Meaning and Action: Relating Knowledge and Action in the Thought of St. Thomas Aquinas

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MEANING AND ACTION:
RELATING KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION
IN THE THOUGHT OF SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

BY
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Providing Some Context

My thesis can be best understood in relation to the questions and context with which I began my research. For the last ten years or so there has been renewed enthusiasm among our nations philosophers for studies in ethics. Many factors have contributed to this trend, including, of course, the complex ethical issues that arise from the availability of new medical technologies. I suspect, however, that another factor is the rash of so-called white-collar crimes and scandals--financial schemes, examples of gross managerial irresponsibility, simple greed and political intrigue--that seemed to plague the country in the late 1980's. Increasingly, we suffer as a nation from persons who, if they follow the letter of the law, do so only to further their own selfish ends, and who for the same reasons oftentimes find it convenient simply to disregard the law altogether. In some cases, the results have been devastating.¹

The second factor is of more direct concern to me than the first because it leads us more directly to the question of character and virtue. The best people can

¹A few examples that come easily to mind are the Savings and Loan debacle, the FBI raid and subsequent closure of the Department of Energy's Rocky Flats facility for the manufacture of nuclear war heads (the managers were knowingly allowing dangerous levels of plutonium to leak into the air and ground), and the financial corruption at the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
be honestly perplexed by questions of when life begins and ends, but running a Savings and Loan into bankruptcy and then taking a large bonus before selling the bank off seems to be another sort of problem. In this case, the best people know better, even if they have not had the privilege of exploring the merits and demerits of competing ethical systems. Indeed, they know better, I would venture, instinctively, without much deliberation at all. How do we come by such people and such instincts? Current thinking is that by reemphasizing ethics in our curriculums we can reverse this "trend" toward corruption. I use "trend" advisedly because I suspect that the word minimizes both the problem and the effort needed for a solution. Is the problem we are faced with one which characterizes the mood of a decade, or is it the rather the result of a long-standing cultural blind spot in our understanding of the human good? If the latter is the case, then a new emphasis on ethics must, if it is to be effective, be rooted in a better understanding of the problem of being ethical.

The term "white-collar crime" is meant to suggest crimes committed by those who enjoy positions of authority, presumably commensurate with their intellectual abilities and high levels of education. It is crime committed by those who ought to know better, and that is the rub: if they have been taught better then it seems that education in ethics may be ineffective since it does not actually shape conduct. It seems that ethics is more than a problem of knowledge, but also a problem of character. For how do we teach people that depleting a bank of its resources or poisoning the groundwater is unethical? The question is difficult only because the goods at stake seem so obvious, but if we are really teaching ethics, will not people
really know this? Will they not be able to grasp right from wrong at the most obvious levels and act accordingly?

Indeed, it is likely that intelligent people who act with disregard for their social responsibility do know right from wrong on some level, but that their knowledge is not the same as their character. It seems that we possess knowledge on "levels," meaning that what one knows may be more or less defining of who one actually is. If this is the case, then "character," whatever the term comes to mean, must be part of what we make explicit in our ethical theories. If not, our theories of ethics will not be adequate to the full landscape of ethical reality. Thus, our understanding of ethics requires that we be able to articulate what character is and why it has intrinsic value as a constituent of the human good. Even to articulate the crucial role that character has in ethics is to move a step closer to the achievement of existential knowledge, the knowledge that defines who one is and how one actually lives.

One professor who teaches business ethics raised this question of character (perhaps without being aware that he was) on the editorial page of the Chicago Tribune. He was pessimistic about the impact of his or any course in business ethics on the character of actual business practices. His point was that the values and principles that his students would inevitably live by would not be those they had learned from his course, but rather those actually operative in the business commun-
ity itself. For the most part, his students would act ethically only to the extent that the prevailing norms in their social environment were ethical. Where those prevailing values fell short of justice and fairness, so would most of his students' conduct. He admitted of one exception: those students, those "rare individuals," whose personal values extended beyond a mere concern for profits. His implication was that these students may be the few who would swim against the current when necessary and act ethically despite conventional expectations or pressures from superiors. Yet he also admitted that such rare students did not acquire their values in his class--that his class could not instill such convictions--but that such people had from time to time happened to find their way into it.

In short, this professor suggests that courses in ethics are not a significant influence on the actual practices of individuals. The real factors influencing ethical conduct are culture and personal character. Culture is the primary factor because most of us manage to live up to the expectations of our milieu and achieve the measure of character which our social reality asks of us. Sometimes, however, personal character enables one to rise above common sense expectations which define what is "realistic" and what "everybody does." How and why these people appear on the scene was beyond this teacher's ken. It just happens with nothing to explain it. This, I think, is our cultural blind spot. We would prefer to leave the

2Herbert Rotfeld, "Ethics Training or Not, Business Will Still be Business," Chicago Tribune, 29 February 1988, section 1, p 11: "To believe that ethics courses would create more ethical business men and women is to engage in naive self-deception. . . . Teaching ethics to business students cannot alter the facts of business practice." Rotfeld is an assistant professor of advertising at Pennsylvania State University.
question of character formation to the winds. This is the moral equivalent of the
difference between gathering societies whose members eat when they are lucky
enough to find wild grains and agricultural societies whose members discover that
they can cultivate and ensure their own food supply.

In our colleges and universities, we teach and discuss ideas, not character. We
are intellectually biased in a way which Aquinas, for his all intellectualism, never
dreamed of. He distinguished between intellectual and moral virtues, and argued
convincingly that the personal character and integrity which enable one to live well
come only with the achievement of the moral virtues. I think that we have lost sight
of this distinction and have tried to reduce ethics a mere problem of knowledge. Of
course, such a truncated theory of ethics depicts a truncated human being. An
excessive rationalism in philosophy assumes an excessive rationalism in human
existence, but the facts our society's growing problems with crime and corruption tell
a different story.

The reason for our culture's preference for the intellectual virtues is complex,
but, I believe, some fair portion of the blame belongs to the history of philosophy

\[^{3}\text{I am aware that it is often argued that we suffer in our culture from an anti-intellectual bias. There is, for instance, a paper making this argument by a colleague of mine at St. Mary's University: Daniel Rigney, "Three Kinds of Anti-Intellectualism: Rethinking Hofstadter," Sociological Inquiry 61 (1991), 432-451. Despite the legitimacy of this perspective, there is, nonetheless, an inordinate intellectual bias in, for instance, the idea of value-free education and research. In bracketing the question of the good, such an approach brackets the question of the character of the human beings who investigate and apply their findings. This, of course, neglects the fact that our interests, the questions we ask and fail to ask, are a function of character. Also, in our political and economic thinking we routinely think in terms of manipulating people, who, it is presumed, will always reason out of a calculus of self-interest. Thus, we approach the problem of crime by trying to create an ever higher level of deterrence, instead of reflecting on how to teach integrity and respect for one's neighbor. This approach smuggles the assumptions of an excessive rationalism into projections about how and why people behave the way they do. Since these assumptions are wrong, they exacerbate rather than solve problems.}\]
itself. Though I cannot make my case in detail by delving into a survey of the philo-
osophical enterprise, I suspect that the excessive rationalism which marks modernity
should be understood in part as a flight from the question of character, from the
question of the authentic self. If I am because I think, if we can expect that our
ideas will always have the clarity and certitude of mathematics, if rational discourse
alone can promise sure progress, then self-reflection, reflection on us who engage in
the discourse, may be avoided: no ad hominem considerations necessary. The
exchange of ideas asks little of people, while the expectation of character asks for
justice, moderation, bravery, practical wisdom, friendship, commitment, citizenship,
love. These are hard things, and if reason is enough, unnecessary things.

I tend to agree with the letter written to the Tribune. On the one hand, people derive their moral character primarily from their cultural and social milieu
which educates them, defines the institutions in which they must live and work, and
establishes what is expected of them. Yet, on the other hand, our culture avoids an
explicit articulation or agenda with regard to the question of character. I am

4Thus, Paul Tillich writes: "In Descartes the anti-Existential bias is most conspicuous. The existence
of man and his world is put into 'brackets'--as Husserl . . . has formulated it. Man becomes pure con-
sciousness, a naked epistemological subject . . . It was, therefore, quite adequate when recent philosoph-
ical Existentialism showed that behind the sum (I am) in Descartes' Cogito ergo sum lies the problem

5Still, the adage that refusing to decide is itself a decision applies here. Our avoidance of this
question creates a vacuum which gets filled in a variety of ways--e.g., lives of blind ambition, greed,
hedonism, consumerism, gang culture. Sometimes social engineers take charge in their own, "value-free"
way: the following agenda for the American character, expressed at the close of World War II, has been
quite successfully realized: "Our enormously productive economy . . . demands that we make consump-
tion our way of life, that we convert the buying and use of goods into rituals, that we seek our spiritual
satisfaction, our ego satisfaction, in consumption." Quoted in "Helping College Students Make Moral
Decisions," Conversations on Jesuit Higher Education, Fall 1992, 6-25. For the original source see Alan
concerned in this dissertation not to write an agenda for social reform, but to begin
to articulate what good character and human flourishing are. I am convinced that
if integrity and character are "rare," as the author of the letter believed, it is because
we human beings depend unavoidably on culture for the formation of our character,
while our culture is one which systematically avoids the question. Indeed, as a
culture we must avoid the question because our philosophy has abandoned the
virtues which the philosophies of classical cultures as diverse as Greece, China and
Medieval Europe found to be central to ethics.

One of the primary reasons for our abandoning this tradition lies, I will argue,
in the concern that virtues are culturally relative, that a virtue is merely a habit that
one culture happens to praise and reward. If this is true, a culture which defines the
virtues expected of its citizens thereby destroys its citizens' freedom by insisting on
arbitrary codes of conduct and definitions of the good life. The question of virtue
and character, it would seem, must be abandoned to preserve our freedom. Yet the
notion of freedom at work in this argument is negative, insisting on the absence of
cultural influence on individuals. Culture, then, is considered a constraint on
personal autonomy from which we may hope to find some means of protecting the
individual.

Consideration of the virtues, however, invites us to envision a positive
freedom, the freedom that lies in the realization of the human good, the freedom
which emerges in and through the social context, not despite it. Again, my concern
here is not to define what shape this context would take, but to establish the
rudiments and fundaments of the human good and to argue that the virtues are an integral part of the realization of this good. Thus, my central concern in this dissertation is to show that Aquinas grounds his ethics of virtue in his concern for human fulfillment. Through his analysis of the virtues we envision the character of the human good and grasp that the moral virtues constitute, in part, its realization. Indeed, we will see that the concern for the realization of the human good provides the normative context in which all ethical discourse must be situated.

There has been renewed interest of late in the virtues. Some philosophers have grasped that regardless of what people study, ethical conduct will only follow from ethical character, not from the mere knowledge of ethics. Alasdair MacIntyre and his book, After Virtue, are largely responsible for this resurgence of interest, but MacIntyre's book despite its great insight leaves the question of relativism unresolved. He tends to treat the virtues like a shopping list of qualities. Shopping lists lack internal coherence; one puts down onions, orange juice, tooth paste, justice, courage, a sense of humor, diligence—all without any concern for what one item has to do with the other. Moreover, everyone's shopping list differs from everyone else's. What reason do we have for preferring chicken to pork, a spirit of compromise to the resolve of will? Indeed, at one point MacIntyre criticizes Aristotle and Aquinas for

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6This is, of course, not a new insight, but one long neglected: In II Ethic, lect 4, n 284: "Sed scientia, parvum vel nullum habet momentum ad hoc, quod homo sit virtuous, sed totum consistit in aliis, quae quidem adveniunt homini ex frequenti operatione virtuosa, et sic immobiliter se habet." For my abbreviations in citing Aquinas's texts see the bibliography.
insisting on the internal coherence of the moral virtues.\textsuperscript{7}

In Aquinas’s view, derived largely from his reading of Aristotle, one cannot be just without being brave, cannot be brave without being practically wise, and so on. The moral virtues exist together in one’s character or not at all. As to why the Greeks and scholastics settled on justice, moderation, bravery and practical wisdom as the four cardinal virtues, MacIntyre leaves one with the impression that it is an accident of history and culture. This list can be compared with others--Benjamin Franklin’s or Jane Austen’s--but reasons for a preference are not found and questions of normative foundations are not answered. I am convinced and try to show that answers to these questions can be retrieved from Aquinas’s approach. We can find in his approach to the virtues a trans-cultural and trans-historical mandate of character--i.e., an intrinsic need for the virtues which arises from the human condition itself. To be sure, there are cultural mores and differences of practice which have no foundation beyond the contingencies of history, but I think too that there is something essential to be found through an understanding of the virtues--which St. Thomas better than most authors helps us to grab hold of--that speaks not to the needs of time and place, but to the burden of being human and the prospects for happiness and fulfillment as a human being.

Related to these considerations is the distinction given to philosophy by Aristotle between theoretical and practical knowledge. It is one thing to think

\textsuperscript{7}“Thus, I take it that if any version of moral Aristotelianism were necessarily committed to a strong thesis concerning the unity of the virtues (as not only Aquinas, but Aristotle himself were) there would be a serious defect in that position.” \textit{After Virtue}, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p 168.
philosophically about ethics and another to live ethically. To know the good is not necessarily to do the good. Aristotle brings these true observations to our attention, not, I believe, to denigrate philosophical inquiry nor to dismiss its relevance to living the good life, but to make it clear that more is necessary for the good life than the so-called intellectual virtues. It is within the context of Aquinas's analysis of the virtues that we will unpack what this more is. Moreover, we find that this tension between knowing and doing is also relevant to the problems which MacIntyre's After Virtue leaves us with. Just as the problem of a disjunction between knowing and doing is not cultural but human, so the need for the virtues is not cultural but human. Just as the problem has its solution in the interdependence of the moral virtues, so no person, regardless of his or her culture, will overcome the problem without acquiring the essential moral virtues--i.e., justice, bravery, moderation, practical wisdom. Thus, the claim that the virtues are culturally relative must meet the argument that the virtues address the human need for integrity of thought and action.

These virtues, therefore, residing together in one person, enable the person to live a meaningful existence. In a meaningful existence one pursues the good consistent with one's judgment and one judges about what to do here and now in light of his or her understanding of the human good. To live such a life requires that we discover and live out what is worthwhile. Thus, the question of human fulfillment becomes the question of being able to live meaningfully, but for either expression of
the question the virtues remain an integral part of the solution. 8

Many Thomists in the twentieth century have written about Aquinas's existen-
tialism, and that theme is pursued here too. Usually, however, these Thomists are
referring to the importance of esse, the act of existing, in his metaphysics. Thus, for
these Thomists the term existence connotes something quite different from what it
does in the context of the existential philosophies of the late 19th and 20th centur-
ies. 9 My purpose is not define what existentialism would mean for a Kierkegaard,
Sartre or Camus, but nonetheless I do want to evoke their general themes of human
freedom, responsibility for self, and their concern for how one lives rather than for
what one knows. Understanding Thomas's treatment of esse is, indeed, essential to
Thomistic metaphysics, but we are interested here in the human act, the act of a
rational and volitional being. We are interested in human freedom, one's self-
governance, and how one ought to live. Thomas teaches that essence defines or
limits existence and that existence is the fulfillment or actualization of essence. The

8 The notion of a meaningful existence will develop as we move through this chapter and the
remainder of the dissertation. Sharon Daloz Parks, however, nicely expresses in her own terms what
I try to articulate within the context of Aquinas's work. Note the universality she claims for the need
for meaning: "Because they are human beings, like you and me, these students are not able to survive
unless they can compose some sense of meaning. Human beings require a sense of pattern, order, and
significance--some intuition of the fitting, true, trustworthy, and most dependable connections between
things... To be human is to seek the meaning of the whole, to make sense of the most comprehensive
dimensions we can conceive. We seek a meaningful understanding of the whole of self, world, and
350-367. The need to find one's relationship to the whole will be explored in Chapter 4.

9 See, for instance, Jacques Maritain, Existence and the Existent, tr. by Lewis Galantiere and Gerald
B. Phelan (New York: Doubleday, 1947); Raymond Denney, 'Maritain's 'Intellectual Existentialism':
An Introduction to his Metaphysics and Epistemology" in Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and
Friend, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987),
201-233; Leo Sweeney, A Metaphysics of Authentic Existentialism (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey:
Prentice-Hall, 1965).
human essence includes autonomy, and so human existence, the actualization of the human essence, lies in a self-directed pursuit of the good. Aquinas agrees with Aristotle on the point that the study of ethics is for the sake of action, not for the sake of knowledge. Thus, I find an existentialism in Thomas's thought insofar as the primary focus of his practical philosophy is on the achievement of the conditions of character which enable a person to intend, choose, and act meaningfully.

My reading of Aquinas has developed over time. There were three key discoveries which encouraged me down the path I have taken. The first was coming across a late text (De Virtutibus, a 7, ad 2) which makes a distinction between the qualified good of the intellectual virtues and the absolute good of a good will. A person, Aquinas tells us, is good wholly and simply if she or he has a good will. The text made it clear to me that Aquinas's so-called intellectualism is easily misunderstood. He clearly grasps and thoroughly weaves into his philosophy the truth that who one is and who one becomes cannot be made a simple function of what one knows.

Human goodness is a goodness of intention, choice and action. In the context of ethics, a good will means for Aquinas to possess the moral virtues, but it means preeminently to possess the form of all virtues, caritas. What we approximate to with the moral virtues is fully perfected with Christian love. Yet despite the distinction which Aquinas draws between the moral and theological virtues, in either context the point remains that human goodness lies in the perfection of our capacity for good intention and wise choice. One who loves, intends and chooses the good is good simply; one who knows philosophy or possesses some practical skill, trade or profes-
sion is to be commended, but possesses in all of that something less than the fullness of human perfection, something less than the fullness of human existence.

The second discovery came in reading Yves Simon's very helpful book, *The Definition of Moral Virtue* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1986). His work gave me several insights which I take advantage of in my introduction to the moral virtues in Chapter 3, but the most of important of these was his way of articulating Aquinas's distinction between the intellectual and moral virtues. The intellectual virtues prepare one to theorize or produce something, but not to act. The moral virtues give one, as Simon puts it, an "existential readiness" to act. I had already carefully studied and, I thought, understood Aquinas's distinction between these kinds of virtues. It seemed to me, however, that Simon's term effectively expresses what lies at the heart of the matter and does so by using the term existence in the manner of the existentialists. Aquinas is trying to tell us in the language of 13th century scholasticism that in the transition from judgment to action, there is much of ourselves, our self-understanding, our identity and character at stake. He is trying to tell us that in acquiring the moral and theological virtues--virtues which perfect our will--we are assuming responsibility for ourselves and actually becoming liberated to be ourselves. In his prologue to the Pars Prima Secundae of the *Summa Theologiae* he writes:

> It remains for us to consider [God's] image, namely man, insofar as he is both the principle of his own actions, as possessing free judgment, and the power [moving himself to] his own actions.

*(Restat ut consideremus de eius imagine, idest de homine, secundum quod et ipse est suorum operum principium, quasi liberum arbitrium*
habens et suorum operum potestatem.)

In this comment, Aquinas envisions our human dignity, our liberty, but he is well aware that this is a dignity to be achieved through the common endeavor of individuals in community. We are viatores, wayfarers, on a journey toward the fullness of our existence when we will be united with our God and with ourselves, knowing and living our good.

The third discovery concerns my deepening understanding of practical wisdom, the virtue which gets the most attention in this dissertation (two of the five chapters are devoted to it). Practical wisdom is crucial to my argument because more than any other virtue it enables us to bridge the gap between knowing and doing. Indeed, one might say that it is the virtue of bridging the gap between knowing and doing. Aquinas writes that it is the virtue most necessary for human life (ST, I-II, q 57, a 5) and that it is the virtue of one who is self-directing (ST, II-II, q 48, a 1). As we will see in Chapter 2, the distinction between the theoretical and the practical works analogically in Aquinas's thought. That is, he applies the distinction to knowledge in general (e.g., metaphysics versus practical philosophy), to distinct orientations of life (contemplation versus action), to the sciences (astronomy versus medicine), to the virtues (intellectual versus moral), to the intellectual virtues specifically (the theoretic versus the productive arts), and to the question of self-evident or per se nota principles (intellectus in theoretical inquiry versus synderesis in practical inquiry). It becomes important, therefore, to get a clear grasp of what this distinction is and how it operates in these various contexts. What becomes clear, however, is that practical
wisdom is the prime analogue or paradigmatic case of practical reason and that the fundamental issue is to grasp how it differs from all other forms of knowledge and inquiry.

All wisdom, science and artistic or productive habits stand apart from practical wisdom because only this virtue translates wisdom into action. Most important here are the two ways in which Thomas contrasts practical wisdom with all sciences. In a word, scientific knowledge is abstract, whereas practical wisdom is always directed to the singular. Scientific knowledge is abstract, however, in two ways. The first way, explored in Chapter 4, is that scientific truths are general, universal and always in need of application to specific events or circumstances. The importance of practical wisdom, on the other hand, lies precisely in the ability it gives one for applying ethical principles and one's understanding of the human good to actual events. The second meaning of abstraction, discussed in Chapter 5, refers to the breach between what we know and who we are. Knowledge can be "remote" and of no consequence for personal existence. Practical wisdom, however, concerns us again with the existential. Practical wisdom is an existential knowledge because, unlike any other intellectual virtue, it is a knowledge of one's own good which actually informs how one lives and what one lives for.¹⁰ It is the virtue which roots us in and enables us to

¹⁰Tillich discusses existential knowledge in The Courage to Be, 124-125. He contrasts this knowledge with a "merely theoretical or detached attitude." One thinks or reasons existentially "with the whole of one's existence. This includes temporal, spatial, historical, psychological, sociological, biological conditions. And it includes the finite freedom which reacts to these conditions and changes them." Moreover, in existential knowledge the knower and the known are changed. There is a dramatic encounter of oneself with the world, not a mere disinterested apprehension of what is. We find here something of what Aquinas means by practical wisdom because the person of practical wisdom understands that one's self is a stake in what one does. In pursuing the good in action, one aims to live meaningfully.
cope with the uncertainties and concrete particularities of our lives. It is knowledge which shapes one's character, or, as St. Thomas puts it, it is the order (ordo) which reason brings to the will (In I Ethic, lect 1, n 1). Thus, he tells us that practical wisdom is the only intellectual virtue which must be included among the moral virtues. It is the only intellectual virtue which is a sine qua non for the other moral virtues, as they are a sine qua non for it.

1.2 Virtues, Ethics and the Question of Foundation

In the following four chapters I hope to make the case that the moral virtues are an essential aspect of the human good because they enable us to live a meaningful life--one which has its fulfillment in good action. Meaningful action has two aspects; it is effective in producing some good, and it is expressive of what one knows, believes and values with respect to oneself and the human good in general. If we remove consideration of this second aspect from philosophical considerations—as, for instance, utilitarian theories do—it remains nonetheless a human consideration and need. We desire to act in accord with our understanding of the human good; we aspire to action and lives of meaning. At stake here is one's identity and self-understanding. Thus, it is not enough that an action is effective in producing some consequence, it must also be an expression of self and of one's grasp of the good.

Another way to get at this point is to distinguish the what and why of human action. Two people may pay their respects at the wake of a deceased colleague, but if one attends out of a sense of loss and true admiration for the dead friend while
the other attends out of social etiquette and the usefulness of being seen at such functions, then the value and meaning of their actions are markedly distinct. Moreover, what they have done, i.e., attend the wake, reveals much less about the character of the individuals performing the action than does their distinct reasons for doing it.\textsuperscript{11} Human actions are intentional, and the good human act arises out of and effectively expresses a good intention. Thus, it expresses one's self, one's horizon of concern.

Through this analysis we can locate the importance of the moral virtues for ethics, for the moral virtues are first and foremost habits of intention, habits which determine what one is disposed toward as one's good. Secondly, moral virtues, and most especially practical wisdom, enable one to enact an intention in an effective manner, that is, in a way which is suitable and responsive to the situation at hand. Thirdly, the moral virtues enable one to act with integrity because they habituate the cooperation and integration of reason, will and affectivity. This cooperation overcomes the inner conflicts between desire, fear and reason which often lead to actions conflicting with one's horizon of concern. The good human act always meets the needs of the situation, while remaining true to one's intentions and comprehension of the human good. To achieve the virtues which enable one to act in this way is to achieve a level of integrity of self without which one cannot be at peace with oneself.

The virtues, then, are an integral part of human fulfillment and of philosophi-

\textsuperscript{11}The example comes from Tolstoy's \textit{The Death of Ivan Ilyich}, a text I use in my ethics course. Tolstoy's characters are acute observers of social mores, but lacking in any reflection on their own intentions and concerns, which are, for lack of reflection, reduced to preserving their comforts and avoiding at all costs their fears.
cal ethics. But are they foundational? Are they, that is, the normative basis for all
moral duties and goods? Kevin Staley has outlined various ways in which contempo-
rary philosophers have defined the importance of the virtues for ethics. His
primary concern is to explore the relationship between moral precepts and moral
virtues: which is foundational? Staley identifies various contemporary positions on
this question before attempting to work out Aquinas's position (which entails, Staley
tells us, attempting to work out the relationship between the virtues and natural law).

Most notable of the contemporary positions he identifies are the "reductivists"
and the "supplementalists." The reductivists, such as John Rawls and Bernard Gert,
think that some set of precepts must be foundational and that virtues are merely
dispositions to obey these rules. Virtues are habits of rule-following, and the
fundamental philosophical question is to identify the normative rules. Discussion of
the virtues is secondary since finding the correct virtues depends on finding the
correct rules. The supplementalists think that moral precepts provide a minimal
framework for moral conduct, i.e., a broad sketch of duties, and that the virtues
enable the individual to incorporate this sketch into his or her own life, given one's
temperament, values, ideals, goals, etc. The virtues allow one to decide well when
the precepts do not leave one with enough direction to resolve the question.

12 Kevin M. Staley, "Thomas Aquinas and Contemporary Ethics of Virtue," The Modern Schoolman

13 John Rawls, A Theory of Justice (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972); Bernard Gert, The

14 Staley thinks this is Edmund Pincoff's position: Quandaries and Virtues (University Press of
Staley's account of Aquinas's own position is helpful, but I think ultimately insufficient. He finds that Aquinas, like the supplementalists "does not reduce precepts to virtues, nor virtues to precepts" (297). The virtues do not merely enable one to obey rules, but give one an orientation and apprehension of the good which rules in and of themselves cannot provide. Again, like the supplementalists, Aquinas thinks the virtues are necessary in a complete account of the moral life. He goes on, however, to show that Aquinas's position cannot be reduced to the supplementalist or any other contemporary position because the contemporary understanding of the virtues themselves is inadequate, leading to an inadequate understanding of their importance in ethics (299).

Contemporary authors take virtues to be matters of temperament, formed habits determining one's likes and dislikes. Supplementalists argue that these personality traits are important factors in moral deliberations and ought to be taken into account say, for instance, in management decisions. In other words, discussion of the virtues reminds us that we must suit temperaments to context and resolve problems in a manner agreeable to temperaments. This understanding, however, misses—as Aquinas's did not—the depth and importance of the virtues for one's ethical life. Against the supplementalists, Staley points out that the virtues themselves do not have merely instrumental value, as effective ways of meeting one's duty, but are rather human goods and ends in their own right. As Staley writes, "Temperance is a virtue not only because one is at times obligated to refrain from satisfying certain desires, but also because the harmony of reason and desire is itself a good constitu-
tive of human flourishing" (300). The virtues are integral part of the human good, ensuring the dignity proper to human existence.

Staley's argument is helpful because he has done a good job of showing that in Aquinas's view the virtues have more than instrumental value. They are part of what constitutes human fulfillment, and no theory of ethics is sufficient which does not take human fulfillment into consideration. Nonetheless, I do not think that his paper resolves the "precepts versus virtues" question because he never seriously calls into question the assumption that ethics has its foundation in precepts. Indeed, he never asks the only questions that would help us to get at Aquinas's true position on the issue: what is the origin of the precepts, and what is the relationship between abstract precepts and concrete moral actions? Neglecting these essential questions, he tends to assume that Aquinas's account of the natural law is akin to the contemporary search for fundamental precepts. This is wrong, and leaves the reductivist view intact as viable understanding of the virtues.

There are two points to be made here, both of which have their full articulation and defense in the body of this dissertation. First, in Aquinas's approach to ethics the foundation lies neither in precepts nor in virtues. The foundation lies in human existence and in the fulfillment toward which human beings are naturally inclined (i.e., ontologically or existentially--according to the fundamental meaning of what it is to be human). Aquinas's natural law, as will be seen in Chapter 4, has its roots not in certain normative imperatives, but in the eradicable human desire to pursue the many aspects of the human good in a reasonable fashion. That is,
reasonable action is in itself a human good and the satisfaction of a basic human desire. Prior to all precepts, there is what it means to be fulfilled as a human being, and all moral precepts serve as conceptual constructs which articulate, more or less accurately, what the human good is. Principles of justice, for instance, outline to us how we may realize our potential for social cooperation. Social cooperation, however, is a basic human good, an end in itself. Certain principles of justice may be more basic than others, but all such principles arise out of the fundamentally communal orientation of human existence.

Thus, moral action has a twofold relationship to human fulfillment, and any satisfactory account of ethics must take both aspects into account. The moral act is both the cause and the consequent of human fulfillment. In acting we pursue our own and other's goods; we strive for human flourishing in a social context. Yet the moral act is also expressive of the persons we have become, and the further along one is in achieving the virtues, the more integrity is there in how one lives. That is, the more virtuous one is, the more one's lived existence becomes an integral expression of one's self-understanding and grasp of the human good. We act well, then, both in order to achieve and to live our humanity. Precepts and virtues, therefore, address the same need in different ways. Both direct us toward the human good, precepts by articulating duties to be obeyed, the virtues by forming our character and dispositions. What's more, the two can work in cooperation when moral precepts and civil laws guide us toward conduct which educates us in the virtues. In both cases, the root issue is conduct which forms and expresses our human potential, but
of the two the virtues stand preeminent because they are part of our integral good, not mere indicators of wherein our good lies. Still, this claim of preeminence should not obscure the key point. The foundation for ethics lies in our possibilities for fulfillment, and both virtues and precepts must be understood relative to the question of our good as persons. Neither a discourse on virtues, nor a discourse on precepts has any meaning outside of the context of concern for the human good.¹⁵

A second point to be made in reference to Staley's argument concerns the conception and application of precepts. We must always bear in mind that philosophical ethics is part of the human enterprise, not a mere observation of it. Fundamental precepts, like all duties, laws and definitions of the good, arise out of individuals' reflections on human experience. Civil laws, for instance, begin with the basic need for social cooperation, but develop in fairness and complexity only as specific problems arise which the laws as written must address. Of course, there are occasions of error and unjust decisions, but the general thrust of civil law is to be perfected through the continued adjudication of new cases. The U.S. Supreme Court with its emphasis on precedent has been fairly successful (notorious cases like Dred Scott aside) at applying the Constitution to a changing world because its Justices have generally understood that their job is to develop constitutional law only by

¹⁵For an excellent analysis of Aquinas's understanding of the relationship between law and virtue see Thomas Hibbs, "Principles and Prudence: The Aristotelianism of Thomas's Account of Moral Knowledge," The New Scholasticism 61 (1987), 271-284. Hibbs argues that "Thomas holds that rules are only intelligible in light of an overarching conception of the goals of human life or of a particular community. . . . Human law is an articulation of the fundamental goods necessary for the sustenance of communal life" (279). Moreover, the laws have an educative purpose; they are "auxiliaries" which prompt individuals toward the virtues and the refined capacity for good judgment that they provide (280-284).
applying precedent to new problems. The result is a highly nuanced and fairly just tradition of constitutional law.\textsuperscript{16} Philosophical ethics also depends on experience and the continued application of moral principles to new problems. Thus, the emergence of precepts is no more foundational than the emergence of virtues. In Aquinas’s view, this is true even of the fundamental moral principle of synderesis. He considers it a natural habit or orientation, but also argues that it only arises out of one’s encounter with the world and the need to make choices (see Chapter 4). Whether we are speaking of civil law or practical philosophy, the foundation is persons seeking good moral principles in and through their lived experiences.

The point to be grasped here is that philosophical ethics and good moral judgment are both a function of one’s experience and character. In Chapters 3, 4 and 5 we will reflect in different ways on the relationship between the moral virtues and intellectual development (e.g., philosophical education). We will see that Aquinas envisioned a mode of dependency of the intellectual virtues on the moral. In both theoretical and practical sciences (and ethics is a practical science), the state of one’s moral character is a factor determining the outcome of one’s work. For instance, if one’s moral experience is limited and one’s movement toward the virtues has been truncated, then one’s ability to reflect on the human good will also be

\textsuperscript{16}Thus, Hans-Georg Gadamer writes: "In jurisprudence this reflection [on the interpretation of texts] was mainly concerned with practical juridical questions that arose from the interpretation of legal texts and from their application in cases of conflict. Mediating the universality of the law with the concrete material of the case before the court is an integral moment of all legal art and science." \textit{Reason in the Age of Science}, tr. Frederick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1989), 95. On civil law and moral judgment see Robert Henle, S.J., "Prudence and Insight in Moral and Legal Decisions," \textit{Proceedings American Catholic Philosophical Association} 51 (1982), 26-30.
limited. Again, one’s experiences and habits of intention will be an important factor in defining one’s intellectual interests.\textsuperscript{17}

This question about the origin of precepts, as important as it is, does not yet address the question of application. Ethical precepts and moral rules are never sufficient in themselves for their successful application. The moral agent must always mediate between abstract principles and concrete circumstances. Moral action is not an abstraction, but a singular event dependent on the context in which it occurs for its meaning and value. Thus, what one ought to do cannot be reduced to the simple adherence to rules, and the virtues cannot be reduced to the simple disposition to obey rules. To the contrary, the moral virtues have an epistemic function. They prepare one to discern what the good act is. The person of good moral character is not only better disposed toward doing the good, he or she is also better disposed toward discovering the good to be done.

This cognitive aspect is clearly part of Aquinas’s understanding of the virtues and of vital importance because it flies in the face of the naive assumption that morality can be reduced to rule-following. Application, in other words, is not what happens after one discovers the good, but is rather the extension of that effort to the problem at hand. Human conduct is inventive inasmuch as the good to be done

\textsuperscript{17}Hans-Georg Gadamer seems to me one of our contemporary philosophers most acutely aware of the interaction between theory and practice, including the influence of one’s practical orientation, i.e., one’s intentional habits, on one’s theoretical work. In one of his many observations on this theme he writes: "For one to dedicate one's life to theoretic interests presupposes the virtue of phronesis. This in no way restricts the primacy of theory or of an interest in the pure desire to know. The idea of theory is and remains the exclusion of every interest in utility. . . . On the other hand, the primacy of 'practice' is undeniable. Aristotle was insightful enough to acknowledge the reciprocity between theory and practice." \textit{Reason in the Age of Science}, 111.
stands in need of discovery. Thus, as Gadamer points out, deliberation and decision are unavoidable tasks which no ethical science can spare us (Reason in the Age of Science, 92). Ethical problems rarely begin as questions of whether to act or not; they begin as questions about what can be done. One’s answer will be inventive, and the person of good character is the person whose habits of intention, storehouse of experiences and developed cooperation of faculties best suits him or her to discovering an effective and meaningful course.

The attempt to reduce the virtues to precepts rests on rationalist assumptions about the nature of human reason. The debate assumes that moral reasoning can be segregated from one’s character and habits of intention. It assumes that the philosophical enterprise goes forward separately from human existence; that what one ought to do can be fully determined in the abstract prior to encountering the context and problems that must be addressed; that addressing this context successfully will be a simple matter of deduction in which one merely follows the a priori precepts; and finally that the judgment which resolves what is actually to be done has no relationship to who one is and what one intends and feels. Aquinas, on the other hand, develops his practical philosophy through a discussion of the virtues because he sees through all of these assumptions, because he sees that the one who will judge and act well will be the person of good character. He sees finally that to judge and act well is to live meaningfully in fulfillment of our human potential.

1.3 The Argument in Outline
My argument, as I have articulated it here, develops in the following four chapters through a careful study of Aquinas's writings. The general development of thought begins with the problem and moves toward an understanding of how the moral virtues and practical wisdom, especially, provide the solution. The problem is the disjunction between knowledge and action, and the solution lies in acquiring the capacity for meaningful action, as I have already attempted to define that idea.

In Chapter 2 we begin by examining how Aquinas defines theoretical and practical inquiry. These modes of reasoning have distinct ends and purposes, true knowledge and good action, and therefore seem at first to be quite unrelated. One of our overall concerns in the dissertation is to discern the nature of their relationship, but the status of practical philosophy or ethics is of more immediate concern in Chapter 2. The study of ethics does not fit easily into either one of these categories, and we must first define and contrast the essential characteristics of both modes of inquiry before trying to situate ethics within that context.

Other problems arise, most notably problems of interpreting Aristotle because his statements on this issue in the Nicomachean Ethics are not obviously congruent with his statements in the De Anima and the Metaphysics. Nonetheless, they are compatible, and in discerning that compatibility, with the help of Aquinas's commentary, we come away with a clearer grasp of the essential distinction itself. Yet in order to fully clarify how theoretical and practical inquiry differ, we must also trace out the full implications of the distinction. Aquinas argues that theoretical inquiry heads towards a knowledge of the necessary and universal, and is completed in a
judgment congruent with the actual intelligibility of the object being considered. Practical inquiry, on the other hand, aims toward an understanding of the contingent and singular, and is completed in an action congruent with one's intention. The action produces a state of affairs which must be evaluated in terms of the practical idea that informed the action in the first place.

This analysis prepares us for a consideration of practical sciences. There is no problem in labeling a science theoretical since science is formalized knowledge, but a science can be called practical only by analogy. Since sciences are constituted by abstract and formally related concepts, they can never be simply identified with the practical judgments of singular and contingent objects. Thus, ethics, since it is a practical science, is practical only by analogy. The point here is that the study of ethics must be distinguished from fully practical reason. We begin in this Chapter, therefore, to clarify the limitations of philosophical ethics, to anticipate the human need for practical wisdom (to facilitate the unavoidable task of making truly practical judgments), and to grasp the crucial role of the virtues in ethical living.

In Chapter 3 we start again with a second aspect of the problem. Not only must we contend with the division between theoretical and practical reason, we must also consider the very real disjunction between knowledge and action. That one knows the good does not ensure that he will do the good. That one has studied ethics does not ensure that one is ethical by character. The moral virtues do, on Aquinas's account, ensure both these things. Thus, Chapter 3 examines the meaning of the virtues and their relationship to human fulfillment.
Aquinas develops his notion of fulfillment by defining the virtues in relation to the powers or faculties which they educate and perfect. The key recipients of the virtues are the intellect, will and affective powers (the irascible and concupiscible powers), and these are open to education and habituation to an extent commensurate with the openness and indeterminacy of human understanding and reason. The virtues are formative of these faculties, establishing a new ease, spontaneity and pleasure in the performance of complex operations. Moreover, these operations are, in fact, co-operations, for a virtuous habit inculcates the reciprocity and interdependence of these faculties. The virtues ground a new congruence of purpose, feeling and reasoned action and give the virtuous person an "agility" or intelligence of response that enables her to meet successfully the challenges of a wide variety of complex situations.

The virtuous person, therefore, flourishes because of her learned ability to act with integrity across a wide range of confusing and demanding situations, situations which challenge the cooperation of reasoned judgment and affective inclination. The virtuous person discerns easily what to do and benefits from the cooperation of affectivity and intelligence in the deliberative process. Thus, the virtues prepare one to judge well and discern the good to be done in a manner in which no array of precepts, however analytically refined, could ever provide.

We see in this account of the virtues, the basis for Aquinas's distinction between the moral and intellectual virtues. Only the moral virtues habituate one's day-to-day existence and actual intentions. Only the moral virtues form what one
actually does and the intentions out of which he does it. The intellectual virtues give a facility for performance in some theoretical or productive enterprise, but do not habituate the will and one’s actual conduct. Thus, the actual performance or exercise of the intellectual virtues is a function of one’s moral character. Furthermore, the habits of one’s will, the moral habits of intention and choice, define one’s character and human goodness. The intellectual virtues, on the other hand, do not have any definite relationship to character and identity. They have no direct influence on one’s character, and there is no necessity that they be accompanied by the moral virtues. The moral virtues, however, determine one’s horizon of concern, what one actually cares about and acts on, and thus define who one is.

Through this analysis, we can also locate a notion of freedom which challenges the view that virtues are a cultural restriction on personal autonomy. Philosophers often think, as Hobbes did, that freedom means an absence of constraints. The freedom of the virtues, however, depends not on the removal of limits but on the acquisition of character. The virtues dispose one toward an effective and meaningful existence. One possesses not only the essential freedom of choice, but also the effective freedom of having the means and intent to act well. Indeed, without the virtues, freedom is more of an abstraction than a reality because freedom is meaningless except relative to what one is actually able to do. Finally, this analysis also provides the basis for meeting the question of cultural relativism. The virtues form and perfect the structures (e.g., intention, deliberation, choice) of the human act, and, understood as such, meet the fundamental challenge of being human, not merely the
relative challenge of adapting to one's unique social milieu.

In Chapter 4 our discussion finally turns to practical wisdom. The two previous chapters both serve as propaedeutics to our consideration of the virtue of practical wisdom, the virtue which Aquinas identifies as the most essential and pivotal of the moral virtues. Our consideration of practical wisdom in Chapter 4 brings resolution to several key issues raised in Chapter 2. First, in Chapter 2 we considered two tendencies or modes of intention operative in human inquiry, namely theoretical knowledge and practical action. Theoretical inquiry aims toward abstract and necessary conclusions, while practical inquiry culminates in judgments about singular and contingent events and the courses of action suitable to them. An important question arises out of this division our intellectual labors. Can theoretical achievements contribute to and direct us in our practical endeavors? That is, is this disjunction of the theoretical and the practical absolute or relative to a larger perspective in which the complementarity and cooperation of both types of inquiry can be grasped? In Chapter 4 we discover this larger perspective and the importance of practical wisdom for it.

The larger perspective requires, of course, that we consider that both theoretical and practical endeavors are grounded in one person, one human enterprise. Thus, to grasp the cooperation of the theoretical and practical we must aim to comprehend the human good as a whole, which includes both theoretical and practical activities. Though I remain focused in this discussion on my own reading of Aquinas, it also invites consideration of authors like Germain Grisez and John Finnis and also
Josef Pieper. Pieper's analysis, I think, is closer to Aquinas's own than Grisez's and Finnis's and, more importantly, better reflective of the true nature of human flourishing. Grisez and Finnis make a contribution to the discussion, but miss the central importance of theoretical and contemplative activity for our discovery of the human good and practical pursuit of it.

One of the key aspects of practical wisdom, as Aquinas analyzes it--and one which too few authors besides Pieper pay attention to--is that the person of practical wisdom reasons about right action, about what is to be done here and now, from the context of the whole of human life. That is, practical wisdom is reason reasoning from the principle of the human good as such. The person of practical wisdom takes human fulfillment as his or her horizon of concern--not some limited or instrumental good like money or military victory--and intends this fulfillment in all his or her practical judgments about action. Thus, each decision is made in relation to this context and derives its meaning from it. Practical wisdom is the primary virtue which allows one to live meaningfully because it enables the person to relate two extremes: the horizon of one's intentions for fulfillment and for the achievement of the human good on the one hand and the immediate context of everyday needs and problems on the other. We see in Chapter 4 that in performing this task, the person of practical wisdom reconciles theory and practice, the broadest reaches of knowledge and the urgent challenges of day-to-day existence.

The second issue stemming from Chapter 2 concerns the relationship between ethics and right action. Chapters 2 and 3 both make clear that practical philosophy
and ethical precepts are insufficient for ethical conduct. Chapter 3 begins with the problem of a "weak will," that what one knows in the abstract may not enable him to carry through in the concrete. Yet there is another hinderance to right action besides one's weakness of character--the problem of the practical judgment. Chapter 2 gives us our first indication, and Chapter 4 explores in detail, that no practical science can in itself fully resolve what ought to be done. The practical judgment cannot be made a priori, in the abstract and without consideration of the context of the action. Thus, Chapter 4 explores in detail how practical wisdom mediates between abstract considerations and the concrete circumstances of life. The key to understanding this mediation lies in consideration of the practical judgment itself, the judgment perfected by the virtue of practical wisdom.

Discussion of the practical judgment brings together some key issues in practical philosophy. We see, for instance, in this analysis why moral precepts are insufficient for ethical existence and that the crux of practical reasoning lies in finding an intelligent response--a response which reconciles general precepts and intentions with the exigencies of the matter at hand. Since this is the primary task of practical reasoning, the central problem for ethical living lies not in formulating fundamental precepts, but in acquiring prudencia, the virtue of good judgment and right action. Precepts, in other words, have no effective or practical value except for persons capable of judging well in specific situations. Moreover, the debate between situation ethicists, who insist on the relativity of all practical judgments, and the deontologists, who insist on moral absolutes, can only be resolved through consideration of the
practical judgment of the singular. For this judgment, this *applicatio*, discerns the meaningful act relative to both principles and the situation.\(^{18}\) Aquinas’s position relative to this debate is that the practical judgment of the singular can never be made *a priori* or independently of the relevant context, but that neither can it be made without reference to general principles and intentions. Indeed, the ultimate principle of the practical judgment is the human good.

Discussion of the practical judgment prepares us for a second key juncture—consideration of the relationship between the affective virtues and practical reason. This discussion goes forward in Chapter 5, but depends on our clarification in Chapter 4 of the practical judgment itself. Chapter 4 establishes that for Aquinas the judgment is an act of insight (or *intelligere*). The insight either abstracts, as when one learns from experience, or applies, as when one utilizes the fruits of past experience in new situations. It is the latter mode of insight which constitutes the practical judgment. Thus, in his most succinct explanation of the practical judgment, Aquinas tells us that through it one apprehends the universal (or idea) as instantiated in the particular. That is, the practical judgment conjoins the abstract and concrete, the universal and the singular, and judges the singular to be an instance of the universal. Thus, practical judgment interprets the character of the situation at hand.

\(^{18}\)Contemporary Thomists have not themselves seen their way clear of this debate between deontological and relativistic tendencies because the matter rests ultimately on assumptions about how human beings reason, learn and know. We will consider the contributions of Thomists like Jacques Maritain, John Caputo and Joseph Boyle to this issue, but it was primarily through the work of Bernard Lonergan and Frederick Crowe that I came to my understanding of Aquinas’s treatment of *intellectus* and judgment. Their work, in my opinion, offers the most careful reading of Aquinas on this point and addresses the nature of practical reasoning most successfully.
(See § 1.4 for further consideration of this point.)

This judgment, then, is the key condition for intelligent and reasonable action, but, as we see in Chapter 5, the key condition, in turn, for such a judgment is the cooperation of the many diverse faculties and habits contributing to the moral act. These include, of course, reason and the will, but also one’s sensitive faculties, both apprehensive and affective. The cooperation of the faculties becomes important because the practical judgment is necessarily existential, necessarily a judgment which puts one’s self at stake in a manner not true of theoretical judgments. It is a judgment determining what goods one will and will not pursue, what risks one will and will not take. In this way one forms his character and defines his identity. Thus, all the moral virtues contribute to one’s ability to judge well in the singular, and the question of character has its proper place in our reflections on ethical knowledge. Ethical judgments must be made relevant to the concrete situation, and in one’s interpretation of the concrete situation only the naive rationalist will disregard the influence of his affective and intentional habits.

We see, then, that practical wisdom and science are distinct not only for cognitive reasons, i.e., the nature of the practical judgment, but also because of the direct relationship between practical wisdom and one’s affective and intentional life. I have already indicated that Aquinas finds no direct or necessary relationship between one’s intellectual virtues and one’s moral character. He insists, however, on such a relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues. One cannot be practically wise if lacking virtuous habits of intention and affectivity, and reciprocally one
cannot possess these moral virtues if lacking practical wisdom. Understanding this reciprocal or interdependent relationship is essential to understanding Aquinas's theory of human character. It explains, for instance, his claim that the moral virtues are principles of practical truth. For to Aquinas's mind, the habitual intention of the good is a necessary condition of practical wisdom. Practical wisdom translates intention into concrete action, and that such a translation be wise depends fundamentally on the nature of the intention itself. Yet when we turn to consider how such habits of intention are formed, Aquinas answers by appealing to practical wisdom. Virtues are formed, after all, through the repeated practice of making well reasoned choices, and practical wisdom enables one to do that.

