considered in relation to the end. "Tertio, peccatum quod est ex certa malitia, est gravius peccato quod est ex passione, quia ille qui peccat ex certa malitia, est male dispositus quantum ad ipsum finem, qui est principium in operabilibus. Et sic eius defectus est periculosis quam eius qui ex passione peccat, cuius propositum tendit in bonum finem, licet hoc propositum interrupatur ad horem propter passionem."[20]

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16 I ad Cor., 14, 3 (med.).

17 Mutatis mutandis if the original intention is a bad one.

18 S.T., IIIaII, 24, 10 ad 2.

19 S.T., I-II, 88, 1 ad 3.

20 Ibid., 78, 4 c.
The moral value of action performed with a virtual intention, it has been said, of itself equals the moral value of the same action performed with an actual intention. For what reason, then, does St. Thomas sometimes indicate a preference for an actual intention over a virtual intention? One answer lies in the subtle influence of those two factors of attention and intensity. In the first chapter both of these factors were described. There it was seen how the intensity of any operation of the soul held the attention captive, and how, on the other hand, attention might induce greater intensity. Whatever the difficulty in distinguishing between the two in a given action, it would seem upon analysis that the effect of attending to one's action is to raise the probability of (a) recalling the original end intended and thus repeating the actual intention; (b) eliciting other praiseworthy desires suggested by the means (upon which, properly, one is acting when one has a virtual intention of the end).

While the intellect is distracted there is little chance of making deliberate will acts. The effect of intensity would be to delay the gradual loss of the force of the actual intention and to fortify one's present inclination of the

21 S.T., III, 64, 6 ad 3: "Quamvis studiöse curare debeat sacramenti minister ut etiam actualem intentionem adhibeat." Also, In IV Sent., 6, 1, 2, 1 ad 4.

22 A more obvious answer is that the objects which one intends can make the act of intending more perfect. The higher the end intended, the better the actual intention. So, in virtual activity that everyone carries on day in and day out (the Class B type), people are making numerous actual intentions. But they (the actual intentions), though made by virtue of some previous actual intention of a last end, are less morally valuable than if the last end were the object of those intentions, and not some proximate ends.

23 This is of Class A and Class B virtual intention now that this is meant to be spoken.
will, thus reducing the chances for a change in one's intention. Finally, course, attention would promote intensity and vice versa.

Hence it is more desirable to perform attentively the action one is performing with a virtual intention, than to perform it distractedly. Not that the latter possesses less moral value than the former, considered as under a virtual intention. But in the former circumstance the agent is more prepared to perform other morally valuable acts, and, in particular, to repeat the act of actual intention, which, when repeated, may likely be made more intensely. Similarly, it is more desirable to have an actual intention of the end to which one is directing one's actions, than to have merely a virtual intention. Action which is actually referred to the end is preferable to the same action done with a virtual intention because in the latter case one's chances of continued, complementary, consequent, and reiterated action decreases. Likewise, in the attentive type of action with a virtual intention the chances are greater than in the distracted type; while there is the constant danger, in the distracted type, of losing the force of the virtual intention altogether.

St. Thomas warns of this danger. "Et sicut virtus motionis primum continetur, ut quandoque lapis impulsus quiescat, vel contrario modo moveatur, nisi iterum impellatur; ita, ut dicit Augustinus, 'a curis vitae desiderium quodammodo tepescit. Et ideo certis horis ad negotium orandi mentem revocamus,

24 In III Sent., 21, 2, 2, ad 1: "Intentio autem et dirigatur et excitetur et roboratur ex inspectione aliquius exemplaris, in quo finis secundum rem precedat. Unde sicut intentio nostra qua intendimus in gloriam animae, excitatur ex inspectione divinae gloriae quae est exemplar nostrae beatitudinis futurae; ita . . . ."

25 In connection with this and the next paragraph the following articles are especially pertinent: S.T., I-II, 19, 8 c; 20, 3 c; 20, 4 c.
ne desiderium quod tepescere inceperat, omnino frigescat." In the next Solution he repeats the notion that one's attention remains virtually in one's prayer, even if in the process of the prayer one becomes distracted. He continues with the caution however: "[N]isi tanta fiat evagatio, quod omnino desperat vis praeae intentionis. Et ideo oportet quod frequenter homo cor revocet ad seipsum." Therefore a man can be deprived of the moral value of some good actual intention if he can lose the force of the original intention. To prevent this situation from happening, and to remedy it if it should happen, he has to renew his actual intention.

Theoretically, renewal is unnecessary. Theoretically, that is, according to the nature of virtual intention it would seem sufficient for a person to intend once in his life a last end of his actions, and perform from then on all of his actions with a virtual intention of that end without ever having to renew that actual intention to merit by it. This hypothesis of course is self-destructive, besides presupposing a man possessed of preternatural power. For if a man were naturally capable of getting along so well as not ever to sin mortally, then there would be no logical reason why his intention would cease to be actual during his waking hours. For no passions or other factors would prevent his ordering every act consciously to God, and he could easily attend to this ordering as well, having an actual order to God in all of his actions. Thus, the very possibility of virtual intention would disappear in such an hypothesis.