Many have found a vicious circle in this analysis since it claims that practical wisdom is needed for the formation of the moral virtues and that the moral virtues are a prerequisite for practical wisdom. We consider this problem in detail in Chapter 5, and I argue that it suggests a virtuous rather than a vicious circle. That is, Thomas's analysis outlines the dynamic of the process out of which one's good character emerges. At the core of the dynamic lies the natural human tendency toward the good and toward meaningful action, the principle which Aquinas calls synderesis. This intention disposes one to reasoned choice, and reasoned choice in turn begins to form one's habits of intention and one's affective disposition. It is both true that a man who has overcharged a customer rectifies the situation because he intends to be just and that he has become intentional of justice because of those times when he has foresaken extra profit for the sake of justice. Choice by choice,
one's character, one's intentional orientation toward the world forms, determining how one discerns the good, how one acts, who one is.

This dynamic is important to consider in relation to questions about the connectedness of the virtues. One cannot be brave without being practically wise because one needs practical wisdom in order to find the wise expression of bravery suitable to one's abilities and to the possibilities of the situation. Without, practical wisdom one's response to dangers easily fails on the side of cowardice or on the side of recklessness. On the other hand, one cannot be practically wise without the virtue of bravery. The good of the action depends on the intention operative in the deliberative process. One may intend to be constant in the pursuit of the good despite the risks, or one may imitate bravery while actually intending to take the path of least resistance and to avoid the worse of two dangers.¹⁹

Thus, though two go forth into battle, their intentions, and therefore the quality of their conduct, may be quite distinct. One may fear the consequences of desertion, while the other may be truly committed to the defense of his homeland. The latter will fight eagerly, while the former will be primarily concerned to save his

¹⁹Lee H. Yearley does an excellent job of showing that virtue arises out of an explicit and self-reflective determination to live in accord with an intended good or principle: "We define ourselves by those values that produce desires we want to constitute our wills, to be our regnant dispositions, to cause us consistently to act." Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 100. For his analysis of courage in light of this understanding, see 113-115 and 131-133. He argues, for example, that if a man fights in a war apparently for the sake of freedom and democracy, but then returns home to persecute blacks out of racist motives, we must then reconsider the man's original intentions for going to war. Perhaps he was actually fighting to preserve his or his groups special privileges. An inconsistency of virtuous and vicious intention is less likely than a consistency of vicious intentions. Thus, his performance in battle reflected something other than true courage (132). Thus, Yearley, unlike MacIntyre, grasps that the virtuous person has an integrity of intention and act which stems from the unity of the virtues (see § 1.1 above).
life. Moreover, the latter’s behavior expresses a habit of intention, a virtue. His brave conduct, therefore, will be consistent over time; it will be what those who know him can come to expect. The former's conduct, however, expresses the intention to avoid dangers, not a resolve or commitment to some good. This lack of commitment will reveal itself over time, even though he may from time to time imitate the conduct of bravery.

We see, therefore, that Thomas’s analysis of the virtues requires that we always understand conduct in terms of the intended end. To the extent that one is virtuous, she intends a good end in her actual conduct, and to the extent that she reasons well about practice, she chooses conduct formative of good intentions. The virtuous act, therefore, is well suited to the circumstances and is expressive of the good one intends as a matter of character and self-understanding. The virtuous act is in a word meaningful--expressive of self, not merely expedient. Human fulfillment depends on the achievement of virtue, character and commitment--all of which establish one’s sense of self and ground the expression of that self in one’s lived existence. Such is meaningful existence.

1.4 Comparison with Jacques Maritain

Maritain’s work on Aquinas’s thought has some important affinities with my own. He was very interested in the difference between moral science and practical wisdom and contributed significantly to the discourse on practical philosophy by
developing Aquinas’s theory of connatural knowledge.\textsuperscript{20} These are also central concerns of my dissertation. Accordingly, our readings of Aquinas have a general compatibility as when, for instance, he distinguishes the moral philosopher and the virtuous person and argues that the latter person has moral knowledge "embodied" within himself.\textsuperscript{21} Thus, by concerning himself with connatural knowledge, he focuses on the crucial point that some more readily and easily apprehend and act out the moral good than others. There are, however, several areas where my work either clarifies or disagrees with Maritain’s. The two topics of concern which need to be addressed are Maritain’s notion of intuitive knowledge, or intuition of being, and his treatment of connatural knowing.

His claim that an intuition into being is the basis for metaphysics (and a necessary event or experience for one who aspires to do metaphysics) has no basis as far as I can tell, in Aquinas’s own work. I do, however, claim in Chapter 4 that Thomas finds the act of insight or intellectus crucial for the practical judgment of the singular. Hence, it is important to contrast my understanding of Thomas’s treatment of intellectus (derived from Lonergan and others) with Maritain’s intuition into being. Chapter 4 establishes, I believe, that Thomas found insight at the core of the practical judgment, that insight is a cooperative act between the intellect and the vis


\textsuperscript{21} The Range of Reason, 23: "On the other hand, we can possess the virtue in question in our own powers of will and desire, have it embodied in ourselves, and thus be in accordance with it, or co-natured with it, in our very being."
cogitativa, that the presence of an appropriate image or phantasm is necessary for one to have the insight, and finally that he often refers to insight as the apprehension of the universal in the singular. Insight enables one to derive universals from experience (abstraction) and to discern when they apply to new situations (application). It is the application that occurs in the judgment of the singular, and it allows the person of practical wisdom to mediate between the universal and the singular as is discussed in Chapter 4. Thomas claims that insight can be experienced because we can notice ourselves searching for the right image in order to understand (ST, I, q 84, a 7).

Maritain's intuition into being is not what I mean by insight. It seems to refer to a grasp of being as such, and therefore must be dissociated from all concrete images or specific applications. It is apparently not the grasp of the universal in the singular, but an intellectual intuition stripped of any individual context. It seems to be a privileged experience, something esoteric and unknown to the many, including many philosophers. Insight, on the other hand, is the common occurrence of

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22. "And at the end of its course [the intellect] arrives at being, but being envisaged in itself, disengaged from its matrix, viewed in its own light and in accordance with its own type intelligibility." A Preface to Metaphysics (New York: New American Library, 1962), 49.

23. "One does not have to be a metaphysician to have the intuition of being . . . but without it one cannot be a metaphysician. The intuition visits anyone who one day suffers the shock of realizing that things exist or that he himself exists, as when one suddenly realizes that contingency of one's own existence. . . . The intuition is not given to everybody, not even to all who engage in philosophy; not even to all those who desire to be or believe they are metaphysicians. Maritain says that Immanuel Kant, despite his stature in the history of philosophy, never had the intuition. . . . The difficulty . . . is one of achieving a sufficient degree of intellectual purification to enable the intuition to take place in us." Raymond Dennehy, "Maritain's 'Intellectual Existentialism': An Introduction to His Metaphysics and Epistemology," in Understanding Maritain: Philosopher and Friend, ed. Deal W. Hudson and Matthew J. Mancini (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1987), 206.
class rooms, where effective teachers provide the key examples that make the point clear, and the ordinary event of good people of common sense who solve problems on a daily basis.

Maritain explicitly disassociates metaphysics and his intuition of being from connatural knowing.\textsuperscript{24} Yet the insight operative in the practical judgment of the singular is made connatural by the cooperation of practical wisdom and the moral virtues. For Maritain, connaturaly operates in aesthetics, mysticism, and morality. His analysis is intriguing and worthwhile, for he correctly reminds us that our encounter with each of these areas need not be limited to the conceptual. He challenges the boundaries between our conceptual and affective encounters with our world. Despite his insistence that connaturaly and metaphysical intuition differ, his emphasis on contrasting the connatural with the conceptual suggests that we are again concerned with some kind of intuition or non-conceptual knowledge. There is a tendency on his part to conceive of connaturaly as an alternative to intelligence and reason. He often presents the connatural as nascent, preconceptual, exclusively affective or inclinational with no intellectual component, and ineffable or unexplainable.\textsuperscript{25}

With regard to the claim that connatural knowledge is nascent and preconcep-

\textsuperscript{24} "But knowledge through connaturality has nothing to do with metaphysics itself. . . . Like all rational knowledge [metaphysics] presupposes sense experience; and insofar as it is metaphysics, it implies the intellectual intuition of being \textit{qua} being. But neither in this intellectual intuition nor in sense perception is there the smallest element of knowledge through inclination" (The Range of Reason, 29).

\textsuperscript{25} "It is not rational knowledge. . . . But it is really and genuinely knowledge, though obscure and perhaps incapable of giving accounts of itself, or of being translated into words" (The Range of Reason, 23). "It is through connaturaly that moral consciousness attains a kind of knowing--inexpressible in words and notions--of the deepest dispositions--longings, fears, hopes or despairs, primeval loves and options--involved in the night of subjectivity" (ibid, 26).
tual, we must be clear, as I show in Chapters 3, 4 and 5, that Aquinas closely associates moral connaturality with the moral virtues. Indeed, I identify the two terms or approaches: moral connaturality is the knowing of the person of practical wisdom and the moral virtues. When Aquinas writes about those who know the human good connaturally, he has nothing else in mind than the prudens. Practical wisdom is connatural knowing with regard to conduct and the human good. To say this suggests why Aquinas counts practical wisdom among the moral virtues and contrasts it with all science. Practical wisdom forms or educates our affective life, and in turn the person of practical wisdom is supported by habits of intention and affect in his judgments. Thus, connatural moral knowledge is not nascent, but acquired as practical wisdom is acquired. To be sure, I also argue that the moral virtues are developments of natural tendencies and inclinations, but these tendencies and inclinations are not yet moral knowledge, not yet the connaturality of the morally mature and wise person.

With regard to Maritain's tendency to contrast connaturality with conceptual knowing, we must be clear that Aquinas offers no alternative to knowing except by means of our intellectual faculty. We must be clear that connaturality is the extension of intelligence into the affective powers. It is not an alternative to intelligence, but the reach of intelligence into distinct aspects of our existence. It is not unlike the intelligence operating in the body of trained athlete or in the hands of an accomplished musician. Just as the body "receives" the years of practice and experience and becomes formed by them, so does our affective life. This point becomes especi-
ally important in Chapter 5 in the discussion of convergence of intellect, the discursive power and affectivity. Connatural implies the cooperation of these distinct powers in one judgment and action. Thus, any suggestion that intelligence and reason must be contrasted with affective or experiential knowing is contrary to Aquinas’s position. To the contrary, affective knowing develops through one’s good judgment and is to know more fully, to know with more of oneself, what the intelligent and reasonable person knows. This is why it is not inappropriate to refer to it as an existential knowledge, a knowledge determining who one is because it determines how one lives. It is not the theory we teach, write or critique, but the knowledge we live and act out of in the day-to-day drama of existence.

Finally, connatural knowing is not ineffable or incommunicable as authors like Maritain, Yves Simon and Charles O’Neil claim. That is, the judgment of the person of practical wisdom is always intelligent and reasonable. One can discern the wisdom in the conduct of the prudens. The life of a Socrates, Jesus or Martin Luther King (i.e., a person of great practical wisdom) need not be beyond the comprehension of those who encounter them. Their wisdom can be grasped, articulated, recognized. The distinction to draw is not between the intelligible and unintelligible or the expressible and ineffable, but between the abstract, universal and a priori truths

26 For Maritain see the note above. Yves Simon writes, "Inasmuch as the ultimate practical judgment admits of no logical connection with any rational premises, it is, strictly speaking incommunicable." Practical Knowledge, ed. Robert J. Mulvaney (New York: Fordham University Press, 1991), 23. His argument stems from his correct supposition that the practical judgment is not a logical and certain deduction from premises, but nonetheless his conclusion incorrectly sets affect over against reason and intelligence. I argue that the ultimate practical judgment is intelligent and reasonable insofar as it depends on an insight into phantasm. Being intelligent and reasonable, it is also communicable. See also Charles O’Neil, "Prudence, the Incommunicable Wisdom," in Essays in Thomism, ed. R. E. Brennan, O.P. (Freeport, New York: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 187-204.
which one can know independently of circumstances and the wisdom rooted in the immediacy of existence. The latter wisdom is not ineffable, but perhaps unpredictable, not beyond recognition, but beyond articulation by others who must wait to learn it from the lived wisdom of men and women greater than themselves.

This point is crucial if we are to claim a distinction between wisdom and fanaticism, between the truth incarnate and insanity. The human condition is such that we must always move back and forth between the abstract and the concrete, alternatively using the abstract to guide us in the uncertainties of the moment and drawing from new and unanticipated events clearer and more refined articulations of the good in the abstract. The abstractions of practical philosophy, civil laws and codes of ethics are the distilled insights of practical wisdom operating in concrete situations. Thus, these abstractions communicate practical wisdom, but never to the extent that one can escape the burden of making practical judgments of the singular, where the confluence of reason, experience, image and affectivity is crucial for effective wisdom, wisdom expressed in action. We can now turn to Aquinas and his articulation of these themes and concerns.
CHAPTER II

KNOWLEDGE AND ACTION:
DISTINGUISHING THE THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL

2.1 Introduction

The story goes that one night Thales was out stargazing and was so absorbed in the heavens that he did not see the ditch into which he fell. An old woman who saw his blunder laughed out loud at how a man, supposedly so wise, did not know enough to watch where he was going. Was Thales wise or stupid? He was able to predict astronomical events accurately, but unable to keep himself from pitfalls right in front of him. To meet the question, Aristotle saw the need to distinguish between wisdom per se and wisdom in human affairs, between theoria and sophia (which Aquinas's Latin renders speculatio and sapientia) and phronesis (prudentia for St. Thomas. See NE, VI, 7, 1141b1-5; In VI Ethic, lect 6, nn 1191-92.). Thus was born the distinction between the wisdom of the philosophers and the practical wisdom which gets one through life.

The distinction has never been an easy one to live with. Pascal saw need to caution us not to confuse the God of the philosophers with the God of the prophets, apparently because he found the achievements of theoria to be markedly distinct from the achievements of men and women wise and holy in the affairs of life. The
distinction was troublesome for Aristotle himself when it came to the question of ethics. He was in no doubt that ethics, since it is the study of the human good, brings us into the realm of practical wisdom. Still, he saw need to caution his readers that the study of ethics does not in itself make one good or wise in the affairs of living. His caution seems to suggest that those who succeed in the study of ethics may be wise more in the manner of Thales than in the manner of Socrates. Thales’s wisdom was theoretical, but Socrates stood for Aristotle as the example par excellence of the spoudaios, the person of practical wisdom (NE, II, 4, 1105b10-20). Yet if the study of ethics makes us wise in the manner of Thales, how can we conclude that we study ethics in order to become wise in the manner of Socrates? Aristotle is quite clear about our goal: we study ethics for the sake of action and to determine how we ought to live. He is less clear, however, about how far along the way the study of ethics will take us toward our goal.

We are concerned to understand how one becomes a good person and how knowledge contributes to that task. A good starting point is to consider how Aquinas understood Aristotle’s distinction between the theoretical and practical. Any successful discussion of ethics and practical wisdom must be situated within the context of this distinction because we cannot otherwise be clear whether our intellectual endeavors aim toward the wisdom exemplified by Thales or by Socrates. We cannot be clear, more specifically, whether the study of ethics promotes good intellectual habits or good moral habits, and Aristotle has cautioned us that the study is for naught if it achieves only the former. Neither, however, can we be totally at ease
with the distinction itself. It was a man, in fact, who was out that night long ago studying the heavens, and whatever wisdom he possessed was the wisdom of a man, one wise enough to seek it out. And though the example of his own life won Socrates the respect of history, it cannot be denied that the enemies he won in his own time resented him for tripping them up in abstract philosophical debates. Aristotle’s distinction between the theoretical and the practical may be useful, but not if we forget that the wisdom of philosophers and prophets (Hebrew or otherwise) are both, whatever differences there may be between them, the wisdom of human beings. Indeed, despite Pascal’s warning, some philosophers, St. Thomas among them, understood themselves to be serving the same God whether they wrote of him in their philosophies or prayed to him at the altar.¹ We must understand the distinction because the difference is as real as the ditch Thales fell into, but we must also see beyond it to the whole person in which both kinds of wisdom play their part.

In this chapter we contend with the distinction itself; we set about in the following three chapters attempting to understand the relationship between wisdom and character, between what one knows and who one is. This chapter has four main topics. In § 2.2 we establish the philosophical basis for the distinction between theoretical and practical inquiry. In § 2.3 we discuss the distinction in light of Thomas’s faculty psychology and a difficulty he had in interpreting Aristotle. Section 2.4 considers derivative modes of distinction. Given the basic difference between theoretical and practical inquiry, other differences arise. It is important, however,

to clarify how these differences derive from and are implied by the basic difference. Finally, in § 2.5 we examine how Aquinas applied the distinction between theoretical and practical to the sciences. This will pave the way for our discussion in Chapter 4 of the relationship between practical philosophy, practical wisdom and ethical action.

2.2 Theoretical and Practical Cognition: The Fundamental Difference

Our first task is to examine how Aquinas distinguishes two types of rational operations, namely theoretical and practical inquiry. It will be best to go directly to the heart of the matter, leaving nuances, implications and derivative distinctions for later. Therefore, as any inquiry is a process, its character or ratio is determined by the end in which it achieves its completion or, in Thomas’s language, its perfectio. Accordingly, theoretical and practical inquiry are most suitably distinguished by the ends at which they aim. The end of the former is the achievement of truth itself, the further acquisition of knowledge; and the end of the latter is some work, operation, performance or effect extrinsic to the intellect. That is, since the aim of theoretical inquiry is truth, the perfectio of such an inquiry remains intellectual and intrinsic to cognition itself. Since, however, the aim of practical inquiry is some work, its perfectio lies beyond itself in something else, for example in the erection of a building or in some commendable personal conduct.²

²For other discussions of this topic see John Naus, The Nature of the Practical Intellect According to St. Thomas Aquinas (Rome: Livreria Editrice Dell' Universita Gregoriana, 1959); Jacques Maritain, The Degress of Knowledge, tr. by Gerald Phelan (New York: Scribner’s, 1959): especially 310-316 and (continued...)
Aquinas does not distinguish the two types of intellectual inquiry exclusively in this way, but he does so repeatedly; and we shall see, after examining his various approaches to the problem, that he considers the distinction to be essentially and most fundamentally a difference of ends. All other means of distinction derive from this essential difference. Moreover, he appeals to this manner of distinction consistently from early to late works. So we read in the Commentary on the Sentences:

The theoretical and practical differ in this that the theoretical intellect considers truth alone, whereas the practical considers truth as ordered to a work.

(Intellectus speculativus et practicus in hoc differunt quod intellectus speculativus considerat verum absolute, practicus autem considerat verum in ordine ad opus, In III Sent., d 23, q 2, a 3, sol 2.)

Aquinas makes the same point in the De Veritate, where he also stresses that only when there is a conclusion in some work or operation can knowledge be taken as practical. Whatever one's ultimate concerns, if inquiry stops short of work or action, it stops short of being practical. We shall see that this point is crucial when we turn to the question of practical science (§ 2.5). Finally, he uses the same approach in the Summa Contra Gentiles and the Summa Theologiae:

However, all practical sciences, arts and powers are choiceworthy on account of something else, for they have their end not in knowing, but in performing. The theoretical sciences, however, are choiceworthy for

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2(...)continued
appendix 7; and Jean Petrin, "Intellectus speculativus per extensionem fit practicus." Revue de l'Universite de l'Ottawa 16 (1946), 175-84.

3De Ver, q 3, a 3: "Sicut dicitur in 3 De Anima [ch 10, 433a15] intellectus practicus differt a speculativo fine; finis enim speculativi est veritas absolute, sed practici est operatio ut dicitur in Metaphysics [II, 1, 993b20ff]"; De Ver, q 14, a 4: "Intellectus enim practicus idem est quod intellectus operativus: unde sola extensio ad opus facit aliquem intellectum esse practicum."
their own sake since their end is in knowing itself.

(Omnès autem scientiae et artes et potentiae practicae sunt tantum propter aliud diligibiles: nam in eis finis non est scire, sed operari. Scientiae autem speculativae sunt propter seipsas diligibiles: nam finis earum est ipsum scire, SCG, III, 25, #9.)

For the practical intellect differs from the theoretical by its end, as we find in De Anima III. That is, the practical is ordered to the end of performance, whereas the end of the theoretical intellect is the consideration of truth.

(Nam intellectus practicus differt fine a speculativo, sicut dicitur in 3 De Anima. Intellectus enim practicus ordinatur ad finem operationis: finis autem intellectus speculativi est consideratio veritatis, ST, I, q 14, a 16.)

As several of the above quotations indicate Aquinas's primary sources for this mode of distinction are found in Aristotle's Metaphysics and De Anima. However, in Book VI of the Nicomachean Ethics there is a distinctly different approach to the question of theoretical and practical knowledge. In this work Aristotle argues that there are two parts of the soul, the scientific (scientificum) and the calculative or opinionative (ratiocinativum). These are distinguished by their objects, for the scientific knows necessary truths and the calculative knows contingent truths, matters of fact which could be otherwise. To quote Aristotle:

Let it be assumed that there are two rational elements: with one of these we apprehend the realities whose fundamental principles do not admit of being other than they are, and with the other we apprehend things which do admit of being other. . . . Let us call one the scientific

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4 See also: In Boeth De Trin, q 5, a 1; ad 4; De Virt in Comm, a 7, ad 1; ST, II-II, q 179, a 2.

5 Metaphysics, II, 1, 993b20ff and Aquinas's commentary, II, lect 2, n 290; De Anima, III, 10, 443a15 and Aquinas's commentary, III, lect 15, n 820.
and the other the calculative element (NE, VI, 1, 1139a5-12).\textsuperscript{6}

Two important questions arise in light of this passage, one which we can address next in § 2.3 and one which will be addressed below in § 2.4. Our concern below will be to examine whether the diverse ways in which Aristotle distinguishes theoretical and practical inquiry can be reconciled, that is, whether Thomas finds compatibility between the approach in the Ethics with the approach taken in the Metaphysics and De Anima. Our immediate concern is that Aristotle seems in this text to posit two distinct powers of the soul, "two rational elements," suggesting perhaps that theoretical and practical inquiry are disjointed and altogether separate from one another. How did Aquinas understand this claim of two rational elements? Commentators on Aquinas have found a revision in his interpretation from his early to later writings.\textsuperscript{7}

2.3 Two Intellects or One

The above quotation (NE, VI, 1, 1139a5-12) suggests that there are two powers of the soul whose objects, the contingent and the necessary, are formally distinct. This indicates that Aristotle, at least for part of his career, considered there to be two intellects, that is, two distinct faculties, which ground distinct forms of inquiry. Aquinas adopted this interpretation (or at least failed to offer an alternative

\textsuperscript{6}This and all English translations of this text are taken from the Nicomachean Ethics, tr. with notes by Martin Ostwald, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1962).

\textsuperscript{7}For a survey of commentary on Aquinas's revision see Naus, The Nature of the Practical Intellect, 17-34.
reading) in his De Veritate (q 15, a 2, ad 3), but later changed his view. The question may seem a fine point of faculty psychology with no great bearing on broader philosophical issues, but for Aquinas the question did have far reaching implications. At issue is the ultimate unity of the two kinds of inquiry and knowledge in one intellectual capacity. If the forms of inquiry involved are so distinct as to warrant distinct faculties, then it would seem that what it means to be intelligent and reasonable in theoretical matters is radically distinct from what it means in practical affairs. Thus, when Aquinas sees fit to extend the operations of the theoretical intellect to deliberations in practical affairs, he is asserting the fundamental unity of human intelligence and reason, whether we are speaking of practical or theoretical matters. Although we are concerned in this chapter with differentiating the theoretical and practical, our ultimate aim is to envision their interaction and complementarity. Aquinas's conclusion in his later writings on the question at hand—that one intellectual power grounds both kinds of knowledge—is a crucial step toward showing the common root of theoretical and practical wisdom.

There is no reason to enter into a thorough and chronological examination of the relevant texts since the development in Thomas's thinking has been clearly established by Naus and others. It will be helpful, however, to consider Thomas's

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8See too George P. Klubertanz, S.J., The Discursive Power: Sources and Doctrine of the Vis Cogitativa According to St. Thomas Aquinas (St. Louis: Modern Schoolman, 1952), 212-14; Bernard Lonergan, S.J., Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas, ed. David B. Burrell (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 35-40. The relevant texts are: In Sent, II, d 24, q 2, a 2, ad 2; III, d 17, q 1, a 1, sol 3, ad 3; d 23, q 2, a 3, sol 3; De Ver, q 15, a 2, ad 3; In VI Ethic, lect 1, nn 1118-23; lect 2, n 1132; lect 3 n 1152; In III De Anima, lect 12, nn 779-80; ST, I, q 79, a 9, ad 3. In the Sentences (II, d 24, q 2, a 2, ad 2) Thomas questions whether the ratio inferior and the ratio superior are separate powers. An objection argues that they are since the ratio superior is equivalent to (continued...)
reasons for modifying his own position. To begin, it should be recalled that in his psychology Aquinas distinguishes potencies, acts and objects. Potencies (or powers or faculties) are innate capacities which have their perfectio or completion in the acts which specify them, as vision by seeing, and will by choosing or willing. Acts are in turn specified by their objects. Not all differences, however, among objects diversify acts and powers. For the same act of seeing sees both a tree and an animal, but it is not one act which sees the animal and hears its growl. Aquinas explains that formal differences such as color and sound, not material differences such as red and blue, differentiate acts. Now the formal object of the intellect is being and truth, and whether one’s agenda is theoretical or practical, the object has these formalities. Hence, in his response to an objection in the Summa he suggests that the necessary and contingent are to the intellect as red and blue are to vision:

Nor should it be said simply that there is one power by which the intellect knows necessities and another by which it knows contingencies because it knows both according to the same formal character of the object, i.e., according to the formality of being and the true.

(Nec tamen est simpliciter dicendum quod sit alia potentia qua intellectus cognoscit necessaria, et alia qua cognoscit contingencia: quia utraque cognoscit secundum eandem rationem objecti, scilicet secundum rationem entis et veri, ST, I, q 79, a 9, ad 3.)

Interestingly, Aquinas takes the same approach in his commentary on the

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8(...continued)

Aristotle’s scientificum and the ratio inferior is equivalent to his ratiocinativum. Now since Aristotle’s terms represent two separate powers of the soul, two rationes must also be separate. The point is that Aquinas answers by denying the major premise, that the terms are equivalent, and not the minor, that the scientificum and ratiocinativum are separate powers. However, when faced with the very same objection at ST, I, q 79, a 9, ad 3, he answers by denying both the major and the minor.

9Cf. In II Sent, d 24, q 2, a 2, ad 5; De Ver, q 10, a 3; q 15, a 1; q 22, a 10; In Lib Boeth de Trin, q 5, a 1; ST, I, q 77, a 4; q 79, a 7; a 11; q 82, a 5; In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1122.
Ethics, but as he is wont to do in his commentaries, he makes his point by appealing to Aristotle's own principles. It is doubtful, Aquinas points out, that Aristotle would divide the task of knowing being between two separate powers because of what he wrote in the *De Anima*. There he states that the agent intellect is able to make or conceive all things ("quo est omnia facere") and the possible to become (or receive as a habit) all things ("quo est omnia fieri"). Aquinas stresses the universality indicated by this comment: both the agent and possible intellects relate to all being and all being includes both the necessary and the contingent.\(^\text{10}\) Despite the validity of the distinction between the theoretical and practical, they are unified by the formality of their object--being.\(^\text{11}\)

What prohibited Aquinas from taking this position earlier in his career? In the *De Veritate*, where he posits two separate cognitive powers, Aquinas argues that the quiddity or *quod quid est* is the object of the scientific part. Moreover, the quiddity serves as the principle which grounds conclusions. By the scientific power Aristotle means the capacity to demonstrate conclusions by resolving them back into the *quod quid est* or definition.\(^\text{12}\) Since the scientific power grasps that conclusions

\(^{10}\) *In VI Ethic*, lect 1, n 1119: "Videtur autem, quod hic Philosophus determinat, dubitationem habere. Ipse enim in tertio *De Anima* distinguit intellectum in duo, scilicet in agens et possibile: et dicit quod agens est quo est omnia facere, possibilis autem est quo est omnia fieri. Sic ergo tam intellectus agens quam possibilis secundum suam rationem ad omnia se habet. Esset ergo contra rationem utriusque intellectus, si alia pars animae esset quae intelligit necessaria et quae intelligit contingentia."

\(^{11}\) Thus Lonergan writes: "Later, in the *Pars Prima*, he found his way to include knowledge of the contingent within the same potency, not indeed by changing his concept of intellect, but by admitting within its range imperfect instances of its object." See his *Verbium*, 35-6.

\(^{12}\) *De Ver*, q 15, a 2, ad 3: ". . . et hanc potentiam quae ipsas conclusiones in quod quid est nata est resolvere, Philosophus scientificum appellat."
are sufficiently justified by principles, the conclusions are necessary and truth is known with certainty. If, however, the principles or quiddities themselves are uncertain, there can be no certain demonstration, and this is the case in human affairs. Human affairs are contingent because the nature of the situation at hand and the nature of the action it calls for cannot be demonstrated with certainty. There is no definite quiddity and therefore no definite resolution ("demonstratio non potest esse de his quorum principia contingit se aliter habere"). As we will see in Chapter 4, such a judgment depends much more on experience than on demonstration. For this reason, in the De Veritate, Aquinas holds that contingencies insofar as they are contingent ("in contingentibus in quantum contingentia sunt") are necessarily excluded from the scientific part and are known by another power through a "certain conjecture."

Aquinas’s mature view stresses that being is the object of the intellect and that being includes the necessary as well as the contingent. His earlier view stresses that the intellect aims at a demonstration achieving certitude and that contingent objects which do not admit of such a demonstration must be known in another way. Now in his later writings Aquinas does not abandon the claim that contingent objects do

13 In VI Ethic, lect 4, n 1164: "Scientia est per demonstrationem . . . demonstratio non potest esse de his quorum principia contingit se aliter habere: aliter omnia quae ex principiis illis consequuntur possint aliter se habere. Non enim potest esse quod principia debilius esse habeant, quam ea quae sunt ex principiis."

14 De Ver, q 15, a 2, ad 3: "Sunt autem quaedam in quibus non est possibile talem resolutionem facere ut perveniat usque ad quod quid est, et hoc propter incertitudinem sui esse; sicut est in contingentibus in quantum contingentia sunt. Unde talia non cognoscuntur per quod quid est, quod erat proprium objectum intellectus, sed per alium modum, scilicet per quamdam conjecturam de rebus illis de quibus plena certitudo haberi non potest. Unde ad hoc alia potentia requiritur."
not admit of scientific demonstration. For he writes in the commentary on the

Ethics:

Since knowledge of contingencies cannot possess the certitude of truth repelling falsity; therefore, with regard to knowledge alone [i.e. theoretical knowledge which does not result in action], contingencies are passed over by the intellect which is perfected by the knowledge of truth.

(Quia contingentium cognitio non potest habere certitudinem veritatis repellentem falsitatem, ideo quantum ad solam cognitionem pertinet, contingentia praetermittuntur ab intellectu qui perficitur per cognitionem veritatis, In VI Ethic, lect 3, n 1152.)

Contingencies are not the object of theoretical inquiry, which must pass over or bracket ("praetermittuntur") accidents and variations in examples in order to work with abstractions which admit of demonstration. Thus, in his later thought, Aquinas affirms both the full universality of the intellect in its orientation toward being as well as the impossibility of achieving certitude with regard to contingencies. He has preserved the earlier analysis which had seemed to imply the necessity for two powers, while introducing new reasoning which unifies all inquiry in one intellect. In order to avoid a contradiction, Aquinas needed to rethink how contingencies are known.

He speaks to the knowledge of contingencies both in the Summa (I, q 79, a 9, ad 3) and in his commentary on the Ethics (IV, lect 1, nn 1118-23). In the text from the Summa he argues that knowledge of the necessary and contingent do not entail distinct forms of knowing rooted in distinct powers. Rather, the difference is one of degrees of perfection. Knowledge which apprehends necessities has "perfectum esse in veritate," whereas knowledge of contingencies is an imperfect and
less certain achievement, but nonetheless an imperfect example of knowledge. Aristotle, Aquinas asserts, was only trying tell us in the Ethics that our one intellect has an aptitude for both the perfect and imperfect cases of knowledge.¹⁵

In the commentary we get more details about the perfect and imperfect modes of knowing. He reasons that the contingent can be known in two ways. First, they can be known according to "universales rationes," i.e., abstract concepts, which are certain and subject to demonstration. This is the way in which the natural sciences proceed concerning objects which in their materiality are mutable and contingent. Indeed, it is one and the same intellectual capacity which knows contingencies abstractly and demonstrably and which knows necessities.¹⁶ Secondly, they can be known in their particularity and contingency without bracketing out the the unique accidents and variations in the object.

This mode of knowing requires the mediation of the sensitive powers which apprehend objects in their particularity. The ratio particularis, also called the vis cogitativa, is especially singled out as important because it functions as a kind of

¹⁵ST, I, q 79, a 9, ad 3: "Unde et necessaria, quae habent perfectum esse in veritate, perfecte cognoscit. . . . Contingentia vero imperfecte conoscit; sicut et habent imperfectum esse et veritatem. . . . Et ideo Philosophus posuit duas particulars animae, scientificum et ratiocinativum, non quia sunt duae potentiae; sed quia distinguishunt secundum diversam aptitudinem ad recipiendum diversos habitus, quorum diversitatem ibi inquirere intendit." This argument is repeated in In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1120).

¹⁶In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1123: "Hacc autem dubitatio de facili solvitur si quis consideret quod contingentia dupliciter cognosci possunt. Uno modo secundum rationes universales; alio modo secundum quod in particulari. Universales quidem igitur rationes contingentium immutabiles sunt, et secundum hoc de his demonstrationes dantur et ad scientias demonstrativas pertinet eorum cognitio. Non enim scientia naturalis solum est de rebus necessariis et incorruptibilibus, sed etiam de rebus corruptibilibus et contingentibus. Unde patet quod contingentia sic considerata ad eadem partem animae intellectivae pertinent ad quam et necessaria, quam Philosophus vocat hic scientificum; et sic procedunt rationes indactae."
judging faculty. Since this is a sensitive power, it is indeed distinct from the intellect which works with abstract concepts, but since it mediates between the intellect and material objects, it makes intelligent judgments of singulars possible. The judgment of the vis cogitativa applies to the singular as such and consequently cannot provide an universal and necessary premise for a syllogism. Its judgment of the contingent as contingent can serve, however, as the minor in a practical or operative syllogism. Thus, in reasoning about what to do in a specific situation, when accounting for the singular particularities of the situation is crucial to good judgment, the vis cogitativa proves vital. When Aristotle distinguishes the powers whose objects are the necessary and contingent, Aquinas argues, he is distinguishing the intellect and the vis cogitativa, i.e. the one human capacity for universal knowledge and the interior sense power, whose mediation makes possible an indirect intellectual knowledge of singulars.

Knowledge of the necessary and the contingent are not formally distinct in that knowing either is to know being. Yet in aspiring to achieve necessary demon-

17 In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1123: "Alio modo possunt accipi contingentia secundum quod sunt in particulari: et sic variabilia sunt nec cadit supra ea intellectus nisi mediantibus potentiiis sensitivis. Unde et inter partes animae sensitivas ponitur una potentia quae dicitur ratio particularis, sive vis cogitativa, quae est collativa intentionum particularium." We will discuss the vis cogitativa in detail in Chapter 4.

18 Cf. ST, I q 86, a 1, ad 2; ST, II-II, q 49, a 2, ad 1 & 3; In IV Sent, d 50, q 1, a 3, ad 3; In VI Ethic, lect 9, n 1247; In III De Anima, lect 16, n 845.

19 In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1123: "Sic autem hic accipit Philosophus contingentia: ita enim cadunt sub consilio et operatione. Et propter hoc ad diversas partes animae rationalis pertinere dicit necessaria et contingentis, sicut universalia speculabilia et particularia operabilia." Recall that even in the De Veritate, q 15, a 2, ad 3, Thomas used the phrase "sicut est in contingentibus in quantum contingentia sunt," leaving open the possibility that even in this early work he might have granted that the same intellectual power which Aristotle called scientific also held an abstract, demonstrative knowledge of contingencies. This reading would lessen the sharp contrast between the early and late texts, suggesting that there is only a change in emphasis.
strations, theoretical inquiry must abstract from the contingencies and particularities which distinguish diverse cases. Otherwise, demonstrations would lack universal application. Practical inquiry, however, must remain focused on contingent matters if one is to respond intelligently to each situation, and to do so one must depend on the vis cogitativa. Hence, in Aquinas's mature position the theoretical and practical are two orientations of one power, both aspiring to knowledge of being but in distinct ways. This common ground will prove significant in Chapter 4 when we consider practical wisdom and the vis cogitativa in greater detail. We will see that practical wisdom mediates between the universal good which one knows and the singular good which one does. Were the theoretical and practical rooted in separate powers, this mediation would be unlikely--the wisdom of the philosophers would cut be off from the affairs of life.

2.4 Derivative Modes of Distinction

Theoretical and practical inquiry differ essentially in their respective ends or perfections, true knowledge and good action. Yet Thomas also notes other significant differences between the two. There are four points of contrast to be made. First, theoretical reason aims toward necessary knowledge, whereas practical reason aims toward knowledge of contingencies. Second, theoretical reason is perfected in the universal, while practical reason is perfected in the singular. Third, theoretical reason takes the object known as the measure or standard of the truth, whereas in practical the idea or plan of action precedes the act and work and is their measure.
Finally, theoretical reason has its end and perfection in knowledge itself, but the practical culminates in an act of choice, a movement of the will toward action. These points of contrast are important to consider if we are to have clear understanding of how the study of ethics stands in relation to the theoretical and practical modes of inquiry. Moreover, by examining these various modes of differentiation, we can see that each relates back to the essential difference of ends.

2.4.1 Whether the Object is Necessary or Contingent

Aristotle’s comment from the Ethics quoted above (VI, 1, 1139a5-12) raised more than one problem for Aquinas. The text not only suggests that there are two powers for the two modes of inquiry, but also differentiates the modes in a significantly different manner than can be found in the De Anima and the Metaphysics. Are theoretical and practical inquiry distinguished because of diverse ends, the truth per se and action, or because as the Ethics reasons their objects, the necessary and the contingent, are formally distinct? Our clue in handling this problem lies in noticing that where Aristotle distinguishes between the scientific part (correlated with the necessary) and the calculative (correlated with the contingent), Aquinas relates his comments back to Book III (3, 1112a19-b10) and its discussion of deliberation. Calculation (ratiocinativa), Aquinas tells us, is another term for deliberation (consilium) because both refer to an open inquiry into contingent
matters. By examining what Aristotle says about deliberation, we can see the connection between the distinction of the necessary and contingent and the distinction of knowledge and action.

The discussion of deliberation in book 3 begins when Aristotle raises the question whether anything can be an appropriate object of deliberation or are only certain kinds of objects suitable (3, 1112a17). The deliberations of the foolish or insane are excluded because, as Aquinas explains, these may not indicate what we ought properly to deliberate about (In III Ethic, lect 7, n 459). On the other hand, those who reason well deliberate about matters which in their very nature admit of deliberation. To put it awkwardly but in a way which accommodates Thomas’s Latin, such objects are properly “deliberable” (consiliabilia). Of course, it is not enough to observe that some matters are and others are not appropriate objects of deliberation. There remains the need to characterize somehow what distinguishes one from the other. Thus, Aquinas comments on the five examples which Aristotle offers of things which cannot be deliberated about. Deliberation has the contingent as its object, but further clarification is needed since in considering these five examples, we find that both contingencies and necessities are excluded from deliberation (3,

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20 In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1118: "Imponit nomina praedictis partibus. Et dicit quod praedictarum partium animae rationalis, una quidem quae speculatur necessaria potest dici scientificum genus animae, quia de necessariis est scientia. Alia autem pars potest dici ratiocinativa, secundum quod ratiocinari et consiliari pro eodem sumitur. Nominat enim consilium quamdam inquisitionem nondum determinatam, sicut et ratiocinatio, quae quidem indeterminatio maxime accidit circa contingentia, de quibus solis est consilium."

21 In III Ethic, lect 7, n 459: "Sed illud vere dicitur consiliabile, quo consiliantur homines habentes intellectum recte dispositum. Tales enim non consiliantur nisi de rebus, quae in natura sua talia sunt ut de eis consilium haberl debeat, quae proprie dicuntur consiliabilia. Insipientes enim quandoque consiliantur etiam de his, quae in natura sua sunt talia ut de eis consilium haberl non debeat."
1112a17-30). Why are contingencies excluded? We find that human action is a special case of contingency and the specific concern of deliberation. Discussion of the five examples follows.

First, those who are disposed to understanding rightly ("habentes intellectum recte dispositum") do not deliberate about anything unchanging or eternal. This, Thomas explains, includes both immaterial beings such as angels and necessary truths like those which are found in geometry--i.e. the incommensurability of the diagonal of a square with its side. For although angels are in themselves immaterial and therefore intrinsically immutable, principles of geometry are immaterial and immutable only by way of an abstract consideration of quantity without regard for the material basis in which, for example, any square object would really exist. Hence, whether the necessity is due to the mode of understanding, as in natural science or mathematics, or due to the real immateriality of the thing, in either case the truth of the conclusions cannot be otherwise (In III Ethic, lect 7, n 460).

Secondly, it is not appropriate to deliberate about changes which occur in a consistent and uniform way, as for example the movements of the planets. For although there is change here, and hence some degree of contingency, the form of the change itself is immutable and fully determinate (ibid., n 461). Thirdly, it is unreasonable to deliberate about what happens for the most part, regularly and consistently, but not always. For instance, one anticipates normal weather patterns, say rain in the winter, or normal behavior consistent with a well known friend's personality, and yet finds that occasionally things go contrary to expectations (n 462).
In these cases there remains a determinate order or pattern in events, but it is not an immutable order. Despite discernable patterns or even probabilities, there is a degree of uncertainty. Thus, such events stand intermediate between the fully predictable and mere chance. Fourthly, neither do the reasonable deliberate about luck or good fortune (n 463).22

So Aristotle also excludes chance occurrences, i.e., simple contingencies, from the arena of deliberation. This might be somewhat puzzling since we have seen that calculation and deliberation are specifically oriented toward the contingent, in contradistinction to the scientific which is directed to the necessary. But with the fifth example we begin to see some light. For each of us there are always many human affairs which, although they are human and therefore matters of deliberation, are beyond the reach of our influence. Neither are these matters of deliberation for us. For instance, it often happens that one nation can exert no influence on the internal affairs of another nation and consequently has no deliberation about them (n 464).

We can see, therefore, that we deliberate not about contingencies per se, nor even about all human affairs, but only about what may or may not happen through

22 For Thomas's theory of necessity and contingency see ST, I, q 19, aa 3 & 8; q 22, a 4; q 115, aa 4 & 6. In brief, he argues that a substance and an accident attached to it may be caused by necessity, but the coincidence of two accidents need not be necessary. Thus, that a man be white may be necessary, but that he be white and musical together is not necessary. Thus, an effect which usually follows from a cause, need not happen in every case because the occurrence of some accident may hinder the usual effect. The sun usually has a certain effect on a plant, but an infestation can hinder this effect from occurring. The contingency is found in the coincidence of the conflicting causes on the plant, not in the effect of either one alone. ST, I, q 115, a 6: "Manifestum est autem quod causa impediens actionem alicuius causae ordinatae ad suum effectum ut in pluribus, concurrit ei interdum per accidens: unde talis concursus non habet causam, inquantum est per accidens. Et propter hoc, id quod ex tali concursu sequitur, non reducitur in aliquam causam praexistentem, ex qua ex necessitate sequatur."
our influence and agency. Deliberation is not directed to the weather or a role of
the dice, but to what is contingent relative to the one who deliberates. So in giving
his examples of the "non-deliberable," Aristotle progresses intentionally from the
highest degree of necessity to the greatest degree of contingency. Deliberation is
always excluded whenever our actions are irrelevant to the outcome, even if the
event in itself lacks necessity. Deliberation pertains to what we can achieve. The
object of deliberation is an object which is within our power to effect:

He asserts, as if concluding from premisses, what deliberation
concerns. And he says that we deliberate about operables which exist
"in us," i.e. within our power.

(Dicit quasi concludens ex praemissis, de quibus sit consilium. Et dicit,
quod consiliamur de operabilibus, quae "in nobis," idest in nostra
potestate existunt, In III Ethic, lect 7, n 465.)

Objects which are within our power to effect are, of course, contingent inasmuch as
any change depends on whether we act or not. The contingency in question is the
contingency of choice and of what can be otherwise if one acts or fails to act.
Weather patterns and chance events, though contingent, are not a function of human
choice. Thus, it is evident that Aristotle's correlation of practical reason with the
contingent derives from its relationship with human action.

The five examples also indicate why he correlates theoretical reason with
necessity. All the examples given are of things which can be known, but not chosen.
They indicate three modes of necessity. First, there is the necessity of the object
itself: given certain specified conditions (e.g, a vacuum), an object will fall to the

23 In VI Ethic, lect 4, n 1164: "Nullus consiliatur, neque de his quae sunt simpliciter impossibilia
aliter se habere, neque de his quae non sunt in potestate eius." Cf. ST, I-II, q 13, a 5; and a 6, ad 2.
earth at a fixed rate of acceleration. Second, there is the necessity derived from abstract demonstration. The necessity of geometric proofs derives from our ability to reason about quantity in abstraction from materiality. Third, there is the necessity of contingent facts relative to the knower: the weather for today could have been otherwise than it is, but that it is hot is beyond my control and therefore a necessary fact of my day. The object of deliberation is never necessary relative to the one who deliberates, but always contingent insofar as what comes to pass depends on his or her choice. Theoretical reason aims toward truths beyond our power to effect, and practical reason aims toward doing what can be done. Thus, the distinction made in the Ethics is derived from the distinction made in the De Anima and Metaphysics.

2.4.2 Whether the object is Universal or Singular

Closely related to our discussion of the necessary and contingent is Aquinas’s point that theoretical inquiry is perfected in the universal, while the practical is perfected in the singular. In Aquinas’s view the intellect is a spiritual power, meaning that it is immaterial. We discover this immateriality by reflecting on the abstract character of human knowledge. Ideas are always abstract because they always have a one-to-many relationship with things. That is, there is always at least the potential for an idea to have two or more referents. We know by abstracting

24 For this third case see ST, I, q 19, a 3 where Aquinas discusses necessity "ex suppositione": "Supposito enim quod [Socrates] sedeat, necesse est eum sedere dum sedet." The point is not that Socrates could not be standing, but that he cannot violate the principle of non-contradiction.
from the material and individuating conditions of an object's existence. Now since the term of theoretical inquiry is knowledge itself and not some action, it aims at the universal or conceptual. It aims at truths which will be relevant at diverse times and places and applicable universally (like the rate of acceleration for bodies falling to the earth). Practical inquiry, on the other hand, remains imperfect or incomplete unless it culminates in an action. Actions are relevant to the unique circumstances of specific situations, to what is actually the case, and to the singular:

Theoretical and practical cognition differ in that theoretical cognition and those things which pertain to it are perfected in the universal; but things which pertain to practical cognition are perfected in the particular. For the end of theoretical cognition is truth, which primarily and essentially consists in the immaterial and universal. The end of the practical, however, is an action which relates to the singular. Hence, a doctor does not cure a human being in the universal, but this man, and to this the whole science of medicine has been directed.

(Haec est differentia inter cognitionem speculativam et practicam, quod cognitio speculativa, et ea quae ad ipsum pertinent, perficiuntur in universali; ea vero quae pertinent ad cognitionem practicam, perficiuntur in particulari: nam finis speculativae est veritas, quae primo et per se in immaterialibus consistit et in universalibus; finis vero practicae est operatio, quae est circa singularia. Unde medicus non curat hominem in universali, sed hunc hominem: et ad hoc est tota scientia medicinae ordinata, SCG, III, 75.)

We see in this comment something of the existential character of Aquinas's metaphysics. Esse (a particular thing's act of existing) is always singular, one, and never universal or general. The science of medicine is only concerned with general theories of human physiology and health inasmuch as it is concerned with preserving the health of this or that person. People do not acquire medical knowledge for the sake of knowledge, but for the sake of affecting the health of an existing person. So
time and again Thomas insists that action must reach to the singular because only there will being be affected:

For the theoretical intellect considers something to be true or false universally, which is simple or absolute consideration. However, the practical intellect [considers] by applying [knowledge] to the particular action, since an action is in the particulars.

(Nam intellectus speculativus considerat aliquod verum esse vel falsum in universali, quod est considerare simpliciter: intellectus autem practicus applicando ad particulare operabile, quia operatio in particularibus est, In III De Anima, lect 12, n 780.)

Indeed, Aquinas held to this position so strongly that he felt compelled to argue against the Arabic philosophers that God's knowledge extends to singulars in their materiality. Otherwise, God's knowledge would not reach to the real in its concrete situation, and God would not have providence in human affairs. Rather, he would have an imperfect knowledge of them.

Above we discussed the importance of the vis cogitativa for our judgment of singulars. Our intellects do not know realities fully and exhaustively, but only through abstract concepts. Thus, it is only through the mediation of this and other sense powers that we can indirectly know singular and material realities. For this reason, the vis cogitativa will prove crucial to our discussion of practical wisdom in Chapter 4. Practical wisdom perfects our ability to make judgments of contingent

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25 Cf. Ibid., lect 16, nn 845-46; ST, II-II, q 47, a 3; In VI Ethic, lect 6 n 1194.

26 SCG, I, 65: "Practica autem cognitio non est perfecta nisi ad singularia perveniat: nam practicae cognitionis finis est operatio quae in singularibus est. Divina igitur cognitio quam de alis rebus habet se usque ad singularia extendit."

27 ST, II-II, q 47, a 3, ad 1: "Intellectus per quandam reflectionem se ad materiam extendit."
and singular circumstances which do not admit of certain demonstration.

2.4.3 The Measure of Truth and Principle of Being

Theoretical and practical inquiry differ in their relationship to being because the one is the recipient and the other the origin of what is. Thomas begins his commentary on Aristotle's Ethics with a succinct but incisive division of our intellectual labors. He begins by observing that it belongs to the wise person to order ("sapientis est ordinare," I, lect 1, n 1). Wisdom, he explains, is the greatest perfection of reason, and it is proper to reason to know order. By reasoning well one grasps relationships of priority, dependency and unity in a larger whole. One grasps the nature of things. Thomas goes on to say that the relationship of order to reason is fourfold. First, there is an order which reason discerns and reflects on but does not produce ("non facit, sed solum considerat"). Through its considerations, reason also produces order and in three distinct contexts. First, reason puts order into its own concepts as when a scientist or philosopher writes an argument. Second, reason puts order into matter through the plastic arts and other productive endeavors such as architecture. Third, there is an order which the will receives from reason.

28 Frank Yartz writes: "Order means relation, unity, distinction, individuality. There cannot be order if there are not distinct individual things. There cannot be order if the individuals are not related, that is, if in some sense they cannot be looked at as a unity." See his "Order and Right Reason in Aquinas' Ethics," Medieval Studies 37 (1975), 410-11. Cf. In I Sent, d 20, q 1, a 3, sol 1.

29 In I Ethic, lect 1, n 1: "Ordo autem quadrupliciter ad rationem comparatur. Est enim quidam ordo quem ratio non facit, sed solum considerat, sicut est ordo rerum naturalium. Alius autem est ordo, quem ratio considerando facit in proprio actu, puta cum ordinat conceptus suos ad invicem, et signa conceptuum, quia sunt voces significativae. Tertius autem est ordo quem ratio considerando facit in operationibus voluntatis. Quartus autem est ordo quem ratio considerando facit in exterioribus rebus, quorum ipsa est causa, sicut in arca et domo."
Thus, Thomas has conveniently distinguished the liberal arts (e.g., rhetoric, logic), the plastic arts and the ethical order which forms human character ("order quem ratio considerando facit in operationibus voluntatis"). Moreover, he has established that all three of these areas of concern are practical insofar as in each the order is something produced. In contra-distinction to this production of order is the theoretical endeavor to apprehend an existing order. Theoretical inquiry aims to receive the order or intelligibility of being; practical reason aims to produce it. As we move through the chapters of the dissertation, it will become increasingly clear that the mode of reasoning which brings order to one’s will and character is the primary analogue of practical reason. The plastic and liberal arts are practical only by analogy to this primary case. In this section we will remain focused on the basic distinction between apprehending and producing order.

This analysis of In I Ethic, lect 1, n 1 can be verified in other texts where Thomas also speaks of practical reason as causing or making something. The immanent form or order in something achieved through a human operation has its origin in practical knowledge, and the form in cognition stands as cause to the form in the thing known. In theoretical knowledge the opposite holds. In this case, the form achieved in cognition finds its ultimate cause in the thing known and in the form preexisting in the thing prior to understanding. Consequently, human practical reason is akin to God’s knowledge of his works. For in both human

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30 De Ver, q 8, a 11: "Quamvis non sit ita de formis nostri intellectus, quae se habent duplicite: uno modo ut causae rerum, sicut formae practici intellectus; alio modo sicut causatae a rebus, sicut formae intellectus speculativi, quibus naturalia speculamur." See also De Ver, q 2, a 3, ad 1, and SCG, I, 65.
practical knowledge and divine knowledge, understanding precedes and grounds the
being of the thing.\textsuperscript{31}

When reason and knowledge produce order, they are the cause and measure
of that order, but when reason merely apprehends an existing order, the order or
being itself is the cause and measure of the knowledge. The relationship is reversed
with regard to the order of dependency:

Things relate to the practical and theoretical intellects differently. For
the practical intellect causes things, and hence is the measure of things
which are done through it. But the theoretical intellect, which receives
from things, is somehow moved by things themselves, and thus things
measure it. \ldots Thus the divine intellect is measuring, not measured,
whereas natural things are measuring and measured; but our intellect
is measured [by], not measuring [of] natural things, but only [of] arti-
ficial things.

(Res aliter comparatur ad intellectum practicum, aliter ad
speculativum. Intellectus enim practicus causat res, unde est
mensuratio rerum quae per ipsum fiunt: sed intellectus speculativus,
quia accipit a rebus, est quodammodo motus ab ispis rebus, et ita res
mensurat ipsum. \ldots Sic ergo intellectus divinus est mensurans non
mensuratus; res autem naturalis, mensurans et mensurata; sed
intellectus noster est mensuratus, non mensurans quidem res naturales,
sed artificiales tantum, \textit{De Ver}, q 1, a 2. Cf. \textit{In I Periherm}, lect 3, nn
7-8.)

I take Thomas's use of "measure" in this context to be similar to the notion
of exemplar, as that which something aims to imitate and become like.\textsuperscript{32} Practical

\textsuperscript{31}\textit{De Ver}, q 2, a 8: "Deus habet cognitionem de rebus creatis per modum quo artifex cognoscit
artificialia, qui est artificialiorum causa. Unde in contraria habitudine habet se illa cognitio ad res
cognitas, et nostra cognitio: nostra enim cognitio, quia est a rebus accepts, natura later est posterior
rebus; cognitio autem Creatoris de creaturis, et artificis de artificialis naturaliter praecedit res cognitas." See also \textit{De Ver}, q 3, a 3, ad 7; \textit{SCG}, I, 65; \textit{In I Periherm}, lect 3, nn 7-8.

\textsuperscript{32}\textit{De Ver}, q 8, a 11: "Si autem per formas artis faceret materiam et formam, tunc forma illa
exemplar esset formae et materiae."
knowledge is a measure in the sense that it guides one’s actions and informs what one does. An examplar differs from the actual producing cause. The exemplar is the standard against which one’s endeavor and its outcome are measured, but the producing cause brings the work into actual existence. God is practical in both regards, but human beings may hold back from action and actual production. Thus, practical knowledge is not necessarily the direct efficient cause of that which exemplifies it. Indeed, it is necessary to distinguish knowledge from an operation through which some likeness of the knowledge is produced. For example, an architect designs the blueprints, but need not be involved in the on-site construction. We should recall, however, that it is the nature of practical knowledge to be ordered to some work or performance. Its essential characteristic is that it ends in the production of some actually existing order extrinsic to itself. Although practical knowledge can be distinguished from the execution of that knowledge, it cannot be denied that the execution is the end and purpose of practical inquiry. When practical reason stops short of action, it is not practical in the full sense of the term—a point we will come back to time and again.

Aquinas defines truth as a relationship of likeness (adaequatio, similitudo) between knowledge and the thing known (ST, I, q 16, a 1; De Ver, q 1, a 1). What

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33 In I Sent, d 8, q 1, a 2: "Et ideo esse divinum dicitur esse omnium rerum, a quo omne esse creatum effective et exemplariter manat."

34 Aquinas says as much at In VI Meta, lect 1, n 1153: "Hoc autem principium rerum artificialium, quod est in faciente, est primo intellectus, qui primo artem adinvenit; et secundo ars, quae est habitus intellectus; et terto aliquia potencia exequens, sicut potentia motiva, per quam artifex exequitur conceptionem artis."
we have discussed, however, shows that the standards of truth are opposite in practical and theoretical reason. In theoretical inquiry truth is found in the conformity of the intellect with what is known, but practical truth is found in the conformity of the work with the idea (De Ver, q 3, a 2: "Per formam excogitatem artifex intelligit quid operandum sit."). Thus, there is a passive aspect to theoretical inquiry ("consistit in assimilatione passiva"), which is not found in practical inquiry. The theoretical aims to receive what is, whereas the practical aims to create truth by bringing the likeness of the intended idea into existence. 35

We can now understand why Thomas sometimes asserts that human knowledge of nature is necessarily theoretical. For the principles or forms of natural things are originally in the mind of God; secondly, they are immanent within the natures themselves, and finally they are apprehended in human cognition. 36 Our knowledge of nature consists in a passive assimilation. However, the forms of artificial things have their origin in the human intellect, and secondly become intrinsic constituents of the artifacts. There is a complementarity between theoretical inquiry and nature (and metaphysics), as there is between practical inquiry and things social. Thus Aquinas begins his commentary on the Politics by observing:

It is evident that human reason of natural things is cognitive only; but it is both cognitive and productive of artificial things. Hence, it is necessary that human sciences which concern natural phenomena are theoretical, but those which concern things done by humans are

35 De Ver, q 2, a 8, ad 2: "Cognitio quae accipitur a rebus cognitis, consistit in assimilatione passiva, per quam cognoscens assimilatur rebus cognitis prius existentibus; sed cognitio quae est causa rerum cognitarum, consistit in assimilatione activa, per quam cognoscens assimilat sibi cognitum."

36 See De Ver, q 2, a 8; ST, I, q 16, a 1; In Politic, proemium, n 1.
practical or operative in imitation of nature.

(Patet quod ratio humana eorum quae sunt secundum naturam est cognoscitiva tantum: eorum vero quae sunt secundum artem, est et cognoscitiva et factiva: unde oportet quod scientiae humanae, quae sunt de rebus naturalibus, sint speculativa; quae vero sunt de rebus ab homine factis, sint practicae sive operativae secundum imitationem naturae, In Politic, prooemium, n 2.)

Indeed, from this discussion an interesting definition of nature can be formulated: nature is that order or form subsisting independently of the knower which does not derive its formal principle from the preexisting practical cognition of any human being. Thus, to inquire into nature as such is to inquire theoretically.

Our thesis is that Thomas understands theoretical and practical cognition to differ essentially in that their ends differ. We have now examined important implications of this position for the relationship of cognition to being and for the notion of truth. Since theoretical inquiry has its end in the apprehension of truth, it is ordered to being not as origin or principle, but as recipient. Again, since it is ordered to being as recipient, it aims at truth not by rendering being like itself, but by assimilating itself to being. On the other hand, practical inquiry aims at work, that is, at producing some order. Consequently, it is ordered to being as origin and

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37 Cf. In VI Meta, lect 1, n 1153: "Quod autem scientia naturalis non sit factiva, patet; quia principium scientiarum factivarum est in faciente, non in facto, quod est artificiatum; sed principium motus rerum naturalium est in ipsis rebus naturalibus."

38 Cf. ST, I, q 16, a 1: "Res autem intellecta ad intellectum aliquem potest habere ordinem vel per se, vel per accidens. Per se quidem habet ordinem ad intellectum a quo dependet secundum suum esse: per accidens autem ad intellectum a quo cognoscibilis est. Sicut si dicamus quod domus comparatur ad intellectum artificis per se, per accidens autem comparatur ad intellectum a quo non dependet. Judicium autem de re non sumitur secundum id quod inest ei per accidens, sed secundum id quod inest ei per se. Unde unaquaque res dicitur vera absolute, secundum ordinem ad intellectum a quo dependet."
principle and achieves truth by assimilating being to itself. Practical knowledge may provide the measure or examplary cause of being, but no knowledge or reasoning is fully practical unless it culminates in the action itself. The action is the singular, contingent cause of being.

2.4.4 Whether the Intellect Moves the Will

Aquinas sometimes states that practical inquiry moves the will, while theoretical does not. Theoretical inquiry culminates in knowledge, a judgment, not a determination to do something. Still, human action is reasoned and freely chosen; thus if practical reason has its end in action, it also has its end in the choice to act. Therefore, consideration of practical reason leads us to think about the relationship between the intellect and will, specifically about the relationship between practical judgment and choice. We have seen that practical reason conceives of the exemplar or measure of what is to be done or made, but that conceiving the exemplar is not enough. Practical reason determines not only what we do and how, but also urges that we do it. It is complete only in the act of choice. Thus, Aquinas says that practical inquiry has a twofold conclusion:

The conclusion of practical inquiry is twofold: one which is in reason, namely opinion [sententia] which is the judgment concerning matters deliberated on, but another which is in the will, and choice is of this sort. And [choice] is called a conclusion due to a certain similitude because as the term in theoretical [inquiry] stands in the conclusion, thus in operative [inquiry] the term stands in the operation.

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39 In II Sent, d 24, q 2, a 1 and ad 2; d 38, q 1, a 3; De Ver, q 15, a 3; ST, I-II, q 9, a 1, ad 2; In III De Anima, lect 14, nn 813-16; lect 15, nn 820-23; In VI Ethic, lect 2, nn 1128-29, 1135.
There are several observations to be made about this comment. First, he identifies the initial conclusion as a *sententia*. This refers to the practical judgment, as he states explicitly in similar passage in the *Summa*. He calls it an opinion because, as we have discussed, the contingent and singular objects of practical reason lack the certainty of scientific demonstrations. Second, as the judgment is rooted in the faculty of reason, so the choice is an act of the will. Judgment is the culmination of the deliberation process, but choice is the determination to act. Third, choice is called a conclusion of practical reasoning because practical reason has its term in action, as theoretical has its term in judgment. Finally, this text suggests that the practical judgment mediates between deliberation and choice, and so it will be helpful to think about the relationship between the practical judgment and the act of choice.

Our concern here is not a comprehensive examination of judgment, but to make several observations which will help clarify Thomas’s discussion of judgment and choice. First, then, from the *Sentences* to his late works Aquinas consistently distinguishes two cognitional acts, understanding and judgment, which working together culminate in the achievement of truth. His view is that the initial act of

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40 *ST*, I-II, q 13, a 1, ad 2: "Conclusio etiam syllogismi qui fit in operabilibus, ad rationem pertinet; et dicitur sententia vel judicium, quam sequitur electio. Et ob hoc ipsa conclusio pertinere videtur ad electionem, tanquam ad consequens."
understanding apprehends the quiddity or essence of a thing, and that the judgment reflects upon this initial apprehension in order to know its conformity with the immanent form of the thing, so as to affirm or negate the initial understanding and thereby know truth. For knowing truth, he states, is to know the conformity itself ("Unde conformitatem cognoscere est cognoscere veritatem," ST, I, q 16, a 2.). Therefore, one’s achievement of truth (or slip into error) comes only with the judgment which affirms the agreement of understanding with what is:

And therefore truth and falsity are only in this second operation of the intellect inasmuch as the intellect has not only a likeness of the thing understood, but also reflects upon that likeness, by judging and knowing it.

(Et ideo in hac sola secunda operatione intellectus est veritas et falsitas, secundum quam non solam intellectus habet similitudinem rei intellectae, sed etiam super ipsam similitudinem reflectitur, cognoscendo et dijudicando ipsam, In VI Meta, lect 4, n 1236.)

To judge and know the likeness means to affirm that one’s understanding is true—that it stands in agreement with what is. Thus, judgment consists in an act of affirmation or denial:

Then, however, the intellect judges concerning the thing apprehended when it pronounces that something is or is not, which is the intellect composing and dividing.

(Tunc autem judicat intellectus de re apprehensa quando dicit quod aliquid est vel non est, quod est intellectus componentis et dividentis, De Ver, q 1, a 3.)

41 Cf. In I Sent, d 19, q 5, a 1, ad 7; d 38, q 1, a 3; De Ver, q 1, a 3; q 14, a 1; In Lib Boeth de Trin, q 5, a 3; In I Periherm, lect 3, n 9; ST, I, q 16, a 2.

42 Since the judgment affirms what is, Aquinas correlates it with esse (as he correlates understanding with essence): In I Sent, d 38, q 1, a 3: "Alia [operatio] autem comprehendit esse rei, componendo (continued...)
Aquinas insists on the need for both acts, understanding and judgment, in both theoretical and practical inquiry. Often times his discussion does not distinguish which mode of inquiry is at issue, leaving the impression that the analysis applies to both. At other times, he is explicitly concerned with one or the other. When he is addressing practical inquiry, he correlates these two acts to three virtues which Aristotle introduces in the *Ethics* (eubouilia in *NE*, VI, 10, 1142a35; synesis 11, 1143a1, and gnome 11, 1143a20). Aquinas argues that eubouilia is a virtue perfecting deliberation (which is what understanding is called in practical reason) and that synesis and gnome are two distinct virtues perfecting judgment:

In theoretical [inquiry] in which there is no action, there are only two operations of reason, namely, to discover through inquiry and to judge what has been discovered. Indeed these two operations are also of practical reason, whose inquiry is deliberation (which pertains to eubouilia); whereas judgment concerning the matters deliberated on pertains to synesis.

(In speculativis, in quibus non est actio, est solum duplex opus rationis: scilicet invenire inquiringo, et de inventis judicare. Et haec quidem duo opera sunt rationis practiceae, cuius inquisitio est consilium, quod pertinet ad eubuliam, judicium autem de consiliatis pertinet ad synesim, *In VI Ethic*, lect 9, n 1239.)

In this passage Thomas justifies the need for two of the virtues which Aristotle posited--eubouilia or good deliberation and synesis or perceptiveness and good

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42 (...continued)


43 Cf. *ST*, I-II, q 57, a 6; II-II, q 47, a 8; q 51, aa1-4; *De Virt Card*, q 1, a 1; *In VI Ethic*, lect 1, n 1128; lect 6, n 1199; lect 8, n 1226; *In III Ethic*, lect 9, nn 484, 486; lect 13, nn 518-20. Gnome is also a virtue perfecting the practical judgment; there is no need to discuss it here.
judgment--by grounding each in distinct operations of the cognitional process. The virtue of good deliberation is grounded in inquiry which aims at discovery. This discovery, as we have seen, will be an exemplar, a practical concept which serves as guide and measure of operation. Yet deliberation by itself lacks closure, that is, it is not yet completed and brought to a conclusion. Deliberation presents possibilities for what to do, but does not resolve on one course. Good judgment is grounded in the act of judgment which evaluates the exemplar which has been discovered ("de inventis judicare"). The judgment brings deliberation to a close by affirming what ought to be done, but not as we have seen by achieving the rational certitude which can be found in the sciences. How this judgment is made will be discussed in Chapter 4. What is important here is to consider the relationship between the judgment which brings deliberation to a close and choice.

Electio (choice) is the Latin term which William of Moerbeke used to translate Aristotle’s important term, prohairesis (NE, 3, 2, 1111b5). Aristotle distinguishes choice from his more generic notion of voluntary action. Even children and animals act voluntarily--their principle of motion lies within--yet they do not act from choice. Similarly, the morally weak or incontinent act voluntarily, are responsible for their actions and yet do not choose (2, 1111b5-15). As Thomas comments:

We say that things which we do impulsively are voluntary because in fact the principle is in us; these actions, however, are not said to be according to choice because we have not acted with deliberation.

(Ea quae repente facimus dicimus esse voluntaria, quia scilicet principium in nobis est; non autem dicuntur esse secundum electionem,
Choice, then, is a specific form of voluntary action, one informed by deliberation. Hence, choice is a *voluntarium praeconsiliatum*, a pre-deliberated voluntary act, and therefore is an act of the *appetitus rationalis*, an act of the will specified by reason. Indeed, the etymological meanings of both *prohairesis* and *electio* suggest this deliberative element in choice. For *prohairesis* suggests that one thing is preferred before (pro) another, and *electio* suggests that one thing is chosen from (ex) among others. Yet any act of comparison or ranking in order of preference is an act of reason since it belongs to reason to prioritize and find order. Hence, there can be no choice without a prior deliberation.

Now since choice requires a preceding deliberation, it follows that the object of choice and deliberation are the same. Indeed, the same criteria which we have seen to limit the possible objects of deliberation also limit the possible objects of choice. That is, just as only those objects which fall within one’s power can be deliberated about, so only these can be chosen. More to the point, in any particular choice the objects of deliberation and choice are one, so that what judgment affirms from the deliberation the will moves toward. Thus, choice is

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44 *In III Ethic*, lect 6, n 457: "Non tamen omne voluntarium est eligibile . . . sed voluntarium praeconsiliatum . . . Consilium est actus rationis, et ipsa electio oportet quod sit cum actu rationis et intellectus." For "appetitus rationalis" see *In III Ethic*, lect 9, n 486.


possible only when deliberation is brought to term in a practical judgment, for only in practical judgment is there an actual preference for one option over another. The affirmation or denial of practical judgment makes choice possible. In his commentary on the Ethics, Thomas brings these various pieces of the analysis together:

[Aristotle] shows how the operations of the two remaining, namely, the intellect and appetite, can cooperate. And he shows first how their acts are proportionate. For in judging the intellect has two acts, i.e., affirmation by which it assents to the true, and negation by which it dissents from the false. These two correspond proportionally to two acts in the appetitive power, i.e., pursuit by which the appetite tends to the good and inhaeret in it, and flight by which it withdraws from the bad and dissents from it. And according to this the intellect and appetite can conform, inasmuch as that which the intellect affirms as good appetite pursues, and that which intellect denies to be good the appetite avoids.

(Ostendit quomodo opera duorum reliquirum, scilicet intellectus et appetitus, possunt adinvicem concordare. Et primo ostendit quomodo eorum actus sunt sibi proportionabiles. Intellectus enim in iudicando habet duos actus, scilicet affirmationem qua assentit vero, et negationem qua dissentit a falso. Quibus duobus respondent duo proporcionabiliter in vi appetitiva, scilicet prosecutio qua appetitus tendit in bonum et inhaeret ei, et fuga qua recedit a malo et dissentit ei. Et secundum hoc intellectus et appetitus possunt conformari, inquantum id quod intellectus affirmat bonum appetitus prosequitur, et id quod intellectus negat esse bonum appetitus fugit, In VI Ethic, lect 2, n 1128.)

In this comment Thomas first states the issue, namely, whether the acts of the intellect and will can cooperate in the act of choice. This convergence of acts requires that the acts of intellect and will be somehow proportionate to each other ("quomodo eorum actus sunt sibi proportionabiles"), and he locates this proportionality by appealing to the two possible concluding acts of judgment, affirmation and
negation. For these specifically converge with the will in its movement toward or away from some good. Aquinas's general and often repeated doctrine on the relation of intellect and will is that the intellect informs or specifies the will by apprehending the good which the will moves toward. That is, the intellect moves the will formally: it specifies the object which the will assents to (see ST, I-II, q 9, a 1 and De Ver, q 22, a 13). This text clarifies this point by specifically correlating the affirmation and negation of judgment with the act of choice to pursue or avoid some object.

This analysis of the relationship between the practical judgment and choice is confirmed by a number of other texts both in the commentary on the Ethics and elsewhere. In the Sentences Aquinas states that free choice participates as it were in judgment because judgment is not of the will per se ("ad liberum arbitrium pertinet judicium quasi participative, quia per se voluntatis non est judicare," In II Sent, d 24, q 2, a 4, ad 2). In the Summa Theologiae it is pointed out again that only practical cognition and not theoretical moves the will (ST, I-II, q 9, a 1, ad 2). Appeal is made to the universality of reason in order to argue that choice is free. For the will is able to tend toward anything which reason can apprehend as good (ST, I-II, q 13, a 6). Finally, it is argued that reason apprehends something as good through a practical judgment. Although this conclusion is distinct form the act of

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47 Cf. In III Ethic, lect 9, n 484: "Ideo determinatio consilii praecedit electionem, quia oportet, quod post inquisitionem consilii sequatur judicium de inventis per consilium. Et tunc primo eligitur id quod prius est iudicium." See also ST, II-II, q 47, a 8.
choice, it is related and may be confused with choice since choice follows upon it.\textsuperscript{48}

As we will discuss in Chapter 4, Thomas follows Aristotle in distinguishing the practical judgment and the practical command (praecipere; cf. \textit{ST}, II-II, q 47, a 8). These acts can be distinguished as knowing what ought to be done here and now and exhorting one's self to do it. The judgment settles on what is best, and the command resolves that we do it. The distinction is an important one because one may succeed in judgment but falter in the resolve to do it. One may know, but not act. Nonetheless, the command does not differ from the judgment in what it urges. That is, the command urges what judgment affirms or denies. Thus, in \textit{In VI Ethic}, lect 2, n 1128 translated above, Thomas is content to relate judgment with choice, not introducing Aristotle's third act, the command. This is because the conclusion of deliberation in judgment determines what is commanded of the will. That one acts is ultimately an act of choice.

In Aquinas's faculty psychology the cooperation between the intellect and the will is a complex and very detailed topic. We have merely explored the territory and established some key points which will prepare us for later consideration of practical wisdom. Aquinas distinguishes the acts of understanding and judgment in both theoretical and practical inquiry, but the practical judgment is distinct from the theoretical judgment in important ways. The practical judgment, unlike the

\textsuperscript{48}ST, I-II, q 13, a 1, ad 2: "Conclusio etiam syllogismi qui fit in operabilibus, ad rationem pertinet; et dicitur sententia vel judicium, quam sequitur electio. Et ob hoc ipsa conclusio pertinere videtur ad electionem, tanquam ad consequens." Cf. ibid., a 3: "Electio consequitur sententiam vel judicium, quod est sicut conclusio syllogismi operativi. Unde illud cadit sub electione, quod se habet ut conclusio in syllogismo operabilium." Cf. too \textit{De Ver}, q 15, a 3.
theoretical, has as its object the contingent, singular action which becomes the commanded object of choice. Practical reason commands the will insofar as its judgment affirms what ought to be done or avoided. Still, a command about pursuit or avoidance is not yet pursuit or avoidance itself. Hence, the practical judgment and command remain distinct from the volitional act itself; we are moved to action by the will. Yet without this judgment there could be no reasoned choice. Thus, Thomas states:

Hence, it is manifest that reason somehow precedes the will and orders its act, since the will tends to its own object according to the order of reason because the apprehensive power presents the appetitive with its own object.

(Manifestum est autem quod ratio quodammodo voluntatem praecedet, et ordinat actum eius: inquantum scilicet voluntas in suum objectum tendit secundum ordinem rationis, eo quod vis apprehensiva appetitivae suum objectum repraesentat, ST, I-II, q 13, a 1.)

Aquinas returns here to the theme of order, the theme, as we have seen, which he uses to introduce his commentary on the Ethics. Reason brings order to the will by presenting the object of choice ("voluntas in suum objectum tendit secundum ordinem rationis"), and the will receives this order in choosing.

2.5 Theoretical and Practical Science

We have distinguished two kinds of inquiry or cognitive processes, contrasted by their diverse intentions toward distinct ends. We can now turn to Thomas's treatment of scientia (using the term not generically as "knowledge" but deliberately as "science"). Science stands to inquiry both as its term, the intended end, and as the
habitual context within which new inquiry arises. Science tends toward conceptual formality, complexity and internal coherence, and to the extent that these are achieved, it is universal and abstract, not an apprehension of the singular. It would seem then to be excluded from the practical altogether since the practical aims not toward abstract conceptual clarity but action. Still, Aquinas admits of practical as well as theoretical science. He does so because he uses the terms practical and theoretical analogically.

To explore this we must distinguish primary and secondary cases of these two modes of reasoning. We have been discussing the primary cases thus far, but now in turning to the question of science we will focus on types of knowledge which are theoretical and practical only by analogy to the primary cases. The importance of this lies for us in the question of ethics. Through this analysis, we can clarify in what way ethics is practical. Moreover, in considering Thomas's treatment of this question, an important theme emerges: practical reason is an extension of theoretical reason into the arena of action. Thus, the distinction between these two modes betrays its common ground in human intelligence, bearing fruit first in knowledge and second in action. It is by losing sight of this common ground that the distinction between the theoretical and practical becomes problematic in philosophy, compelling philosophers like Kant or Heidegger to disparage metaphysics in order to compensate for thinkers like Descartes who minimized practical philosophy and the existential self.

To begin this discussion, we can note that Thomas gives us three categories of knowledge: theoretical, practical and mixed. This last category means that the
science has in different respects something of both; it is "secundum aliquid speculativa et secundum aliquid practica." Let us discuss these three one at a time. First, then, Thomas argues that some knowledge is absolutely theoretical with no practical aspect involved. This is the case when the object being considered does not admit of deliberation. Recall that we properly deliberate only about something which falls within our power to change. In the *Sentences* absolutely theoretical knowledge is said to include knowledge which cannot be taken as a rule governing any human operation and knowledge of immaterial beings like angels. Knowledge which implies no insights into good human conduct and knowledge of something which cannot be acted on and changed are necessarily theoretical. Recall too that Aquinas sometimes singles out knowledge of natural phenomena as a key instance of theoretical knowledge. In Aquinas's period in history, nature was taken very much as something to understand, not to control. Accordingly, he also states in the *De Veritate* that, as in the case of natural events (e.g., the motions of the planets), knowledge of things that cannot be produced by a human knower is absolutely theoretical. The same point is made a third time in the *Summa Theologiae.*

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49. *ST,* I, q 14, a 16: "Aliqua scientia est speculativa tantum, aliquia practica tantum, aliqua vero secundum aliquid speculativa et secundum aliquid practica. Ad eius evidentiam, sciendum est quod aliqua scientia potest dici speculativa tripliciter."

50. *In III Sent,* d 23, q 2, a 3, sol 2: "Contingit autem quandoque quod verum ipsum quod in se considerabatur, non potest considerari ut regula operis, sicut accidit in mathematicis, et in his quae a motu separata sunt; unde huiusmodi veri consideratio est tantum in intellectu speculative." Cf. *In III De Anima,* lect 14, n 813 where an example from mathematics is also given.

51. *De Ver,* q 3, a 3: "Quando vero nullo modo est ad actum ordinabilis cognitio, tunc est semper speculativa; quod etiam dupliciter contingit. Uno modo, quando cognitio est de rebus illis quae non sunt natae produci per scientiam cognoscentis, sicut nos cognoscimus naturalia."
Sometimes the object causes the knowledge to be theoretical, as when it is not practicable in relation to the knower, and such is the case in human knowledge of both natural and divine matters. In these cases the knowledge is absolutely theoretical.\(^{52}\)

Secondly, some knowledge is absolutely practical with no theoretical aspect. He argues, for instance, that knowledge is actually practical when the artist fully intends to produce her conception of the work in matter so that the artistic form becomes the actual form of a material thing.\(^{53}\) He asserts too that only by extension to work is knowledge made practical ("Unde sola extensio ad opus facit aliquem intellectum esse practicum." De Ver, q 14, a 4).\(^{54}\) Finally, we also read: "But when [knowledge] is directed to the end of operation, it is absolutely practical." ("Cum vero ordinatur ad finem operationis, est simpliciter practica," ST, I, q 14, a 16.)

Thus, any cognitive operation which stops short of action is less than practical in the full sense of the term.

We will see in Chapter 4 that, absolutely speaking, practical reasoning cannot become a science. This point will prove crucial to our understanding of practical wisdom. There are, of course, theoretical sciences, such as mathematics, that study objects beyond any reasonable human deliberation. Theology is such a science inas-

\(^{52}\)ST, I, q 14, a 16: "Primo ex parte rerum scitarum, quae non sunt operabiles a sciente; sicut est scientia hominis de rebus naturalibus vel divinis...Scientia igitur quae est speculativa ratione ipsius rei scitae, est speculativa tantum."

\(^{53}\)De Ver, q 3, a 3: "Quando scilicet ad aliquod opus actu ordinatur, sicut artifex praconcepta forma proponit illam in materiam inducere; et tunc est actu practica cognitione, et cognitionis forma."

\(^{54}\)Cf. De Ver, q 2, a 8: "Sed tunc proprie habet practicam cognitionem quando extendit per intentionem rationes operis ad operationis finem."
much as God is an object of study beyond deliberation of any sort: God does not fall under human power. Yet theology does provide insights into human conduct and so is an exceptional case (see ST, II-II, q 45, a 3, ad 2). Again, this will be discussed in Chapter 4. Here we must discuss what lies beyond these two extremes or absolute cases. Thomas acknowledges that many sciences lie between them. Such knowledge is neither absolutely theoretical nor practical.

In explaining this intermediate area, Thomas begins by identifying three factors which render science theoretical (see ST, I, q 14, a 16). The first of these three ways we have already seen; it is when the object determines the theoretical character of the knowledge. In this case there is no practical element in the science since the object cannot be deliberated about. In the second and third cases the theoretical character is not determined by the object, meaning that the object is a possible (not actual) object of deliberation and choice. So Thomas uses artifacts for examples in the second and third cases. Yet these remain theoretical studies because there is no absolutely practical consideration or extension to action. This is because of either the mode of knowing ("secundum modum") or because of the intended end ("secundum finem"). Due to either of these factors, the knowledge is neither absolutely theoretical nor practical, but shares something of both. It is "secundum quid speculativa et secundum quid practica".\footnote{ST, I, q 14, a 16: "[Scientia] quae vero speculativa est vel secundum modum vel secundum finem, est secundum quid speculativa et secundum quid practica." In the earlier De Veritate q 3, a 3, a 2, Thomas uses different language which makes the same point: "Ratio illa procedit de cognitione illa quae est practica virtute, non actu; quam nihil prohibet aliquo modo speculativam dici, secundum quod recedit ab operatione secundum actum." Some knowledge is virtually rather than actually practical and is thus to some extent theoretical.} I think, however, that it would be
safe to say that these factors overlap--that the mode is theoretical insofar as the intended purpose is theoretical. Nonetheless, he explains these two factors separately.

What does Aquinas mean by the mode of knowing? Any knowledge, once it is acquired, can be formalized through definitions and clarification of how the parts relate among themselves. In modern parlance, this is to treat something analytically, and its aim is the relational coherence of the many concepts which comprise the science. Knowledge concerning the practical as well as the theoretical can be formalized in this way. This seems to be what Aquinas had in mind when he stated:

Second, with regard to the mode of knowing: say, for example, if an architect were to consider a house by defining and distinguishing and considering its universal predicates. This indeed is to consider practicable things in a theoretical mode and not inasmuch as they are operable. For something is operable through the application of form to matter, not through the resolution of the composite into the universal and formal principles.

(Secundo, quantum ad modum sciendi: ut puta si aedificator consideret domum definiendo et dividendo et considerando universalia praedicata ipsius. Hoc siquidem est operabilia modo speculativo considerare, et non secundum quod operabilia sunt: operabile enim est aliquid per applicationem formae ad materiam, non resolutionem compositi in principia universalia formalia, ST, I, q 14, a 16.)

Thomas’s view on this seems to have changed. In the earlier De Veritate q 3, a 3, he states that an analytic treatment of practicable knowledge is not virtually practical, but rather absolutely theoretical. He states that when knowledge is in no way orderable to work, it is always theoretical, and this occurs in two situations. In the first case, as we have discussed, the knowledge cannot be directed to work on account of the object. The second case occurs when the knowledge is formalized by defining the genus and specific difference: "Sunt autem quaedam quae possunt separari secundum intellectum, quae non sunt separabilia secundum esse. Quando autem consideratur res per intellectum operabilia distinguendo ab invicem ea quae secundum esse distinguui non possunt, non est practica cognitio nec actu nec habitu, sed speculativa tantum; sicut si artifex consideret domum investigando passiones eius, genus et differentias, et huiusmodi, quae secundum esse indistincte inventiuntur in re ipsa." Here he defines the theoretical mode of knowing and states, contrary to his later position, that the study is absolutely theoretical.
A science can lead to action, the application of form to matter, but the science itself has an analytic structure of terms and definitions. As such, the science is abstract and necessarily studied without immediate concern for application. We will return to this theme in a moment when we consider the science of medicine.

Recall that \textit{ST}, I, q 14, a 16 identifies three distinct factors which render a science theoretical. Now we have examined the first two, the object and the mode. The third factor is the intended end. Thomas begins to explain this by noting what we have seen repeatedly: that theoretical and practical inquiry differ according to their diverse objectives. There is, therefore, a difference of intention, and the \textit{consideratio veritatis}, the intention of theoretical inquiry, can also be the intention with which we address ourselves to contingent, practicable objects:

\textit{Hence, if an architect were to consider a house as it can be built, not aiming toward the end of operation, but only to knowing, it would be a theoretical consideration in regard to the end, nevertheless concerning something practicable.}

(\textit{Unde, si quis aedificator consideret qualiter posset fieri aliqua domus, non ordinans ad finem operationis, sed ad cognoscendum tantum, erit, quantum ad finem, speculativa consideratio, tamen de re operabili, \textit{ST}, I, q 14, a 16.})

We often seek to know generally as a rule how something is done without any intention--at least in the short term--of applying the knowledge to an actual situation. For instance, students of practical arts or sciences, such as writing or medicine, learn by observing how the master works. For only through the long accumulation of practical knowledge are the students ready to take on projects of their own. This is also the reason why practical arts and sciences are formalized according to the mode,
as Aquinas puts it. Only by formalizing the knowledge can it be communicated to
the next generation. Hence, the intentions of the young apprentice and the master
differ: the former's is virtually practical and secundum quid theoretical, whereas the
latter's is actually practical.

The differentiation of scientia according to diverse intentions is already
evident in the De Veritate:

The [artist] has speculative or theoretical knowledge when he knows
the reasoned order of the work without intending to apply it to [actual] work. But he then has properly practical knowledge when through his
intention he extends the reasoned order of the work to the end of doing.

(Speculativam quidem, sive theoricam cognitionem habet, cum rationes
operis cognoscit sine hoc quod ad operandum per intentionem aplicet; sed tunc proprie habet practicam cognitionem quando
extendit per intentionem rationes operis ad operationis finem, De Ver,
q 2, a 8.)

An artist, it is noted, has both theoretical and practical knowledge of the artifact.
The difference is not attributed to what is known. Insofar as the knowledge is
knowledge, it is relatively theoretical and relatively practical. The intention to act,
the "extension" of the knowledge, renders it fully practical.

I would now like to turn our attention to an important text, In Boeth De Trin,
q 5, a 1, ad 4. It is important for the special consideration it gives to medicine as a
practical science. We have been examining the factors which distinguish theoretical
and practical sciences, but we now find that a practical science itself can have theor-

57Cf. De Ver, q 3, a 3: "Aliqua vero cognitio practica dicitur ex ordine ad opus: quod contingit dupliciter....Quandoque vero est quidem ordinabilis cognitio ad actum, non tamen actu ordinatur; sicut cum artifex excogitat formam artificii, et scit per modum operandi, non tamen operari intendit; et certum est quod est practica habitu vel virtute, non actu."
ethical and practical aspects. The objection which our text answers (obj. 4) asserts that medicine is an operative science and yet contains a theoretical part. It goes on to argue that this observation should be generalized to include all practical sciences, including ethics, and that, therefore, the so-called practical sciences should be considered among the theoretical. In effect, the argument implies, there are no practical sciences.

In his reply, Thomas suggests that the terms theoretical and practical are not used univocally in all contexts. He draws from Avicenna, who observed that philosophy, art and medicine each are divided into theoretical and practical parts, but each in an analogous manner. We will focus here only on what is said about philosophy and medicine. Philosophy is divided into theoretical and practical branches, metaphysics and ethics, according to the respective ends of each. Since moral philosophy aims at right conduct, it is called practical. Natural philosophy and logic ("naturalem et rationalem") are called theoretical, however, because they are limited to the consideration of truth. Now the same manner of differentiation cannot be utilized in regard to medicine because medicine as a scientia is wholly directed toward practice. Yet despite this unified end in acts of healing, Aquinas agrees that medicine has a theoretical aspect:

However, when we divide medicine in to theoretical and practical, the division is not founded on the end, for the whole of medicine is practical, as ordered to performance. But this same division is made depending on whether matters with which medicine is concerned are

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58 In his translation, The Division and Methods of the Sciences (Toronto: The Pontifical Inst. of Mediaeval Studies, 1963), Armand Maurer gives as the Avicenna reference: Canon Medicinae, I, fen. 1, doctr. 1., prologus (Venice, 1608, I, 6, a 33-40).
near or removed from action.

(Cum autem medicina dividitur in theoricam et practicam, non attenditur divisio secundum finem: sic enim tota medicina sub practica continetur, utpote ad operationem ordinata: sed attenditur praedicta divisio secundum quod ea quae in medicina tractantur, sunt propinqua vel remota ab operatione, *In Boeth De Trin*, q 5, a 1, ad 4.)

The theoretical and practical dimensions of medicine cannot be determined by distinct ends since medicine has only one purpose, healing. What factors, then, explain this differentiation? The key criterion which Aquinas offers is the relative distance or proximity of the knowledge to actual performance ("secundum quod . . . sunt propinqua vel remota ab operatione"). He goes on to explain that one part of medicine teaches methods for helping the patient ("modos operationis ad sanationes"), and another teaches principles which direct practice ("principia ex quibus homo dirigitur in operatione"), but indirectly ("sed non proxime"). The methods must be suited to specific situations. For example, a certain medicine should be administered only for definite symptoms. Principles, however, are general and taken by themselves do not address variations of circumstance, say age, for example. For examples of principles, we read that a student of medicine might learn that there are three "virtues" and so many classes of fever.\(^{59}\) Practice is grounded in broad principles, but not without the addition of further more specific information and methods.

It seems, therefore, that when Thomas writes of the various degrees of proximity of knowledge to practice, he has in mind the difference between knowledge which is relatively universal, possessing only a general validity, and knowledge which

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\(^{59}\) The virtues in medicine were held to be vital, natural and animal. See Maurer, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences*, 14, note 41.
is relatively specific, directing one's actions in concrete circumstances, but for that reason lacking broad application. The distinction between the universal and the singular is to Aquinas's mind one of degrees. Thus, he uses relative terms like remote and near. Concepts have broader and narrower ranges of application, and the nearer one gets to intelligent action, the narrower the relevance of one's understanding must be. Conversely, the price one pays for broad abstractions is a remote relationship to intelligent action. It would seem that one must move back and forth between the broad and the narrow, the universal and the singular, if action is to be intelligent. Accordingly, Aquinas envisions a relationship between theoretical knowledge and action, for he writes:

Nor does any relation to work whatsoever render understanding practical because even simple theorizing can be the remote occasion for doing something. As when a philosopher sees that the soul is immortal, and from there, as from a remote cause, is able to enter upon an occasion for some action. But the practical intellect must be the proximate rule of action, as that by which the action itself is considered both in its character and reasons.

(Nec quaelibet relatio ad opus facit intellectum esse practicum: quia simplex speculatio potest alicui esse remota occasio aliquid operandi; sicut philosophus speculatur animam esse immortalem, et exinde sicut a causa remota sumere potest occasionem aliquid operandi. Sed intellectum practicum oportet esse proximam regulam operis, utpote quo consideretur ipsum operabile, et rationes operandi, et causae operis, De Ver, q 14, a 4.)

This comment is important because we see with it that Thomas understood that theoretical inquiry is never without import or relevance for human living. It is, rather, the distant influence which, though relevant, must be mediated by practical reason. Theoretical reason, to use a common saying of Aquinas's, becomes practical
through extension to work. This occurs when truths, taken as objects of theoretical reflection ("verum ipsum quod in se considerabatur"), are found also to serve as guidelines in action ("potest ut regula operis considerari"). Moreover, this relevance is possible not only for the theoretical aspects of a practical science like medicine, but also for theoretical sciences, like theology and philosophy, which have validity in their own right ("in se dignitatem quamdam"), independently of any concerns for action ("etiam si nunquam ad opus ordinetur"). Hence, we have once again come back to the theme of a common ground--if only to remind ourselves once again that the theoretical and practical are two dimensions of one human intellectual enterprise. The question of how these two dimensions come together must wait for our discussion of practical wisdom.

2.6 Conclusion

Thomas’s treatment of medicine in his commentary on Boethius’s De Trinitate has clear implications for the status of ethics as a science. Indeed, the objection which Aquinas is responding to explicitly draws ethics into the argument. Ethics or practical philosophy shares with medicine the unity of purpose and end. Both are for the sake of practice and nothing else. On the other hand, I indicated in § 2.5 that

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60 In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3, sol 2: "Contingit autem quandoque quod verum ipsum quod in se considerabatur . . . potest ut regula operis considerari: et tunc intellectus speculativus fit practicus per extensionum ad opus." The underlined formula is repeated in De Ver, a 2, a 8; ST, I, q 79, a 11, sed contra; II-II, q 4, a 2, ad 3.

61 Ibid: "Aliquando vero illius veri consideratio habet in se dignitatem quamdam, etiam si nunquam ad opus ordinetur, sicut accidit in consideratione divinorum, quorum cognitio dirigit in opere; et tamen visio Dei est ultimus finis operis; et tunc illa consideratio principaliter est in intellectu speculativo, et secundario in practico."
no science can be absolutely practical. That is, science by its very nature is practical only by analogy to practical reason. Section 2.4 with its four parts establishes the essential characteristics of practical reason. Its object is contingent not necessary, singular not universal, and it concludes in an act of choice moving one to act as reasoned judgment has determined one should. None of this can be said of practical philosophy. Like any science, it aims at abstract conceptual clarity, not judgment of the contingent singular. Like any science, it stops short of choice and action, and like any science it needs the mediation of practical reason in order to guide one in action. Practical philosophy can guide one in action, but "non proxime," that is, not immediately and directly. Practical philosophy is not like Thales' astronomy because it has its end not in knowing but doing; yet neither is it like the existential wisdom of Socrates because it does not in itself define who one is, only what one knows. There have been many indications along the way that our analysis here must be completed in later chapters in our consideration of practical wisdom. That discussion will allow us to understand something of (if not possess) the wisdom of Socrates.
CHAPTER III

THE VIRTUES

3.1 Introduction

In Chapter 2 we explored the relationship between practical and theoretical knowledge. Practical inquiry aims toward action, but no knowledge, neither practical nor theoretical, determines in and of itself how and whether we will act, for action requires the resolve of the will. Hence, we shall observe that intellectual development does not ensure that one will act well. Indeed, this principle applies even to those who study the practical science of ethics. One does not acquire moral character through the study of ethics. Rather, human goodness is essentially determined by the goodness of the will and the virtues which perfect it, for it is due to a good will that one is readily disposed to good conduct. Knowledge, Aquinas will tell us, even the knowledge of ethics, does not make one good wholly and simply. The learned, as also the artistic and skilled, do not necessarily integrate their abilities into a genuinely good and human personality. There is then the question of character or moral virtue. Moral virtue enables one to act well: it is the person of good moral character who both knows and does the good.

For Aquinas, there are primary and secondary meanings for the term virtue,
and the primary meaning focuses on one's readiness to act, one's willingness, what Yves Simon termed an "existential readiness."\(^1\) The secondary meaning is used to extend the concept of virtue to intellectual development, a development which may go forward exclusively of moral development. This use of the term is derivative and lacks its full force precisely in that the intellectual virtues do not imply an existential readiness to act.

We cannot, however, take this emphasis on the virtue of the will as an anti-intellectual or volitional bias (something Aquinas is rarely accused of anyway) because for a human being to act well must mean to act intelligently and reasonably. We cannot accept a complete split between thinking and doing. Our dignity calls for us to act as a human being acts—with reason. Rather than exacerbating the disjunction between reason and action, the moral virtues enable us to overcome the existential dichotomy of knowing and doing. Indeed, our understanding of the moral virtues would be incomplete if we failed to understand the part played by intelligence and reason in their formation. The existential readiness which Simon writes of is, for Aquinas, an acquired or learned readiness of will, not a natural but a connatural readiness. This connatural willingness to act in accord with reason cannot form in us without the cooperation of reason. Thus, Aquinas finds practical wisdom to play a crucial part in forming our character and determining our conduct. We will encounter practical wisdom in this chapter only tangentially when Aquinas makes reference to a connatural, "felt knowledge," a knowledge of the heart, but discussion

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of practical wisdom--reserved for the next two chapters--will always be just in the background because the moral virtues do not form independently of practical reason.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce Aquinas's general concept of moral virtue. The concept of moral virtue is indeed crucial to our overall goal of understanding the relationship between knowledge and action because our existential readiness, our willingness to act, depends on acquiring these virtues. To possess the moral virtues means to be true to oneself, for it is a willingness to extend one's truths into the arena of action. Again, to possess the moral virtues is to be free to act, both because of what one has acquired, a learned ability to bring reason, emotion and will into cooperation, and because of what one is freed from, the chaos of psychic conflict which keeps one from acting well.