Looking at man as he is, therefore, renewal of his actual intention of his

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26. In IV Sent., 15, 4, 2, 3 sqq.
27. Ibid., 4 sqq.
last end is necessary for him either to restore the subordination of his action to the last end if that subordination has been lost, or else to make that subordination more solid. Renewal is advantageous, also; for by it one restores fervor into one's actions, thus adding to their moral value.

The reasons why renewal is practically necessary are as old as man since Adam's fall. Passions, ignorance, assertion of selfish pride, the bad habits consequent upon these, etc.—they all lead a man away from action consonant with a good actually intended end. "Cum autem aliquis non utitur habitu virtutis ad moderandas passiones vel operationes proprias, necesse est quod proveniant multae passiones et operationes prae ter modum virtutis, ex inclinatione appetitus sensitivi, et aliorum quae exterius movent." 28 "Quando inferiores potentiae vehementer afficiuntur ad sua objecta, consequens est quod superiores vires impediantur et deordinentur in suis actibus. Per vitium autem luxuriae maxime appetitus inferior, scilicet concupiscibilis, vehementer intendit suo objecto, scilicet delectabili, propter vehementiam delectionatis. Et ideo consequens est quod per luxuriam maxime superiores vires deordinentur, scilicet ratio et voluntas." 29 The very external acts which men have to perform can lead them astray. "Quod autem huiusmodi bona aliquis intendat ut in pluribus quibus privationes boni secundum rationem consequuntur, ex hoc provenit quod plures vivunt secundum sensum, eo quod sensibilia sunt nobis manifesta, et magis efficaciter moventia in particularibus, in quibus est operatio." 30 As a matter of fact, in

28 S.T., I-II, 53, 3 c.
29 S.T., II-II, 153, 5 c. Cf. also I-II, 109, 8 c.
30 C.G., III, 6.
the natural order "impossibile [est] hominem semper vel dui in tanta vigilantia esse, quanta ad hoc requiritur propter multa in quibus mens hominis occupatur," where "ad hoc" refers to the avoidance of giving consent to something which will break off his ordination to his good end.

In the light of all these inimical factors, then, it is clear why a man who wants to perform morally valuable acts must renew his actual intention; both to restore his ordination to his proper end should he have fallen from that ordination; and to prevent himself from approaching too dangerously near a fall. Such renewal is beneficial for preparing a man to increase his morally valuable acts, if not through increasing the intensity of the repeated intention and the action following, at least through the fact that two acts of actual intention are better than one.

How often an intention should be renewed is never determined by St. Thomas. Once, however, he seems to indicate the answer, but in reality he has only rephrased the problem. "Et si quaeratur quando oporteat actum referre in finem ultimum, hoc nihil aliud est quam quaerere quando oportet habitum charitatis exire in actum; quia quandocumque habitus charitatis in actum exit, fit ordinatio totius hominis in finem ultimum, et per consequens omnium eorum quae in ipsum ordinantur ut bona sibi." All he is saying is that one must make an actual intention of the last end when one has to do something actually for that end.

But it would seem obvious that no definite indication of time or times can be given to the question. First of all, much depends on one's purpose. If the question is "How often should a man renew an actual intention of his last end in

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31 De Ver., 24, 12 c.
32 In II Sent., 40, 1, 5, ad 6.
order to avoid losing its force?" the general answer must come in terms of the individual's own sad past experience. If "How often to be perfect?," the general answer must again come in terms of the individual's habits, occupations, virtues, temperament. Disappointing as such a general answer may be to anyone seeking definite solutions to every problem, the fact remains that a definite solution cannot in this case be given. At any rate, it was not given by St. Thomas.

This chapter, then, dealing with the moral influence of a virtual intention upon action performed with a virtual intention, began by noting the continuance of the matter-form relationship set up in the actual intention. After an explanation of attentive and distracted virtual intention, followed by a distinction of three classes of virtual intention, it was seen that action under a true virtual intention (as opposed to interpretative intention) has the same moral value as action under an actual intention. At this point the discussion of the interpretative type of virtual intention led naturally to a brief consideration of the idea of conformity to right reason, which in turn pointed out how the influence of an original intention can cease. Next, the modifying influences of attention and intensity helped to explain the preferability of an actual intention over a virtual intention, and of an attentive action over a distracted action. Finally, the reasons which make renewal of an actual intention necessary and desirable were found in the human element, an answer which at the same time rules out a numerical answer regarding the frequency of renewal.
CHAPTER V

CONCLUDING REMARKS

A great deal of confusion can surround the terms actual intention, virtual intention, and habitual intention. The major part of the difficulty in understanding each of the three and in distinguishing one from the other stems from the usage of terms and from the complexity of human action.