In § 3.2 we observe that Aquinas acknowledges the discrepancy between knowledge and action, and that he agrees with Aristotle--contrary to Socrates, or at least the Socrates of Plato's early dialogues--that to know the good is not necessarily to do the good. The importance of the moral virtues appears with this realization because there is in the failure to do the good which one knows to be good a failure of self, a loss of human dignity, and it is this failure and indignity from which the moral virtues liberate us. This is why Aquinas writes that the moral virtues enable us to fulfill our nature (ST, I-II, q 108, a 1, ad 2, quoted below). Our powers of reason, will and emotion are fulfilled in their cooperation and interdependence which becomes manifest in our conduct.

In § 3.3 we turn to the concept of moral virtue itself. We will follow Aquinas
in defining the general concept of virtue and then focus on the question of how the
virtues are fulfilling of our nature. The virtues, it will be argued, enable us to utilize
our natural powers effectively. They are not, therefore, as many philosophers have
taken them to be, mere social constructs which change from society to society and
enable us to operate successfully in whatever social milieu we happen to live in.
However true it is that we must form habits in order to adapt to our particular social
order, virtue is in its most fundamental aspect a learned ability to be true to
ourselves and to realize our human dignity. Thus, in this section we will need to
define in what sense a virtue is a learned ability by delving into Aquinas's analysis
of virtuous habits and connaturality (§ 3.3.1). We can then go on to argue that the
virtues differ from the vices in that virtue is liberating and fulfilling, whereas vice
impedes our potential for full human existence (§ 3.3.2). In grasping that virtue and
vice are defined relative to human fulfillment, not social conventions, we get past the
problem of cultural relativism.

Finally, in § 3.4 we turn to the distinction I alluded to above between intellectual
and moral virtues. Virtue in its primary meaning gives an existential readiness,
and yet there is reason to discuss virtues which form our intellectual life. We shall
find in pursuing this distinction that the disposition of the will takes center stage in
Aquinas’s primary notion of virtue and that the intellectual virtues, in and of them-
selves, contribute not at all to character in this primary sense. It is this inefficacy,
if you will, on the part of the intellectual virtues that makes our consideration of
practical wisdom in the next two chapter so important. We must wonder how great
is the divergence between the intellectual and moral aspects of our souls and whether the development of the one aspect plays any part in the development of the other. A complete answer to these questions awaits in the later chapters, but in Chapter 3 we see that there is a gulf between knowing and willing, a gulf which taken as a fact gives credence to the claim of the will as a human power: that such things as scholarship and intellectual maturity may leave one without the existential readiness of good character only makes clearer the part of the will in our moral life and the need for our willingness to be formed by the virtues.

3.2 The Insufficiency of Knowledge for Moral Action

Aquinas follows Aristotle in insisting that ethics is a practical inquiry, for it is undertaken for the sake of action, not knowledge. Consequently, not everyone can study this science profitably because even though a person might understand its lessons, she or he is not necessarily disposed to carrying out its conclusions. Some, Thomas tells us, choose to live according to their passions rather than reason. There is a deliberate intention to seek pleasure. Others acknowledge that inordinate desires should be avoided, but are overcome by them anyway and act against their own reason. The former are called followers of passion or hedonists ("sectatores passionum") and the latter the incontinent ("incontinentes," In I Ethic, lect 3, n 39). Neither type of person is necessarily unaware of ethical knowledge, but neither translates that knowledge into moral action:

One who follows the passions will listen to this science vainly, that is, without effect, and uselessly, that is, without pursuit of the due end.
For the end of this science is not only knowledge, which per chance followers of passion would be able to acquire. Rather, the end of this science, as with all practical sciences, is human action. Those who follow the passions, however, do not achieve virtuous acts. . . . To such as these knowledge of this science is useless, as it also is to the incontinent who do not execute the knowledge of morals which they have.

(Ille qui est sectator passionum, inaniter, idest sine aliqua efficacia audiet hanc scientiam, et inutiliter, idest absque consecutione debiti finis. Finis enim huius scientiae non est sola cognitio, ad quam forte pervenire possent passionum sectatores. Sed finis huius scientiae est actus humanus, sicut et omnium scientiarum practicarum. Ad actus autem virtuosos non perveniunt, qui passiones sectantur. . . . Talibus autem fit inutilis cognitio huius scientiae; sicut etiam incontinentibus, qui non sequuntur scientiam, quam de moralibus habent, In I Ethic, lect 3, n 40.)

We are also warned that the philosophical study of ethics should not be mistaken for moral goodness. Philosophy in this regard is to the person what medical advice is to the body: it is only useful when it is followed. Some, Aristotle had noted (NE, II, 4, 1105b10-20), take refuge in the intricacies of philosophical argumentation and presume to become good by this. But such people are like the unhealthy who have good medical advice, but fail to follow it. Again, those who cannot study ethics profitably are like school children who approach their lessons by learning to mouth the words which they do not understand. Understanding requires time because only through much meditation can knowledge be firmly impressed and

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2 Aquinas is commenting on NE, I, 3, 1095a4-14. There are many examples of the "sectator passionum"; perhaps those who live a life of deliberate sexual promiscuity present the most obvious. I think that the contemporary idea of an "addictive personality" correlates with Aquinas's "incontinens."

3 In II Ethic, lect 4, n 288: "Arguit quorumdam errorem, qui non operantur opera virtutis, sed confugiendo ad ratiocinandum de virtutibus aestimant se fieri bonos philosophando. Quos dicit esse similes infirmis, qui sollicite audiant ea quae dicuntur sibi a medicis, sed nihil faciunt eorum quae sibi praecipiuntur."
held, as it were, connaturally. The connatural knowledge which children aim at may well be theoretical, say a knowledge of geometry. At first, in working out proofs they can only imitate what their teacher has done first, but with the accumulation of many examples and hours of study they become increasingly free to work out new problems on their own. In this way, their knowledge of geometry becomes connatural. Something similar is at work in moral development, but now the matter is more complex because in this case the moral lessons must be held firmly and connaturally in the heart. If ethics is to be studied profitably, it must become a knowledge "felt in the heart." The incontinent fall short in just this way, for they mouth one principle of conduct and are affectively inclined to another:

And it is same with the incontinent. For even if one says, "It is not good for me to seek such pleasure now," nevertheless he does not feel this in the heart. Hence, it can be resolved that the incontinent say such words insincerely because they feel one thing in the heart and proffer words to the contrary.

(Et ita est etiam de incontinente. Etsi enim dicat, non est mihi bonum nunc prosequi tale delectabile, tamen non ita sentit in corde. Unde sic existimandum est, quod incontinentes dicant huiusmodi verba quasi simulantes, quia scilicet aliud sentiunt corde, aliud proferunt ore, In VII Ethic, lect 3, n 1344.)

By the phrase "felt in the heart" Thomas has in mind an affective disposition toward doing the good. Ethics is studied profitably only when affectivity is realigned so that the good of desire is in accord with the good affirmed in moral judgment.

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The connaturality in the example of the school children suggests an enhancement of their intellectual ability alone, but when used with regard to moral conduct, connaturality suggests an integration of knowledge and feeling. The education of mathematics aims to develop a student's intellect, but some kinds of learning are incomplete if they remain only intellectual. So we have here an indication of Aquinas's strong conviction that moral virtue is also a vital dimension of a person's education and maturation. In the following, for instance, he indicates two types or levels of judgment:

Right judgment can occur in two ways: in one way according to the perfect use of reason, and in another because of a certain connaturality for those matters about which there is now need for judgment. For example, one who has mastered moral science judges rightly through the inquiry of reason about matters of chastity. But one who has the habit of chastity judges rightly about these matters through a connaturality for them.

(Rectitudo autem judicii potest contingere dupliciter: uno modo, secundum perfectum usum rationis; alio modo propter connaturalitatem quandam ad ea de quibus iam est judicandum. Sicut de his quae ad castitatem pertinent per rationis inquisitionem recte judicat ille qui didicit scientiam moralem: sed per quandam connaturalitatem ad ipsa recte judicat de eis ille qui habet habitum castitatis, ST, II-II, q 45, a 2.)

Through the perfect use of reason one versed in moral science can judge that fornication is wrong, but through connatural affectivity one can judge rightly "now," that is, in the particular circumstances of one's own immediate situation, what he or
she ought to do. The judgment which flows solely from one's mastery of ethical
science remains to some degree in the theoretical order, and by itself is inconsequen-
tial in the existential order, i.e., in the "now" of a situation demanding a personal
decision ("de quibus iam est judicandum"). As we have argued, practical inquiry has
its term in action, and action always has its locus in one's actual situation. The first
kind of judgment--which depends on reasoning well, but not necessarily on one's
affective orientation--may be well made when considering abstract matters, that is,
when inquiry is not yet focusing on a decision which the inquirer must actually make.
Yet when the decision is at hand, one's connatural disposition must be called upon
because the making and acting out of one's judgment now depend much more
immediately on the cooperation of one's will and emotions. The connatural judg-
ment has its efficacy in action because it flows from an integration of the cognitive
and affective sides of the personality, and this integration is not achieved simply
through the mastery of ethics or any other practical science.

A thorough account of what I mean here by an integration of the cognitive
and affective sides depends on working out Thomas's understanding of the moral
virtues (as attempted later in this chapter). Here, however, some preliminary obser-
vations are in order. Aquinas hints at this integration when in the introduction to
his commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics he writes of the order which reason pro-
duces in the will ("ordo quem ratio considerando facit in operationibus voluntatis,"
In I Ethic, lect 1, n 1. See Chapter 2, § 2.4.3.). Accordingly, later in the commentary
Thomas notes that it is the nature of the human appetitive power to obey reason, and
when we repeatedly act according to reason, its form or order, as it were, is impressed in the appetite. This reception of reason's form is nothing other than the emergence of moral virtue (In II Ethic, lect 1, n 249).

The point is taken even further when the importance of pleasure and pain for ethical matters is considered. The same act is performed differently before and after the acquisition of a virtue. Prior to acquiring the virtue one performs the act only by suffering a self-inflicted violence of sorts, but with the virtue, the same act is desired and enjoyed. Thus, Aquinas anticipates the emergence of a connaturality in the human personality which enables one to act well. Through some formation or integration, the pain which one suffers through obedience to right reason becomes the pleasure one feels in acting in accord with the spontaneity of desire. Hence, this new connaturality refers to an acquired cooperation of knowledge and affectivity so that the known good is also the felt good.

In this discussion we have seen that Aquinas acknowledges that knowledge of the good is not necessarily the means to do the good. We become more likely to act on our knowledge if there is what I have called an integration of intellect and heart, or more exactly the cooperation of the will and emotions with reason. Through such cooperation we can expect connatural judgments, judgments which will be wise not only in the quiet of one's study but also in the troubled moment of decision.

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6In II Ethic, lect 3, n 265: "... differt executio huiusmodi operationis post virtutem et ante virtutem. Nam ante virtutem facit homo sibi quamdam violentiam ad operandum huiusmodi. Et ideo tales operationes habent aliquam tristitiam admixtam. Sed post habitum virtutis generatum, huiusmodi operationes fiunt delectabiler. Quia habitus inest per modum cuiusdam naturae. Ex hoc autem est aliquid delectabile, quod convenit alieui secundum naturam."
Aquinas's comments suggest such an integration, but at this point the notion remains vague. In exploring his concepts of moral virtue and connaturality in detail, the nature of this needed integration, as Aquinas analyzes it, will become explicit. Thus, far we can say this. If knowledge is to be truly practical, in the sense that it determines how we act, it must become a "felt knowledge." That is, it must be the wisely discerned order come to be "impressed" in our affectivity, the integration of feeling and will with knowing. Moreover, a "felt knowledge" would be a simplified but not inappropriate way to say what Aquinas means by practical wisdom. We shall pursue that avenue later; now we must see just what a moral virtue is.

3.3 The Notion of Virtue

In discussing the virtues, Aquinas deploys three broad categories of virtue. The first are natural or, more accurately, nascent virtues. These are, if you will, the seeds of virtue. With regard to intellectual ability, the contemporary notion of "talent" might come closest to what Aquinas has in mind. But there are also nascent moral virtues, and so we might speak of a given predisposition toward friendliness or generosity. These given dispositions, which differ from person to person, should not be confused with actual virtue. In order to develop into actual virtues, such given dispositions must be cultivated and guided by practical intelligence. For natural courage can easily be deformed into the vice of recklessness. Again, talent can be
wasted, and the diligent will outpace the gifted if the gifted sit on their hands.\textsuperscript{7}

Second, there are the infused or theological virtues, faith, hope and love (\textit{caritas}). These are, to use Augustine's compact phrase, what God works in us without us.\textsuperscript{8}

The infused virtues are best understood in contradistinction to the third type of virtue, those acquired through the use of one's own powers.

Unlike the infused virtues, the acquired virtues emerge through our own deliberate efforts. By diligent work one becomes an accomplished musician, and similarly one becomes just through the practice of just deeds. In our discussion we will focus primarily on this last kind of virtue; yet whether we speak of infused or acquired virtue, the term suggests a further determination or enhancement of innate human capacities or powers, specifically the powers of intellect, will and emotion. Accordingly, I take virtue to denote a power in the human psyche (whether acquired by one's activity or given by God) which arises, not \textit{ex nihilo}, but as the development and enrichment of innate human powers. I will justify this reading by looking at Aquinas's appropriation of the Aristotle's idea that a virtue is a habit. We shall also see that Thomas's notion of a connatural disposition parallels and enhances his understanding of what a habit is. A virtue, I maintain, is a habit and a connatural

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Nascent virtues may be either common to the species, as is the disposition for knowing first principles, or unique to individuals. The latter are due to biological differences or perhaps early childhood socialization. See \textit{ST}, I-II, q 51, a 1; \textit{In VI Ethic}, lect 11, nn 1276-80. On the natural disposition for virtue and the need for practical intelligence see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 58, a 4, ad 3. See Luke J. Lindon, S.C.J., "The Significance of the Term \textit{Virtus Naturalis} in the Moral Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas," \textit{Proceedings American Catholic Philosophical Association}, 31 (1957), 97-105.
\item In his \textit{De Libero Arbitrio}, II, 19, Augustine offers this definition of virtue: "Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, qua nemo male utitur, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur." Aquinas takes the phrase, "\textit{quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur}," to refer only to the infused virtues (\textit{De Virt}, a 2).
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disposition which consists in the development of the innate human powers for understanding and reason, as well as volition and emotion. The importance of this definition lies in the implication that a virtue is fulfilling of a human potential and that the virtues enable a human person to be fully human in that through them our given abilities are brought to fruition.

Our first task, then, is to explore Aquinas's understanding of what a virtue is, and doing so we begin by focusing on the idea that a virtue is a habit which forms innate human powers (§ 3.3.1). It is true, however, that vices are also habits, though they are not habits which enable one to act well. Thus, our second task is to differentiate virtues and vices by appealing to the idea of freedom. A virtue liberates one for effective action and living, while a vice hinders one's pursuit of the good (§ 3.3.2).

3.3.1 Habits, Virtues and Connaturality

Potency and act are two of the fundamental principles of Aristotelian metaphysics. They are also fundamental to Aristotelian ethics. Indeed, the Nicomachean Ethics can be thought as an attempt to outline how the human person moves from the most indeterminate potentiality to the most determinate power

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9Aristotle derived his notion of virtue from the more generic notion of a "hexis," which is literally translated as "habitus" in Latin and "habit" in English. It is important to note that a vice too is a habit. A virtue is a good or well ordered habit, a vice a disordered habit. A virtuous habit "participates" in reason and enables us to act reasonably; it contributes to an integrated and coherent life. A vice lacks reason and habituates unreasonable action; it does not necessarily cohere with other vices nor contribute to the general integration and perfection of one's character (ST, I-II, q 73, a 1). Some claims about the virtues will also be true of vices since both are habits, but some claims will apply only to the virtues since the vices are disordered. On virtue and ordo see Frank Yartz, "Virtue as an Ordo in Aquinas," The Modern Schoolman, 47 (1970), 305-319.
(virtus) or disposition for good action. Ultimate priority is given to action itself, for happiness, that at which all human living aims, is a matter of what one does, not what one possesses (see NE, I, 2, 1098b7-20; ST, I-II, q 3, a 2). The priority of activity over mere possession applies to the virtues as well as to material goods. Virtue gives an enhanced capacity for good action, and its importance lies in its relation to action. Aquinas makes the point in his commentary:

Just as it is no small difference whether someone prefers the possession of an external object or its use—which is clearly better than possession--so it is similar with regard to the possession or performance of a virtue: its use is better. For someone can have a habit who is not doing anything good, as with someone sleeping or in some way at leisure. . . . Hence, performance according to virtue is more perfect than the virtue itself.

(Sicut non parum differt in exterioribus rebus, quod quis optimum ponat in possessione alicuius rei, vel in usu eius, qui est manifeste melior quam sit possessio, ita etiam se habet circa habitum virtutis et operationem, quae est usus eius qui est melior. Potest enim esse habitus in eo qui nullum bonum facit, sicut in dormiente, vel in eo qui qualitercumque est otiosus. Unde operatio secundum virtutem est perfectior quam ipsa virtus, In I Ethic, lect 12, n 152.)

Essential to both the notion of an innate human power and an acquired habit is that they are capacities which enable one to act. Indeed, both innate powers and acquired habits are known and defined by the acts which they make possible and are only completed or perfected in the realization of those acts. Still, we should not infer that the priority given to the operatio over the mere capacity diminishes the importance of virtue for Aquinas. It does not because his emphasis is on an activity according to virtue ("operatio secundum virtutem"). That is, an activity arising out of a virtuous power is preferable not only to the mere possession of the virtue but
also to an activity which springs from an uncultivated power. The general movement of human potency into actuality cannot bypass the acquisition of the virtues, for virtue is an increase of potency and a necessary ground for effective performance. It is a midway point between mere potential and actual operation. Below we shall see that virtues are liberating in that they enable us to act, when without them we would be either unable to act or unable to act well (§ 3.3.2). The rest of our analysis in this section will clarify what a virtue is. We will focus on the idea that virtues are developments of natural tendencies and abilities--the connatural forming the natural.

Aquinas notes that the Latin "virtus" is derived from "vis," another term for "potentia" or power. Virtus is an increase, a new strength, in the original potentia (De Virt, a 1). Just as we are normally able to move and lift by using our muscles, but become increasingly strong and capable through exercise, we can, similarly, increase our original ability to choose and judge well. And just as physical exercise brings an increase to the muscle, so too a virtue brings an increase to the psychological power. Aquinas expresses the point that virtue is an increase to the power by stating that a human virtue is "seated" in an operative power of the soul, meaning that the operative power is the recipient of the habit (ST, I-II, q 56, a 1). The innate powers are what become habituated, and without powers capable of habituation it would not be possible to acquire virtues.

Consistent with this idea that the virtues are rooted in the various powers, Aquinas correlates the cardinal virtues--justice, moderation, courage and practical wisdom--with four distinct powers (ST, I-II, q 61, a 2). Practical wisdom is seated in
the intellect, and justice in the will. Temperance and bravery are seated in two distinct faculties of emotion. Temperance arises in the concupiscible faculty, the seat of our desires for what is suitable and of our aversions to what is harmful. Bravery, however, arises in the irascible faculty, the seat of our emotions like anger and fear which arise in response to dangers and obstacles to what we want (see ST, I, q 81, a 2 on these latter two powers). This analysis is interesting in that it suggests that Aquinas did not think that the traditional grouping of the cardinal virtues was an accident of culture. That is, the traditional grouping of the cardinal virtues is not explained (at least not exclusively) by the needs and values of a particular culture; it also indicates the human need, which exists regardless of the culture, to acquire virtues which habituate the four powers whose operations constitute the essential constituents of moral action.10

Each of these four powers contributes to a moral act; they do not operate in isolation, but account for the deliberation, reasoning, intentions and feelings which culminate in a chosen action. This will be important to bear in mind as we develop a general account of what a virtue is. A virtue is a habit which must be understood in relation to the particular power which receives it. Nonetheless, habits are formed, like moral acts themselves, out of the cooperation and interdependence of the intellect, will and emotions. Indeed, it is this cooperation and interaction which becomes habituated. Temperance, for instance, is rooted in the concupiscible power,

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10Yves Simon was taken with the long and consistent history of singling out these four as the cardinal or chief virtues: "Such a consensus is not often found in the history of philosophy, and it gives this list a special weight." The Definition of Moral Virtue, 95-6.
but it cannot be formed there except through human acts involving the intellect and will. This last point will receive ample attention in the later chapters where we will focus on the virtue of practical wisdom. We will see that practical wisdom has a crucial part to play in the formation of all the virtues. Moreover, the vices differ from the virtues on this point; virtues instill us with psychic harmony, meaning that judgment, intention and emotion come together in one act. As Aristotle would say, one is a friend with oneself and not divided against himself as a base or vicious person is (NE, IX, 4, 1166a10-30; 1166b5-10; cf. ST, I-II, q 73, a 1).

Human virtue pertains essentially to those capacities or powers which are specifically human, that is, to the intellect, will and emotions. So Aquinas often contrasts operations which are "properly human," and therefore the concern of moral reflection, with other operations such as digestion or breathing. These latter are called "natural," meaning that unlike properly human operations they are not subject to the direction of human reason and will. Generally, they are not a matter of reasoned choice. Hence, virtue is a perfection of a power--a perfection of a naturally given capacity to act as a human being acts, that is, freely and intelligently ("Virtus nominat quandam potentiae perfectionem," ST, I-II, q 55, a 1). Perfection

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11 The emotions are specifically human powers and capable of virtuous habituation only because they come under the guidance of the intellect and will. ST, I-II, q 58, a 3 argues that there are only two principles of human action, intellect and appetite, which alone can be perfected by human virtue. Yet reason and will direct the operation of other capacities. Thus, the irascible and concupiscible powers (i.e., the emotional capacities which we share with other animals) may be virtuously modified insofar as they "participate" in reason and thus become principles of human acts. See ST, I-II, q 56, a 4.

12 In I Ethic, lect 1, n 3: "Dico autem operationes humanas, quae procedunt a voluntate hominis secundum ordinem rationis. Nam si quae operationes in homine inveniuntur, quae non subiacent voluntati et rationi, non dicuntur proprie humanae, sed naturales, sicut patet de operationibus animae vegetativae." Cf. ST, I-II, q 55, a 2.
here implies an increase, a further enhancement or determination of the original power. And as a power is completed in its act, the virtue better disposes the power to its act:

The perfection of something is assessed chiefly with respect to its own end. Now the act is the end of a power. Therefore, the power is said to be perfected insofar as it is determined to its own act.

(Uniuscuiusque autem perfectio praecipue consideratur in ordine ad suum finem. Finis autem potentiae actus est. Unde potentia dicitur esse perfecta, secundum quod determinatur ad suum actum, ST, I-II, q 55, a 1.)

What is meant by the claim that a virtue determines a power to its own act?

Aquinas gives a detailed answer to this question in De Virtutibus, a 1. Yet before turning to it, we must see that the answer he gives there is premised upon his understanding of the powers themselves which receive the virtues. It is important to stress that virtuous habits enable us to operate according to our natural bent--i.e., according to the inclination congruous with our natural powers. We must grasp that a virtue does not thwart one’s natural disposition, but rather enables it to come to the fore:

He acts freely, therefore, who acts from his very self. When, therefore, a man acts from a habit proportionate to his own nature, he acts from his very self since the habit inclines in the way of [his] nature.

(Ille ergo libere aliquid agit qui ex seipso agit. Quod autem homo agit ex habitu suae naturae convenienti, ex seipso agit: quia habitus inclinat in modum naturae, ST, I-II, q 108, a 1, ad 2.)

A virtuous habit does not repress or inhibit the individual, but rather enables one’s

13 Josef Pieper cites this text in the context of his argument that good deeds cease to be work, but are effortless for those who acquire the virtues, and, indeed, have more merit for being done with pleasure. Leisure, the Basis of Culture, tr Alexander Dru (Markham, Ontario: Mentor, 1963), 31.
nature to emerge more forcefully. This is why it is appropriate to think of the virtues as developments of one's given capacities.\textsuperscript{14} Thus, prior to the emergence of the virtues, and within the innate powers themselves, there already exists some level of integration between the will, intellect and emotions. We are, that is, naturally inclined toward those operations which constitute the completion of our powers. We naturally desire to be intelligent and reasonable both in our theoretical and practical endeavors. The virtues develop these inherent possibilities and enable us to act according to our natural desire (\textit{ST}, I-II, q 63, a 1; q 85, a 1). Our powers are related to their operations in the following three ways:

1. An act is formally specified by the power: a power is capacity for a certain kind of act, and thus the nature of the act is formally determined by the power itself. So vision is formally determined to discern color; hearing is related comparatively to sound, intellect to discovery and discernment of the truth, and will to the choice and intention of the good: "The operation is proportionate to the form which is the principle of the operation."\textsuperscript{15}

2. We are naturally inclined to perform those acts which are formally specified by our powers: since the power is a certain formal agent, it is moved easily and spontaneously by the will to act in accord with its formal disposition. We spontaneously intend those acts which are proportionate to our powers—the sense organs to perceiving, the intellect to discerning truth and the will itself to intending the good.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}On the idea of virtue as a development see Lee H. Yearley, \textit{Mencius and Aquinas}, 59-60 and 79-83. Development means, according to Lee, that "capacities produce proper dispositions and actions only if they are nurtured and uninjured. If improperly developed, capacities either attain only a truncated form or become so weak that animating them becomes virtually impossible" (p. 60). For the idea that we possess the "semina" of the virtues by nature, see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 63, a 2, ad 3.

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{SCG}, I, ch 48 (#2): "Operatio enim formae quae est operationis principium proportionatur."

\textsuperscript{16}This is the reason why Aquinas argues that there is a natural desire to know (even God, since knowledge is not perfected except in the knowledge of the ultimate cause, \textit{SCG}, III, ch 25). For the desire to know is a specific case of the generic point being made here. The generic point is found in \textit{ST}, I, q 80, a 1, ad 3: "Unaquaque potentia animae est quaedam forma seu natura, et habet naturalem (continued...)
3. We delight in acts suitable to our capacities: the realization of a power in its act is pleasurable because the act is naturally befitting and proportionate (conveniens) to the formal principle, that is, the power. So the thirsty find pleasure in drinking, the curious in understanding and the practical in acting reasonably.\(^{17}\)

These three points indicate that our natural human powers give some practical direction to life in that our tendencies and inclinations are defined by our given capacities. Yet these inclinations are only as specified as the powers themselves. In the case of intellect and will, whose formal objects are the true and the good—terms which for Aquinas are convertible with being (ens)—the possibilities for further specifying them are open-ended and indeterminate.\(^{18}\) In their case, it is possible for habits to further specify and determine the kinds of acts a person tends toward and takes pleasure in. Intellectual and volitional habits develop the intellect and will according to each of the three points made above. Thus, such habits give (1) an added formal determination for certain types of acts, (2) a spontaneous inclination in proportion to the new formal determination, and (3) concomitant pleasure in such

\(^{16}\) (...continued)

inclinationem in aliquid. Unde unaquaque appetit obiectum sibi conveniens naturali appetitu." The natural inclination causes the ease and spontaneity of action. For the point that this natural inclination is due to the will see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 10, a 1: "Non enim per voluntatem appetimus solum ea quae pertinent ad potentiam voluntatis; sed etiam ea quae pertinent ad singulas potentias, et ad totum hominem. Unde naturaliter homo vult non solum obiectum voluntatis, sed etiam alia quae convenit aliiis potentiis: ut cognitionem veri, quae convenit intellectui, et esse et vivere et alia huiusmodi."

\(^{17}\) \textit{In XII Meta}, lect 8, n 2537: "Delectatio enim consequitur operationem connaturalem alicuius intelligenti et desiderantis." See also \textit{ST}, I-II, q 31, a 1, ad 1; II-II, q 180, a 7; \textit{In X Ethic}, lect 7, nn 2025-30.

\(^{18}\) Recall Aristotle’s comment in \textit{De Anima}, III, 431b20 that the mind can in a way become all things, and his comment at 432a1 that the mind is the form of forms as the hand is the tool of tools. Hence, Aquinas writes that the power ("virtus") of the human soul "ad infinita quodammodo se extendit," meaning not that we are omnipotent, but that we cannot circumscribe \textit{a priori} how we conceive and intend \textit{ens} (\textit{De Virt}, a 6). This indeterminacy also applies to the emotions, but only insofar as they can be influenced by the intellect and will. See also on this indeterminacy \textit{ST}, I-II, q 55, a 1. On the emotions in relation to reason and the will see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 56, a 4.
Let's now consider these points one at a time, using De Virtutibus, a 1 as our point of reference. First, a virtue ensures that there is consistency in our behavior ("uniformitas in sua operatione"). This consistency is suitable to our nature, but is only achievable through habits which determine our character. A person with a certain character generally tends to act in accord with it. Character defines the norm or usual pattern of one's conduct, the norm which those who know a person have come to expect. We sometimes say things like, "It wasn't like you to act that way," or "You're not yourself today." Such comments reveal the character or virtue which experience brings us to expect in individuals and which we miss when someone acts against the grain of her or his own personality.

Virtue in general and the specific virtues are Aquinas's way of discussing the form of a good character. Intellectual virtues, such as a science, work similarly to moral virtues in that they form one's cognitive orientation, one's established ways of understanding or thinking. These dimensions of one's personality are due to the further acquired determination of our given powers. It is important to add, however,

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19 I will use the term virtue here rather than habit, even though the points being made apply to some extent to vicious as well as virtuous habits. My reasons are, first, that the text which I am drawing on (De Virt, a 1) use virtus rather than habitus. Second, though the claims made by Thomas may hold for vices as well as virtues, they do not hold to the same extent. For instance, vice affords less consistency of behavior than virtue because the virtues bring our various powers into cooperation, making consistent action easier, whereas vices inculcate conflict between, for instance, good judgment and desire. Now a base desire may be habitual and may even habitually overrule reason, but nonetheless there remains the tension of having good reasons for acting differently. Consequently, vicious habits tend to be less stable than virtuous habits because they leave us less integrated in our operations than the virtues do. See, for instance, ST, I-II, q 54, a 3. This topic will be discussed further in § 3.3.2.

20 De Virt, a 1: "Primo ut sit uniformitas in sua operatione; ea enim quae ex sola operatione dependent, facile immutantur, nisi secundum aliquam inclinationem habitualem fuerint stabilita."
that although a virtuous character is predictable, it is not rigid in the way that an
instinct is. The instinctual behavior of some animals, for instance, establishes
migrations routes that do not change for decades, if not longer. Intellectual and
moral virtues operate with our capacity for discernment so that, for instance, a brave
person is willing both to charge ahead or retreat depending on the circumstances.
The virtues do not establish invariant patterns and routines, but the regular good use
of judgment and will. Similarly, intellectuals often become rigid in their concepts,
modes of interpretation and patterns of thought. They become less tolerant of new
approaches and overlook their merits. Yet true intellectual virtue would be manifest
in the opposite--in one who easily engages in a diversity of discourses, modes of
interpretation, etc., and addresses each of them on its merits.21

Next, just as a power moves spontaneously to its own proper act, virtue
provides a new spontaneity correlative with the added formal determination.

Aquinas writes:

Secondly, [virtue is needed] so that the activity is readily carried
through. For unless a rational power is somehow directed to one object
by a habit, it will always be necessary, when there is need to act, to
begin the undertaking with an inquiry, as can be seen in those who
lack a habitual knowledge and yet wish to investigate something, or
who lacking a habitual virtue wish to act according to the virtue.

(Secundo ut operatio perfecta in promptu habeatur; nisi enim potentia
rationalis per habitum aliquid modo inclinetur ad unum, oportebit
semper, cum necesse fuerit operari, praecedere inquisitionem de

21See for instance Yves Simon's description of pedantic and inspiring teachers: "The former have
a definite method and operate according to well established habits. . . [The latter] tend to experiment
with unrefined concepts, they use metaphors, and they even jump to conclusions. . . . But at least the
better students seldom mind, because such teaching is an invitation to master, not just a procedure, but
a subject." The Definition of Moral Virtue, 60.
It is true enough that both a first year college student and her philosophy professor have a capacity for philosophy, but there is a rather dramatic difference of degree in that capacity. Both may wish to undertake new investigations in philosophy, but the professor will do so with relative ease, deftly moving through new texts and tackling new problems as one can only do with the benefit of years of experience and training. The young student, on the other hand, still needs the slow accumulation of skills and insights that gradually constitutes the virtue of an intellectual discipline. She can undertake the same investigation as her professor, but she cannot succeed with the same ease because the arduous but necessary task of training and development remains for her.

Notice, however, that this example concerns cognitive or intellectual development, not moral development. Bear in mind that Aquinas insists that these two kinds of development or virtue are quite distinct. His analysis in the text quoted, however, deals with the notion of virtue generically as a further determination of both the intellect and will. Accordingly, he also provides an example concerning moral development which gives one an ease and spontaneity in conduct and a freedom from difficult deliberation before resolving to act. As we have already noted (in § 3.2), moral virtue replaces belabored deliberation with a connatural orientation toward the good to be done here and now. Below we will examine Aquinas's distinction between intellectual and moral virtues in detail (§ 3.4), but it
is worth noting that the examples he offers in this passage—ease of intellectual investigation and ease in moral conduct—are not chosen haphazardly. Intellectual virtues give us an ease of understanding and inquiry, but only moral virtues enable us to act well, readily and enjoyably.

Finally, just as virtue gives an added formal determination to the act and a concomitant spontaneity, it also grounds a new pleasure in the performance of an act, a pleasure proportionate and concomitant with the new spontaneity. So Aquinas tells us that virtue renders an act pleasurable and desirable:

Thirdly, [virtue is needed] so that a perfect operation is carried through pleasurably, which happens on account of a habit. For since a habit is a sort of nature, the operation proper to it is rendered natural and therefore pleasurable. For proportionality [i.e. of power to object] is the cause of pleasure.

(Tertio ut delectabiliter perfecta operatio compleatur. quod quidem fit per habitum; qui cum sit per modum cuiusdam naturae, operationem sibi propriam quasi naturalem reddit, et per consequens delectabilem. Nam convenientia est delectationis causa, De Virt, a 1.)

In this text Thomas accounts for the pleasure of a virtuous act by appealing to his understanding of what a habit is. A habit acts as a quasi-nature ("per modum cuiusdam naturae"), and therefore the act specified by the habit, like the natural operation of a given power, is pleasurable ("operationem sibi propriam quasi naturalem reddit, et per consequens delectabilem"). For proportionality or suitability, we are told, is the cause of pleasure ("convenientia est delectationis causa").

Aquinas finds that pleasure can accompany any activity which fulfills our natural or connatural bent. So we can delight in inquiry, in just deeds or in an act of friendship, and the pleasure of these activities, like the pleasure of sex, of eating
or of a child at play, has to do with the fact that the act is simply appropriate and fitting with one's powers and habits. Play activities especially illustrate the simple delight in the spontaneous exercise of one's powers. The energy of children is only matched by their sheer delight in the simple exercise of their muscles, their senses, their athletic and creative impulses, their curiosity. As a virtue adds to one's abilities, it also adds to the kinds of acts one can delight in. In receiving a habit, a power is instilled with a new, quasi-natural or connatural orientation toward an action. Indeed, in Aquinas's view—as is markedly different from Kant's, who held affective motives for moral acts highly suspect—a morally good act has greater merit when it is undertaken with pleasure and has less merit when it is chosen reluctantly and with pain. It can be shown, therefore, that Aquinas thinks of a habit or virtue as a connatural development of a power.

Aquinas uses the term connatural in diverse contexts and its meaning changes accordingly. For instance, he often uses the term to mean that two things belong together by nature, as a power to its proper act and object. Hence, it is connatural to the intellect to turn to phantasms in order to understand. Used in this way, the term need not be restricted to the realm of human psychology and has no direct connection with virtue; it means only that something is co-natural, i.e., naturally concomitant with something else.

22See on this point, Pieper's Leisure, 29-31.

23ST, I-II, q 26, a 1, ad 3: "Cum unaquaeque res habeat connaturalitatem ad id quod est sibi conveniens secundum suam naturam."

24SCG, III, ch 119; ST, I-II, q 5, a 1, ad 2; II-II, q 174, a 2, ad 4; q 175, a 1.
However, Aquinas does have a special use for the term in which it becomes the equivalent of virtue or habit. When the term is used in this way, it becomes necessary to distinguish a connatural from a natural inclination. Any reality has a natural inclination toward what is proper to it according to its nature. But the inclination toward the performance of a habitual act and the delight felt in that act is connatural. That is, the inclination is due to an added determination of one's nature which becomes, as it were, one's second nature:

For to anyone having a habit, the object properly proportionate to the habit is lovable in itself because [the object] becomes somehow connatural to him inasmuch as custom and habit are converted into nature.

(Quia unicuique habenti habitum, est per se diligibile id quod est conveniens secundum proprium habitum: quia fit ei quodammodo connaturale, secundum quod consuetudo et habitus vertitur in naturam, ST, I-II, q 78, a 2.)

The operative phrase in this text is "habitus vertitur in naturam." Thomas seems to be suggesting that since our nature is for the most part potentiality, it makes little difference whether we think of the habit as an addition to or the definition of that nature. He takes Aristotle's notion of a habit to be a connatural development of a naturally given power. Connatural in this context means that our indeterminate nature is, as it were, extended or enriched through a further formal determination which grounds both a spontaneous disposition toward a virtuous act and a quasi-natural delight in that act.

25ST, I, q 80, a 1, ad 3: "Unaquaeque potentia animae est quaedam forma seu natura, et habet naturalem inclinationem in aliquid. Unde unaquaeque appetit objectum sibi conveniens naturali appetitu."
The term "form" (as in "formal determination") suggests in the Aristotelian lexicon a unity of materials, as when an ordered and coherent design forms bricks, the materials, into a church. The bricks, of course, by themselves are not a church, but the orderly arrangement of the bricks makes the church possible. We must bear in mind that here too in considering the virtues unity and integration are also at issue. The distinct virtues—and this is especially true of the moral virtues—emerge and take shape only in cooperation with other virtues. A virtuous act is one in which the powers cooperate rather than conflict. A full exploration of this point will develop only when we focus on the virtue of practical wisdom since, to continue with my analogy, a person's use of practical reason provides the architect for the order which integrates the affective materials. Yet for now we can get at this issue of integration from another direction, for Aquinas finds that virtue differs from vice as the unity and cooperation of powers differs from their disintegration and conflict. Indeed, this is the difference between liberty and dissipation.

3.3.2 Virtue, Vice and Freedom

The moral virtues provide the psychological conditions which allow our knowledge to shape and inform our conduct, and this acquired ability to act well, i.e.,

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The architectural metaphor is helpful in that it allows the analogy of practical wisdom and the architect, but unfortunately suggests a rigid and unyielding structure, while as we shall see rigidity is more a quality of vice than of virtue. *ST*, I-II, q 67, a 1 suggests the metaphor: "Sciendum est quod in huiusmodi virtutibus [i.e., virtutes morales] aliquid est formale, et aliquid quasi materiale. Materiale quidem est in his virtutibus inclinatio quadam partis appetitivae ad passiones vel operationes secundum modum aliquem. Sed quia iste modus determinatur a ratione, ideo formale in omnibus virtutibus est ipse ordo rationis."
according to our best judgment, is liberating. Now to argue that the virtues liberate the individual conflicts with the philosophical tradition which understands freedom exclusively as the absence of constraints and limitations. In that approach, virtue is thought to begin as an external norm or rule, a social convention, which comes to be habituated and which limits and confines the individual's behavior. Far from being liberating, therefore, virtue is a limitation on one's freedom. Moreover, since the virtues are understood to be social constructs or conventions, their sole purpose is taken to be to ensure the cooperation of individuals with the social order. Thus, they need not benefit the individual except insofar as one reaps rewards for conforming with the laws and expectations of society and avoids punishment for the failure to conform. Despite these rewards and punishments, this approach finds that the price of virtue and social cooperation is some measure of personal inhibition or repression, a loss of freedom, and the so-called virtues are the formation of this

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27 This approach can be found in a wide array of philosophies, but seems especially important in British Empiricism. See for instance Hobbes's definition of liberty: "By liberty is understood, according to the proper signification of the word, the absence of external impediments; which impediments may oft take away a man's power to do what he would. . ." Leviathan, Chapter 14 (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958), 109. John P. Hittinger shows the influence of Hobbes on Locke and goes on to demonstrate Locke's view that virtues are (1) culturally relative, (2) can be defined as what is praised in the judgment of common opinion, while vices are what are blamed, and (3) that virtues are not a suitable basis for a normative moral philosophy. See his "Why Locke Rejected an Ethics of Virtue and Turned to an Ethics of Utility," The American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly 66 (annual supplement, 1990), 267-276.

28 Hittinger writes: "Locke's thesis is simple: men praise what is useful, i.e., they praise what is to their own advantage. It is advantageous for others to be courageous and just; the courageous man may offer his assistance and the just man will not deprive one of his goods" (ibid., 273). Thus, virtue consists in socially desirable patterns of behavior, but not necessarily personally fulfilling patterns.
repression in one’s psyche.  

It cannot be denied that we typically form our habits through a process of socialization while we learn to cooperate with the social order. Indeed, it would be a grave error to assume that the virtues can emerge without a suitable social context or that such a situation would be desirable. The virtues are fulfilling of the individual for his social existence. Yet it may or may not be the case that the habits which allow us to succeed in a given social order are virtues. Thomas’s analysis of virtue and vice offers an insight on the question of human freedom which is sorely needed if we are to understand what human flourishing is. True virtues, not necessarily those inculcated by a given social order, allow the authentic self to emerge and thrive. Virtues, that is, fulfill rather than repress one’s potential and enable one to

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29 I believe that this is Freud’s approach in Civilization and Its Discontents. By "sublimation" he means that a sensual drive inhibited by some cultural taboo is redirected to a new outlet. The point, however, to make by way of contrast with Aquinas is that for Freud habits are fixed patterns or modes of inhibiting and redirecting sensual desires, whereas Aquinas finds other distinct natural desires from the start: the desire to know, the desire to act according to reason, and the receptivity of our emotions to the influence of reason. Thus, character is not the mere internalization of societal prejudices, as it is for Freud, but is the fulfillment one’s own tendencies. If the desire to act in accord with one’s best judgment is natural, then its realization through the formation of a virtue is fulfilling, not inhibiting.

30 For instance, Josef Pieper in his Leisure, argues in essence that the work habits which an exclusively utilitarian society asks us to develop are not those which allow for the fullness of human flourishing. In his After Virtue, Alasdair MacIntyre leaves two perspectives on virtue unresolved. First, he argues against Aquinas’s reading of Aristotle that the moral virtues mutually imply one another so that one cannot possess courage, for example, without also possessing justice. In arguing against this view he uses the example of a Nazi soldier who, despite the injustice of his cause, possesses true courage. MacIntyre writes: “Thus, I take it that if any version of moral Aristotelianism were necessarily committed to a strong thesis concerning the unity of the virtues (as not only Aquinas, but Aristotle himself were) there would be a serious defect in that position" (168). In Aquinas’s view one cannot act courageously for an unjust cause, but more to the point here MacIntyre’s example suggests that the virtues are culturally relative since apparently risking one’s life for any cause or purpose may be equally courageous. Yet, secondly, like Pieper, MacIntyre is constructing a critique of utilitarian individualism, suggesting that some social institutions habituate vice (e.g., acquisitiveness) rather than virtue, which is not possible to argue without some normative notion of virtue. See especially Chapters 17 and 18 for his critique.
realize his or her possibilities rather than inhibit them.

In order to explore this argument in detail we can consider the following three points. First, the virtues integrate and perfect the operations of the human powers, whereas the vices inhibit their cooperation and thwart the person's effectiveness. Second, virtues are not "habits" at all, if by the use of this term it is to be implied that a person acts out of a rigid pattern of thought, affectivity and conduct. Such habits are vices inasmuch as they leave the person unresponsive to significant differences in changing situations. With a vice there is a consistency of response inappropriate to the changing realities of circumstances. Virtues, on the other hand, heighten a person's autonomy by enabling him to act well within a broader and more challenging range of circumstances. Third, the good to which a virtue disposes a person is real. That is, it is something truly beneficial to the person. The object to which a vice disposes a person, however, is only an apparent good. We can take these three points one at a time.

First, then, virtues fulfill a person's natural potential and thereby bring dignity to his or her life. Thus, the goodness of a virtue is not determined merely by its relationship to the conventions of a given social order. Indeed, the laws and expectations of a society must themselves be measured by whether they enable persons to flourish. We have already seen in the previous section that Aquinas understands the virtues in terms of the various powers which they perfect and that a virtue adds a habit to the power which further determines its operation and gives a new spontaneity and ease in acting. We can also note that Thomas finds a natural inclination
Thus, he claims that virtues are naturally inchoate and begin as aptitudes in need of perfection. These aptitudes are like the seeds of the virtues ("quaedam seminalia intellectualium virtutum et moralium," ST, I-II, q 63, a 1). It follows, therefore, that virtues and vices can be distinguished according to whether the habit is fulfilling or thwarting of one's natural aptitude and inclination because some habits will dispose a person to acts befitting of his nature ("disponit ad actum convenientem naturae agentis") and others to acts harmful to it.

One way to understand what Aquinas means in claiming that the virtues perfect one's natural aptitudes is to contrast the integration of the virtues with the dissipation of the vices. The four cardinal virtues--practical wisdom, justice, courage and moderation--imply one another. One must possess all four in order to possess any of them (ST, I-II, q 65). The intention operative in any virtue differs from the intention operative in any vice in that virtues dispose one to act in accord with what is reasonable, but vices dispose one to satisfy an emotion independently from the guidance of our reasoned judgment. Thus, the vices need not imply one another.

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31 ST, I-II, q 85, a 1: "Secundo, quia homo a natura habet inclinationem ad virtutem."

32 ST, I-II, q 63, a 1: "Virtutes in nobis sunt a natura secundum aptitudinem et inchoationem, non autem secundum perfectionem."

33 ST, I-II, q 54, a 3: "Et hoc modo distinguuntur specie habitus bonus et malus: nam habitus bonus dicitur qui disponit ad actum convenientem naturae agentis; habitus autem malus dicitur qui disponit ad actum non convenientem naturae."

34 ST, I-II, q 73, a 1: "Aliter se habet intentio agentis secundum virtutem ad sequendum rationem, et aliter intentio peccantis ad divertendum a ratione. Cuiuslibet enim agentis secundum virtutem intentio est ut rationis regulam sequatur: et ideo omnium virtutum intentio in idem tendit. Et propter hoc omnes virtutes habent connexionem ad invicem in ratione recte agibilium, quae est prudentia, sicut supra dictum est [ST, I-II, q 65, a 1]. Sed intentio peccantis non est ad hoc quod recedat ab eo quod est secundum rationem; sed potius ut tendat in aliquod bonum appetibile, a quo speciem sortitur."
as the virtues do. Indeed, vices may conflict among themselves, drawing the person off in opposite directions. Hence, the virtues differ from vices in that the virtues bring together the many desires and drives into a unity of focus, whereas the vices accomplish the opposite, dissipating the focus of one’s energies into a multitude of directions:

For a base act is not committed by passing from a multitude to a unity [of inclinations], as occurs with the virtues which are interconnected, but rather by falling from a unity into a multiplicity [of inclinations].

(Non enim peccatum committitur in accedendo a multitudine ad unitatem, sicut accidit in virtutibus quae sunt connexae: sed potius in recedendo ab unitate ad multitudinem, ST, I-II, q 73, a 1.)

The Virtues operate together, bringing a cooperation of powers, a unity of purpose and integrity of character. The vices cause the opposite, bringing conflict of reason and affectivity, a divergence of purposes and a lack of character. The virtues are fulfilling because as human beings we naturally aspire to this cooperation, integrity and focus. When our energies are dissipated in a multitude of directions, on the other hand, we are adrift and aimless, acting without purpose or reason. Such a life is not perfective of our human aptitude.

The virtues liberate and the vices hinder for a second reason. The term "habit" may imply that one’s behavior is in a way involuntary. Thus, it is our human condition to struggle with "bad habits" which we would like to break, but often do not. The question arises then whether the virtues, since they are habits, render a person’s behavior involuntary. Yves Simon was so insistent that virtues do not lessen

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35ST, I-II, q 73, a 1: "Huiusmodi autem bona in quae tendit intentio peccantis a ratione recedens, sunt diversa, nullam connexionem habentia ad invicem: immo etiam interdum sunt contraria."
the freedom of one's conduct that he refused to translate the Latin habitus as habit, a term which he took to imply an involuntary response.\textsuperscript{36} I find Simon's concern quite legitimate inasmuch as Aquinas understood that the virtues do not narrow the range of one's conduct, but broaden it. They do not render conduct less responsive and intelligent, but more so.

To clarify this we must distinguish between the essential freedom of a human being and the effective freedom which brings our essential freedom into actuality.\textsuperscript{37} This is the difference between the freedom of an eighteen year old who has "his whole life ahead of him" and the freedom of, say, a forty-five year old. The younger person, we often claim in exaggeration, can become "anything he wants to be." He has the freedom of possibilities, the freedom of the future. In celebrating this freedom we affirm the importance of opportunity and the removal of economic and social barriers. Yet the freedom of possibilities often leaves one short in the moment. Our eighteen year old may be an aspiring doctor, but if we are ill, it would be best to go to the educated and competent forty-five year old. Her freedom is actual; it is the freedom of what she has already become, the freedom to act effectively in the present. The effective freedom of the mature adult depends on forming virtues, intellectual and moral, which make one an effective agent of good. The virtuous habits enable one to do more, not less. We can follow Aquinas's own explanation of this point.

\textsuperscript{36}Instead, he retained the Latin term. The Definition of Moral Virtue, 55-60.

We have seen that Aquinas distinguishes specifically human operations such as inquiring or choosing from other operations performed by human beings such as breathing or digestion (see In I Ethic, lect 1, n 3; and ST, I-II, q 55, a 2). Moreover, he argues that the specifically human operations are those which are exclusively in need of the further determination provided by the virtues. This is because the intellect and will are the most radically indeterminate of powers:

Rational powers, however, which are proper to man are not determinate to one [act], but relate indeterminately to many. They are, however, determined to an act through a habit.

(Potentiae autem rationales, quae sunt propriae hominis, non sunt determinatae ad unum, sed se habent indeterminate ad multa: determinantur autem ad actus per habitus, ST, I-II, q 55, a 1.)

The human or rational powers have need of further perfection or determination because they begin indeterminately. A native capacity is often fully determinate, without any need or possibility for further determination by a habit. This is the case with the instinctual powers of animals and even with the human sense powers. In these cases the determination implies a lack of freedom in such powers. The human sense organs are compelled to act when acted upon, and the material content of the act of sensation itself is fully determined by the object which moves the sense to act. Similarly, animals act in instinctual patterns and routines. The spiders of one

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38 Cf. ST, I-II, q 55, a 1, ad 5: "Potentiae naturales sunt de se determinatae ad unum: non autem potentiae rationales."

39 De Virt, a 1: "Illae vero potentiae sunt tantum actae quae non agunt nisi ab alius motae; nec est in eis agere vel non agere, sed secundum impetum virtutis moventis agunt; et tales sunt vires sensitivae secundum se consideratae. . . . Et hae potentiae perficiuntur ad suos actus per aliquid superinductum; quod tamen non inest eis sicut aliqua forma manens in subjecto, sed solum per modum passionis, sicut species in pupilla."
species, for example, all make their web in an uniform way, while sparrows all build the same kind of nests (De Virt, a 6; cf. ST, I-II, q 49, a 4; and q 55, a 1).

The human rational powers, however, are not fixed in this way. There is a level of indeterminacy which can be fully accounted for only through an analysis of essential human freedom as it is manifested in free choice. Human intelligence and reason, which allow us to discern and compare abstract concepts, are necessary conditions of free choice. In matters of choice and action, human reason is not compelled to resolve to one or another course of action, but can resolve in opposite directions, either to act or not. This is because we can always conceive of some good or advantage in both acting or refraining, and no alternative is beyond being conceived as a good. Therefore, reason's assessment of the good is indeterminate, and this indeterminacy is one of the essential conditions of freedom.

Hence, when Aquinas contrasts the fixed routines of spiders and sparrows with the potentially infinite diversity of human acts, he writes of the nobility and infinite possibilities of humankind's active principle, the soul. He suggests, therefore, that human freedom necessitates the human need for an acquired and not merely a

40 ST, I, q 59, a 3: "Sed solum id quod habet intellectum, potest agere iudicio libero, inquantum, cognoscit universalem rationem boni, ex qua potest iudicare hoc vel illud esse bonum. Unde ubicumque est intellectus est liberum arbitrium."

41 ST, I, q 83, a 1: "Ratio enim circa contingenta habet viam ad opposita. . . . Particularia autem operabilia sunt quaedam contingenta: et ideo circa ea iudicium rationis ad diversa se habet, et non est determinatum ad unum. Et pro tanto necesse est quod homo sit liber arbitrii, ex hoc ipso quod rationalis est." Cf. ST, I-II, q 17, a 1, ad 2; De Ver, q 24, a 2. According to Lonergan, the Thomist conditions of freedom are: 1) the real existence of alternative courses of action, 2) the discernment of these alternatives by reason, 3) the ability of the will to withhold assent from the object of the intellect, and 4) the will's self-movement in its assent to the practical judgment. Grace and Freedom (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 93-97.
natural perfection. The indeterminacy of human freedom brings the need for the determination provided by virtuous habits:

Human operations, however, are multiple and diverse on account of the nobility of his active principle, the soul, whose power extends in a way infinitely. Therefore, neither the natural appetite for the good nor the natural judgment for acting rightly suffices for man, unless further determined and perfected.

(Homo autem est multarum operationum et diversarum; et hoc propter nobilitatem sui principii activi, scilicet animae, cuius virtus ad infinita quodammodo se extendit. Et ideo non sufficeret homini naturalis appetitus boni, nec naturale iudicium ad recte agendum, nisi amplius determinetur et perficiatur, De Virt, a 6.)

Thomas also explains that the specifically human powers are not compelled to act as are the senses. The senses act when acted upon, and they are affected only so long as action upon them continues. The specifically human powers, however, are perfected through an additional formal principle, a habit, which remains as part of the power and further fixes the formal character of the acts flowing from that power:

These powers are fulfilled in acting through something superadded, which is not in them as a mere passion, but through the mode of a form resting and remaining in a subject. Nevertheless, these forms do not compel the power from necessity to one object because otherwise the power would not be master of its own act. The virtues of these powers . . . are habits according to which one is able to act when he has willed.

(Hae potentiae completur ad agendum per aliquid superinductum, quod non est in eis per modum passionis tantum, sed per modum formae quiescentis, et manentis in subjecto; ita tamen quod per eas non de necessitate potentia ad unum cogatur; quia sic potentia non esset domina sui actus. Harum potentiarum virtutes . . . sunt habitus, secundum quos potest quis agere cum voluerit, De Virt, a 1.)

Aquinas is concerned to argue here that the acquired determination of a habit does not destroy the essential freedom and "openness" of the power to diverse options.
Despite the acquisition of a habit, a human power remains free, "domina sui actus."
The habit does not compel the person, but enables him to act effectively so that he
is not impeded in acting as he chooses.

The fundamental freedom of the power, manifest in the unlimited number of
its possible objects, grounds the need for the habit. Yet this same ground of freedom
requires that a habit be something which does not destroy the flexibility and
unrestricted possibilities of the power. In other words, the effective liberation
achieved through a virtue is premised upon the essential freedom of the power which
a virtue perfects. The virtue which a disciplined pianist acquires does not limit his
or her ability to play diverse kinds of music. To the contrary, the training enhances
the possibility for diversity, and yet "focuses" the playing, ensuring that it will be well
ordered and in accord with the requirements of the piece. A virtue is an increased
capacity for good order in one's operations and yet does not undermine their
voluntary character. In sum, then, a virtue perfects or develops a given power.
Virtue establishes a generally followed norm of successful and effective conduct, an
ease, spontaneity and pleasure of action. This is possible inasmuch as the virtue is
rooted in human freedom, but perfects and liberates this freedom without destroying
it.

The voluntary character of the virtues can be attributed to what Thomas often
refers to as the participation of the affective or appetitive powers in reason. That
is, the moral virtues themselves, due to their participation in reason, constitute a kind

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42 On Thomas's treatment of virtue as a *recta ordo* see Frank Yartz, "Virtue as an Ordo in Aquinas."
of knowledge or reasonableness—connatural knowing:

The moral virtues perfect the appetive power inasmuch as it participates somewhat in reason, since its nature is such that it is moved by the command of reason. . . . Thus, moral virtues are habits of a type which dispose the appetitive powers to obey reason promptly.

(Virtutes morales perficiunt vim appetitivam secundum quod participat aliquam rationem, inquantum scilicet nata est moveri per imperium rationis. . . . Virtutes morales habitus quidam sunt, quibus vires appetitivae disponuntur ad prompte obediendum rationi, ST, I-II, q 68, a 3.)

The participation of the virtues in reason allows one’s affective and volitional response to a situation to remain guided by the discernment of one’s intellect and judgment. Thus, as significant changes in circumstance arise, one’s affective response may make note, so to speak. Feelings and desires may remain suited to the situation at hand, rather than remaining fixed in an unyielding form, as happens with a person who is habitually angry or inordinately docile despite the need for other responses.

The vices, however, which consist of habits which resist the guidance of reasoned judgment, can be characterized as rigid and unresponsive precisely because of the rift between reason and affectivity.43 Such habits are in a sense blind.

Our third and last point regarding freedom and the virtues concerns the acts which they dispose us toward. Habits which are formed and guided by reasoned judgment dispose us toward what reasoned judgment has found to be good. Conversely, the act desired through a base habit will be subjectively good inasmuch as the person truly desires the act as a good, but it will not be objectively good inasmuch

43 On the role of reason in the virtues and the potential for one’s affective response to be educated by reason see Lee H. Yearley, Mencius and Aquinas, 106-107.
as a reasonable person would not desire this act. So a reckless act is desirable to one who lacks the virtue of courage, but nonetheless is objectively an unwarranted risk of life. Again, to a cigarette smoker smoking is a desireable good, but the same smoker may well admit that he knows on a rational or intellectual level that cigarette smoking is bad for his health (or if he does not know this, others could inform him of it). We see in these examples not only that there is a possible dichotomy between knowing and doing, but also a rift between one's affective habits and one's reasoned judgments. To claim that the virtues dispose us to the objective good is to claim that they overcome this rift. The moral virtues are liberating because they enable one easily to pursue his best judgment.

Our analysis thus far has established some helpful elements of Aquinas's position. First, knowledge alone is insufficient for effective moral conduct. Virtue, however, provides an enhanced ability for action. The moral virtues liberate one to act according to the good that one knows. Indeed, we have had indications that that moral virtues constitute a kind of knowledge which can be called connatural. This is a point to be pursued in the later Chapters dealing with practical wisdom. However, it has also been noted that Aquinas admits of intellectual as well as moral virtues. This introduces a measure of ambiguity and confusion. Do intellectual virtues also enhance one's readiness for action, and if not, in what sense are they virtues? We can also inquire about the independence or perhaps interdependence of moral and intellectual virtues: do intellectual virtues support and contribute to moral development and vice versa? In distinguishing the intellectual and moral
virtues and examining their possible interdependence, the primacy of the moral virtues over the intellectual and the importance of the will in Thomas's account of the human act will come to the fore.

3.4 Distinguishing Intellectual and Moral Virtues

To know the good is not necessarily to do the good, and to acquire habits in some specialized discipline, to become a person of letters or to acquire the know-how of a special trade or profession is not to acquire good moral character. To put this in Thomas's language, the moral virtues determine how we actually conduct ourselves, and in the language of Yves Simon, the moral virtues give us an "existential readiness," a willingness to act. The intellectual virtues, taken alone, do not form our existential character, do not span the divide between knowing and doing. There is one notable exception to this rule, practical wisdom, but in this section we will be more concerned with the rule than the exception. Still, by way of introduction it will be helpful to focus on practical wisdom for a moment.

Thomas applies the theoretical and practical distinction to the intellectual virtues just as he does to the sciences. Among the intellectual virtues, the theoretical include wisdom (sapientia), understanding of first principles (intellectus) and the sciences (scientia), and the practical include practical wisdom (prudentia) and the

productive arts (ars). There is no need to elaborate on the meaning of these terms here or to discuss these individual virtues in detail.\textsuperscript{45} It will be helpful, however, to indicate briefly the unique place of practical wisdom among the intellectual virtues. Both art and practical wisdom are practical virtues because both strengthen one's ability to discern the good order for an activity (\textit{ST}, I-II, q 57, aa 3-4). Yet practical wisdom, unlike art, is a moral virtue. Indeed, it is the only intellectual virtue--i.e., one which perfects an aspect of one's cognitive development--which Aquinas counts among the moral virtues.\textsuperscript{46}

In this section we will examine why Aquinas subordinates the intellectual virtues to the moral. He argues that only the moral virtues are virtues in the full meaning of the term. The intellectual virtues, on the other hand, are virtues only in a qualified or derivative sense. Now since practical wisdom is a moral virtue, it is considered to be a virtue simply and without qualification. This is not true of the other practical virtue, art, which like the theoretical virtues shapes neither our actual conduct nor our moral character (\textit{ST}, I-II, q 57, a 3). Practical wisdom stands apart from all the other intellectual virtues in being counted among the moral virtues. There is significance in this, for the divide which Aquinas acknowledges between knowledge and conduct may yet be spanned. We can anticipate that practical wisdom, since it must be excluded from our analysis here of the other intellectual virtues, which draws primarily from the \textit{Nicomachean Ethics}, see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 57, a 1-5.

\textsuperscript{45}For Aquinas's analysis of the individual intellectual virtues, see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 57, aa 1-5.

\textsuperscript{46}ST, I-II, q 58, a 3, ad 1: "Prudentia, secundum essentiam suam, est intellectualis virtus. Sed secundum materiam, convenit cum virtutibus moralibus: est enim recta ratio agibilium. . . . Et secundum hoc, virtutibus moralibus connumeratur."
virtues, constitutes a unique kind of wisdom, one which reconciles intellect and will. Earlier in this chapter we have already seen reference to a felt knowledge and a connatural knowing; practical wisdom in being excluded from our discussion here remains a candidate to be such a knowledge. Our purpose here, however, is to examine the divide which practical wisdom might connect.

We shall move through section 3.4 in three steps. In § 3.4.1 we will examine the manner in which Aquinas distinguishes intellectual and moral virtues and his reasons for subordinating the former to the latter. In § 3.4.2 we will explore the foundation for his position which is found in his psychology of the will, and in § 3.4.3 we shall consider what possible interdependence there may be between these two types of virtue. What bearing does one’s moral character have on one’s theoretical and artistic or practical achievements, and in turn what bearing do the intellectual virtues which one possesses have on one’s moral character?

3.4.1 Intellectual Habits are Virtues in a Derivative Sense

We now need to compare and contrast the intellectual and moral virtues. In an article essential to our analysis (ST, I-II, q 56, a 3), Aquinas asks whether the intellect may receive virtuous habits ("Utrum intellectus possit esse subjectum virtutis"). In his response, he distinguishes habits which are virtues in the full meaning of the term ("habitus qui simpliciter dicitur virtus") and those which are virtuous only in qualified or limited respect (secundum quid virtus). As I have noted, all intellectual habits except practical wisdom are of this latter sort. They are virtues
only in a derivative sense. In working through Aquinas’s argument in this article, we will see that he reserves for the will alone the possibility of virtue in the full sense of the term. Moreover, this is due to his understanding of the will as the dynamic source in the soul moving all the powers to fruition, each in its own proper act.

The article begins with a nominal definition of virtue: "Virtue is a habit through which one acts well." Yet, Aquinas immediately notes, there are two ways in which a habit may relate to action. In the first more limited way, a habit gives a new ability or capacity ("facultas") for something. So, to use Thomas’s example, a linguist or orator has the capacity to use language well. Still, through indifference or laziness, such a person may butcher the language as badly as anyone else. Another example would be a doctor who may or may not utilize his skills to help heal someone. In these cases, the virtue is not yet a disposition for action, a disposition which may or may not accompany the virtue. Such virtues provide a certain ability for a theoretical or practical enterprise, but such abilities do not yet determine when and how one is inclined to act. Hence, other habits have a more direct relation with action:

In another way, some habits give not only a capacity for doing, but also bring the person to use the capacity rightly. So justice not only gives a person a promptness of will for performing justice, but also causes the person to act justly.

(Alio modo, aliquis habitus non solum facit facultatem agendi, sed etiam facit quod aliquis recte facultate utatur: sicut iustitia non solum facit quod homo sit promptae voluntatis ad iusta operandum, sed etiam facit ut iuste operetur, ST, I-II, q 56, a 3.)

Justice is moral virtue, a virtue perfecting one’s willingness to act justly. It will
become apparent as we proceed why moral virtues, like justice, leave a person ready to act ("promptae voluntatis"). Now having introduced this difference, Thomas goes on to establish the priority of the latter kind of habit over the former. Potency is relative to act and is fulfilled or perfected in the act. So too an acquired potentiality for a good act is relative to the actually good act, i.e., the act itself. Accordingly, a good habit which determines when and how one acts is good in a more complete sense and renders the person who possesses it good in a more complete sense than one which gives only a capacity for action. Of the two sorts of habits Aquinas is discussing here, the type which brings the person to the actual good use or exercise (which translate Aquinas's uti and usum) of a virtuous power is the more significant and true virtue. As I indicated, Yves Simon refers to this readiness to act as an "existential readiness," a disposition which is fully a part of one's lived existence, not merely of a refinement of one's talents, skills and intellectual accumen.

In defending his position Aquinas appeals to common experience. We often recognize that people with special talents and abilities are not necessarily good persons in a more comprehensive sense. There are, for instance, persons whose work we greatly admire, although we would not seek out their friendship or respect the kind of life they lead. Pablo Picasso, for instance, is reputed to have been something of a monster in his treatment of those who loved him and knew him intimately. This and other examples have often raised questions about the relation between a person's

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47 ST, I-II, q 56, a 3: "Et quia bonum, sicut et ens, non dictur simpliciter aliquid secundum id quod est in potentia, sed secundum id quod est in actu; ideo ab huiusmodi habitibus simpliciter dictur homo bonum operari, et esse bonus, puta quia est iustus vel temperatus."
work and his character. Aquinas addresses this issue through his effort to differentiate intellectual and moral virtues. Special abilities which have their basis in practical or theoretical intellectual development do not fully determine the value of the actual work, nor of the character of the person:

But the first kind of habits are considered virtues only in a qualified sense. For they do not bring goodness to the work, but only a certain capacity for it. Nor do they make their possessor good simply speaking. For a person is not called good without qualification [i.e. good qua person] since he is learned or skilled, but is called good only in a certain respect, say a good grammarian or good smith.

(Primi vero habitus non simpliciter dicuntur virtutes: quia non reddunt bonum opus nisi in quadam facultate, nec simpliciter faciunt bonum habentem. Non enim dicitur simpliciter aliquis homo bonus, ex hoc quod est sciens vel artifex: sed dicitur bonus solum secundum quid, puta bonus grammaticus, aut bonus faber, ST, I-II, q 56, a 3.)

This text makes two related points about intellectual habits. First, in regard to their work or activity, Aquinas states that these virtues do not of themselves render the effort good. Yet they give an increased capacity and possibility for good acts. An engineer, a doctor or a lawyer have special virtues (or skills to use a more contemporary term) which can be applied in a way that is of great service to the community. Their training gives them a real increase in their capacity for good. But someone may refuse to use the same virtues when it would be appropriate to do so, or may use them for unjust purposes. On the one hand, a person who lacks the

48 In an issue of Commonweal, 27 January, 1989, 40-1, John Garvey raised the question of what influence, if any, Pablo Picasso’s morbid personality had on his art.

49 We could also speak of suspending one’s virtue or skill when, for example, a well trained technician does shoddy and careless work creating a dangerous situation. The same could be said of one undertaking an investigation in philosophy or physics, theoretical pursuits. In these cases, one acts (continued...)
proper training is ill equipped to provide, say, good health care. Yet on the other, such know-how in itself does not establish the sufficient conditions of character which ensure that the know-how is used well and justly. Therefore, if such cognitive virtues are used well (i.e., under appropriate circumstances, at the right time, and for a just end), the reason for their good use does not lie within the virtue itself, but must be sought elsewhere. That is, such virtues themselves do not account for their good application.

Secondly, Aquinas's comment that intellectual virtues make a person good in only a qualified sense needs some elucidation ("Non enim dicitur simpliciter alquis homo bonus, ex hoc quod est sciens vel artifex: sed dicitur bonus solum secundum quid"). Just as intellectual virtues do not sufficiently determine the moral value of an act, neither do they satisfactorily determine the character and moral goodness of the agent performing the act. Although training in language, in some trade or in some specialized theoretical science effects a real increase in one's abilities, still this achievement does not suffice, or perhaps is irrelevant, for determining if one's character is good simpliciter. What does Aquinas have in mind here, and what determines whether one's character is good without qualification?

Aquinas makes his point more clearly for us in another text (De Virt, a 7, ad 2). The question at hand concerns whether there are theoretical virtues, and the second objection appeals to Aristotle's observation in the Ethics that one is not good

\[\text{(...)continued}\]

but not in accord with one's virtue. See ST, I-II, q 57, a 2, ad 3, and a 3, ad 1. In the latter text, Aquinas writes: "Cum aliquis habens artem operatur malum artificium, hoc non est opus artis [i.e. the habitus], immo est contra artem."
because he or she is learned. Thomas’s response does not reject the argument, but insists that theoretical and other intellectual habits bring a qualified and limited goodness to the person. Thus far his answer adds nothing new to our analysis, but what is remarkable is the directness with which he addresses the possibility of human goodness simpliciter:

A person is not called good simply speaking because of some partial good, but because the person is wholly good; and this comes about through the goodness of the will. For the will commands the acts of all the human powers since any act is the good of its own power. Hence, that person alone who has a good will is said to be good simply speaking.

(Homo non dicitur bonus simpliciter ex eo quod in parte bonus, sed ex eo quod secundum totum est bonus: quod quidem contingit per bonitatem voluntatis. Nam voluntas imperat actibus omnium potentiarum humanarum. Quod provenit ex hoc quod quilibet actus est bonum suae potentiae; unde solus ille dicitur esse bonus homo simpliciter qui habet bonum voluntatem, De Virt, a 7, ad 2.)

Through a good will a person is wholly good ("secundum totum est bonus") and good simply speaking ("simpliciter"). Aquinas does not mince words on the matter. But why is this the case? Why does he give central importance to the character of the will? His justification is found both in this text and the text from the Summa which we have been considering (ST, I-II, q 56, a 3). The will is central and fundamental in the personality in that it moves or commands all human acts. Hence, Aquinas continues his analysis in ST, I-II, q 56, a 3 by appealing to this theme in his

50 De Virt, a 7, obj 2: "Non enim dicitur propter hoc bonus homo, quia habet scientiam. Ergo habitus qui sunt in intellectu speculativo non sunt virtutes."

51 De Virt, a 7, ad 2: "Et sic patet, quod ex eo quod homo habet scientiam, non dicitur bonus simpliciter, sed bonus secundum intellectum, vel bene intelligens; et similiter est de arte et de aliis huiusmodi habitibus."
psychology. He states that habits which are virtues in a qualified sense can constitute intellectual development, both theoretical and practical, so long as these habits are considered independently of the will ("absque omni ordine ad voluntatem"). On the other hand, those which are virtues fully and properly speaking must perfect the will or must at least be virtues which always presuppose the movement of the will.\textsuperscript{52}

What is his justification for this subordination of intellectual to volitional virtues? Since the will moves all other powers to their own proper acts, a virtuous proclivity for the exercise of a capacity must be volitional:

For the will moves all other powers which are in some way rational to their own acts. . . . And, therefore, it happens that a person actually acts well because the person has a good will. Thus, a virtue which brings actual good conduct, rather than a mere capacity, is necessarily either in the will or in another power but regarded as moved by the will.

(Cuius ratio est, quia voluntas movet omnes alias potentias quae aliqualiter sunt rationales, ad suos actus. . . . Et ideo quod homo actu bene agat, contingit ex hoc quod homo habet bonam voluntatem. 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, ST, I-II, q 56, a 3. Cf. In III Sent, d 23, q 1, a 4, sol 1.)

These lines give us our first indication of a point we shall pursue in detail. For Aquinas virtue essentially and primarily denotes the perfection of the will, and the analysis of the intellectual virtues which we have been examining is rooted in his psychology, i.e., in his understanding of the will in its relation to the person as a

\textsuperscript{52}Ibid: "Subiectum vero habitus qui simpliciter dicitur virtus, non potest esse nisi voluntas; vel aliqua potentia secundum quod est mota a voluntate." The second qualifying portion of this statement anticipates Aquinas's analysis of practical wisdom. It is a virtue simpliciter because it always presupposes a right will.
whole: "From the very notion of habit we see it has some primary relationship to the
will since a habit is what one uses when he wills." The moral value of any human
act as it is actually performed depends on the goodness of the will. A good will
causes one to be good secundum totum because the intentionality of the will per-
meates all acts; the will causes a power and its habits to be fulfilled in an actually
good act, and whatever virtues, moral or theological, which perfect the will, perfect
one's character simpliciter.

3.4.2 The Will as the Ground of Human Goodness

In this section we will take time out to examine Aquinas's account of the cen-
trality of the will in the human personality. He tells us that there are two funda-
mental aspects in the movement of a psychological power, that is, in its reduction
from potency to act. There are two because both the subject, that is the power, and
the object contribute to the realization of the act. Vision can be taken as an example.
We can locate the contribution of the power if we consider, for instance, that the
condition of the organ, the eye, causes one to see more or less clearly. Similarly, we
can locate the contribution of the object by noting that sometimes one sees white and
at other times black.

53 ST, I-II, q 50, a 5: "Ex ipsa etiam ratione habitus apparat quod habet quendam principalem
ordinem ad voluntatem, prout habitus est quo quis utitur cum voluerit."

54 De Malo, q 6, a 1: "Potentia aliqua dupliciter movetur: uno modo ex parte subjecti; alio modo
ex parte objecti. Ex parte subjecti quidem, sicut visus per immutationem dispositionis organi movetur
ad clarius vel minus clare videndum: ex parte vero objecti, sicut visus nunc videt album nunc videt
nigrum."
to an act we must distinguish the exercise or efficient cause from the specification or formal determination:

The first influence pertains to the exercise itself of the act, as namely it is or is not performed or is performed better or worse. But the second influence pertains to the specification of the act, for the act is specified through the object.

(Et prima quidem immutatio pertinet ad ipsum exercitium actus, ut scilicet agatur vel non agatur aut melius vel debilius agatur: secunda vero immutatio pertinet ad specificationem actus, nam actus specificatur per obiectum, De Malo, q 6, a 1. Cf. ST, I-II, q 9, a 1.)

The importance of this analysis lies in its application to intellect and will. Just as in any act we find both the exercise of the act and its specification, so in any human act there is both an intellectual and volitional contribution. For the will has no object except that provided by the intellect; and the intellect by itself provides no good to move toward as a final cause, unless its object is chosen by the will. Aquinas clarifies the point I am making here by discussing the formal objects of the intellect and the will, verum in communi and bonum in communi.\(^{55}\) In every case, the good of the will must have a content and, hence, must be apprehended by the intellect as a specific truth. Similarly, the object of the intellect, the true, is a specific good, the good which the intellect moves towards as its proper end. Therefore, any good is an instance of truth, and any truth is a specific good:

Thus, even the good itself, since it is a certain comprehensible form, falls under the true as a certain truth. And the true itself, since it is

\(^{55}\)De Malo, q 6, a 1: "Si autem consideremus obiecta voluntatis et intellectus, inveniemus quod obiectum intellectus est primum principium in genere causae formalis, est enim eius obiectum ens et verum; sed obiectum voluntatis est primum principium in genere causae finalis, nam eius obiectum est bonum, sub quo comprehenduntur omnes fines, sicut sub vero comprehenduntur omnes formae apprehensae."
the end of the intellectual operation, falls under the good as a certain particular good.

(Unde et ipsum bonum, inquantum est quaedam forma apprehensibilis, continetur sub vero quasi quoddam verum; et ipsum verum inquantum est finis intellectualis operationis, continetur sub bono ut quoddam particulare bonum, De Malo, q 6, a 1.)

Out of this analysis of the true and the good, Aquinas draws the conclusion that both the intellect and the will cause the human act, the intellect as providing the specifying object and the will as intending the end and effecting the exercise of the act. Without the apprehension of the intellect, there is no object to be loved or willed, and without the act of the will, no object takes on the formal character of a good, a loved and intended end. Now the crucial point in all this for our purposes is in the conclusion that can be drawn about the relationship of the will to the intellect and to all other psychological powers of the soul.

The bonum in communi is the formal object of the will, but in any particular act the good is not something general, but rather the specific end which is achieved through the willed exercise of some of human power, as sight is what one intends in the act of seeing and truth is what one intends in the act of inquiring. Hence, in each case, the specification of the act depends, on the one hand, on the character of the power exercised, its perfecting habits and the kind of object to which it is receptive and, on the other, on the exercise of the act which is due to one's willingness to

56Thus, In III Sent, d 23, q 1, a 4, sol 1 distinguishes acts which are formally and materially good: "Et quia bonum est obiectum voluntatis, ideo per modum istum [i.e. formaliter] actus bonus dicit non potest nisi actus voluntatis, aut appetitivae partis. Materialiter autem actus bonus dicitur qui congruit potentiae operanti, quamvis obiectum eius non sit bonum sub ratione boni. Sicut cum quis recte intelligit et oculus clare videt."
move the power to its own proper operation:

And since each agent acts on account of the end, the principle of this motion is from the end. . . . However, the good in general, which has the character (ratio) of the end, is the object of the will. And thus in this regard the will moves the other powers of the soul to their own acts. For we use the other powers when we will, since the ends and perfections of all other powers is comprehended under the object of the will as certain particular goods.

(Et cum omne agens agat propter finem, principium huius motionis est ex fine . . . Bonum autem in communi, quod habet rationem finis, est objectum voluntatis. Et ideo ex hac parte voluntas movet alias potentias animae ad suos actus: utimur enim aliis potentiiis cum volumus. Nam fines et perfectiones omnium aliarum potentiarum comprehenduntur sub objecto voluntatis, sicut quaedam particularia bona, ST, I-II, q 9, a 1.)

Every agent acts for the sake of an end, and all human acts operate through the ultimate intention of the will for the good. Although the good of each power is found in its own proper acts, nonetheless this ultimate intentionality of the will stands as the impetus behind each of these acts. For it is only through these particular operations that the dynamic tendency toward the bonum in communi can be made actual. But the crucial point comes here. Moral virtue, according to Aquinas, depends essentially on those habits which structure and form our desires, choices and intentions for the good. Hence, in the following text Thomas distinguishes acts which

57 Aquinas repeats this point often: De Malo, q 6, a 1: "Et hoc modo voluntas movet seipsam et omnes alias potentias. Intelligo enim quia volo; et similiter utor omnibus potentiiis et habitibus quia volo." In III Sent, d 23, q 1, a 4, sol 1: "Et inde est quod voluntas imperat actus aliarum potentiae inquantum actus carum materialiter se habent ad rationem boni, sicut cum quis recte intelligit et oculus clare videt." But his emphasis on the self-movement of the will appears in his late works, especially in the prima secundae and De Malo. Hence, the point is not mentioned in the early text cited here. On this issue of development see Klaus Riesenhuber, "The Bases and Meaning of Freedom in Thomas Aquinas," Proceedings American Catholic Philosophic Association 48 (1974), 99-111. Cf. ST, I, q 82, a 4; De Ver, q 22, a 12; SCG, III, ch 26.

58 On the intentionality of the will see In II Sent, d 38, q 1, a 3 and ad 4; and ST, I-II, q 12, a 1.
are essentially volitional from other acts which are commanded by the will. Only the former are essentially moral acts:

For some acts are elicited by the appetitive part, as for example willing, choosing, desiring and others, and such acts are essentially moral. But other acts, such as walking, considering and others, are commanded, not elicited, by the appetitive part. And these are not moral according to their own species, but only according to their use, insofar as they are commanded by the will.

(Sunt enim aliqui actus a parte appetitiva eliciti, sicut velle, eligere, concupiscere, et huiusmodi; et tales actus essentialiter morales sunt. Alii vero sunt actus a parte appetitiva non eliciti, sed imperati, sicut ambulare, considerare et huiusmodi; et isti non sunt morales quantum ad speciem suam, sed solum quantum ad usum eorum, prout imperatur a voluntate, III Sent, d 23, q 1, a 4, sol 2.)

Acts of willing, choosing, desiring (elicited acts) are essentially moral, but other (commanded) acts are moral only according to the way they are willed, chosen, desired. Aquinas's continued insistence on this principle is clear, and it explains his view that the intellectual virtues are virtues only in a derivative sense, but the further implications of this position for Aquinas's attempts to assess the value of intellectual achievement must now be considered.

3.4.3 The Relationship between the Intellectual and Moral Virtues

Human goodness is essentially a goodness of will, a goodness of one's

59 For the point that a habit effecting right choice is always in the appetitive power see ST, I-II, q 58, a 1, ad 2.

60 Hence, the passage cited here goes on to distinguish the virtues in a fashion similar to ST, I-II, q 56, a 3. The text reads: "Et ita virtutes, quae perficiunt appetitivam partem, proprie dicuntur morales. Virtutes autem perficiences intellectivam, perficiunt cam ad actus perfectos in genere cognitionis, non autem secundum ordinem ad imperium voluntatis."
intentions, desires and choices. The good will is, however, a matter of perfection through virtuous habits, and thus we may inquire about the contribution of the intellect in the formation of these habits. We wonder, that is, what Aquinas means by a good will and the part which our intellectual powers play in the achievement of such a will. On the other hand, we may also focus on the intellectual virtues and consider to what extent they may flourish independently of good moral character and a good will.

When we turn to Aquinas's own analysis with these questions in mind, we find a certain tension in his thought. We find clear indications that the intellectual virtues depend in a way on one's moral character, but also that the reverse does not hold: the moral virtues do not depend on the intellectual. Yet each of these claims must be qualified by countervailing observations. One's weaknesses of moral character cannot diminish one's intellectual achievements, and one's good will depends on forming well-ordered habits where good order is what is discerned by the intellect. Final resolution of the matter lies in the last two chapters because the interdependence of intellect and will in the formation of one's character depends on practical wisdom with its self-reflective structure. The breach, on the other hand, which we find between the intellectual and moral virtues can be explained ultimately by the fact that the cooperation of intellect and will, knowledge and intention, must be understood as a human possibility, an existential task and need, more than a given fact of human psychology.

We already have clear indications that the intellectual virtues depend on the
moral. Intellectual virtues give one a capacity, an acquired ability to use one's intellect well, but whether one does in fact exercise these virtues depends on one's choices, desires and intentions. In *ST*, I-II, q 56, a 3, which has been quoted at length in § 3.4.1, Aquinas states that the intellectual virtues do not "render the work good" ("non reddunt bonum opus"), that is, they do not in actual fact determine when and how well one exercises what these virtues make possible to be exercised. Similarly, at *ST*, I-II, q 57, a 1, Aquinas asks whether the habits of the theoretical intellect may be considered virtues. He argues that they may, but goes on to assert that the moral value of theoretical activity and the end at which it aims is not itself determined by the theoretical virtues. His response runs along the same lines as the article we discussed above and appeals to it (*ST*, I-II, q 56, a 3). A habit may be taken as a virtue for two reasons. It may give a capacity for good work, or it may also determine the good use or exercise of a capacity ("facit etiam usu bonum"). Virtues of this latter sort pertain only to the appetitive part, for it is the appetitive power which determines our actual conduct and exercise of any power or habit ("Vis appetitiva animae est quae facit uti omnibus potentiiis et habitibus."). Hence, the virtues perfecting the will (whether moral or theological) determine the moral value and goodness present in the exercise of a theoretical habit:

Therefore, a virtue which perfects the will, such as charity or justice, also grounds the good exercise of these theoretical habits.

(Et ideo virtus quae perficit voluntatem, ut caritas vel iustitia, facit etiam bene uti huiusmodi speculativis habitibus, *ST*, I-II, q 57, a 1.)

This comment indicates that Aquinas recognizes that even theoretical inquiry--
i.e., inquiry which does not focus at all on one's own conduct--has some form of dependency on the will and the virtues perfecting it. The good use of one's ability to investigate and discover truth is not simply a function of one's intellectual development, but requires a good will as well. Aquinas's point is that one must choose to inquire and may not so choose when to do so would be appropriate. Thus, as Etienne Gilson points out, Aquinas's position harks back to the Greek view that philosophy is a way of life dependent on the love of knowledge, and that Aquinas's so-called intellectualism is misunderstood if it is taken to imply that theoretical inquiry operates independently of the moral virtues and the love of truth. 61

Thus, it is consonant with Aquinas's position to argue that the very efficacy of theoretical effort in its quest for truth is a function of the moral character of the will, its habitual affective and intentional disposition. If, for instance, the person with theoretical virtues would follow the rigor of the analysis down a certain path, reason may dictate a certain conclusion. Still if that conclusion conflicted with one's affective inclinations (e.g. one's career ambitions or even one's world view), one may prefer to reason sophistically, to avoid raising all the pertinent questions and following the relevant lines of thought, or simply to drop the matter altogether. It seems that this response would constitute a moral rather than an intellectual failure:

61 Now as a science through which man finds his way towards beatitude wisdom must be for [Aquinas] an object of love. ... A true Thomist, then, is a man who knows because he is a man who loves. There is, in other words, a moral side to the study of Thomas Aquinas." Etienne Gilson, Wisdom and Love in Saint Thomas Aquinas (Marquette: Marquette University Press, 1951), 5. This work traces out Aquinas's analysis of the intellectual or contemplative life and the importance of the moral and theological virtues for that life.
a decision not to utilize the intellectual abilities one enjoys.\textsuperscript{62}

It is also noteworthy that in this same article no effort is made to show a reverse dependency of a good will on the theoretical virtues. Indeed, Aquinas stresses the lack of influence. The theoretical virtues do not perfect the appetitive side nor modify it in any way ("Cum igitur habitus intellectuales speculativi non perficiant partem appetitivam, nec aliquo modo ipsam respicient, sed solam intellectivam. . ."). Such virtues give only an increased ability for investigating the truth, the specific good of the intellect ("Faciunt facultatem bonae operationis, quae est consideratio veri. Hoc enim est bonum opus intellectus."). The influence of knowledge and intellectual ability on our moral character is indirect at best, and yet clearly for Aquinas the opposite does not hold: theoretical inquiry is dependent upon one's moral character.

The arts or intellectual virtues which allow us to produce something are, of course, distinguished from theoretical virtues by their separate ends, success in

\textsuperscript{62}This possibility of a moral corruption of one's intellectual habits is also suggested by Aquinas's treatment of conscience. One's conscience is binding whether it be true or false; yet it would be a moral error to change a true conscience and there is a moral obligation to change a false conscience when the opportunity presents itself (De Ver, q 17, a 4). The implication is that one's conscience, though binding, may be formed honestly or dishonestly (i.e., self-deceptively) and that how one forms one's conscience is also a form of moral conduct. Also, Aquinas's thematic development of the relationship between intellect and will suggests, or perhaps is confirmed by, an important theme in contemporary philosophy. Authors such as H.-G. Gadamer, David Tracy and Alasdair MacIntyre stress that theoretical and philosophical inquiry themselves constitute a \textit{praxis}, that is, an activity dependent on moral as well as methodological concerns. Tracy writes: "And all texts, theirs and mine, are saturated with the ideologies of particular societies, the history of ambiguous effects of particular traditions, and the hidden agendas of the unconscious" in \textit{Plurality and Ambiguity} (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987), 62. MacIntyre is even more explicit in his \textit{First Principles, Final Ends and Contemporary Philosophical Issues}, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1990), 40-43. He cites Aristotle who in the \textit{Metaphysics} (1004b17-26) distinguishes the sophist and philosopher by the kind of life each has chosen, and MacIntyre argues that the virtue of practical wisdom must also be operative in theoretical endeavors.
production and success in inquiry respectively. Yet they share in common that both types of virtues are intellectual and distinct from the moral virtues. The arts too depend on one’s moral character for their good use: "In order for a person to use his art well he needs a good will, one perfected by moral virtue." This point is crucial for Aquinas because it shows the centrality of one’s moral character in all theoretical and practical facets of human existence. One lives day-to-day utilizing one’s practical and theoretical abilities, but one cannot isolate or separate the use of these abilities from one's character as a person. Their good use is a function of moral character:

Therefore, properly speaking, art is a practical [operativus] habit. Yet even so in one respect it is comparable with the theoretical habits. For it is also true of the theoretical habits that their domain is the condition of the objects under their consideration, and not, however, the relation of the human appetite to the same objects. And in this regard, art and the theoretical habits are the same sort of virtues. Namely, because neither art nor the theoretical habits cause the exercise of the good activity—as do the virtues perfecting the appetite—but only give a capacity for acting well.

(Sic igitur ars, proprie loquendo, habitus operativus est. Et tamen in aliquo convenit cum habitibus speculativis: quia etiam ad ipsos habitus speculativos pertinet qualiter se habeat res quam considerant, non autem qualiter se habeat appetitus humanus ad illas. Et ideo eo modo ars habet rationem virtutis, sicut et habitus speculativi: inquantum scilicet nec ars, nec habitus speculativus, faciunt bonum opus quantum ad usum, quod est proprium virtutis perfectis appetitum; sed solum quantum ad facultatem bene agendi, ST, I-II, q 57, a 3.)

It is quite clear that Aquinas sees a parallel between theoretical inquiry and productive endeavors in that the virtues enabling us to succeed in either type of

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63 ST, I-II, q 57, a 3, ad 2: "Quia ad hoc ut homo bene utatur arte quam habet, requiritur bona voluntas, quae perficitur per virtutem moralem."
endeavor do not determine our actual conduct or when and how we utilizes our intellectual virtues. Yet in drawing this parallel in ST, I-II, q 57, a 3 Thomas adds a new and qualifying point. He goes on to observe that the work produced must be evaluated separately from the activity of producing it. For the value of the work or object produced cannot be simply equated with the value of the productive activity itself:

Art is always right reason for works to be made, and the condition of the human appetite has no bearing on the good in these works, which consists rather in the fact that the work itself which is made is in itself good. For the will with which he makes the work is irrelevant to the praise of an artist as an artist; what matters is the work which he has made.

(Ars nihil aliud est quam ratio recta aliquorum operum faciendorum. Quorum tamen bonum non consistit in eo quod appetitus humanus aliquo modo se habet: sed in eo quod ipsum opus quod fit, in se bonum est. Non enim pertinet ad laudem artificis, inquantum artifex est, qua voluntate opus faciat; sed quale sit opus quod facit, ST, I-II, q 57, a 3.)

The praise of the artist as an artist depends on her work, and in finding the value of that work the moral character of the artist need not be considered, just the work itself. The phrase "laudem artificis inquantum artifex est" recalls the point made earlier that human goodness may exist wholly or in some limited respect, either simpliciter and secundum totem or secundum quid and according to some science or art which one possesses (ST, I-II, q 56, a 3 and De Virt, a 7, ad 2 quoted above in § 3.4.1). To praise the artist as an artist is to praise him secundum quid, not as possessing a good will, but as possessing an art. According to the text just quoted, it seems that this qualified goodness may be sufficient for the achievement of good
work. That is, the work achieved may have intrinsic value, even if one’s intentions
and choice in undertaking the inquiry or productive activity lacked moral value.

I find a "healthy tension," if you will, between the two claims being made here.
On the one hand, theoretical and practical endeavors depend on moral as well as
intellectual virtues, while on the other hand one’s theoretical and practical accom-
plishments may be assayed without regard for one’s moral character or intentions in
undertaking those endeavors. I refer to this as a healthy tension because I do not
believe that either point gives us the complete picture. If, for instance, we were to
emphasize only the latter point that the work accomplished has a value independent
of the moral character of the one who accomplished it, we might then overlook the
truth that moral character enables us to accomplish more work of a better quality.
For moral virtue determines when and how we utilize those intellectual abilities
which we possess. As we have seen, virtue gives us a focus and unity of purpose
which vice diminishes, and such dedicated and whole hearted pursuit of one’s goal
is crucial for excellence in the arts and sciences.64

Yet, on the other hand, if we emphasize moral character too much, this may
be to overlook the great accomplishments of men and woman who were all too
human in their moral imperfections. I have already mentioned the example of
Picasso, and in recent times Martin Heidegger’s philosophical achievements have
been called into question because of his sympathies with National Socialism and

64Hence, there are virtues and vices directly related to the pursuit of knowledge. So to be studious
is a form of moderation in the pursuit of knowledge (ST, II-II, q 166, a 1). See Gilson, Wisdom and
Love, endnote # 22, 54-55.
ultranationalism. It seems that we can neither dismiss what these men accomplished because of what we know of their moral failings, nor can we naively assume that those shortcomings in no way left their mark on their work (or perhaps diminished what they might otherwise have accomplished). The goodness of a man and the value of his work lie in tension, the one being neither simply equated with the other nor being wholly divorced from it. We will discuss this issue from a different angle in the next chapter when we consider the relationship between the contemplative and active lives.

What of the reverse relationship--the effect of our intellectual achievements on our moral character? Thomas’s only comment in the texts we have been discussing denies that there is any influence (ST, I-II, q 57, a 1 as quoted above). This seems an unsatisfactory way to leave the matter because it would suggest an anti-intellectual or volitional bias on Aquinas’s part—that our intellects and acquired knowledge play no part in forming our moral character. Recall, however, that in Chapter 2 we found it important that Aquinas, while distinguishing between theoretical and practical knowledge, also acknowledges a kind of continuity between the two. Theoretical knowledge, he claims, becomes "by extension" practical. We might take this a step further and suggest that knowledge becomes "by extension" moral virtue. In other words, the theoretical intellectual virtues such as theology and moral science as such may not contribute to our moral character. They may contribute indirectly, however, if that knowledge were to fall within the reflections of practical wisdom, deliberating on the means of pursuing the good existentially. How this is possible,
how it is that the moral virtues are formed and the part played by practical wisdom in their formation, will be the concern of our next two chapters.

3.5 Conclusion

In Chapter 3 we have come to many junctures where it has been necessary to anticipate the importance of practical wisdom for our argument. We have argued, indeed, that it is the very nature of virtue to integrate reasoned judgment and affectivity, that the moral virtues are therefore unified and mutually interdependent, and most importantly that practical wisdom stands in contra-distinction to all other intellectual virtues by reason of its status as a moral virtue. On the other hand, we have found that Aquinas is unequivocal in his claim that human goodness lies essentially in the goodness of one's heart or will. We turn then to discuss practical wisdom in order to understand ultimately what Aquinas means by a knowledge of the heart. This chapter has made clear, I hope, that it is our human condition to experience a gulf between intellectual achievement and moral character, between what one knows and does. Our development of our native abilities through the intellectual virtues does not rectify this situation, but there is also the possibility of acquiring an existential readiness. We must see that practical wisdom is essential to the realization of that possibility, as it is for the achievement of a good will.
CHAPTER IV

PRACTICAL WISDOM AS AN INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE

4.1 Introduction

This chapter and the one that follows both concern the virtue of practical wisdom. This chapter treats of practical wisdom insofar as it is an intellectual virtue, and the next analyzes it insofar as it is a moral virtue. We have already had discussion of the importance of practical wisdom for the integration of knowledge and action. This importance lies in this virtue's unique two-sided nature as both a moral and an intellectual virtue. We saw, for instance, in the previous chapter that the person of moral character is responsive to the subtle but significant differences which require different courses of action for similar situations (§ 3.3.2). Moral virtue allows one to overcome the rigidity which would compel others to respond uniformly and therefore less effectively to these situations. This responsiveness is due to affective habits inasmuch as one must be able to feel differently in order to respond differently, but practical wisdom is the essential virtue operating in this responsiveness because at the core of the matter is the need to discern relevant differences where they arise. Practical wisdom enables one to judge well about singular situations. Chapter 5 will explore how practical wisdom brings flexibility to the affective habits themselves, but here our primary task is to consider the practical
judgment itself and how this capacity is perfected by the virtue of practical wisdom.