Terms. Terms overlap. An actual intention can be habitual (meaning customary) and virtual intention can be habitual. The case of a hermit monk who is almost continuously making actual intentions of a certain end illustrates the first situation, and the case of a holy married man who repeats his actual intentions at only infrequent intervals illustrates the second. Then again, actual intentions are virtually in the will which has an habitual intention. Sometimes the notion of virtual intention can be extended to signify what is properly called now an interpretative intention, but which was not so named in the day of St. Thomas. On the other hand, St. Thomas sometimes let the word actual include both actual and virtual intention. Finally, the use of such phrases as habitual knowledge and habitual fortitude, and even habitual disposition, can easily mislead one into a wrong conception of the nature of habitual intention.

Partly accounting for this overlapping is the complexity of human action. Willing W for Z—an actual intention—is simple enough to describe. Willing T for W (for Z)—a virtual intention of Z—involves also an actual intention of W. Or one can perform T (for W for Z), in which case one's actual intention of W
has ceased because of distractedness, and everything is being done with a virtual intention. Daily human action, however, becomes much more complicated than this skeletal picture. Intentions follow one upon another in rapid succession. Some of the ends intended are subordinated to others, some are coordinate though eventually subordinated to an identical higher end, some are intended together in one act of the will. Attention comes and goes; intensity grows and falters. When all is taken into account, it becomes clear that it is far easier to know the nature of the three types of intention than to be able to say in a particular given instance which of the three types of intention is had.

One problem which frequently arises in regard to the subject of virtual intention concerns the moral value of certain actions which seem completely a matter of habit. The following may serve as an example: a man enters a church and automatically crosses himself and genuflects. Or, a bishop passing a crowd automatically makes the sign of the cross over them. Taking a situation outside the religious sphere, one wonders about such automatic gestures as leaving a tip, or shaking hands, or passing a greeting. Do these actions have moral value? What kind of intention does the agent have?

The first step in answering the question might well be to ask whether or not these actions are as completely unconscious as the word automatic suggests. If the reactions are no more than the stimulus and response variety, then such actions can be set alongside the "stroking of one's beard" which exemplifies for St. Thomas the acts of a man as opposed to human acts. But if the word automatic is not to be taken too strictly, then the second step naturally seems to be to determine whether the action were performed with an habitual or with a virtual intention. This, however, is to pose a false question; for the habitual
intention has already been ruled out, unless one is referring to some end not sought in the action itself. The habitual intention belongs to a man when he is not performing human acts—in other words, stimulus and response reactions are done with an habitual intention (of the last end, or a proximate end, but not of the end of the act itself; in stimulus and response activity no intention is actually made). "Habitualiter enim refert in Deum et qui nihil agit, nec aliquid actualiter intendit."¹

Rather, if those "automatic" gestures described in the statement of the problem involve some consciousness on the part of the agent and thus are more truly human action, the proper question should be whether the action is done with a virtual or an actual intention. Now, according to the definition of a human action, the agent must have some end in view.² Therefore, in those acts, at least an actual intention of some end, however proximate, must be present. It may be that a virtual intention of some more ultimate end can also be attributed to the agent. It may also be true, as already stated, that the agent has an habitual intention of some distant end; for example, if the actual intention were a minor desordination from right reason. But if the "automatic" gestures were at all consciously placed, then the agent must have had some actual intention when he began them.

Another of the major problems connected with the subject of intention has already been answered. This problem asks how often a person should renew his

¹De Carit., 11, ad 3. That is, "nec aliquid actualiter intendit [in Deum]."
²S.T., I-II, 1, 3 c: "[A]ctus dicuntur humani, inquantum procedunt a voluntate deliberata. Obiectum autem voluntatis est bonum et finis. Et ideo manifestum est quod principium humanorum actuum, inquantum sunt humani, est finis."
actual intention of the last end, the supposition being, of course, that an actual intention of the last end is better than a virtual intention of the same end and certainly better than an actual intention of all lesser ends. The answer given previously indicated that renewal of a good intention is necessary after the good intention has been destroyed by an actual intention of an end contrary to right reason, provided the person desires to perform morally worthwhile acts. If on the other hand the person desires to prevent the loss of the force of the actual intention, then he must be content, as was said, with a general norm. "Renew your actual intention of the last end often because you never can tell when you might find yourself opposing it deliberately." How often is often? How long ago is just in such phrases as: "as I just mentioned above"; "President Smith just died"; "I just read somewhere"? It is up to the individual, having understood the importance of a right intention, the way in which it is lost, and the reasons why it is lost, to determine for himself what the word often will mean in the context of his personal life.

Many other problems bother the moralist in connection with the act of intention. These, however, pertain to an aspect of the subject which did not allow of treatment in the present study, namely, the question of a good or a bad intention. In many ways the problems which arise from this question are far more delicate than the task of distinguishing the three types of intention, and perhaps this explains why the medieval philosopher-theologians were more preoccupied with those problems.\(^3\)

As for what concerns the nature of the act of intention, however, and the difference between each of the three types of intention discussed by St. Thomas, it is hoped that this study has met all the significant problems and answered them sufficiently. Or, if not, at least that it has provided the correct basic analysis from which can be drawn the solutions to more specific problems.
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B. ARTICLES


The thesis submitted by Mr. Edmund R. Skrzypczak, S.J., has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Philosophy.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Nov. 21, 1958
Date

Signature of Adviser