Since we are considering the practical judgment, this chapter completes the analysis begun in Chapter 2 (as, similarly, Chapter 5 may be considered to complete Chapter 3). In Chapter 2 we saw that human inquiry moves toward the two goals of true knowledge and right action. With the former goal the process aims at theoretical, abstract and necessary knowledge. Pursuing right action, inquiry aims at knowledge of the practical, the singular and the contingent. The latter direction culminates in the resolve or command (praecipere) to act, which is, we shall see, the culminating moment in practical reasoning. The person of practical wisdom, the prudens, possesses, among the many other attributes that must be mentioned, the ability to move from the practical judgment to a resolve to act. The command, however, adds no new knowledge, no new insight, to the inquiry. Rather, it ends inquiry in the determination that the best course of action has been found: do it! The judgment of the singular, then, is crucial to our discussion of practical wisdom because it determines what the command will be. It is the judgment of the singular that must be contrasted with the theoretical, abstract and necessary tendencies of inquiry. This judgment enables one to act well only insofar as it discerns not the abstract, but the concrete, not the necessary, but the contingent, not the general rule, but the wise deed suitable for here and now.

Aquinas names practical wisdom the virtue most necessary for human life ("maxime necessaria ad vitam humanam," ST, I-II, q 57, a 5). Practical wisdom is wisdom in human affairs because of the two kinds of principles or ultimates operative
in its deliberations and judgments. These are the ultimate end and good of human life and the singular action expressed in the immediacy of a particular time and place (see ST, I-II, q 58, a 5; II-II, q 47, a 3; a 15; In VI Ethic, lect 3, nn 1339-40; ibid, lect 6, n 1194). Were one to reason from a more restricted horizon of concern, say the end of military science or of engineering, or were one's deliberations to stop short of determining what one will actually do, in either case one's reasoning would fall short of being wisdom for human life (see ST, II-II, q 47, a 2, ad 1). But insofar as the person remains wise and reasons in regard to these ultimates, his or her practical wisdom knits together the theoretical and the practical, knits together one's self-understanding, one's grasp of the human good and one's worldview with resolve for the good to be done here and now.

We are concerned to understand the complex relationship between knowledge and action in Aquinas's psychology. Practical wisdom is the key to that relationship. We may then think of practical wisdom as the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle we have been trying to assemble. This metaphor is true enough but ultimately insufficient because more to the point practical wisdom is practical reason as it attempts to assemble the puzzle of one person's personality and lived existence. More than being a key part of a whole, practical wisdom is the human attempt to make one's self whole. Practical wisdom is reason insofar as reason can achieve order and integration in the individual. It is the virtue which considers the whole person by reasoning about what to do now in light of the "finis communis toti vitae humanae" (ST, II-II, q 47, a 2, ad 1).
This chapter has three main divisions. In the first (§ 4.2) we lay out some preliminary points about practical reason: that the deliberation and judgment about what to do culminate in the command to act. Only when the command follows judgment has practical reason taken on its essential form and achieved its end, the determination of right action.

In the next division (§ 4.3) we focus on the practical judgment of the singular. The difficulty of understanding the judgment of the singular, so crucial for wise action, causes the debate between situation ethics and deductive approaches, the former view tending toward moral relativism and the latter toward legalism and moral rigidity. If right action depends on the judgment of the singular, we might expect that any universal or general moral rules are irrelevant, saying nothing about what one ought actually to do. If this is so, perhaps morality is not a rational enterprise at all; perhaps it is exclusively a matter of affective inclination. It would be better to start with the assumption that there are moral absolutes which one needs follow whenever the relevant situation arises. One can merely deduce that the specific moral duty applies here and act accordingly. Unfortunately for this strategy, knowing when duties apply is not a matter of deduction, but a matter of interpretation and insight, a matter, that is, of the judgment of the singular. The debate between rule-based approaches and situation ethics must take this essential need for the judgment of the singular into account. It must be realized that moral absolutes and general rules, which have validity in the abstractions of moral science, can be known to be relevant to the concrete only through judgments of the singular. Their
application cannot be known a priori.

Thus, the argument about whether there are moral absolutes is really a debate about a factual question: are there any moral rules which never have exceptions? To answer one must look for situations where it would seem that the reasonable person would acknowledge mitigating circumstances and put the moral rule aside, but knowing whether there are mitigating circumstances or not requires a judgment of the singular. Thus, moral discourse cannot be exempted from the general dependency of all human inquiry on experience. Attention to experience is both the source of moral ideas through abstraction and necessary for the application of these same ideas to new situations. Right action can never be a simple matter of deduction; the practical judgment of the singular is always necessary. Nonetheless, human conduct is intelligent and reasonable because the judgment of the singular is an intellectual act which mediates between the abstract premises and rules of morality and the singular situation at hand. At the heart of this judgment is the need, as Thomas puts it, to see the universal in the singular (In II De Anima, lect 13, n 398, et al. cited below).

Section 4.3 has three subdivisions. The first contrasts practical wisdom with moral science. Moral rules which hold true in the abstractions of moral science can only be reasonably applied to actual situations through the mediation of the practical judgment of the singular. The second examines the task of mediating between universal principles and concrete situations, and the third argues that at the core of this mediation lies the cooperation of the intellect with the discursive power, a cooper-
ation which makes possible the apprehension of the universal in the singular.

The third main division (§ 4.4) focuses on the first principle of practical reason which is the end or intended good. The human good can be understood in two ways. First, it is a natural principle, called by Thomas the natural habit of synderesis. Second, it is a learned idea of the human good, our conceived and articulated understanding of the ultimate fulfillment of human life. Consequently, section 4.4 has two parts. The first considers synderesis and argues that this natural habit presents the existential task of living in accord with reason, of integrating what one knows with what one does. Prior to the acquired ability to achieve this goal (through the moral virtues), there is a natural desire for its achievement and natural dissatisfaction with our failure to achieve it. The second part considers Thomas’s treatment of the human end. This topic is vast and our discussion remains focused primarily on the relationship between practical and theoretical wisdom, prudentia and sapientia. This distinction of two kinds of wisdom results in the comparison of the contemplative and practical lives. This topic parallels the discussion in Chapter 3 (§ 3.4.3) on the interdependence of the intellectual and moral virtues, but the question in this chapter is about the part played by practical wisdom and contemplation in the ultimate end of human life.

Finally, let me note the importance of one of Thomas’s distinctions for the argument in this chapter. He distinguishes between the order of intention ("ordo intentionis") and the order of execution ("ordo executionis"). The ultimate end is first in the order of intention and last in the order of execution, for the end is the
fundamental principle which guides one in acting reasonably here and now. Conversely, the action is first in the order of execution and the end is last, the goal to be achieved.\textsuperscript{1} Clearly, the two orders, although distinct, are related. The practical judgment of the singular has its wisdom in uniting the intention of the end with the pursuit of the good relevant to the situation at hand. The unique importance of practical wisdom for the human good lies in the fact that the person of practical wisdom reasons about what to do from one's comprehensive horizon of concern. Thus, Thomas writes:

One is a good deliberator without qualification, however, and therefore practically wise, who through reasoning is able to integrate what is best for a human being into action.

(Ille autem est simpliciter bonus consiliator, et per consequens prudens, qui ratiocinando potest coniicere quid sit optimum homini ad operandum, \textit{In VI Ethic}, lect 6, n 1193.)

4.2 Practical Wisdom, the Virtue of Practical Reason Simpliciter

Recall that in Chapter 2 we saw that Aquinas acknowledges degrees of practicality and states that much knowledge is in limited respects both practical and theoretical (§ 2.5). No such knowledge is fully practical or practical \textit{simpliciter}. We also discussed, however, the primary analogue of practical reason, practical reason brought to term in the command to act. We shall see in this section that practical wisdom is the virtue which perfects one's ability to reason practically in the full sense

\textsuperscript{1}ST, I-II, q 1, a 4: "In finibus autem inventur duplex ordo, scilicet ordo intentionis, et ordo executionis. . . . Principium autem intentionis est ultimus finis; principium autem executionis est primum eorum quae sunt ad finem."
of the term. Only the virtue of practical wisdom brings practical reason to its ultimate perfection in the command to act. Indeed, the true mark of the person of practical wisdom is that she acts at the appropriate time without undue delay or haste. The same cannot be said of any theoretical or practical science, nor even of any productive art. If these forms of knowledge are to reach to the moment of action--so that one actually engages in these activities of inquiry or production--they will do so only through deliberation, judgment and command, that is, only through the mode of reasoning perfected by the virtue of practical wisdom. Only the mode of reasoning perfected by practical wisdom brings knowledge and reason to bear on action, and thus only practical wisdom constitutes practical reasoning in the full sense of the term.

Aquinas argues that to command or urge action (praecipere) is the proper and unique operation of practical wisdom; no other habit of the intellect defines what ought to be done (ST, II-II, q 47, a 7). The good that one knows within the viewpoint of a science or an art is never sufficient for knowing what one ought to do in concrete circumstances. All extension of deliberation and judgment into the execution of any theoretical or practical endeavor is either practically wise or unwise. Thus, just as we saw in the previous chapter that the moral virtues play a central part in all human endeavors inasmuch as we exercise our human faculties only if we will, so here we see that practical wisdom shares this pivotal role with the moral virtues inasmuch as it directs or commands the will in all endeavors.

Practical reason defines the order of execution; it aims to determine the good
exercise of practical wisdom, for all are necessary for recta ratio agibilium, but following Aristotle, Aquinas also accepts that there are distinct virtues perfecting each of these acts. Now in this more detailed analysis, the prudens is the person most apt to translate the practical deliberation and judgment into a command. That is, the prudens is most apt to culminate the process of deliberation with the resolve to act, and the praecipere is the chief act of practical wisdom:

Practical wisdom is right reason for things which can be done. . . . and in this there are three acts. The first is to deliberate which pertains to discovery, for to deliberate is to inquire. . . . The second act is to judge about the [possible action] discovered, and at this point theoretical reason stops. But practical reason, which is ordered to deeds, proceeds further, and its third act is to command. Indeed, this act consists in the application of deliberations and judgments to what must be done. And since this act is closer to the end of practical reason, it is the principle act of practical reason and thus of practical wisdom as well.

(Prudentia est recta ratio agibilium. . . . Cuius quidem sunt tres actus. Quorum primus est consiliari: quod pertinet ad inventionem, nam consiliari est quaerere. . . . Secundus actus est iudicare de inventis: et hic sistit speculativa ratio. Sed practica ratio, quae ordinatur ad opus, procedit ulterius, et est tertius actus eius praecipere: qui quidem actus consistit in applicatione consiliatorum et iudicatorum ad operandum. Et quia iste actus est propinquior fini rationis practicae, inde est quod iste est principalis actus rationis practicae, et per consequens prudentia, ST, II-II, q 47, a 8. On the first and second acts and their relationship see Chapter 2, § 2.4.4.)

This text invites many observations. Let us notice first that it brings us back

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3 They are called "potential parts" of practical wisdom because they may operate independently as virtuous operations in their own right, or they may contribute to the exercise of practical wisdom. Thus, one may be good at deliberating and judging (and therefore good at giving advice to others) but not at following up deliberations and judgments with action. This person possesses virtues, but not the virtue of practical wisdom. ST, II-II, q 48, a 1: "Partes autem potentiales alicuius virtutis dicuntur virtutes adiunctae quae ordinantur ad aliquos secundarios actus vel materias, quasi non habentes totam potenti­am principalis virtutis. Et secundum hoc ponuntur partes prudentiae eubulia, quae est circa consilium; et synesis, quae est circa iudicium eorum quae communiter accidunt; et gnome, quae est circa iudicium eorum in quibus oportet quandoque a communi lege recedere. Prudentia vero est circa principalem actum, qui est praecipere." Cf. In III Sent, d 33, q 3, a 1, sols 1 and 3, and see NE, VI, 9 and 11.
to our effort in Chapter 2 to distinguish theoretical from practical inquiry, completing one aspect of that discussion. It was argued there that the essential difference between the two modes of inquiry lies in their respective ends, truth and action. Theoretical reason, Thomas notes here, ends with a judgment, whereas practical reason includes a third act, a command. In judgment we either affirm or deny the truth of a proposition, either to a theoretical claim or to a proposed course of action (in which case the truth lies in its worthiness as an action). Yet even if, as is the case in practical reason, the inventio is a proposed course of action, a conceived operabile, the judgment remains to some extent theoretical because practical reason is incomplete until it stops the reasoning process with the resolve to act. And since praecipere is the principle act of practical wisdom, only the inquiry of practical wisdom which incorporates this act is truly practical. The command is the essential act of practical reason, and all reasoning which stops short of the command is to some degree theoretical.

Accordingly, Aquinas claims in the same article just cited that even art culminates in a judgment ("Perfectio artis consistit in iudicando, non autem in praecipiendo"). Art too, therefore, remains practical only to a relative degree. An art, although enabling one to make good judgments in productive endeavors, is not a virtue which actually enables one to reach a resolution about what to do. Indeed, there is only one virtue which enables us in this way, practical wisdom, which is operative in any human endeavor, theoretical or productive, insofar as the endeavor is wisely undertaken and pursued, that is, insofar as the pursuit of the endeavor
stands in accord with human fulfillment. We will return to this point later in the chapter (§ 4.4.2).

We can see then that no knowledge, virtue or skill will be manifest in one's actual conduct except (1) through a deliberation which discovers or conceives a possible course of action (inventio), which in turn comes to be evaluated (2) in a judgment as to whether it is appropriate to the circumstances, and (3) commanded as what ought to be done here and now. I might have, for example, the thought that I should spend my day writing. To write well depends on my training in grammar and philosophy, but the idea to write today is the product of a deliberation in which I sort through my needs, obligations, opportunities, etc. Out of this reasoning the idea arises that I might use my time by writing. Thus, I have a possible course of action. This idea must be evaluated; it must be compared to other options which may also seem reasonable and related to any conflicting needs and obligations. What, for instance, about my need to get to the dentist, to visit my family, etc.? In judgment I affirm that my idea is a good one. This judgment, however, is not yet the resolve to act. Between judgment and command an inappropriate delay is possible (ST, II-II, q 51, a 3, ad 3). Perhaps my emotional life may conflict with this plan—my fear of not being ready to write, but instead wanting to do more research, my tendency to procrastinate, my intemperate devotion to the seashore. Practical wisdom, therefore, needs foresight, caution and circumspection in order to command well because one may always remain unduly anxious or impulsive in acting (ST, II-II, a 1). Thus, practical wisdom directs every human action and undertaking insofar as it
urges action at the right time and in the right way. In this regard, practical wisdom is the intellectual complement to the moral virtues. Let’s take a moment to clarify this last point.

In the second chapter we discussed that Aquinas distinguishes practical and theoretical reason in other ways which derive from the essential difference of distinct ends. Among the derivative ways which we examined is that practical reason moves the will, but this is true of practical reason, not as a science or art, but only insofar as it is practical simpliciter. Practical reason moves the will because it culminates in a command, and the good action which the command urges is the object of choice, the formal content of the electio (see Chapter 2, § 2.4.4). Thus, in determining what ought to be done, practical wisdom makes choice, the act of the will, possible. Indeed, Thomas sometimes equates command and choice (praecipere and electio). This is a crucial point if we are to understand Aquinas’s claim that moral virtue is an order which reason makes in the will (In I Ethic, lect 1, n 1). I raise the point here, even though it will receive more detailed consideration in Chapter 5 because it should be noted that the praecipere, the ultimate act of practical wisdom, is the act which produces this order and which depends in turn most directly on the cooperation of the affective life. Thus, Aquinas stresses that the moral virtues are acquired when the appetitive powers are moved by reason ("secundum quod moventur a ratione," ST, I-II, q 51, a 2).

As we saw in Chapter 3, the will in conjunction with the other appetitive

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4ST, II-II, q 104, a 1: "Movere autem per rationem et voluntatem est praecipere." De Virt, a 12, ad 26: "In actibus etiam rationis praecipuum est praecipere, sive eligere, quod facit prudentia."
powers is the proximate moving cause of all human operations. Intellectual virtues, both theoretical and practical, give an ability to reason well, but do not ensure the exercise of their own operations. Their exercise is a matter of choice. Yet if one's choice to act is to be well ordered, that is, if it is to be intelligent and reasonable, the act must be chosen wisely. Hence, there is need for practical wisdom to operate in theoretical inquiry just as there is in any human activity (see **ST**, II-II, q 47, a 7 ad 3). Practical wisdom is unique among the intellectual virtues in that it complements the will in the determination to act. So we read that the command is the form or character (i.e., *ordo*) given to the act of the will:

To move, taken absolutely, pertains to the will, but to command suggests motion with a certain order. Therefore, [command] is an act of reason.

(Movere absolute pertinet ad voluntatem. Sed praecipere importat motionem cum quadam ordinatione. Et ideo [praecipere] est actus rationis, **ST**, II-II, q 47, a 8, ad 3.)

The *praecipere* is the object of the will in its act of choice, the *electio*. Now elsewhere, Aquinas notes that the object of choice is the conclusion of a practical syllogism. We turn now to a closer analysis of practical reason and the syllogism. We will focus not on the conclusion of the syllogism which defines the command, but on the minor premise which depends on the judgment of the singular and makes the conclusion possible. In other words, we will focus on the practical judgment because in this chapter we are concerned about practical wisdom as an intellectual virtue.
To focus on the command is to take it as a moral virtue.\textsuperscript{5}

\section*{4.3 Practical Wisdom Mediates between the Universal and the Singular}

In the current debate on ethics some authors emphasize the uniqueness of situations and circumstance and argue that moral principles cannot be established in the universal because the relevancy of such principles to real life cannot be known \textit{a priori}. This position tends towards relativism and a kind of anti-intellectualism which claims that human actions do not need to be justified or perhaps cannot be justified on rational grounds. An opposing view emphasizes a deductive approach in which established moral principles determine what ought to be done in any situation. Whereas the first view tends toward relativism, the second tends toward rigidity and an easy dismissal of the complexities of the human drama with its unlimited variety of situations and personalities. In short, this approach tries to contain all moral discourse and moral judgments within a scientific or universal discourse.\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{5}Frederick Crowe, S.J. stresses that the command does not add new knowledge, rather it brings inquiry to its conclusion. See his "Universal Norms and the Concrete 'Operabile' in St. Thomas Aquinas," \textit{Sciences Ecclesiastiques} 7 (1955), 115-149 and 257-291. He writes: "\textit{Praecipere} does not add any knowledge, for knowledge as such is complete in the first two steps" (264). He also quotes \textit{In III Sent}, d 33, q 3, a 1, sol 3: "Ratio autem non praecipit nisi prius in se perfecta sit quantum ad id quod est sui ipsius, sicut nec aliqua res movet ante sui perfectionem. Perfectio autem rationis practicae, sicut et speculativae, consistit in duobus, scilicet in inveniendo et iudicando." This text makes it clear that as an intellectual virtue practical wisdom is perfected in judgment; as a moral virtue it commands well.

\textsuperscript{6}See Frederick Crowe, S.J., "Universal Norms." He writes of situation ethics: "Its central thesis is the inadequacy of universal norms of conduct. . . . Every decision is unique, for it must be made by the individual conscience in a concrete situation which is unique and therefore falls outside the compass of abstract universals" (115). Among Thomists, Joseph Boyle tends toward the deontological and deductive approach, while John Caputo emphasizes the variability of circumstances and history. See their exchange of views in \textit{Proceedings American Catholic Philosophical Association} 58 (1984): Joseph M. (continued...)
Aquinas's analysis of practical wisdom takes us a long way toward reconciling the strengths of both these approaches while avoiding their pitfalls. The key lies in grasping how practical wisdom and moral science differ and how practical wisdom mediates between the universal and the singular. For Aquinas, the moral act is intelligent and reasonable, not arbitrary and unintelligible. In our moral judgments we draw on moral norms and universals, and yet what is actually best to do cannot be determined a priori by a moral science, but only by the person of practical wisdom addressing the unique circumstances at hand.

Even if someone were to write the definitive moral science, or practical philosophy, as Aquinas also refers to it, it would not give us the necessary cognitive conditions for moral action. In other words, the knowledge provided by practical philosophy is not sufficient for knowing what would constitute a good action in a singular situation. Practical philosophy is a science, and Aquinas distinguishes practical wisdom from all sciences, practical as well as theoretical.⁷

We have already indicated in the previous chapter that Thomas considers

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⁷On the distinction between practical reason and scientia see Chapter 2, § 2.5; ST, I-II, q 58, a 5; II-II, q 47, aa 3 & 15; SCG, III, 75; In VI Ethic, lect 2, nn 1132, 1135; lect 6, n 1194; lect 7, nn 1213-15; In III De Anima, lect 12, n 789; lect 16, nn 845-46. For corroborating commentary see Naus, The Practical Intellect, 92-3, and Vernon J Bourke: "The Real Basis of Ethical Discourse," Proceedings American Catholic Philosophical Association 51 (1982), 125-132. Thomas Hibbs argues effectively that Aquinas's doctrine of natural law must be read in conjunction with his teaching on practical wisdom because Aquinas is quite clear that without this virtue the natural law cannot be effectively applied. The thrust of his argument appropriately goes against a deductivistic reading of Aquinas. See his "Principles and Prudence" already cited in Chapter 1.
practical wisdom, unlike any science, to be a moral virtue. There are, however, differences in their very methods, if you will, which give him cause to distinguish practical wisdom and science. He typically explains this by contrasting the universal conclusions of the sciences with the singular conclusions of practical wisdom. His point, however, needs clarification because it remains true that practical wisdom is concerned with universals and the sciences with singulars. Indeed, one of the important aspects of Aquinas's analysis of practical wisdom—important because it distinguishes his position from that of the relativists—is that although he distinguishes science and practical wisdom, he does not segregate or isolate them for one another (as he also distinguishes but does not segregate theoretical and practical reason). We will see rather that practical wisdom may draw on any form or type of knowledge in its own reasoning. In general, then, we can say that practical wisdom mediates between the universal knowledge of the sciences and the singular judgments proper to its own domain, but how it does this and why this mediation distinguishes it from science must be discussed.

Aquinas names the task of utilizing universal knowledge in our deliberations about action an "applicatio" since one strives to judge possible courses of action in light of general or universal norms. In order to be practically wise one must draw on general principles and relate them to the singular situation:

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8 In VI Ethic, lect 7, n 1213: "Prudentia non est scientia. Scientia enim est universalium. . . prudentia autem extremi, id est singularis, quia est operabilis quod est singulare. Et sic patet, quod prudentia non est scientia." ST, I-II, q 58, a 5: "Prudentia est recta ratio agibilium; non autem solum in universalis, sed etiam in particulari, in quibus sunt actiones." Cf. In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 5, ad 1; De Virt, a 6, ad 1. Cf. NE, VI, 8, 1142a22 ff.
Practical wisdom includes, not only rational reflection, but also application to work, which is the end of practical reason. No one, however, can properly apply one thing to another without knowing both, namely, that which needs to be applied and that to which it needs to be applied. Now operations occur in singular [situations], and therefore the person of practical wisdom must know both the universal principles of reason and singulars, wherein lie operations.

(Ad prudentiam pertinet non solum consideratio rationis, sed etiam applicatio ad opus, quae est finis practicae rationis. Nullus autem potest convenienter aliquid alteri applicare nisi utrumque cognoscat, scilicet et id quod applicandum est et id cui applicandum est. Operationes autem sunt in singularibus. Et ideo necesse est quod prudens et cognoscat universalia principia rationis, et cognoscat singularia, circa quae sunt operationes, ST, II-II, q 47, a 3.)

Practical wisdom has the task of bringing principles and moral norms to bear on what one does in a singular context. The person of practical wisdom must then be capable of applying general rules to singular situations. Yet this application is usually difficult, less than certain, and rarely will only one approach be morally good. We have seen after all (in § 4.2.2) that the first step in practical reasoning, the consiliari, is an inventio or discovery of what might be done. Deliberation is creative or inventive in the way in which an artistic idea is creative: one discovers possible courses of action, and what might be discovered cannot be defined in advance by a science. We see this, for instance, in the discussion of moral dilemmas or cases in which several duties conflict. The ways out of the dilemma are often reduced to two options for the sake of debate, but usually a third, a fourth or many more options can be proposed. Furthermore, some options will prove more inventive than others in the sense that they successfully address several duties or needs, instead of forcing one

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9 Cf. ST, II-II, q 47, a 6: "Et horum est prudentia, applicans universalia principia ad particulares conclusiones operabilium."
to choose between them. The application is not, then, a simple matter of logical
deduction. It is rather a matter of interpretation and insight. That is, one must
categorize the situation itself as such-and-such a kind of situation in order to
subsume it under a relevant moral principle. Aquinas refers to this task of
interpretation as seeing the universal in the singular.  

4.3.1 Practical Wisdom and Science

We shall explore the applicatio and the need for insight in detail. First,
however, let me remain focused for a moment on the distinction between science and
practical wisdom. The applicatio is not the only function of practical wisdom; it too,
like the sciences, depends on the abstraction of concepts from experience. Other-
wise, there would be no accumulation of experiences, no learning, no development
of wisdom. It would be misleading to suggest that singular realities are irrelevant to
the sciences or that scientists do not apply universals to singulars, and it would be
equally untrue to conclude that the person of practical wisdom never learns general
truths from experience. It is true, however, that when Aquinas compares practical
wisdom and science, he emphasizes that the scientist derives or abstracts universals
from experience and that the person of practical wisdom applies universals to

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10See ST, I, q 84, a 7; In II Post Anal, lect 20; In II De Anima, lect 13, nn 396-398; In VII Ethic,
lect 3, n 1340. There are also numerous texts from all periods of Aquinas's writings in which he insists
that there is no intellectual act whatsoever, either of abstraction or application, without the presence of
a phantasm. He argues for an intelligible grasp of the phantasm or image which various commentators
have named an insight: In Boet de Trin, q 6, a 2, ad 5: "Phantasmata comparantur ad intellectum ut
obiecta in quibus inspiciat omne quod inspicit." In ST, I, q 84, a 7 the same verb is used in reference to
the phantasm: "...in quibus quasi inspiciat quod intelligere studet." For a careful textual study see
Frederick Crowe, S.J., "Universal Norms." See also Robert Henle, S.J., "Prudence and Insight in Moral
singular situations. This seems to have led some commentators to overlook the need for practical wisdom to draw general conclusions from past experience and decisions.\(^1\) Practical wisdom, like all virtues, develops, and its development depends on the on-going interplay between learning how to negotiate new problems and reapplying what one has learned from the past to new situations. In this way one gains experience and the accumulation of general moral insights (see *In VI Ethic*, lect 7, n 1208 quoted below). We cannot, therefore, assume that abstraction is not part of practical wisdom, nor that application is not part of science (since universals must be verified by actual events). How, then, should we understand Aquinas's manner of contrasting science and practical wisdom?

There is, I think, a more balanced account of what Aquinas is doing. Though application and abstraction operate in both science and practical wisdom, these habits of the intellect have distinct ends and purposes. The scientist aspires to the ideal of universal knowledge of essences or laws which will always be true over a range of specified circumstances, but practical wisdom aims at judgments relevant to

\(^1\) Caputo criticizes Boyle for this oversight, rightly I think. Caputo writes: "But there must be a practical *intellecut* of the simple moral natures, that is to say, a practical intellectual insight into the concrete moral situation. This is the correlate of the speculative intellect's simple grasp of the quiddity embedded in a sensible individual. That concrete moral insight is *prudentia*, the judgment as to what is to be done here and now... And it is also from this concrete context that new and more particular ethical insights keep arising, thereby enabling us to build up a body of moral knowledge. This concrete moral context is the font of all moral norms, in just the same way that intellectual insight into the quiddity of a sensible being is the font from which all scientific knowledge of the natural world arises. *Nihil in intellectu quod non prius in sensu*--and that goes for the *intellecut practicus* as well... I want to interrupt the 'downwards' deductivist movement which tends to dominate Prof. Boyle's paper" ("Prudential Insight and Moral Reasoning," 53). Fr. Henle, S.J., gives helpful examples from the law showing that the need for the definition of legal principles evolves only as new problems arise. "Due process" and the "appropriate force" for self-defense were only defined when cases arose which exposed ambiguity of these ideas. See his "Prudence and Insight," 26-30.
the situation at hand. Thus, in Chapter 2 we saw that theoretical reason (and a fortiori all sciences since even practical sciences are in part theoretical) determines the necessary and universal, while practical reason determines the contingent and the singular (§ 2.4; cf ST, I-II, q 94, a 4). He tells us, moreover, that theoretical reason is "perfected in the universal" and practical reason "perfected in the particular" (SCG, III, ch 75; cf. SCG, I, ch 65, In III De Anima, lect 12, n 780 and see § 2.4.2). Hence, theoretical reason and the sciences are completed when universal truths are established, but practical reason is completed only when a judgment determining a singular action has been made.

Scientific judgments are of value in that they explain and set norms for a definite range or class of experiences, whereas the value of practical judgments is for one unique situation. Scientific truths apply necessarily whenever the specified conditions occur. On the other hand, general practical truths drawn from experience serve only as rules of thumb, guidelines, which no one expects to be true in all cases. Indeed, the more we get into the specific details of a problem, the more we can expect divergence from general norms (ST, I-II, q 94, a 4). The practical judgment "completes" these general truths by determining which of them hold when

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12 Thus, the distinction between experientia and universalia; both are general, for experience teaches one what to expect from past examples, but only science provides universals--i.e., principles which are necessary for a specified range of application. In III Sent, d 24, a 3, sol 3: "Ex multis sensibus fit una memoria et ex multis memoris unum experimentum et ex multis experimentis unum universale principium ex quo aitia concludit; et sic acquirit scientiam, ut dicitur in principio Metaphysicorum et in fine Posteriorum." In II Post Anal, lect 20: "Puta diu medicus consideravit hanc herbae sanat febrientem, et Platonem, et multos alio singulares homines: cum autem sua consideratio ad hoc ascendit, quod talis species herbae sanat febrientem simpliciter, hoc accipitur ut quaedam regula artis medicinae." Before assenting to the general rule of medicine, the doctor can practice medicine by drawing on past cases, after assenting by following rule. Cf In I Meta, lect 1.
and where. The practical judgment must discern which aspects of the situation are morally relevant, either because they justify the application of a moral rule or because they present mitigating circumstances which warrant suspending some moral rule in this case.\textsuperscript{13} Thus, it would be the task of moral science to specify, to the extent possible, human duties and obligations over a specified range or class of situations, but it would be the task of practical wisdom to mediate between such norms, as well as the customs, conventions and the general moral wisdom of one's culture, and one's own situation.\textsuperscript{14}

This task of mediation can never be eliminated by the thoroughness of the universals. Consequently, we are told that given a choice between experience and scientific or universal knowledge, the experience is more conducive to practical wisdom:

Since, therefore, practical wisdom is practical reason [\textit{ratio activa}], the practically wise person must know both, that is, both the universal and the singular. Yet if the person happens to have one of them, it would be more appropriate to have the latter, that is, knowledge of the particulars which are closer to action.

(Quia igitur prudentia est ratio activa, oportet quod prudens habeat utramque notitiam, scilicet et universalium et particularium; vel si

\textsuperscript{13}Aquinas used the Greek philosophers' standard example of returning a person's weapon upon request; justice requires honoring the request, unless the owner intends a treasonous use of the weapon--see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 94, a 4. Joseph Boyle articulates this point well: "An act described up to a certain point can be judged to be right or wrong in the light of some moral principle, but if the description of that act is amplified, features of the act not captured in the less complete description will be revealed. And these features can be morally relevant." See his "Moral Reasoning and Moral Judgment," 39.

\textsuperscript{14}Kenneth Melchin articulates this point well: "The ethicists who emphasize moral principles, laws and absolute norms call for our obedience to norms which remain valid independent of contexts. . . . [But] to implement moral rules requires discerning in the flow of our day-to-day experiences patterns of events which conform to the ordered set of events configured by the rule." See his "Revisionists, Deontologists, and the Structure of Moral Understanding," 398.
The person of practical wisdom may draw on the theory and principles that one knows, but such knowledge is not essential to practical wisdom. One can do better by relying on a good understanding of circumstances, supported by past experiences, than by relying on theory or science which is not complemented by experience. Experience and understanding of the present situation are essential; theory or moral science are complementary or helpful only if one has a sufficient degree of experience to negotiate their application to the singular situations.\textsuperscript{15}

Practical wisdom enables one to know when and how to apply universal principles to unique and unanticipated circumstances. Scientists often aim to predict events as the means of verifying their theories, but have completed their task when the theories are correct. The person of practical wisdom, however, must wait for events to arise before resolving what ought to be done. It would be futile to try to do otherwise. It is, for example, equally true that haste makes waste and that he who hesitates is lost, but when should one proceed with caution and when move ahead forthwith? We might imagine a moral science which tries to specify just such a thing—when, that is, it is time to deliberate further and when it is time to act. Yet the person of practical wisdom would be content to know that both principles are true

\textsuperscript{15} \textit{In VI Ethic}, lect 6, n 1194: "Actio autem est circa singularia. Et inde est, quod quidam non habentes scientiam universalium sunt magis activi circa aliqua particularia, quam illi qui habent universalem scientiam, eo quod sunt in aliis particularibus experti. Puta si aliquis medicus sciat quod carnes leves sunt bene digestibles et sanae, ignoret autem quales carnes sint leves; non poterit facere sanitatem. Sed ille qui scit quod carnes volatilium sunt leves et sanae, magis poterit sanare."
and confident that he or she would recognize those times when it would be best to be cautious or best to go ahead. Trying to resolve a priori when which truism would be true would be irrelevant to practical wisdom.  

4.3.2 The Mediation of Practical Wisdom

With the difference between science and practical wisdom in mind, we can now turn our attention to the application of principles to circumstances. We can find three claims involved in the notion that practical wisdom mediates between the universal and the singular. First, though practical wisdom enables one to make the particular judgment, the practically wise person may in making that judgment draw on general moral wisdom of one’s culture, the universal principles of moral science, or the detailed rules of a professional code of ethics in reasoning about right action. Second, such general or universal principles apply in actual practice only if circumstances warrant, and moral science cannot fully determine a priori when principles apply because we cannot anticipate the indefinite variety of circumstances or the variety of good and reasonable ways one might respond to those circumstances. Third, practical wisdom discerns when circumstances warrant action of such-and-such a kind, and this discernment consists in the act of insight, the intellectual act of

16Lonergan's analysis of "common sense" depends on this same contrast between practical generalizations and scientific universals: "[Common sense] can operate directly from its accumulated insights. In correspondence with the similarities of the situation, it can appeal to an incomplete set of insights. In correspondence with the significant difference of situations, it can add the different insights relevant to each. Again, common sense may seem to generalize. But a generalization proposed by common sense has quite a different meaning from a generalization proposed by science. The scientific generalization aims to offer a premise from which correct deductions can be drawn. But the generalizations issued by common sense are not meant to be premises for deductions. Rather they would communicate pointers that ordinarily it is well to bear in mind" (Insight, 176).
grasping the universal in the singular. Let's take these in order.

The first point to be made is that there are no real restrictions on what kinds of knowledge may be drawn on in practical reasoning. Hence, even if one speaks properly ("etiam proprie dictam") rather than broadly, physics, dialectics and rhetoric may be taken as parts of practical wisdom because practical reasoning may proceed from demonstrations of necessity, from probable arguments or from conjecture through persuasion. The proper mode of reasoning for practical wisdom remains to determine right action for this moment and these circumstances, but in doing so it can reason from universal premises, themselves derived from any manner of science or argumentation. Hence, the practical syllogism moves from an universal major to a particular conclusion:

Practical reason is something universal and something particular. It is universal when it affirms that something ought to be done by someone, say, a son to honor his parents. Particular reason [ratio particularis], however, affirms that this is such and that I am such, for instance, that I am the son, and I ought to show this honor to my parent now.

(Ratio autem practica, quaedam est universalis, et quaedam particularis. Universalis quidem, sicut quae dicit, quod oportet talem tale agere, sicut filium honorare parentes. Ratio particularis dicit quod hoc quidem est tale, et ego talis, puta quod ego filius, et hunc honorem debeo nunc exhibere parenti, In III De Anima, lect 16, n 845.)

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17 ST, II-II, q 48, a 1: "Si vero prudentia sumatur large, secundum quod includit etiam scientiam speculatam...tune etiam partes eius ponuntur dialectica, rhetorica et physica... Potest tamen dici quod haec tria pertinent ad prudentiam etiam propriam dictam, quae ratiocinatur interdum quidem ex necessariis, interdum ex probabilibus, interdum autem ex quibusdam coniecturis."

18 Cf. In VI Ethic, lect n 1123; In VII Ethic, lect 3, nn 1340 and 1345; In IV Sent, d 50, q 1, a 3, ad 3; and ST, I, q 86, a 1, ad 2 which reads: "Electio particularis operabilis est quasi conclusio syllogismi intellectus practici...Ex universalis autem propositione directe non potest concludi singularis, nisi mediante aliqua singulari propositione assumpta. Unde universalis ratio intellectus practici non movet nisi mediante particulari apprehensione sensitivae partis."
I will be referring back to this text throughout §§ 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, for this analysis of the practical syllogism is essential to understanding the mediation or applicatio which is operative in practical reason. We will be concerned shortly with the ratio particularis, the power which makes the judgment of the singular situation possible. Our current concern is with the point that the particular conclusion of the practical syllogism is grounded in an universal premise. Although an universal principle by itself is insufficient for determining right action, it nonetheless influences what that action will be judged to be. From general or universal principles we gain our means of interpreting situations (which is not to neglect the reverse that we draw general principles from our encounter with particulars). Accordingly, in a comment which follows immediately after the one just cited, Thomas acknowledges that the major premise also in a way moves one to action:

This opinion [i.e., the particular judgment which constitutes the minor premise] however, now moves, but the universal does not. Or if both move, the universal moves as the first and quiescent cause and the particular as the proximate cause which is in someway applied to motion. For operations and movement are in the particular; thus universal opinion must be applied to the particular if motion is to follow.

(Haec autem iam opinio movet, sed non autem illa quae est universalis. Aut si utraque movet, illa quae est universalis, movet ut causa prima et quiescens, particularis vero ut causa proxima, et quodammodo motui applicata. Nam operationes et motus in particularibus sunt; unde oportet ad hoc quod motus sequatur, quod opinio universalis ad particularia applicetur, In III De Anima, lect 16, n 846.)

Aquinas is commenting on III De Anima, 11, 434a16 ff; Alfred L. Ivry, "The Will of God and Practical Intellect of Man in Averroes Philosophy," Israel Oriental Studies 9 (1979), 377-391, examines Averroes very similar reading of this same text (388 ff).
As the major premise can also be said to move one to action, as the remote and unmoving cause, if you will, so too can all knowledge insofar as practical wisdom mediates between it and the current situation. The applicatio knits together general principles and the judgment about the current situation into one argument urging one action. Hence, the general principle is intended in the act itself.\textsuperscript{20}

Thomas’s treatment of theology is instructive here. In his understanding of the distinction between theoretical and practical inquiry, theology provides a paradigmatic example of theoretical knowledge since its object is God, the ultimate ground of all that is and that about which there is absolutely no deliberation. Recall that practical reason applies to only what one may deliberate about and that one may deliberate only about that which is within one’s power to affect (Chapter 2, §§ 2.4.1 and 2.5). God is absolutely beyond our power to affect, and so the study of God is an absolutely theoretical study. Yet, paradoxically, this paradigmatic case of a theoretical science is the one science which he acknowledges not to fit neatly into the distinction between the theoretical and practical. Although Thomas admits of a distinction between theoretical and practical philosophy, he does not for theology. Rather, both the theoretical and the practical are "comprehended" within this one science.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{20} \textit{In VII Ethic}, lect 3, n 1345: "Oportet scire quod in eius processu est duplex opinio. Una quidem universalis, puta omne inhonestum est fugiendum. Alia autem singularis circa ea quae proprie secundum sensum cognoscuntur, puta hoc est inhonestum. Cum autem ex his duabus opinionibus fiat una ratio, necesse est quod sequatur conclusio."

\textsuperscript{21} \textit{ST}, I, q 1, a 4: "Sacra doctrina, una existens, se extendit ad ea quae pertinent ad diversas scientias philosophicas, propter rationem formalem quam in diversis attendit: scilicet prout sunt divino lumine cognoscibilia. Unde licet in scientiis philosophicis alia sit speculativa et alia practica, sacra tamen doctrina comprehendit sub se utramque; sicut et Deus eadem scientia se cognoscit et ea quae facit."
His point is that in reflecting on the ultimate ground of reality, this science also reflects on humankind's relation to the ground--i.e., it reveals the end and purpose of human existence. The metaphysical origin and first cause, God, is also our final cause or end, and, as we will discuss later, the end serves as the first principle in practical reason. There is a real unity of the theoretical and practical in God who knows with the same knowledge both himself and his work ("Deus eadem scientia se cognoscit et ea quae facit"). Human finitude does not permit this same perfect confluence of the theoretical of the practical, but in the study of theology there is a kind of imitation of it.

Similarly, whenever we reason practically to determine what to do, we strive to join the universal with the particular, the theoretical with the practical. Thus, the structure of the practical syllogism shows that it is human to act in a manner that reflects our knowledge and general understanding. That knowledge and understanding serve as the "causa prima et quiescens" of one's conduct. To be sure, our knowledge is ultimately drawn from experience and develops over time, but the person of practical wisdom discerns how to reapply it to new experiences that it may serve as the measure and guide in action. Thomas, as we noted in Chapter 2, does not intend the distinction between theoretical and practical reason to be absolute. The theoretical becomes practical "by extension" (see § 2.5; In III Sent, d

22 Alfred Ivry reaches a similar conclusion from his reading of Aristotle and Averroes: "The theoretical intellect is thus involved, in its own, way, with particular judgements, and thereby with the world of action and contingent events. The particular judgements in themselves cannot be deduced from the universal ones, but intuitively the individual realizes when he confronts particular examples of these universal propositions," "The Will of God and Practical Intellect of Man," 390.
23, q 2, a 3, sol 2); these two modes of reasoning are drawn together by the ability to go beyond the abstractions and universals of science to particular judgments about the contingencies of human existence.

Now for our second point. We cannot know a priori how universal principles will apply to a given situation. As one moves from universals to contingent particulars of the human drama, the likelihood of the need to deviate from the universals increases. As I argued in Chapter 2 (§ 2.5), the nearer one gets to action, the less likely it is that one's understanding will have broad application. In matters of action it is wrong to ignore the mitigation of circumstances and to judge simply according to universal truths as such. The action is singular and must be reasonable and intelligent relative to the singular circumstances of its context:

Since acts address singular [situations], in [discerning] what ought to be done, what is so here and now is considered more so than what is so simply [or in the abstract].

(Et quia actus circa singulare sunt, in his quae agenda sunt magis consideratur quod est hic vel nunc tale, quam quod est simpliciter tale, ST, II-II, q 106, a 2.)

This emphasis on the here and now is necessary because of the variability of circumstances. Indeed, the "causes" of action, that is, the reasons for acting, vary indefinitely ("variantur infinitis modis") as do circumstances. Therefore, there is no preestablished art or account of how to work out the applicatio, and the judgment

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23 ST, I-II, q 94, a 4: "Sed ratio practica negotiatur circa contingentia, in quibus sunt operationes humanae; et ideo, etsi in communibus sit aliqua necessitas, quanto magis ad propria descendit, tanto magis inventur defectus."

24 Thus a man is excused from his promise if relevant circumstances have changed (ST, II-II, q 110, a 3, ad 5).
of what to do must remain the task of the individual, exercising his or her own
deliberation and judgment. There is, therefore, need for a degree of personal
judgment, responsibility and practical wisdom which cannot be evaded:

Since discourse on morals is uncertain and variable even in universal
(expressions), it is even more uncertain and variable if one wishes to
descend further by applying teachings in specific cases. For this
(application) does not fall under any art or narrative account since the
causes of single actions vary indefinitely. Thus, the judgment about
singular situations is left to the practical wisdom of each person.
Therefore, those acting through their own practical wisdom must
intend to consider--after attending to all the particulars of the
situation--what courses of action befit the present time.

(Et cum sermo moralium etiam in universalibus sit incertus et
variabilis, adhuc magis incertus et variabilis, si quis velit ulterius
descendere tradendo doctrinam de singulis in speciali. Hoc enim non
cadit neque sub arte, neque sub aliqua narratione. Quia causae
singularium operabilium variantur infinitis modis. Unde iudicium de
singulis relinquitur prudentiae uniuscuiusque. Et hoc est, quod oportet
ipsos operantes per suam prudentiam intendere ad considerandum ea
quae convenit agere secundum praesens tempus, consideratis omnibus
particularibus circumstantiis, In II Ethic, lect 2, n 259.)

The indefinite variety of circumstances means that in the human situation right action
generally requires more than obedience to some preestablished duty. No type of
discourse, neither formal training ("sub arte") nor narrative story ("sub narratione"),
can eliminate the need for personal judgment and wisdom. There is no simple
deduction and no one way to wisely negotiate the situation. Thus, Aquinas asserts
that there is less human perfection in following the counsel of others than in

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25 The variety of circumstances also affects principles of natural law, i.e., the practical science of
morals, so that they are true "in majori parte," In IV Sent, d 33, q 1, a 2. Cf. ibid., d 26, q 1, a 1, ad 3;
ST, I-II, q 94, a 3, ad 3; De Malo, q 2, a 4, ad 13. On the natural law and the variability of
circumstances see Naus, The Nature of the Practical Intellect, 46-60, and Hibbs, "Principles and
Prudence," 274-279.
exercising practical wisdom one's self (ST, I-II, q 57, a 6).

For our understanding of practical reason, the application of principles to particulars proves crucial since the greatest difficulty in practical reasoning lies in mediating between the two. The difficulty, for example, lies not in knowing that one should be brave, but in knowing how be brave here and now--discerning how to avoid both the reckless and cowardly in this case. As John Caputo argues, we begin with indeterminate principles in practical reason, and their ultimate completion and full determination can rest only with the responsible person ("Prudential Insight and Moral Reasoning," 52). After all, the practical judgment is always two sided, determining something about the situation at hand and something about the character and story of the person acting.

Our third point is that it is the person of practical wisdom who successfully negotiates the applicatio; the prudens must discern when and how universal principles apply. This discernment, however, is not a matter of logical deduction, but rather a matter of discovering the intelligibility of the situation, a matter, that is, of discerning the universal in the singular. Universal moral principles and general moral wisdom are helpful but insufficient for deliberation about what to do, but practical wisdom discerns the good in the singular:

Practical wisdom is not a science. Science [concerns] universals; practical wisdom, however, ultimates, that is, singulars, because it [concerns] what is to be done which is singular. Thus, it is evident that practical wisdom is not a science.

(Prudentia non est scientia. Scientia enim est universalium. . . . Prudentia autem extem, id est singularis, quia est operabilis quod est singulare. Et sic patet quod prudentia non est scientia, In VI Ethic.
The concern of practical wisdom is *agibilium* or conduct, which Aquinas here refers to as the *extremus* or ultimate, the *operabilia*. The discovery and command of the specific action one is to take is the terminus of one's practical reasoning. This ultimate cannot be determined by a science because of the very purpose of science, which is to know universals. The judgments of practical reason, then, are distinct from the judgments of a science as the contingent and singular are distinct from the necessary and universal (*ST, I-II, q 94, a 4*). Yet are both kinds of judgments intelligent and reasonable? How is the practical judgment of the singular act accomplished? Aquinas continues the commentary just translated with the following note which at first glance seems to suggest that practical reason and science differ as do perception and rational argument:

Practical wisdom, however, is of an ultimate, namely of a singular action, which must be taken as a principle in matters of conduct, and there can be no science of this ultimate since it is not proven by reason. Instead, for it there is perception because it is perceived by some sense power. Not indeed by a sense proper with which we sense the species of the proper sensibles, say color, sound or something of this sort, but by an interior sense.

(Haec autem, scilicet prudentia, est extremi, scilicet singularis operabilis, quod oportet accipere ut principium in agendis: cuius quidem extremi non est scientia, quia non probatur ratione, sed eius est sensus, quia aliquo sensu percipitur: non quidem illo quo sentimus species propriorum sensibilium, puta coloris, soni et huiusmodi, qui est sensus proprius; sed sensu interiori, *In VI Ethic*, lect 7, n 1214.)

I find this text troublesome both if we take it at face value and if we try to relate it to Aquinas's treatment of the practical syllogism. On the face of it, Aquinas seems to be saying that the term of practical reason, the singular act, is discerned or
perceived by an interior sense power. In Chapter 2 we saw that Aquinas wrestled with the question of whether practical and theoretical reason depend on separate faculties or are distinct modes of reasoning united in one faculty, and that he finally resolved on the latter (§ 2.3). The main source of difficulty for him was in the Nicomachean Ethics which can be read to suggest distinct faculties. Here again in commenting on Aristotle's work, there is a trace of this problem. Commenting on Aristotle (VI, 8, 1142a25-30) Thomas must incorporate Aristotle's appeal to perception, which seems to suggest that practical wisdom depends on a distinct perceptual faculty. Yet neither we nor Aquinas can accept Aristotle's remark at face value if we maintain that practical wisdom refers to the human ability to apply universal principles to particular situations. No perceptual faculty by itself could accomplish that.

The text is also troublesome if we compare it with Aquinas's comments on the practical syllogism (see In III De Anima, lect 16, nn 845 and 846 translated above). For that analysis implies that the wise act is found in the reasoned conclusion of a syllogism with a universal major premise and a judgment characterizing a specific

\[26 \text{NE, VI, 8, 1142a25 ff: "Practical wisdom has as its object the ultimate particular fact, of which there is perception but no scientific knowledge. This perception is not the kind with which each of the five sense apprehends its proper object, but the kind with which we perceive that in mathematics the triangle is the ultimate figure." The triangle is an ultimate figure because there is no simpler polygonal figure (see Ostwald's note 37, whose translation is given here, 161), and to "perceive" that it is simplest would be impossible without the joint operation of the interior sense power and the intellect. This joint operation constitutes an insight. See Lonergan's Verbum, 25-33; Henle's "Prudence and Insight in Moral and Legal Decisions," 26-30; and Crowe's "Universal Norms," 133-135.} \]

\[27 \text{In II Post Anal, lect 20: "Si autem ita esset, quod sensus apprehenderet solum id quod est particularitatis, et nullo modo cum apprehenderet universale in particulari, non esset possibile quod ex apprehensione sensus causaretur in nobis cognitio universalis."} \]
situation for a minor premise. Once these premises are in place, the conclusion clearly follows (cf. In VII Ethic, lect 3, n 1345). Indeed, the analysis of the syllogism might suggest that the application of the universal to the singular is a simple matter of logical deduction, which I have argued it is not. Yet the text given above states that the singular act cannot be determined by a science because it is not proven by reason ("non probatur ratione"). Does the practical syllogism prove by reason what one should do, or does the person somehow perceive what act ought to be undertaken? How can we reconcile these comments?

They can be reconciled, I believe, only by taking into account the act of insight or intelligere, the intellectual grasp of the universal in the singular. This act is possible only through the cooperation of the intellect and the interior sense power which Aquinas, taking his cue from Aristotle, referred to as the ratio particularis or vis cogitativa. Thus, if you refer back to the text on the practical syllogism, you will see that the minor premise is attributed to the ratio particularis, a reference to an interior sense power. Moreover, we saw in Chapter 2 that Aquinas finally resolves to read Aristotle's Ethics not as distinguishing between two intellects, the theoretical and practical, but as distinguishing between the intellect per se, which knows particulars in the universal, and the ratio particularis, which, as the instrument of the intellect, allows knowledge of the contingent as contingent.28 The judgment of the

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28In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1123: "Hace autem dubitatio de facili solvitur si quis consideret quod contingentia dupliciter cognosci possunt. Uno modo secundum rationes universales. . . . Alio modo possunt accipi contingentia secundum quod sunt in particulari: et sic variabilia sunt nec cadit supra ea intellectus nisi mediantibus potentiis sensitivis. Unde et inter partes animae sensitivae ponitur una potentia quae dicitur ratio particularis, sive vis cogitativa, quae est collativa intentionum particularium."
singular, which constitutes the minor premise of the practical syllogism, is a kind of perception, a perception in which the interior sense power cooperates with the intellect.\textsuperscript{29} Hence, in § 4.2.4 we turn our attention to such judgments and the interior sense power which makes them possible.

Before moving on, though, let us review where we are. We saw in Chapter 2 that theoretical inquiry aims at truth rather than action, at the universal rather than the singular, at the necessary rather than the contingent. Practical knowledge aims in the opposite direction, but this tendency remains incomplete and the knowledge remains practical only to a relative degree so long as one does not urge action. Yet acting intelligently requires bringing knowledge and reason to bear on the immediate situation. Aquinas explains how this is accomplished through his analysis of the practical syllogism. He shows that in this reasoning process a singular conclusion must be found through the application of an universal premise to a particular situation. Now that is possible only if the minor of the syllogism expresses a judgment affirming something about the specific situation--i.e., a judgment which characterizes the situation to be of such-and-such a kind. It may be a situation, to use Aquinas's example, which calls for a son to honor his father, but it may also be one which calls for a son to tell the truth despite the harm it may cause his father. There are no definite and certain rules for making such a judgment, but the way one characterizes the specific situation determines the action one will reason to. A general moral principle understood in the abstract is insufficient for discerning right

\textsuperscript{29}ST, II-II, q 49, a 2, ad 3: "Ipsa recta a estimatio de fine particulari et intellectus dicitur, inquantum est alicuius principii, et sensus, inquantum est particularis." Cf. ibid., ad 1.
action until one affirms that the present conditions constitute an actual instance of the general obligation.

Thus, as we shall now discuss, the minor premise requires a judgment through which one recognizes the universal as existing in the particular. Recognizing the universal in the particular is to establish the minor of a practical syllogism, to discern the meaning of the present situation and what principles or moral rules apply to it. One is able, therefore, to draw the conclusion about the good to be done. The judgment of the singular is essential to the task of mediation since without grasping the relevant and intelligible features of the situation, one cannot find the intelligent and reasonable way to bring one's principles, ideas and values to bear on it.

4.3.3 Practical Reason and the Discursive Power

We are concerned with the ability of the person of practical wisdom to judge a specific situation well, to make a judgment of the singular. This topic takes us into an area of great complexity in Aquinas's psychology because the judgment depends on the convergence of the intellect and interior sense faculties and the development of memory, experience, and intellectual as well as affective habits. We will introduce the question of affective habits in the next chapter; here we shall focus on the discursive power and the intellectual act of insight which results from its cooperation with the intellect.

In most of his discussions of the practical syllogism, Aquinas appeals to the exercise of an interior sense power which makes the judgment of the particular
possible. So in the text quoted above in § 4.2.3 (In III De Anima, lect 16, n 845), Thomas makes mention of the ratio particularis, which he also often refers to as the vis cogitativa and which is typically termed in English the discursive power. The discursive power is one of the four interior sense powers, all of which contribute in distinct ways to the formation of the phantasm or image. With regard to the judgment of the singular and the exercise of practical wisdom, Aquinas especially singles out the discursive power as crucial. The judgment of the singular, essential to practical reasoning, cannot occur except through the work of the discursive power.

The relationship of the intellect to the interior sense powers is crucial to reasoning because Aquinas's crystal clear position is that there can be no act of understanding without the presence of an image which unifies what one is actually sensing now or has experienced in the past. The presence of the image is essential if one desires to learn or discover something new, but also if one desires to utilize knowledge which one already possesses habitually. That is, even habitual knowledge which has already been abstracted from experience cannot be brought to bear in an

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30 Some authors prefer the cogitative power. See ST, I, q 86, a 1, ad 2; In VI Ethic, lect 1, n 1123; In VII Ethic, lect 3, nn 1340 and 1345; In IV Sent, d 50, q 1, a 3, ad 3. For the best comprehensive studies of this power see George Klubertanz, The Discursive Power: Sources and Doctrine of the Vis Cogitativa According to St. Thomas Aquinas (St. Louis: Modern Schoolman, 1952); and by the same author, "St. Thomas and the Knowledge of the Singular," The New Scholasticism 26 (1952), 135-166; Julien Peghaire, "A Forgotten Sense, the Cogitative," The Modern Schoolman 20 (1942-3), 123-40 & 210-29.

31 ST, I, q 78, a 4 discusses the sensus communis, memorativa, imaginatio and cogitativa in detail.

32 In VI Ethic, lect 7, n 1215: "Et ad istum sensum, idest interiorem, magis pertinet prudentia, per quam perfectur ratio particularis ad recte existimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilium."
actual moment of understanding without the presence of an appropriate image. The image is necessary both for abstraction and application. The image is the proper instrumental object of the human intellect in that the intellect’s task is to make the image actually intelligible. Indeed, without a suitable image one will be unable to understand or apprehend (inspicere) the universal. For these reasons, Lonergan and others refer to Aquinas’s act of understanding (intelligere) as an insight into phantasm.

Consequently, the relationship between the intellect and the interior sense powers can be characterized as one of instrumentality; for the intellect needs the interior sense powers in order to operate. The intellect has no direct knowledge of singulars since its understanding is always abstract (i.e., always immaterial and therefore potentially relevant to an indefinite number of concrete realities). So to

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33 ST, I, q 84, a 7: "Impossible est intellectum nostrum, secundum praesentis vitae statum, quo passibili corpori coniungitur, aliquid intelligere in actu, nisi convertendo se ad phantasmata. . . . Unde manifestum est quod ad hoc quod intellectus actu intelligat, non solum accipiendo scientiam de novo, sed etiam utendo scientia iam acquisita, requiritur actus imaginationis et ceterarum virtutum." In II Sent, d 3, q 3, a 3, ad 1: "Ideo ex eis singularia non cognoscentur quae individuantur per materiam nisi per reflexionem quandam intellectus ad imaginationem et sensum, dum scilicet intellectus speciem universalem, quam a singularibus abstraxit, applicat formae singulares in imaginazione servatae." See also ST, I, q 85, a 1; q 86, a 1; In III De Anima, lect 13, n 791.

34 In Boet de Trin, q 6, a 2, ad 5: "Phantasmata comparantur ad intellectum ut objecta in quibus inspicit omne quod inspiciat." Cf. De Anima, a 15: "Potentialia sensitivae sunt necessariae animae ad intelligendum... ut repraesentantes animae intellectivae proprium objectum."

35 A suitable image is one which exemplifies or instantiates the idea that needs to be abstracted: ST, I q 84, a 7: "Hoc quilibet in seipso experiri potest, quod quando aliquis conatur aliquum intelligere, format aliqua phantasmata sibi per modum exemplorum, in quibus quasi inspiciat quod intelligere studet." SCG, II, 73, n 38: "[Intellectus] intelligit quidem immaterialia, sed inspiciat ea in aliquo materiali. Cuius signum est, quod in doctrinis universalibus exempla particularis ponuntur, in quibus quod dicitur inspiciitur."

know singulars it must always turn to phantasms in order to know them indirectly, that is, through the mediation of the sense powers which apprehend singulars in their singularity (i.e., in their materiality; ST, I, q 84, a 7; q 85, a 1; q 86, a 1; II-II, q 47, a 3, ad 1). Moreover, this relationship of instrumentality can be analyzed in either direction: there is the influence of the interior sense powers on the intellect and the influence of intellect and reason on them.

The former aspect of the relationship is dispositive since the intellect must be well disposed by the sense powers for its proper operation. Hence, a lesion, insanity or sleep will hinder one from intellectual work not because they affect the immaterial intellect directly, but because they leave the intellect without its proper object, the phantasm. The latter aspect is directive in that intelligence guides the interior sense powers in their operations for forming images for the purpose of facilitating understanding. Indeed, the virtues seated in the intellect, including practical wisdom, may reach into the sensitive powers, habituating their operations as well, because the habitual dispositions of the intellect also affect their operations. Thus the application of knowledge differs from its initial discovery in that one’s habitual knowledge enables one to direct the interior sense powers and readily muster the necessary images (see F. Crowe, "Universal Norms," 141).

37 ST, I-II, q 56, a 5: "Cognitio autem veri non consummatur in viribus sensitivis apprehensivis; sed huiusmodi vires sunt quasi praparatoriae ad cognitionem intellectivam." See too ST, I, q 84, a 7; a 8; q 89, a 5.

38 ST, I-II, q 50, a 3: "Secundum vero quod [vires sensitivae] operantur ex imperio rationis, sic ad diversa ordinari possunt. Et sic possunt in eis esse aliqui habitus, quibus bene aut male ad aliquid disponuntur." See too ibid., ad 1; ST, I, q 89, a 5; I-II, q 50, a 4, ad 3; q 56, a 5; q 53, a 1; De Ver, q 10, a 5.
The directing influence of reason applies especially to the discursive power; it is reason's bridge, giving it entry into the process of forming the images which will facilitate understanding and judgment:

Practical wisdom is not seated in the exterior sense through which we know the proper sensibles, but in the interior sense which is perfected through memory and experience for judging particular experiences promptly. Nor does this mean that practical wisdom is in the interior sense as its principle subject, for principally it is in reason. Yet through a certain application [practical wisdom also] influences this sense.

(Prudentia non consistit in sensu exteriori, quo cognoscimus sensibilia propria: sed in sensu interiori, qui perficitur per memoriam et experimentum ad prompte iudicandum de particularibus expertis. Non tamen ita quod prudentia sit in sensu interiori sicut in subiecto principali: sed principaliter quidem est in ratione, per quandam autem applicationem pertingit ad huiusmodi sensum, ST, II-II, q 47, a 3, ad 3.)

In this text we are reminded that practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue, which must be thought of chiefly, therefore, as a perfection of a rational process. Thomas seems to think that a likely error would be to take practical wisdom to be seated in a interior sense power (as perhaps Aristotle did), and the reason why he anticipates this error is that practical wisdom, through the instrumentality of the discursive power, makes prompt judgment about specific situations possible. Moreover, he refers to the influence of practical wisdom on the discursive power as a "quandam applicationem," using the term with which we have been concerned since the outset of § 4.3.

We are also told, however, that memory and experience (experimentum) are

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39 Memory is also directed by reason since it preserves what the discursive apprehends. See ST, I, q 78, a 4 and G. Klubertanz, The Discursive Power, 281-2.
needed for this facility of judgment. In fact, Aquinas on several occasions reminds us that ample experience is a necessary condition for the acquisition of practical wisdom. Recall, for instance, that he thinks that actual experience is more important than theoretical knowledge to right practical judgment (In VI Ethic, lect 6, n 1194, cited in § 4.2.3). There is also this comment:

It seems that the young may not become prudent because practical wisdom concerns singularities which we come to know through experience. The young, however, cannot be experienced since becoming experienced takes much time.

(Non videtur quod iuvenis fiat prudens. Cuius causa est quia prudentia est circa singularis quae fiunt nobis cognita per experientiam. Iuvenis autem non potest esse expertus quia ad experientiam requiritur multitudo temporis, In VI Ethic, lect 7, n 1208.)

Clearly, in this text experientiam does not refer to mere sensation, for the young can sense their environment as well as, if not better than, the old. The term, rather, refers to the cumulative experience which depends on time and practice, as when we say that someone is an experienced craftsman, meaning that he has the competence that younger practitioners cannot have even if they have more native talent. Memory, experience and practical wisdom make prompt and appropriate judgment in specific situations possible, but only through the discursive power and its activity, which is often referred to as a collatio, a sorting and combining of distinct experiences:

Experience results from the combining of many singulars received in memory. A combining of this kind, however, is proper to a human being and pertains to the discursive power, also called the particular reason, which correlates individual intentions just as universal reason does with universal intentions.
Experience depends on the memory of past perceptions of individual things, and draws on these, as on materials, in order to sort, compare and combine them ("collativa intentionum individualium"). Hence, experimentum is the acquired ability of the discursive power to judge well something here and now by drawing on the memory of past judgments. Notice also that in this text Thomas uses the term intentio, which usually refers to an act of the will. Here the intention is associated with the discursive power, which as an apprehensive power, it would seem, does not intend at all, but rather discerns or judges. Yet the judgment which the discursive power makes possible determines one's course of action. Some further background on the discursive power will clarify this use of term intentio.

The discursive power is the human analogue of the estimative power, a sense power that the philosophic tradition which Aquinas inherited had long attributed to lower species of animals. Aristotle and the Arab philosophers noted that animals "perceive intentions," such as when the sheep perceives the danger of the wolf and the bird the usefulness of a piece of straw for its nest. Now the danger or usefulness cannot be present in the perceptions of the external senses. That is, danger and

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40 Cf. In I Meta, lect 1, n 17: "Dicit ergo primo, quod ex memoria in hominibus experimentum causatur. Modus autem causandi est iste: quia ex multis memoris unius rei accipit homo experimentum de aliquo, quo experimento potens est ad facile et recte operandum."

41 On the historical origins of the doctrine see Klubertanz, The Discursive Power.
utility differ significantly from color, sound, smell or anything given by the external senses. Hence, they reasoned that the "intentional perception" must be from another power:

The sheep seeing the wolf coming flees, not because of the unbecoming color or shape, but because of the hostility, as it were, of the nature. Similarly, the bird gathers straw, not because it pleases the sense, but because it is useful for building a nest. It is, therefore, necessary for the animal to perceive intentions of this kind which the exterior senses do not perceive. . . . The estimative power, however, is ordered to apprehending intentions which are not received through the [exterior] sense.

(Ovis videns lupum venientem fugit, non propter indecementiam coloris vel figurae, sed quasi inimicum naturae; et similiter avis colligit paleam, non quia delectet sensum, sed quia est utilis ad nidificandum. Necessarium est ergo animali quod percipiatur huiusmodi intentiones, quas non percipit sensus exterior. . . . Ad apprehendendum autem intentiones quae per sensum non accipiuntur, ordinatur vis aestimativa, ST, I, q 78, a 4.)

In lower animals the intention or estimation of utility or danger is perceived instinctively. That is, this power qualifies or interprets, as it were, perceptions with regard to the biological needs of the animal. Through the estimative power the objects perceived became something to pursue or avoid. Intended action is concomitant with the estimation which is therefore called an intention. The human discursive power also "perceives intentions," but unlike the estimative power in animals, this human faculty serves as the instrument of practical reason. Hence, both the estimative and the discursive are ultimately concerned with action, whether to pursue the good or avoid the bad. With the former, however, perceptions become intentional through instinct; whereas, with the latter perceptions result in an intention to act when an universal is apprehended in the singular.
First and foremost we must understand that the discursive power makes judgments insofar as it serves as the instrument of the intellect and the virtue of practical wisdom. J. Peghaire offers the term "immediate judgments," and I have suggested "judgment of the singular," but whatever the term, the key point is that the need is to discern the universal in the particular because there can be no prescriptive conclusion without this. Thomas compares such judgments to the grasp of first principles since both are simple and without middle terms and since both require an intellectus or intellectual act:

As an absolute judgment about first principles pertains to the intellect in [understanding] universals; thus concerning singulars the discursive power is called intellect insofar as it has an absolute judgment about singulars.

(Sicut pertinet ad intellectum in universalibus judicium absolutum de primis principiis. . . ita et circa singularis vis cogitativa vocatur intellectus secundum quod habet absolutum judicium de singularibus, In VI Ethic, lect 9, n 1255. Cf. ST, II-II, q 49, a 2, ad 1.)

My argument entails three claims about these simple judgments of the singular. First, they depend on the cooperation of the discursive power and the intellect. Second, they are "intentional perceptions," to us the terminology of the Summa and commentaries cited above (ST, I, q 78, a 4; In I Meta, lect 1, n 15). In reference to the estimative power, this language means that the sheep's experience

42 In VI Ethic, lect 7, n 1215: "Et ad istum sensum, idest interiorem, magis pertinet prudentia, per quam perficitur ratio particularis ad recte existimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilium."

43 A Forgotten Sense, the Cogitative," 226: "Now the cogitative knows the singular without any reasoning or discursive process and therefore passes upon it judgments which are 'absolute,' taking this word as synonymous for immediate judgments." We have already cited In VI Ethic, lect 7, n 1214 which confirms Peghaire's claim that the judgment is immediate: "Haec autem, scilicet prudentia, est extremi, scilicet singularis operabilis, quod oportet accipere ut principium in agendis: cuius quidem extremi non est scientia, quia non probatur ratione, sed eius sensus, quia aliquo sensu percutitur."
of the wolf is accompanied by the instinctual sense of danger and the impulse to flee, but in reference to the human discursive power it means that the experience is interpreted in terms of universal concepts. The universal is apprehended in the individual, allowing for a conclusion about what to do. Third, such judgments make the minor of the practical syllogism possible, for that is exactly what the minor requires—a judgment that a universal applies (or fails to apply) to some specific situation. Aquinas brings these points together in the following text:

For the discursive power apprehends the individual as existing under a common nature which occurs inasmuch as it is united with intellect in the same subject. Hence, it knows this man as this man and this wood as this wood. The estimative power [in animals], however, does not apprehend some individual under a common nature, but only insofar as it is the term or principle of some action or passion.

(Nam cogitativa apprehendit individuum, ut existens sub natura communi; quod contingit ei, inquantum unitur intellectivae in eodem subiecto; unde cognoscit hunc hominem prout est hic homo, et hoc lignum prout est hoc lignum. Aestimativa autem non apprehendit aliquod individuum, secundum quod est sub natura communi, sed solum secundum quod est terminus aut principium alicuius actionis vel passionis, In II De Anima, lect 13, n 398.)

The estimative power of lower animals brings the animal immediately from perception to action. The discursive power, however, differs in that action is intended only when meaning is assigned to a particular circumstance, when this is taken to be such-and-such a kind of thing or situation. I may know that I ought to return property to its rightful owner, but I also need to know that this wood belongs to this man. Intention now means to know the practical equivalent of the quod quid est, to know what kind of thing or situation this is, and this is to bring the particular under the domain of an universal idea. This grasp of the singular requires the
cooperation of the intellect and discursive power: there is the activity of *collatio*, in which the intellect directs the discursive power in the comparison and judgment of past memories, and the *applicatio* or judgment itself which is the intellectual apprehension of the experience as an instance of the universal.\(^{44}\) So to paraphrase Aquinas's analysis of the practical syllogism which has already been cited (*In III de Anima*, lect 16, n 845 in § 4.2.3), it is not enough to know that one ought to honor his parents. It must also be determined that this man is my father and this my duty to him, and this is "*recte existimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilium*" (*In VI Ethic*, lect 7, n 1215, cited above).

Practical wisdom has as its proper object *recta ratio agibilium*, for it determines the character of the human act. In the *ordo executionis* this act comes first and the end is taken as its consequent. Yet the end itself is first in the *ordo intentionis*, meaning that it is the end which gives meaning and reasonableness to the act. That is, the end defines the purpose of the act. Hence, in determining the human act practical wisdom and the discursive power effect an *applicatio*, a composite operation which defines the human act only after understanding the exigencies of the situation in light of suitable universal principles. Since there is a judgment of the singular, the specific circumstances of the situation are known, and since this

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\(^{44}\)On *collatio* see *In I Meta*, lect 1, n 15 quoted above. On the act of insight and apprehending the universal in the singular there is also *ST*, I, q 84, a 7: "Et ideo necesse est ad hoc quod intellectus actu intelligat suum obiectum proprium, quod convertat se ad phantasmata, ut speculetur naturam universalem in particulari existentem." For other expressions of this need to understand the particular as an instance of an universal see *In II Post Anal*, lect 20; *In VII Ethic*, lect 3, n 1340. Alfred Ivry in "The Will of God and Practical Intellect of Man" writes: "The particular judgements in themselves cannot be deduced from the universal ones, but intuitively the individual realizes when he confronts particular examples of these universal propositions," (390).
judgment understands the situation under suitable principles, the act itself is defined in accord with the understood good. Thus, when one knows that this is his father and this his duty to him, he may in acting intend the universal principle to honor his father. The act chosen, then, is an expression of the principle intended. Thus, we come to the ordo intentionis, the mode of practical reasoning which understands that the end is the principle and cause of the action. Aquinas thought that there must something ultimate, a fundamental principle, which is intended in every judgment and command of practical wisdom. Were there not such a principle, there could be no end, no reason or purpose, for the human act. Hence, we turn now in our analysis to the ordo intentionis in order to consider the first principle of practical reason.

4.4 The First Principle of Practical Reason

We have seen that practical wisdom mediates between universal principles and specific circumstances, finding the intelligent way to apply general principles in this case. We now need to turn our attention to the fundamental moral principle which is operative in practical reasoning. We tend to think of first principles as carefully formulated propositions, which, if well formulated, will serve as fundamental rules of practical reason. Thomas, however, considers the first principle of practical reason to be a "natural habit." The significance of this point lies in this. Prior to being a philosophical proposition given formal expression, the first principle of practical reason, since it is a natural habit, is actually operative in human practical reason.

45ST, I, q 62, a 9: "In unoquoque motu motoris intentio fertur in aliquid determinatum, ad quod mobile perducere intendit: 'intentio enim est de fine cui repugnat infinitum.'
Hence, the task at hand is not the discovery of a workable principle, but of the principle actually at work.

The distinction between the theoretical and practical remains important to our discussion. The fundamental principle of practical judgment has its appropriate analogue in the fundamental principle of theoretical judgment, yet the natural habit of practical reason, unlike its theoretical counterpart, is related to action. Human action, as we know, is never merely an intellectual concern, but depends on the disposition of the will. Thus, in discussing the first principle of practical reason we must also take into consideration the desire or intention for the good which complements this principle. Aquinas finds that there is also a natural desire for the good, without which there could be no truly practical first principle.

Philosophers like Aquinas who emphasize the primacy of reason over emotion are often contrasted with thinkers like Hobbes or Hume who argued that reason's part in the practical life is to do the bidding of the passions or sentiments. Such a comparison will not be very productive, however, until Aquinas's doctrine of the will is clearly understood. The will is a rational appetite, meaning that it is by nature an intention and disposition to action as determined by rational judgment. The claim that reason must serve the passions is certainly called into question--indeed we have something of a false dichotomy--if, as Aquinas finds, at the core of our affective life is a desire to live reasonably. Yet if this disposition to the good is natural and spontaneous, its accomplishment depends on the achievement of the virtues. It is a disposition to act in accord with reason and to reconcile the conflicting tendencies
of the person. To accomplish this is to become virtuous, but prior to virtue there is the operative principle, the given task of living and acting as a rational being. The existential problem of living with integrity is revealed in the simple principle to do good and avoid evil. If, then, we adopt Yve Simon's term for the moral virtues--"an existential readiness" (Chapter 3)--we can argue that the first principle of practical reason defines the "existential task" which is fulfilled in the readiness the moral virtues provide.

This line of analysis is important to pursue for two reasons. First, it provides us with the fundamental norm operative in practical reason. It also provides us, however, with an analogue for the relationship--a concern of the next chapter--between practical wisdom and the moral virtues: just as the first principle of practical reason requires its complement in a natural desire for the good, so similarly, there can be no virtue of practical reason simpliciter, no practical wisdom, without its complement in the moral virtues. Moreover, just as the natural habit of practical reason is in a way foundational, allowing for the development of the virtue of practical wisdom, so too the natural desire for the good is foundational, allowing for the development of affective and volitional virtues which complement practical wisdom. We can clarify and link these points by returning again to the notion of integrity. The first principle of practical reason urges unity and accord between thought and action. Yet though this desire for integrity is natural, the actual fact of integrity can only be achieved through wise choice and action. It is not yet the application of knowledge to specific circumstances, but is the demand that the good
which is known inform the act which is taken. Practical wisdom and right choice achieve the integrity to which we are naturally called by *synderesis*.

Thomas is fond of reminding us that the truth of practical reason always hinges on knowledge of the end or intended goal. He expresses this by stating that the end is the first principle of practical reason ("*Primum autem principium in operativis, quorum est ratio practica, est finis ultimus,*" ST, I-II, q 90, a 2). He tells us too that in our attempt to find order and coherence in all matters of conduct, we reason from the end ("*Ratio autem ordinat omnia in agibilibus ex fine,* ST, I-II, q 72, a 5). The proper object of practical wisdom, that which it determines, is as we have seen right action. Action is right, however, insofar as it is in accord with the end. Accordingly, the end must be the normative principle operative in practically wise reasoning:

It is evident, therefore, that it belongs to practical wisdom to organize matters in a coherent fashion with regard to the end. And since this relation of means to the end [is established] through practical wisdom, it [requires] a mode of reasoning in which ends are principles. (For the whole structure [ratio] of these relationships in all matters of action is derived from the ends, as appears clearly with things which are made.) Therefore, in order to be practically wise, one must keep himself in proper relation to the ends. For there can be no right reasoning unless the principles are preserved. Hence, both the understanding of ends and the moral virtues are required for practical wisdom.

(Patet ergo quod prudentiae est aliqua ordinate ad finem disponere. Et quia ista dispositio eorum quae sunt ad finem, in finem per prudentiam, est per modum cuiusdam ratiocinationis, cuius principia sunt fines (ex eis enim traditur tota ratio ordinis praedicti in omnibus operabilibus, sicut manifeste appareat in artificiatis); ideo ad hoc quod quis sit prudens, requiritur quod bene se habeat circa ipsos fines. Non enim potest esse recta ratio, nisi principiis rationis salventur. Et ideo ad prudentiam requiruntur et intellectus finium, et virtutes morales, De
Practical wisdom is good deliberation about matters which pertain to the complete life of a human being and to the ultimate end of life.

The end is normative in practical reason, and right action in present circumstances (i.e., the means or "eas quae sunt ad finem") must be discovered in light of the end. Thus, it will be important for us to consider how Aquinas understands the end and our knowledge of it. The first of the two texts given above makes it quite clear that practical reason can operate virtuously in human life only if one remains well disposed toward the end, and one can only be well disposed to the end if there is both understanding of ends ("intellectus finium") and the virtuous disposition toward them. The question of the virtuous intention of the end will come into focus in the next chapter; here we need to pursue the understanding of principles.

I have included the second text in order to suggest why finis in this context is not an univocal term. There is the first principle of practical reason, the natural habit which Thomas calls synderesis. The end taken in one sense refers to this, the normative principle operative in all practical reasoning. Synderesis urges us to do good and avoid evil, and this may be understood equally well as a first principle and as the proximate end which all moral acts aim to achieve. Hence, the end taken in this way is the practical equivalent of indemonstrable principles ("principium inde-monstrabile") in theoretical inquiry: "The ultimate end, which holds in the practical
realm like indemonstrable principles in the theoretical realm, is the [first] principle of the whole domain of morality."\textsuperscript{46} First principles make scientific conclusions possible but are not themselves such conclusions. Similarly, \textit{synderesis} is not yet an understanding and articulation of the "\textit{totam vitam hominis}," nor of the "\textit{ultimum finem vitae}," but such an articulation will relate to \textit{synderesis} in the same way that the achievements of a science will relate to its indemonstrable starting points.

Principles, whether practical or theoretical, make the development of knowledge possible and, in a sense not to be misunderstood, contain that development virtually.\textsuperscript{47} This does not mean that we naturally know what the good life is, but that the good life, whatever we discover it to be, will be in accord with the first principle of practical reason. An individual's conception of his life, its good and purpose, governs in that individual's practical deliberations as much as \textit{synderesis}, but clearly we should not expect that one's concept of the ultimate good of human life will be found in a natural habit. Our articulation of the human good must be discovered, as any other knowledge must be discovered, through the application of our intellects to experience, but in that discovery is found the ultimate end and principle of practical wisdom. Therefore, we need a two part discussion. First, we shall discuss \textit{synderesis}, the natural habit of practical reason (4.4.1). Second, we shall

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{ST}, I-II, q 72, a 5: "Principium autem totius ordinis in moralibus est finis ultimus, qui ita se habet in operativus sicut principium indemonstrabile in speculativus."

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{De Ver}, q 10, a 6: "Et sic in lumine intellectus agentis nobis est quodammodo omnis scientia originaliter indita, mediantibus universalibus conceptionibus, quae statim lumine intellectus agentis cognoscuntur, per quas sicut per universalia principia iudicamus de aliis, et ea prae cognoescimus in ipsis." For a detailed discussion of this text see Crowe, "Universal Norms," 121-129.
consider that the unique place for practical wisdom in Aquinas's psychology stems from its comprehensive horizon of concern, i.e., that it reasons from the "totam vitam hominis" as from a principle (4.4.2).

4.4.1 Synderesis

Aquinas notes that it is human nature to arrive at truth through investigation and discursive reasoning; knowledge is not had immediately but rather comes at the conclusion of the reasoning process. Reason, however, could never arrive at conclusions unless there was some knowledge which could be known immediately and against which the conclusions of discursive reasoning could be measured so that their truth or soundness of reason could be known. He calls this sort of knowledge the understanding of first principles, and "first" indicates the order of dependency, that is, that the immediately known is the efficient cause, moving us to assent to conclusions which cannot be immediately known. Hence, he states that synderesis moves practical wisdom as the understanding of principles (intellectus) moves in science ("Sed synderesis movet prudentiam, sicut intellectus principiorum scientiam," ST, II-II, q 47, a 6, ad 3).48

First principles are known naturally, meaning not that they are known a priori

48 Cf. ST, I, q 79, a 12: "Ratiocinatio hominis, cum sit quidam motus, ab intellectu progreditur aliquorum, scilicet naturaliter notorum absque investigatione rationis, sicut a quodam principio immobili; et ad intellectum etiam terminatur, inquantum iudicamus per principia naturaliter nota de his quae ratiocinando inveniuntur." And cf. In III Sent, d 23, q 2, a 2, sol 1: "Alio modo potest considerari intellectus noster secundum ordinem ad rationem, quae ad intellectum terminatur, dum resolvendo conclusiones in principia per se nota, earum certitudinem efficit: et hoc est assensus scientiae." On the resolution see Lonergan, Verbum, 54 (especially note 28) and 62-3.
in the Kantian sense, but that given an understanding of sense experience some principles are known at once and without further investigation. First principles like all other knowledge require an insight into an image or phantasm, the difference being the immediacy with which the conclusion or judgment becomes apparent. One of Thomas's standard examples of a first principle clarifies this. It is that any whole is greater than its parts:

From the nature of the human intellectual soul itself, it befits a man, once he knows what a whole is and what a part is, to know immediately that every whole is greater than its parts, and it is similar in other cases. But what a whole is and what a part is cannot be known except through intelligible species taken from images.

(Ex ipsa enim natura animae intellectualis, convenit homini quod statim, cognito quid est totum et quid est pars, cognoscat quod omne totum est maius sua parte: et simile est in ceteris. Sed quid est totum et quid est pars, cognoscere non potest nisi per species intelligibles a phantasmatibus acceptas, ST, I-II, q 51, a 1.)

This principle cannot be understood without understanding the terms whole and part, and the terms cannot be understood without sense experience or at least images derived from it. But once the terms are understood, the principle can be grasped immediately without any further inquiry. Hence, the term natural is meant to suggest the spontaneity and ease with which one understands once the proper conditions, i.e., the necessary images and understanding of language, are met.49

49 Crowe writes: "First principles are the product of agent intellect illuminating phantasm and reducing it to intelligibility. In this, they do not differ from concepts; both one and the other emerge, according to Aquinas, from the action of the intellectual light on phantasm," ("Universal Norms," 129). In Boet de Trin, q 6, a 4 confirms this: "Quo quidem lumine nihil manifestatur nobis nisi inquantum per ipsum phantasmata fiunt intelligibilia in actu." See too De Anima, a 5: "... quia etiam ipsa principia indemonstrabilia cognoscimus abstrahendo a singularibus." See also Hibbs, "Principles and Prudence," 273-74.
Aquinas maintains that such principles are known through "natural habits," and he usually distinguishes the theoretical habit, calling it *intellectus*, from the practical which he names *synderesis*. Now by "natural habit" he does not mean, as I have just attempted to explain, that the knowledge is innate rather than acquired through experience. Indeed, he states that there are no completely natural habits in human nature, meaning that no habit is formed prior to our interaction with our environment (ST, I-II, q 51, a 1). Why then does Aquinas maintain that such knowledge constitutes a natural habit? It is habitual for the same reason that any knowledge is habitual: because it comes to be firmly rooted in our minds and ready for use. The habit is natural for the reasons I have already indicated: given the requisite experience, it is concomitant to the human intellect to know some principles immediately, that is, in a simple act of judgment ("oportet esse cognitionem veritatis sine inquisitione et in speculativis et in practicis"). Moreover, such judgments are the sure ground for all other reasoning and judgments about experience ("oporteat esse stabiliora et certiora . . . quoddam seminarium totius cognitionis sequentis"). We

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50 There is at least one text where he uses the term *intellectus*, rather than the expected *synderesis*. See ST, I-II, q 58, a 4. On the history of the term *synderesis* see Terry L. Miethe, "Natural Law, the Synderesis Rule and St. Augustine," Augustinian Studies 11 (1980), 91-97. Miethe traces its biblical, Greek, and Augustinian sources and argues that the Old Testament and St. Augustine were most influential for Thomas's doctrine. With regard to the formula "Do good and avoid evil," Miethe makes his case, but Aquinas's understanding of what a natural habit is clearly shows Aristotle's influence.

51 De Ver, q 16, a 1: "Oportet etiam hanc cognitionem habitualem esse, ut in promptu existat ea uti cum fuerit ncess."  

52 De Ver, q 16, a 1: "Unde et in natura humana . . . oportet esse cognitionem veritatis sine inquisitione et in speculativis et in practicis; et hanc quidem cognitionem oportet esse principium totius cognitionis sequentis, sive speculativa sive practicae, cum principia oporteat esse stabiliora et certiora; unde et hanc cognitionem oportet homini naturaliter inesse, cum hoc quidem cognoscat quasi quoddam seminarium totius cognitionis sequentis."
can say, then, that *synderesis* is a principle actually operative in human practical reason, regardless of whether there is an explicit understanding or awareness of it. It may or may not be expressed and may or may not be expressed well, yet it governs in practical reason.

Aquinas's custom is to explain *synderesis* by comparing it with its counterpart for theoretical reason. Perhaps this comparison is most carefully developed in *ST*, I-II, q 94, a 2. The context is the *Summa*’s often discussed account of natural law. Although there is no *quaestio* in the early *De Veritate* dedicated to a discussion of the natural law, it is already stated there that the first principles of action, which are known in the natural habit of *synderesis*, are the first principles of *juris naturalis* (*De Ver, q 16, a 1*). *Synderesis* and its first precept--do good and avoid evil--are the root of the natural law, but the notion of the natural law is only of tangential interest to our purposes here. We are interested in *synderesis* in relation to practical wisdom. The difference is that an inquiry into the natural law would lead toward an articulation of the necessary principles of a moral doctrine, whereas an inquiry into practical wisdom aims toward an understanding of the necessary foundations of the prudens, the one who is wise in the actual living of life.53 The moral doctrine will, of course, be a science, the science of practical or moral philosophy, whereas above

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53 It is interesting to note in this context that Augustine's description of practical wisdom often reads much like the *synderesis* rule to do good and avoid evil, showing that practical wisdom is the acquired virtue that enables one to discern the good to be done and evil to be avoided. Augustine writes for instance: "Is not this virtue constantly on the lookout to distinguish what is good from what is evil, so that there may be no mistake made in seeking the one and avoiding the other?" *The City of God*, Bk 19, ch 4 (New York, NY: A Doubleday Image Book, 1958), 439. See Miethe, "The *Synderesis* Rule," 96, from which this quotation is taken.
we have seen that practical wisdom is distinct from all science.

Let us pursue the first principle of *synderesis* by examining *ST*, I-II, q 94, a 2 and the analogy which Thomas constructs. *Ens* falls first in the *ordo* of apprehension because in anything which is perceived there is included, at least implicitly, an understanding of being. Consequently, Thomas continues, the first indemonstrable principle is that one cannot both affirm and deny the same thing at the same time, for this principle is founded upon being and non-being. Since any experience affords an apprehension of *ens*, it also gives rise to a grasp of the first norm of judgment. Just as something cannot both be and not be at the same time, neither can one affirm that something is and is not at the same time. This principle—which has both ontological and epistemological expressions like two sides of the same coin—is the norm and measure which guides us in reasoning and makes all other judgments possible (but not without the requisite experiences and acts of understanding).\(^5^4\)

This analysis of the principle of non-contradiction applies equally well to *synderesis*. Just as *ens* falls first in apprehension generally, *bonum* falls first in the apprehension of practical inquiry.\(^5^5\) The apprehension determines the *inventus*, i.e., the understanding of what to do, the conceived *operabile*.\(^5^6\) And just as the

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\(^{5^4}\) *ST*, I-II, q 94, a 2: "Nam illud quod primo cadit in apprehensione, est ens, cuius intellectus includitur in omnibus quaecumque quis apprehendit. Et ideo primum principium indemonstrabile est quod non est simul affirmare et negare, quod fundatur supra rationem entis et non entis: et super hoc principio omnia alia fundantur."

\(^{5^5}\) *ST*, I-II, q 94, a 2: "Ita bonum est primum quod cadit in apprehensione practicae rationis." In the background here is the convertible character of the terms *ens* and *bonum*: *Bonum* is *ens* as desirable to some agent. See *ST*, I, q 5, a 1; q 16, a 3.

\(^{5^6}\) The *bonum* is the discovery of what to do or make, which is conceived "sicut artifex intelligendo excogitat formam domus," *De Ver*, q 3, a 2. Cf. Chapter 2, § 2.4.4.
apprehension of ens founds the principle of non-contradiction, so the apprehension of the bonum founds the first indemonstrable principle of practical reason, the principle which serves as measure and guide in all practical reasoning. But this principle must differ from the former as practical reason differs from theoretical, and these differ, as we know, in that only practical reason is oriented to action. Moreover, the impetus for every action lies in the desire for the good. Hence, in his own analysis Thomas does not formulate the first indemonstrable principle of practical reason before reminding us that the good is that which all desire:

Therefore, the first principle of practical reason is founded upon the nature of the good, namely, that 'good is that which all desire.' This, it follows, is the first precept of the [natural] law, that the good is to be done and pursued and evil avoided. And all other precepts of the natural law are founded upon this.

(Et ideo primum principium in ratione practica est quod fundatur supra rationem boni, quae est, Bonum est quod omnia appetunt. Hoc est ergo primum praeceptum legis, quod bonum est faciendum et prosequendum, et malum vitandum. Et super hoc fundantur omnia alia praecepta legis naturae, ST, I-II, q 94, a 2.)

Action never springs from knowledge alone, but always from desire and the impetus of the will. Moreover, insofar as the desire for the good is a desire to act in accord with reason, action may be right and true. Out of such a desire springs the possibility of an unity between the good that is known and the good that is done. For these reasons I read the phrase, "bonum est faciendum et prosequendum et malum vitandum," to mean that reason ought to be manifest in action. Accordingly, as the first theoretical principle rules out contradiction in thought--i.e., an affirmation and denial of the same proposition--so the first practical principle rules out a
contradiction between thought and action--i.e., an action which pursues a desire contrary to reason and the good which is known. This is the principle of integrity, the demand that reason and action be in accord. Aquinas stresses Aristotle’s definition of the good when he introduces this principle because the duty he articulates is existential: it is a duty natural to our existence, rooted in our desire for the good.

In order to pursue this line of analysis further, we must focus on the notion of the desire for the good. I have suggested that it is this desire which accounts for the difference between synderesis and intellectus and that this desire is a desire to act in accord with reason. Both points are crucial to an understanding of synderesis. Ever since David Hume noted the distinction between is and ought and argued that no conclusions in the order of facts can justify conclusions in the order of obligations, the notion of obligation has been problematic in philosophy. Yet in Greek and Medieval philosophy no such dilemma existed and not because there was a lack of competent logicians. Morality was conceived to spring from the spontaneous search for the good in human life, and it was understood that the inclination to act in accord with reason sprang from the desire for the good. Aquinas took quite seriously Aristotle’s maxim that all things aim at the good, and indeed in his effort to utilize that principle he wrote of the natural inclination of the human will.

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57. The supposedly troublesome transition from Is to Ought suggests that the formality of goodness, that which is perfective and fulfilling [of one’s self], is not already present in any desire.” Ralph McInerny, Ethica Thomistica (Catholic University of America Press: Washington, D.C., 1982), 38. McInerny is stressing that human desire always intends the human good. The ought of synderesis is an operative fact of human existence no less so than the desire for food.

58. Although Aristotle seems to find a rational appetite (NE, I, 13 1103aff), Aquinas goes further in his doctrine of the will. He takes the will to be free and accordingly does not think that any finite act (continued...)
The human will has a natural inclination or desire which Aquinas characterizes in a variety of ways, which we need only summarize here. We naturally desire our own good ("proprium bonum") which can be conceived as a state of completion and perfection ("esse completum in bonitate"). Hence, our desire for our own good is also a desire for an ultimate end or achievement ("ultimus finis"), and this end would be a state of satisfaction, fulfillment or happiness (felicitas, beatitudo). 59

Now these terms which Aquinas gives us in order to name the object of our natural desire do little to specify that object. The desire is natural, but our manner of conceiving the object must be worked out by each culture or individual. There is, then, the possibility of error in seeking one's good and fulfillment in an object which cannot perfect, complete nor fulfill. By nature we desire a good and a state of fulfillment which is not by nature known or defined. 60 Our attempts to conceive of this good need not succeed, and our self-understanding need not disclose our true

58(...continued)
or object is necessarily willed, but insofar as one does actually exercise the will, the natural inclination of the will is evident in that act. This is usually explained by distinguishing the willing of ends and means. One necessarily or naturally wills one's own end, perfection or good, but freely chooses all means to that end. Thus, the intention of the end is operative in every choice. Thomas also uses an analogy with vision to make his point: One is never compelled to see, but if one chooses to see, one necessarily sees color. So too no choice is necessary, but an intention, and therefore a desired object, is operative in every choice. See De Ver, q 22, a 6; ST, I-II, q 10, a 2; De Malo, q 6.

59De Ver, q 22, a 7: "Sed homini inditus est appetitus ultimi finis sui in communi, ut scilicet appetat naturaliter se esse completum in bonitate." De Virt, a 6: "Per naturalem siquidem appetitum homo inclinatur ad appetendum proprium bonum." Cf. also In III Sent, d 33, q 1, a 1, sol 2: "Inclinatio autem ad finem ad appetitum pertinet. . . . Appetitus autem respectu alicuius est rectus naturaliter, sicut respectu finis ultimi, prout quilibet naturaliter vult esse felix."

60De Ver, q 22, a 7: "Sed in quo ista completio consistat, utrum in virtutibus, vel scientiis, vel delectabilibus, vel huiusmodi alis, non est ei determinatum a natura." ST, I-II, q 8, a 1: "Ad hoc igitur quod voluntas in aliquid tendat, non requiritur quod sit bonum in rei veritate, sed quod apprehendatur in ratione boni."
end and true happiness.

The important point here, however, is this. Whatever the end and fulfillment come to be conceived as, they will be conceived and pursued through reason. In other words, there is another way, besides those we have already listed, to name the object of our natural desire: Our desire is for the good taken as a general notion ("bonum in communi"), that is, for the good as it is to be determined by reason: "The proximate end, however, of human life is the good of reason in general. Thus Dionysius says that human evil is to be contrary to reason."\(^{61}\) The point which needs to be emphasized here is not that reason specifies our good (a point too commonplace in Aquinas’s philosophy to need emphasis), but that our natural desire is a desire naturally disposed to being specified by reason. Our desire for our \textit{proprium bonum} and for our own fulfillment is a desire to pursue the good which reason determines to be good. It is this natural disposition which explains why Aquinas and other classical philosophers never considered the origin of the \textit{ought} to be a significant problem for moral philosophy: the ought which grounds morality is not an external obligation imposed on us, but the expression of our spontaneous inclination to be a rational being.

Of course, it is this manner of characterizing that natural inclination of the will that allows us to understand that it is the proximate complement of the natural

\(^{61}\text{In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3: "Finis autem proximus humanae vitae est bonum rationis in communi; unde dicit Dionysius quod malum hominis est contra rationem esse." Cf. ST, I-II, q 10, a 1: "Similiter etiam principium motuum voluntariorum oportet esse aliquid naturaliter volitum. Hoc autem est [1] bonum in communi, in quod voluntas naturaliter tendit, sicut etiam quaelibet potentia in suum objectum; et etiam [2] ipse finis ultimus, qui hoc modo se habet in appetibilius sicut prima principia demonstrationum in intelligibilibus."}
habit of *synderesis*. Accordingly, Thomas sometimes expresses the natural law by simply stating that we are naturally inclined to act according to reason: "The natural law concerns things to which a human being is naturally inclined, and among these is to act according to reason."\(^{62}\) And *synderesis* compels us to nothing but what this inclination is: "*Naturalis enim ratio dictat unicumque ut secundum rationem operetur,*" *ST*, II-II, q 47, a 7.

Finally, it will be helpful to note in anticipation of Chapter 5 that this exploration of the theme of a natural desire to be in accord with reason prepares us for consideration of the relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues. Aquinas makes the point by constructing the following analogy: "For as the natural inclination [of the will] is from natural reason [i.e., *synderesis*], thus the inclination of moral virtue is from practical wisdom."\(^{63}\) The comment suggests a causal relationship: the natural principle of practical reason makes possible a natural rational appetite, as the acquired virtue of practical wisdom makes possible the acquired inclinations of the moral virtues. (Although the text does not make explicit the type of causality, in the next chapter we will focus on Aquinas's often repeated theme that the moral virtues "participate" in practical wisdom.) Thus, the acquired virtues develop our natural bent; the existential readiness of the person of character fulfills

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\(^{62}\) *ST*, I-II, q 94, a 4: "Ad legem naturae pertinent ea ad quae homo naturaliter inclinatur; inter quae homini proprium est ut inclinetur ad agendum secundum rationem." See ad 3 also.

\(^{63}\) *In III Sent.*, d 33, q 2, a 3: "Sicut enim inclinatio naturalis est a ratione naturali, ita inclinatio virtutis moralis a prudentia." Cf. *Ibid*.: "Et sic quodammodo prudentia præstituit finem virtutibus moralibus, et eis actus in eorum actibus immiscetur; sed inclinatio in finem illum pertinet ad virtutem moralem quae consentit in bonum rationis per modum naturae*; *ST*, II-II, q 47, a 6: "Bonum autem humanæ animæ secundum rationem esse. . . . Unde necesse est quod fines moralem virtutum praexistant in ratione."
the existential task which burdens human existence.

Whereas the first principle of theoretical reason calls for coherence in judgment, **synderesis** incites to a coherence of action with judgment, or as Thomas puts it, **synderesis** urges us to the good and grumbles against the bad.\(^{64}\) Prior to the emergence of any moral virtue, there already lies inchoate in the human will an orientation to act according to the direction of reason: "It is the nature of the will to move itself freely according to the judgment of reason."\(^{65}\) It is this real orientation to act in accord with reason which, to put it poetically, allows the call and grumble of **synderesis** to be heard and which accounts for the possibility of an ought in human existence. We may think of this ought as a call to integrity and unity in the personality since it urges an integration of desire, reason and action.

This analogy between **synderesis** and the acquired virtues grounds an important point for this section. Although practical wisdom and the moral virtues are acquired, the obligation to acquire them is natural. As I argued in the previous section, a specific virtuous act cannot be defined *a priori*, but that our actions ought to arise from a virtuous disposition is prescribed by natural law:

Everything to which a human being is inclined by his own nature comes under the natural law. . . . Hence, since the rational soul is the proper form of man, the natural inclination in any human being is to act according to reason, which is to act according to virtue.

(Quod ad legem naturae pertinet omne illud ad quod homo inclinatur secundum suam naturam. . . . Unde cum anima rationalis sit propria

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\(^{64}\) *ST*, I, q 79, a 12: "Unde et synderesis dicitur instigare ad bonum, et murmurare de malo." Cf. *De Ver.*, q 16, a 2.

\(^{65}\) *ST*, I-II, q 73, a 6: "[Voluntas] nata est moveri libere ex seipsa secundum iudicium rationis."
Although the virtues are distinct dispositions, at root each enables us to act and live according to reason. The debate between rule-based or deontological approaches to ethics and the Aristotelian-Thomistic tradition will not get far without consideration of this point. Human duty not only prescribes an "ought" for behavior; it also prescribes one for habit, character, identity. The adage that we have a duty to ourselves means in this context that we have a responsibility for what we become, or more simply a responsibility to become--to become a person disposed to the good.

In his own work on Thomas's moral philosophy, Ralph McInerny distinguishes the models of principle and application and of ends and means. The former refers to the search for a fundamental rule which may then serve as arbiter for all particular moral problems. The latter refers to the process of reasoning about what to do in light of an ultimate end. I agree with McInerny that these approaches, "are compatible and indeed complimentary." Synderesis is generally thought of as a normative principle or law, the root of the natural law; whereas beatitude and the desire for happiness are thought of as ends which may be used in the effort to

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66 On the relationship between virtue and our natural end see R. Mary Hayden, "Natural Inclinations and Moral Absolutes: A Mediated Correspondence for Aquinas," American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly 64 (1990), 144-45 and ST, I-II, q 4, a 7.

67 In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3: "Finis autem proximus hominum vitae est bonum rationis in communi; unde dicit Dionysius quod malum hominis est contra rationem esse: et ideo est intentum in omnibus virtutibus morallibus, et passiones et operationes, ad rectitudinem rationis reducantur." Cf. ST, I, q 18, a 5; I-II, q 71, a 2; q 94, a 4.

68 "I want to show that the ends/means model and the principle/application model are compatible and indeed complementary." Ethica Thomistica, 35.
determine means. Yet we have seen that action in accord with reason, the first principle of practical reason, which I refer to as the principle of integrity, is itself an end since it is the good intended by a natural desire or inclination. Thus, the teleological structure of human existence grounds Aquinas's approach to both the natural law and the virtues. At the core of Thomas's ethics lies the question of human fulfillment.

Accordingly, Aquinas sometimes distinguishes between ends which are acts and ends which are things, and also between proximate and ultimate ends.\textsuperscript{69} 

Synderesis defines our proximate end and our mode of action; it prescribes an integrity towards which we aim prior to any explicit teleological concept of the ultimate end or good for human beings. Yet the moral virtues form only through the exercise of the reasoning of practical wisdom, and practical wisdom reasons with regard to one’s sense of the good life, the explicit good to which one aspires. That is, practical wisdom presupposes not only the proximate end, the natural ought, given by synderesis, but also one’s concept of the ultimate end, the human good, which is acquired through reason and faith and inherited through theological, philosophical and cultural traditions. Thus, practical wisdom, unlike any other form of practical reason--e.g., arts, technologies, medicine--reasons from one’s ultimate horizon of

\textsuperscript{69} On ends which are acts and ends which are objects see \textit{ST}, I-II, q 13, a 4; On the "\textit{finis proximus}" there is In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3: "Sed inclinatio in finem illum pertinet ad virtutem moralem quae consentit in bonum rationis per modum naturae: et haec inclinatio in finem dicitur electio, inquantum finis proximus ad finem ultimum ordinatur. . . . Unde praestitutio finis praecedit actum prudentiae et virtutis moralis; sed inclinatio in finem, sive recta electio \textit{finis proximi}, est actus moralis virtutis principaliter, sed prudentiae originaliter." This text shows clearly that moral choice, which Aquinas usually asserts to be in regard to the means rather than to the end, can also be said to be the choice for the \textit{finis proximus}, that is, for the reasonable act, the act defined by practical wisdom and the act to which the will is already naturally inclined.
concern and is for that reason human wisdom.

4.4.2 Human Wisdom

Synderesis is in one respect the end and first principle of practical reason, but the person of practical wisdom reasons from the end and good of human life formulated as an explicit concept and understanding. Synderesis provides this end implicitly or seminally and is a kind of foreknowledge of the human good which is, whatever else we can say about it, the reasonable life. Yet from the implicit understanding given by our natural habit to the achievement of the well-thought-through concept there is great room for error both in thinking and in moral habit. The possibilities for error are individual, say by indulging the vice of greed, cultural, as when the cultural mores celebrate an excessive individualism which neglects the social dimension of human fulfillment, and even philosophical and theological.

These possibilities exist because happiness or beatitude, which is only possible for rational or intelligent beings, depends on self-reflection and an explicit understanding of one's own good. Such a being is master of his own actions, but if self-knowledge is lacking so is one's mastery for doing good. Again, all creatures naturally desire God "implicite," but rational creatures can desire God "explicit." Every creature desires and moves towards its own perfection, and this desire for the

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70ST, I, q 26, a 1: "Nihil enim aliud sub nomine beatitudinis intelligitur, nisi bonum perfectum intellectualis naturae; cuius est suam sufficientiam cognoscere in bono quod habet; et cui competit ut ei contingat aliquid vel bene vel male, et sit suarum operationum domina."
proximate end and perfection contains implicitly the ultimate or principle end.\(^{71}\)

Our rational nature, however, is "capax Dei" or capable of knowing and loving God explicitly.\(^{72}\) Our implicit movement toward the end is by nature, but the explicit articulation of the end is a possibility inherent in human history--one which the ancients had not yet satisfactorily accomplished despite their great progress toward it (SCG, III, 48). Practical wisdom depends upon our degree of achievement of self-understanding.

The explicit grasp of the human good is a necessary condition for practical wisdom since the prudens reasons from one's concept of the human good as from a first principle. Aquinas's attempts to articulate the human good have been analyzed and argued over for centuries. John Finnis and Germain Grisez have contributed one of the more recent wrinkles in that debate by challenging the claim that the ultimate end of contemplation is simple and exclusive. They argue that human goods are complex, with no one good being highest and with no basis for ranking the various goods amongst themselves.\(^{73}\) Moreover, perpetually in the background of all such discussions is the need to clarify how Thomas saw fit to pour the new wine

\(^{71}\) De Ver, q 22, a 2: "Et ideo, sicut secundum agens non agit nisi per virtutem primi agentis existentem in eo; ita secundarius finis non appetitur nisi per virtutem finis principalis in eo existentem. . . . Et ideo, sicut Deus, propter hoc quod est primum efficient, agit in omne agente, ita propter hoc quod est ultimus finis, appetitur in omni fine. Sed hoc est appetere ipsum Deum implicite."

\(^{72}\) De Ver, q 22, a 2, ad 5: "Sola creatura rationalis est capax Dei, quia ipsa sola potest ipsum cognoscere et amare explicite."

of Christianity into the old wineskin of Aristotle's philosophy of nature and his ideal of the self-sufficient sage and philosopher. Aristotle's ultimate end, as he articulates it in his Nicomachean Ethics, is natural, lying within the real possibilities of human achievement before death, but Aquinas flatly asserts that by nature human beings desire to know God, desire the beatitude of the immortal. We suffer, then, a yearning for an end beyond the imperfect happiness of this life.  

Discussions of the human good typically focus on two key areas: Thomas's writings on natural law and his Aristotelian emphasis on contemplation as the highest human good. The former area concerns the relationship between reasonable living and the fulfillment of natural needs and inclinations, for such natural inclinations define the elements in the human good. The latter area has its roots in the distinction between the theoretical and practical, for out of that distinction comes Aristotle's notions of the contemplative and practical lives (NE, X, Chapters 7 and


75 The root of the natural law is in a principle which we cannot but know, synderesis, and its development or full articulation is in the application of this principle to inclinations we cannot help but have. Aquinas calls them "inclinatio naturalis" and states: "Omnes inclinationes quarumcumque partium humanae naturae, puta concupiscibilis et irascibilis, secundum quod regulantur ratione, pertinent ad legem naturalem, et reducuntur ad unum primum praeceptum. . . . Et secundum hoc, sunt multa praecepta legis naturae in seipsis, quae tamen communicant in una radice," ST, I-II, q 94, a 2, ad 2. The phrase "regulantur ratione" suggests the task of discerning the order of priority, the right means of pursuing ends, etc. On the natural inclinations vis-a-vis the natural law see R. Mary Hayden, "Natural Inclinations and Moral Absolutes."
These areas overlap, of course, since the evaluation of the contemplative and practical lives is rooted in an evaluation of natural human inclinations, but our main focus, given the overarching concerns of the dissertation, is on the relationship between practical wisdom and contemplation. To what extent does the human good rest in contemplation and what part does practical wisdom play in contemplative activity? My intention is not to give an exhaustive treatment of the plethora of issues surrounding the question of our human end, but to argue that 1) the imperfect human good, prior to our immortal beatitude, necessarily includes practical wisdom, and 2) Aquinas was correct to give priority to contemplative activity as the highest and most fulfilling human endeavor.

In the tenth book of his *Ethics*, Aristotle distinguishes between the contemplative life and the practical life, the former governed by the virtue of *theoria* (sapientia) and the latter by *phronesis* (prudentia; see *NE*, X, 8, 1178a5-25). He argues that contemplation is the highest good available in human life and observes that those who live this life must remove themselves as much as possible from human affairs, the affairs of politics and business for which the moral virtues are most needed (*X*, 7, 1177b15-30). While practical wisdom concerns itself with the affairs of man, theoretical wisdom focuses elsewhere. Thus, practical wisdom might be called human wisdom inasmuch as it is the wisdom of matters human. Aquinas follows him in this approach, for he writes, not in his commentary, but in the *Summa:*

The consideration of the highest cause in any genus belongs to wisdom in that genus. Now in the genus of human acts the highest cause is the common end of the whole of human life. . . . Thus, it is clear that practical wisdom is wisdom in human affairs. It is not, however,
wisdom absolutely speaking because it is not about the highest cause absolutely speaking. Rather it is about the human good, and man is not the best of things which are.

(Unde consideratio causae altissimae in quolibet genere pertinet ad sapientiam in illo genere. In genere autem humanorum actuum causa altissima est finis communis toti vitae humanae.... Unde manifestum est quod prudentia est sapientia in rebus humanis: non autem sapientia simpliciter, quia non est circa causam altissimam simpliciter; est enim circa bonum humanum, homo autem non est optimum eorum quae sunt, ST, II-II, q 47, a 2, ad 1.)

Sapientia differs from prudentia according to their respective objects of concern, the absolutely highest cause and good in contradistinction to the human good. Sapientia is wisdom simpliciter, and prudentia is wisdom in a circumscribed and limited regard. Thus, in the wonderfully humble comment that human existence is not the greatest of things ("homo autem non est optimum eorum quae sunt"), we catch a glimpse of how metaphysics plays a key part in the discernment of goods and their relative priority. Aquinas’s discussion of the human good is bound up with his metaphysics and natural theology. Nonetheless, I hope in this section to soften the rather sharp line between sapientia and prudentia being drawn in this text. The person of practical wisdom reasons from a comprehensive horizon of concern ("toti vitae humanae"); prudentia is the wisdom which translates simple wisdom (sapientia) into meaningful action, and it is wisdom governing human endeavors among which must be included the endeavor to contemplate what is highest and best (i.e., sapientia). Rather than two segregated fields of endeavor, sapientia and prudentia are two aspects of one human wisdom. To be sure, there is a distinction between the human endeavor for a wisdom which does not limit itself to questions about human conduct
(sapientia), and the wisdom directive and operative in all human endeavors
(prudentia), but to deny their interdependence would be a serious mistake. It
would be to deny that the philosopher (sapiens) is a human being and that the
person desirous of wise living (prudens) can benefit from the reflections of the
philosopher.

Practical wisdom is wisdom about human affairs, but sapientia is human
wisdom about what? What does the contemplative contemplate? Aristotle's answer
seems to be that principally he contemplates metaphysics and the prime mover. For
these are the matters of greater merit and value than human affairs, and the contem-
plative life stands apart from the practical life, for one reason, because it studies
what is highest and noblest ("causam altissimam simpliciter"). Indeed, the
paradigm for Aristotle's discussion of the highest human good seems to be a self-

76 Anthony J. Celano traces the thirteenth century history of commentary on the Nicomachean
Ethics, focusing on the difficulty of accommodating that text to a Christian worldview. He argues that
Kilwardby, Albert the Great and Aquinas all excelled because they effectively grasped and utilized
Aristotle's own agenda of articulating what happiness is possible in the field of human action. This is
to prescind from the question of a transcendent and highest good per se, and to remain focused on
wisdom and virtue as the conditions of fulfillment in human operations. They understood that
Aristotle's project, although giving for the Christian an incomplete account of the human good, was
legitimate and largely successful. See his "The 'Finis Hominis' in the Thirteenth Century Commentaries
on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics," Archives D'Histoire Doctrinale et Litteraire du Moyen Age 53
(1986), 23-53. As Aquinas explains, God is the ultimate end of all creatures including man, but knowing
and loving God are activities proper to man (ST, I-II, q 1, a 8; q 2, a 7). Thus, contemplation considers
the ultimate good per se, and practical wisdom disposes us toward those contemplative activities as the
highest human activities.

77 Aristotle is rather strict in his adherence to his principle that practical philosophy considers human
acts, not metaphysical reflections. In NE, I, 6, 1096b30 he dismisses the Platonic approach of exploring
the Good itself, saying that even if there were a universal good, its study would belong to another branch
of philosophy. He does not name that branch, but Aquinas, who thinks that God is such a good, sees
fit to say that the science would be metaphysics (In I Ethic, lect 8, n 97). In the tenth book, Aristotle,
when arguing that contemplation is the highest activity, never utilizes that argument that contemplation
directs us to what is the highest and best in the cosmos. Presumably he avoids this line of reasoning
because the argument crosses the line from considering human activities as such to considering
metaphysical questions. Yet the argument is his: Meta, XII, 7 1072b20-30.
sufficient being, removed from bodily or human concerns and capable of sustained thought and reflection. Such a being would reflect on what is highest and best, and being itself the highest form of existence, this being would reflect on itself. The paradigm which we can imitate, albeit imperfectly, is thought thinking itself. We in our best moments can meditate in solitude on it, as it perpetually meditates on itself (X, 7, 1177a25-35; Meta, XII, 7, 1072b15-30).

Contemplation has two roles, therefore. Most explicitly, it is the highest way of life or at least the best and central part of a way of life. Yet it is also—even if Aristotle does not explicitly state this—the means to our apprehension of the paradigm of the human good. Aristotle’s metaphysical conception of this paradigm informs the conclusion of his Ethics, and grounds his articulation of the human good. The Ethics concludes in the way of all great literature by returning to the beginning. We discovered at the outset that happiness is what we aim at, but only in the tenth book do we fully apprehend what our human possibilities for happiness actually are. There is at the outset a foreknowledge, and at the conclusion an articulation and justification of the contemplative life as the life of greatest human fulfillment.

There is something of a paradox at work here. The contemplative activity which, we are told, takes us beyond the provincial concerns of human life provides the first principle of human practical reason. I mean this in two ways: first, for Aristotle the contemplative life is the end or good activity which the good life aims toward, and second, the contemplative life is itself the means or source of the articulation of the human good. It is the activity towards which one aims as a target,
and since Aristotle’s metaphysics discerns his paradigm for the human good, it is also
the activity through which that target is discovered. We have seen Thomas’s own
grasp of this interplay between the theoretical and practical in his treatment of
theology ($4.3.2$). Theology is the only science which cannot be relegated to either
theoretical or practical categories because in reflecting on what is highest and
best absolutely speaking, it establishes what is highest and best for man. Aquinas’s
God is not thought thinking itself, and the greatest human fulfillment will be found
elsewhere than in the life of the self-sufficient sage (Caritas is Aquinas’s highest
virtue, not sapientia, and in this life it is better to love God than to know him. Cf.
ST, I, q 82, a 3 and ad 3; De Ver, q 22, a 11), but it is equally true to argue that
Aquinas’s vision of the human good is informed by his Christianity and natural
theology of God as Aristotle’s is informed by his metaphysics.

Human wisdom of the absolute highest and best and wisdom of the highest
and best for humans are something like two sides of the same coin: one’s theoretical
wisdom gives shape to one’s practical wisdom, one’s metaphysics to one’s ethics. One
can read Aristotle’s writings or Aquinas’s attempts to incorporate his thought and
come away with the impression that the theoretical and practical are sharply divided
realms of activity. Similarly, one gets the impression that the practical and contem-
plative lives are quite distinct, and that the greatest possibility for happiness lies in
finding out how to escape the lesser of these and remain in the better for as long as
possible. Yet just as one’s concept of human good, the first principle of practical
reason, depends on one’s metaphysical and theological achievements, so conversely
one's contemplative activity depends on one's practical judgment and moral character.

This interdependence explains, I think, the importance of Josef Pieper's eloquent plea for leisure and its fruits in art, literature, philosophy and religious worship. A utilitarian culture fails not only because it offers a truncated idea of the human good, but because it excludes as a matter of principle those contemplative activities through which people would attain a more complete comprehension of the human good. Thus, Pieper calls for theoretical and contemplative activity as the wellspring of cultural vitality. Yet it must also be acknowledged thatPieper's argument is explicitly political and therefore practical. He is arguing about the social institutions of post world war Europe and what activities they ought to accommodate and not exclude (e.g., his notion of a "world of total work"). That Pieper's argument is political would not surprise Aristotle and his best commentator, Aquinas, for in both the first and the sixth books of the Ethics it is clear that the theoretical pursuits

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Pieper, Leisure: The Basis of Culture. Pieper gets at the idea of sapientia when in defense of the classical notion of the liberal arts he reminds us that the human mind is "capax universi": "Education concerns the whole man; an educated man is a man with a point of view from which he takes in the whole world. Education concerns the whole man, man capax universi, capable of grasping the totality of existing things" (36). The phrase capax universi, of course, echoes Aristotle's comment in the De Anima that the human intellect can in a way become all things. But Pieper seems to be working with two notions of the totality. One, "the totality of existing things," relates to sapientia simpliciter, the wisdom of what is highest simply speaking; the other suggested by the comment that "education concerns the whole man," relates to prudentia inasmuch as practical wisdom intends the good of the whole man ("toti vitae humanae"). This interplay of the two in Pieper's analysis shows that the human good cannot be discerned except through sapientia, for the human good cannot be known except by knowing human-kind's place in the totality. But it also shows that sapientia depends on practical wisdom, for it is practical ignorance which excludes leisure and contemplation from one's culture and thereby inhibits human fulfillment.
of culture are a matter of political judgments. Aquinas, moreover, transposes Aristotle’s treatment of the relationship between politics and theoretical wisdom into the context of his psychology: just as politics determines the form of the social pursuit of wisdom, so practical wisdom determines one’s disposition to contemplation:

It can be said, however, that the act of theoretical reason itself, since it is willed, falls under choice and deliberation with regard to its exercise and thus under the directing rule of practical wisdom. Yet in regard to its own species, relative to its object which is necessary truth, [the activity] does not fall under deliberation nor practical wisdom.

(Quamvis dici possit quod ipse actus speculativae rationis, secundum quod est voluntaris, cadit sub electione et consilio quantum ad suum exercitium, et per consequens cadit sub ordinatione prudentiae. Sed quantum ad suam speciem, prout comparatur ad objectum, quod est verum necessarium, non cadit sub consilio nec sub prudentia, ST, II-II, q 47, a 2, ad 2.)

Thomas’s comment here is consistent with his general account of practical wisdom in that of all forms of practical habit--i.e, the practical sciences, the arts or special skills, and practical wisdom--only it culminates in the command (praecipere) which urges action. Only practical wisdom directs us to the wise choice of what actually to do--even when the endeavor is theoretical (see § 4.2). This claim is justified by the need for wise choice to be related to the human end, not merely to

79 NE, I, 2 1094a25-1094b5: "For [politics] determines which sciences ought to exist in states, what kind of sciences each group of citizens must learn, and what degree of proficiency each must attain... It legislates what people are to do and what they are not to do" (cf. In I Ethic, lect 2, nn 26-27). NE, VI, 13, 1145a5ff: "Practical wisdom does not use theoretical wisdom but makes the provisions to secure it. It issues commands to attain it, but does not issue them to wisdom itself." This second text is preceded by analogy to health and medicine. Medicine gives command with regard to the preservation or attainment of health, but health is an end and good for its own sake and medicine is the means to that end. Thus, health is preeminent over the science which restores health. Aquinas explains the application of the analogy to sapientia and prudentia: "Et similiter prudentia, etiam politica, non utitur sapientia praecipiens illi qualiter debeat iudicare circa res divinas, sed praecipit propter illam, ordinans scilicet qualiter homines possint ad sapientiam pervenire. Unde sicut sanitas est potior quam ars medicinae, cum sit eius finis, ita sapientia prudentiae praecipit" (In VI Ethic, lect 11, n 1290).
an intermediate good or more limited horizon of concern. In any area of knowledge, wisdom is a matter of knowing the most fundamental principles. So in human affairs, the "causa altissima" is the end or good for the whole of human life ("finis communis toti vitae humanae"). Practical wisdom "intends" this end, meaning that it is this end which is intended in the praecepere to undertake a specific action:

One who reasons well to some specific end, say to victory, is said to be practically wise not simply but in this class [of goods], say in matters of warfare. Thus, he who reasons well to living the whole [of life] well is called practically wise simply.

(ILLE qui ratiocinatur bene ad aliquem finem particularem, puta ad victoriam, dicitur esse prudentes non simpliciter, sed in hoc genere, scilicet in rebus bellicis; ita ille qui bene ratiocinatur ad totum bene vivere dicitur prudentes simpliciter, ST, II-II, q 47, a 2, ad 1.)

Other practical habits, like the art or science of waging war, have more circumscribed ends like victory and not the human good per se. Therefore, the general who commands the attack may be wise as a general if his decision furthers the goal of victory, but he is not wise as a human being unless his decision is just, brave and temperate. Still, there are no generals who are not also human beings, and who, therefore, do not reason from their own (true or false) ultimate horizon of concern. Military victory is not a proper end, but an instrumental good, and one makes it a per se good only at the expense of practical wisdom. Thomas assigns the function of command exclusively to practical wisdom because any human endeavor

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80 Cf. ST, I-II, q 57, a 4, ad 3: "Prudentia est bene consiliativa de his quae pertinent ad totam vitam hominis, et ad ultimum finem vitae humanae. Sed in artibus aliquibus est consilium de his quae pertinent ad fines proprios illarum artium. Unde aliquis, inquantum sunt bene consiliativi in rebus bellicis vel nauticis, dicuntur prudentes duces vel gubernatores, non autem prudentes simpliciter." Cf. too In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 2, sol 1, ad 2.
is wise only if it coheres with the complete good of human life. The true value of any endeavor can only be found by knowing the "causa altissima."

Perhaps it is becoming apparent that Aquinas does not think of practical wisdom as a virtue which addresses some specific area of human conduct which might be juxtaposed with other areas of conduct such as theoretical endeavors or other types of practical endeavors (e.g., a trade or medicine). On the contrary, practical wisdom disposes one to the wise pursuit of all endeavors insofar as acting well always means to act in accord with the human good. Practical wisdom is needed in productive as well as theoretical endeavors, and one will falter in both kinds of endeavors, not only if one's decisions are poor with regard to the limited good intended in the endeavor itself, but also if, through that endeavor, one does not intend and pursue the human good per se. Thus, although it is true that Aquinas distinguishes the theoretical and practical, sapientia and prudentia, the contemplative and the practical lives, he does not intend any of these to be understood in abstraction from the whole person who pursues them; nor does he expect our human potential for wholeness to advance without development on both sides, the theoretical and practical. This leads to our last question in this discussion of the human end: is contemplation the simple and exclusive goal of human life?

The distinction between instrumental and per se goods is fairly manageable and serves to establish priorities among goods easily. Money is an instrumental good, and the person who pursues wealth as an end in itself leads a life which suffers from the failure to grasp the shallowness of acquiring wealth for wealth's sake. Yet once
we recognize that there are several per se goods, matters become more complicated. We can no longer rank one good over another because one is merely instrumental. What basis do we have for making preferences and giving priority? Many Thomists have done a good job of listing human per se goods. Mary Hayden writes, "This last end is the self's perfection, culminating in both contemplative and practical acts of virtue ordered to the common good of all within a community" ("Inclinations and Absolutes," 142). Kevin Staley reaches a similar conclusion: "Man comes into being in need of many things. . . . He must refine his moral sense. He must share himself with others in friendship and participate in political community. He must develop his mind by learning about himself and his world" ("Happiness: The Natural End of Man?" 230). Aquinas, himself, offers a three tiered arrangement of goods according to 1) the inclination for preservation common to all beings, 2) the inclinations common to all animal life such as the desires to procreate and prepare offspring for survival, and 3) the inclinations proper to human beings as such, that we know the truth about God and live in community (ST, I-II, q 94, a 2).

These summaries of human goods are all in substantial agreement and are, I think, patently correct. The question remains, however, whether such goods themselves might be prioritized. John Finnis and Germain Grisez have argued that such ends cannot be prioritized. Each is a per se good and cannot be compared or ranked against others: each is "incommensurable." Thus, contemplation is no more the ultimate activity of human life than is an act of charity for one's neighbor or the
enjoyment of a good meal with good company. In an useful essay, Finnis argues the point textually, trying to align his position with Aquinas's, but he is only partially successful ("Practical Reasoning"). He argues that the human good is an "integral human fulfillment" meaning that fulfillment occurs when the several human goods coalesce in one life. Fulfillment is an integral coalescence of several goods whether we are speaking of the perfect beatitude of union with God or of the imperfect fulfillment of this life (i.e., the mortal life which approximates to the complete satisfaction of beatitude). He notes, for instance, that both lives include societas amicorum in addition to contemplative activity, and thus neither life has a simple or exclusive good as its ultimate end (ibid, 28-30). The human good, he argues, is a complex unity and cannot be reduced to something simple.

Finnis and Grisez's contribution lies in their stress on the non-exclusivity of Aquinas's position. It is true that the human good is complex, but they depart from Aquinas on the claim that the human goods are incommensurable. Finnis writes: "There is, we may say, no single, privileged perspective from which such a human good as theoretical knowledge grasped and enjoyed contemplatively is simply and in all respects highest, particularly if by ‘highest’ we mean most choice-worthy" (ibid, 27). Yet Aquinas writes:

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81 Grisez writes: "There is a twofold incommensurability. First, it is impossible to measure different categories of human good against one another, since the basic human goods are not reducible to one another or to some ultrabasic category of good underlying all the rest. . . . Second, however, it is no less impossible to measure different instances of the same good against one another and determine that one instance outweighs the others. . . . Where shall I go on vacation, the mountains or the seashore?" Beyond the New Morality, 132.

82 The last end, if it has the unity of human nature, must have the complexity which is unified in that nature," ("Practical Reasoning," 29).
As Aristotle says in the Ethics [X, Chapters 7-8], the imperfect happiness which can be possessed here [in this life] first consists chiefly in contemplation, but secondarily in the operations of the practical intellect as it directs human actions and passions.

(Beatitudo autem imperfecta, quals hic haberi potest, primo quidem principaliter consistit in contemplatione: secundario vero in operatione practici intellectus ordinantis actiones et passiones humanas, ut dicitur in X Ethic, ST, I-II, q 3, a 5.)

This comment does not exclude practical wisdom and practical activities from the human good; they are an integral part of it. The comment does, however, clearly support Aristotle in his argument for priority. Contemplation is the chief and essential human activity. Aquinas gives three reasons in the same article. First, human happiness consists in some operation and activity, and it must be the best operation of the best faculty in regard to the best object which that faculty can address. The faculty is the intellect, the operation is theoretical and its object God. Second, contemplative activity is preeminently for its own sake, whereas practical activity, although a good in its own right, is always a means to some end. The practice of a profession, like teaching or medicine, can be loved as a way of life, but the meaning of the profession is always in the good it produces. There is an element of instrumentality in all practical affairs. Third, contemplation allows us (however imperfectly) to communicate with God and angels, beings higher than ourselves (see ST, I-II, q 3 a 5). These arguments are definitely Aristotelian and rest on the basic assumptions that the end must be simply for its own sake, and that both with respect to the act and the object it must be objectively higher and more noble than anything else.
Why is contemplation the highest activity and more noble than practical reason? Surprisingly, I find that Finnis himself communicates the answer quite clearly, though he does not seem to grasp the significance of what he is saying. He writes:

To see God would be to really understand, for the first time, the point (the good) of all created goods, including created persons and the love-of-friendship between them. To love oneself and others like one, in full measure, would thereby become not less possible, not less appropriate, but more possible and more appropriate than in this life (31).

Finnis argues here persuasively that the beatific vision would not exclude other goods, but really reveal their goodness for the first time. This is exactly why the contemplative moment has priority: it is the moment of synthesis, the moment when one grasps the unity in the complexity and discovers the true (i.e., relative) goodness of every good as if for the first time. As we noted, Pieper argues that human existence is such that we must grasp our place in the totality; we must have sapientia if we are to have prudentia. We must situate our ethics within our metaphysics. It is remarkable to me that Finnis could have articulated this point so well and yet have missed it so completely.

Indeed, Aquinas makes the same point himself. He explains that the contemplation of eternal things is not included in but is, nonetheless, relevant to the practical life:

Nevertheless, the contemplative knowledge of eternal matters is sometimes relevant to the active life: not that it is in its essence, but because it serves as a preexisting cause, as when the reasons for living are taken from the contemplation of eternal matters. For as the act of understanding [intellectus] is both the principle and term of reason, so the contemplative life is [the principle and term] in respect to the
This text reveals that contemplation is the source of the unity in the complexity of human goods. Just as our rational or discursive reasoning must begin with a simple intellectus and culminate in a new intellectus or unified intellectual apprehension, so the active life must begin from a simple grasp of the good (synderesis) and proceed from there to action. Action will, however, return us to contemplation as we struggle to integrate the concrete activities and goods we have experienced into one unified understanding and pursuit of the human good. As we cannot understand this unity without contemplation, neither can we pursue it without practical wisdom.

Moreover, out of this interaction of intellectus and ratio and of contemplatio and actio comes the possibility of a clearer and more profound grasp of the human good. We move from sensation to memory, from memory to experience, from experience to science (see § 4.3.3). We discover the difference between theory and practice, worship and deed; we struggle, suffering the discrepancy between what we know and do, to bring judgment and action into alignment. The struggle reveals the need to understand ourselves, to know our own good, and reveals too that we are often helpless against the discord within. It occurs to us that perhaps there is a God who could make us whole. As we pursue what is highest and best simpliciter, we pursue again and again the ultimate source and principle of action. We strive to
discover (intellectus) and live out the unity in the complexity. The complex human good proceeds from contemplation to action and back to contemplation, back to the wellspring of our unity as persons and as community. The wellspring is first, the ultimate of human goods, because it is in moments of contemplation that there lies our greatest possibility to discover our own wholeness, our own fulfillment as persons.

4.5 Conclusion

Practical wisdom is a moral virtue because of the praecipere, but it is wisdom because one intends one’s self-understanding and grasp of the human good in the resolve to act. The order of intention, in which the ultimate end is first, informs the order of execution, in which one resolves to take the first step toward the end. The person of practical wisdom reasons from a comprehensive horizon of concern and intends that concern in his day to day endeavors. The human good is complex, and so too is human wisdom. There is the wisdom directing us in all our endeavors (prudentia) and the wisdom seeking to know our place in the totality, seeking too to find the unity which holds together the complexity of the human good (sapientia). To find our place in the totality is to be sapiens, and to live out that wisdom is to be prudens. Prudentia is wisdom directing us in all our endeavors, and sapientia is success in the endeavor to find wisdom.

In this chapter we have gone beyond the distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge, not by disavowing the distinction, but by noting the interplay and interdependence between the two. Practical wisdom is that virtue which aims
at and builds an integration. However, the coherence of practical wisdom is distinct from the coherence of a cohesive metaphysics or scientific theory and distinct too from the material cohesiveness of some artifact or human edifice. The person of practical wisdom aims, rather, at human cohesiveness, integration or, too use Aquinas’s term, ordo. We have already noted several times that Aquinas anticipates the ordo which reason brings to the will. This cohesiveness is not natural, but acquired. We have seen that we are called to this achievement by synderesis, a natural habit calling us to the integrity whereby what one affirms in judgment coheres with what one performs in deed. Thus, the task is existential, calling us beyond insight to action, and is made possible by the existential readiness of virtuous character. Yet though the moral virtues make the fulfillment of synderesis possible, it remains true that practical wisdom forms the moral virtues. So we turn our attention to the fact that Aquinas numbers practical wisdom among the moral virtues.
CHAPTER V

PRACTICAL WISDOM AS A MORAL VIRTUE

5.1 Introduction

Thus far two strains of analysis have gone forward in this dissertation. The first, begun in Chapter 2 and completed in Chapter 4, concerns the need to mediate between abstract knowledge and specific problems. This analysis began with consideration of the interaction between theoretical and practical inquiry. We found that practical knowledge itself proves not to alleviate that task of mediation, for even the study of ethics always leaves further need for discerning the good relevant to concrete circumstances. Application is not what one does after one knows the good, but is the extension of the task of discovering the good to the problem at hand. We discover the good by drawing from an individual’s or group’s past experiences, but the resulting abstractions may or may not adequately reveal the good to be done here and now. Whether they do or not cannot be known except by making a judgment of the singular. Thus, Chapter 2 allowed us to distinguish clearly the study of ethics and practical reason. Ethics, since it is a practical science, is practical only by analogy. Practical wisdom, on the other hand, is the virtue which perfects the operations of fully practical reason--i.e., of practical reason as what the study of ethics is compared to by way of analogy. In Chapter 4 we worked through an analysis of practical
wisdom and the operations which it perfects. We saw that its primary task is to mediate between abstract knowledge and concrete circumstances and that its crucial moments are the judgment of the singular and the command to act. Through the exercise of practical wisdom one grasps the meaning and possibilities of the situation and determines what ought to be done.

The second strain of analysis was brought into focus in Chapter 3. Abstract knowledge is not only insufficient for ethical existence because its truths are general; it also insufficient because knowledge does not determine one’s character, one’s resolve and willingness to act for the good. The moral virtues are the proximate determinant of one’s ethical conduct. Knowledge may be an indirect determinant of conduct only if one is disposed by character to draw on it.\(^1\) We saw, in other words, that how and when we use our intellectual abilities is a function of choice and, therefore, a function of one’s habits of the will. The moral virtues form our intentions, and our intentions determine our degree of willingness to discover and act out the good. Thomas goes so far as to tell us that human goodness \textit{simpliciter} or essentially--not the goodness of a particular science, talent or skill, but one’s goodness as a person ("\textit{quod secundum to tum est bonus}")--is a matter of having a good will. Virtue in its primary meaning consists in habits of the will determining what one truly cares about. Such habits ensure the intention of good ends, connatural intentions which

\(^{1}\text{ST, I-II, q 57, a 1: "Cum igitur habitus intellectuales speculativi non perficiant partem appetitivam, nec aliquo modo ipsam respiciant, sed solam intellectivam." We must, however, put this comment in context by considering what was said in Chapter 4 about the relationship between practical wisdom and abstract knowledge (both theoretical and practical). Such knowledge can bear on one’s character indirectly, if it is made use of in practical reason.}
enable one to choose well.²

These two strains of analysis converge. The task of mediating between the abstract and the concrete and the question of character must be understood as interdependent problems. Since, the intentionality of one's will grounds one's pursuit of the good to be discovered, the person of moral character is the person most apt to mediate well. This gives us a clue as to why Aquinas insists that practical wisdom is a moral virtue, but before considering Aquinas's explanation of this point an example may prove helpful. Let us suppose that the executives of a corporation have discovered, after the fact, that their product may endanger the health of their customers. They must decide what, if anything, to do about the situation. Now many questions arise about the nature of the problem. What kind of risk to health is involved? Is the risk possible, probable or definite? Is the danger life-threatening or something minor like an evening with a headache? In addition, however, will come questions about the cost and pain that will fall to the corporation with trying to rectify the situation. Will acting responsibly involve a minor expense, a significant loss, the bankruptcy of the corporation? Will people lose their livelihoods?

Of course, all these question are relevant and knowing what to do cannot be answered until they are all addressed. The example illustrates that the exercise of practical wisdom requires attention to the specifics of this unique situation. My point, however, is that the willingness of the executives to raise and answer these

²De Virt, a 7, ad 2: "Homo non dicitur bonus simpliciter ex eo quod est in parte bonus, sed ex eo quod secundum totum est bonus: quod quidem contingit per bonitatem voluntatis. Nam voluntas imperat actibus omnium potentiarum humanarum." See § 3.4.
questions responsibly will be a function of their willingness to act responsibly. If the executives are generally willing to suffer corporate or even personal losses in order to meet their obligation to the health and well-being of their customers—if, that is, they have the courage to honor their responsibilities—then they will also be more likely to ask and answer the relevant questions.³ If, on the other hand, they lack this resolve, then they will also be less likely to pursue these relevant questions, but likely to be satisfied in their ignorance or to rationalize a defense for taking the easy way out.

The judgment of the singular, the ultimate determination of what ought to be done, cannot be made in isolation from one’s character. It will be a function of one’s past experiences, one’s moral or intentional habits, one’s affective life. Thus, practical wisdom is a moral virtue because its operations are actually cooperations between the intellect, will and sensitive faculties of affect and apprehension (e.g., one’s fears, desires and the discursive power). Thomas’s succinct way of making this point is to assert that the moral virtues serve as the first principles of practical reason. They determine the intended ends in light of which one reasons, and one reasons well and

³Aquinas argues in ST, II-II, q 123, a 4, ad 2 that an apparent act of courage is false, a mere semblance of courage, if the act is chosen for the sake of some false end, such as fear of punishment or the desire for glory. Thus, the value of the act is a function of the end intended. With Aquinas’s point in mind, Yearley defines courage as follows: "It signifies the overcoming of the difficult through knowing, loving and holding to a good for the sake of which one will either surrender or endure the loss of a lesser good" (561). See his "The Nature-Grace Question in the Context of Fortitude," The Thomist 35 (1971): 557-580. The courageous and virtuous commitment in our example would be to the greater goods of just relations with one’s customers and the health of individuals. This commitment would require courage since it might call for the corporation to suffer the loss of a lesser good such as profits or for an individual to risk personal advance in the corporate hierarchy.
wisely only if one’s principles are true and good.  

Thomas also tells us, however, that the moral virtues are virtuous and moral because they "participate" in practical reason. That is, the moral virtues emerge and form the will only through the good exercise of practical reason. There is a troubling circularity in this analysis. It seems that practical reason can be made wise only by the establishment of the moral virtues, and yet the moral virtues can only form through the wise exercise of practical reason. Actually, this problem proves very helpful to analyze. Through careful analysis not only are we able to see through the apparent circularity, but more importantly we can grasp more fully the dynamic interplay of operations out of which one’s character and integrity come to be formed. The ground and source of this dynamic lies in the human desire to live and act with meaning, the desire to express the coherence of one’s ultimate horizon of concern in how one acts here and now. This is how we must understand Aquinas’s thinking on synderesis; he sees it as our basic orientation toward action informed by reason and understanding of the human good.

We are concerned in this chapter to discuss practical wisdom as a moral virtue. To do so is to consider the interaction between practical judgment, intention and choice and to consider also the dynamic process which forms the virtuous character of these operations. In working through this analysis we encounter the second

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4 As we will note below, it was the dissociation of practical wisdom from intended ends that opened the way for the deformed notion of "prudence" which, as with Machiavelli’s prince, refers to a shrewd person willing and capable of manipulating circumstances to his advantage despite the moral value of his methods. Of course, such a notion of prudence ties in nicely with a consequentialism which cares about results, not about the intrinsic value of acts.
crucial difference between scientia and prudentia. In Chapter 4 it became clear that practical wisdom must be distinguished from all forms of science. At the core of our argument lay the assertion that it is always inappropriate to apply abstractions and generalities immediately to contexts. The task of mediation is always there. In this chapter we find a second principle of differentiation. We may again think that the difference hinges on the question of abstraction, but here we will mean something else by abstract knowledge than was meant in Chapter 4. Scientia is also abstract in the sense that it is to know something in such a way that the knowledge need not bear on one's character and conduct. To know with practical wisdom, however, is to know precisely in such a way that the knowledge bears on who one is and what one is willing to do.

As synderesis is the principle of integrity, practical wisdom is the achievement of this integrity because it is, if I may put it this way, the working of knowledge into one's heart. What one intends, desires and actually does supports one's clear headed judgments. Thus, when one knows with practical wisdom, one also knows with one's will and feelings, and to know in such a way is what Aquinas calls connat-

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5 ST, II-II, q 47, a 16, ad 3: "Prudentia principaliter consistit non in cognitione universalium, sed in applicatione ad opera." For purposes of contrasting scientia and prudentia, it will be convenient not to translate the terms because scientia is often best translated as knowledge, not science, but prudentia too is a kind of knowledge. Indeed, In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 5, ad 1 begins a discussion on how prudentia differs from scientia with the comment, "Est duplex scientia," indicating that practical wisdom is a kind of knowledge (see note 5 below). In the context of this discussion, scientia refers to any abstract knowledge insofar as it is abstract.

6 Hence, Aquinas tells us that synderesis relates to the will as practical wisdom relates to the moral virtues, In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3: "Sicut enim inclinatio naturalis est a ratione naturali, ita inclinatio virtutis moralis a prudentia." The difference, of course, lies in the point that synderesis and the will are natural principles, whereas practical wisdom and the moral virtues are connatural and acquired.
ural knowledge. It is to know with one's whole self, and therefore to achieve it is to achieve a level of integration which *scientia* as such has nothing to do with.

The present chapter clarifies and defends what I have indicated here about practical wisdom. In § 5.2 we contrast *scientia* and *prudentia*, showing that they differ not only for the reasons discussed in Chapter 4, but also because practical wisdom forms our affective life and our actual conduct. In § 5.2.1, we discuss the interplay between practical wisdom and our affective responses to immediate circumstances and argue the point that to know with practical wisdom is to know connaturally. The contribution of our affect or emotions to our practical judgments proves important here, for connatural knowledge consists of a spontaneity of judgment which no science as such can provide. This habitual or connatural disposition becomes possible through the learned cooperation of affect with the good of reason. These points will be brought to a conclusion with a reconsideration of the moral virtues and how they mediate between reason and affect (§ 5.2.2). We see that they enable one to choose well because they are habits of intention which form one's immediate affective responses. Through the moral virtues our affective responses to immediate situations are determined by habitual intentions of good ends. Thus, through the learned cooperation of the various operations, we judge and act well.

Having reconsidered the moral virtues, our focus shifts to their relationship and interaction with practical wisdom (§ 5.3). Aquinas is quite clear that practical wisdom is, in a way, a moral virtue because it presupposes one's intention of the end. Yet he also argues that the moral virtues presuppose practical wisdom. Indeed, it
is this interaction and interdependence which sets prudentia apart from scientia. Sections 5.3.1 and 5.3.2 lay out Aquinas's explanation of this interdependent or symbiotic relationship and lay the ground work for § 5.4. There I argue that practical wisdom must be understood both as an integral part of one's moral character, and as the formal agent in the dynamic process which forms our character. Practical wisdom, as I also indicated at the outset of Chapter 4, is not only a key part of the whole of moral character, but is how one strives to achieve one's desire for wholeness, order and integrity in one's self.

Section 5.4.1 lays out the key moments in the process through which one forms one's integrity of character. We might think of integrity itself as the end which practical wisdom achieves, but human integrity is ultimately found in one's actions. Thus, § 5.4.2 argues that the virtuous act, which is the ultimate end and good of wise practical reasoning, is the act chosen for its own sake as the expression of one's character. The integrity at stake here concerns the relationship between one's self-understanding and what one does. The person of practical wisdom intends the good for its own sake as what he or she values. One intends intrinsic goods like justice, courage and friendship, and acts accordingly. Thus, the virtuous act reveals one's identity, one's heart. Such acts are not only the means to achieve good consequences, they are acts participating in one's ultimate concerns. Being of just character entails acts of justice; singular acts are the concrete fruition and expressions of one's love of justice. We see, therefore, that practical wisdom is, as I have indicated, an existential knowledge, defining not only what we know, but also who we are, what we
intend and do. Theoretical knowledge discloses what is; the practical sciences provide a framework within which to think about how to proceed, but only practical wisdom reaches to the heart of us, forms us and becomes the wisdom we live.

5.2 Prudentia and Scientia Compared

The textual evidence makes it quite clear that for Aquinas practical wisdom differs from any art or practical science, including moral science. His justification, however, takes two different tacks. In Chapter 4 we focused on methodological differences that set practical wisdom apart from the sciences and arts. Thomas's second reason for setting practical wisdom apart concerns the relationship between the intellect and will, concerns, that is, the fact that practical wisdom is a moral virtue. Practical wisdom operates in conjunction with the will and emotions, so that when the moral virtues are absent practical wisdom too is absent. No other intellectual habit, no art or science, assures us of this learned cooperation, nor absolutely requires it (though moral integrity furthers our intellectual endeavors); yet this mutual interdependence lies at the very heart of what practical wisdom is:

Practical wisdom is not only in reason, but there is something of it in the appetite as well. Thus, insofar as all which [Aristotle] mentions here are species of practical wisdom, they are not formed of reason alone, but something of them resides in the appetite as well. Moreover, insofar as they are in reason alone, they are designated as specific practical sciences like ethics, economics or politics.

(Prudentia non est in ratione solum, sed habet aliquid in appetitu. Omnia ergo de quibus hic fit mentio, in tantum sunt species prudentiae, inquantum non in ratione sola consistunt, sed habent aliquid in appetitu. Inquantum enim sunt in sola ratione, dicuntur quaedam scientiae practicae, scilicet ethica, oeconomica et politica, In VI Ethic,
Ethics, economics and politics may be taken as practical sciences or as aspects of practical wisdom, and which way they should be categorized depends on the affective side of the knower's psyche. If the knowledge does not reach into one's affectivity, one's will and emotions, it is an abstract science, whereas if it does it is practical wisdom. Since this is so, practical wisdom cannot be forgotten as abstract science or art can. Practical wisdom is lost, rather, through some disorder in one's affective life ("aboletur autem cessante appetitu recto"). The reason why practical wisdom reaches into the will and emotions and can be lost only through an emotional disorder is that its culminating act of command brings knowledge to bear on what one desires and how once acts ("praecipere quod est applicare cognitionem habitam

7Cf. In III Sent. d 33, q 2, a 5, ad 1: "Est duplex scientia. Una in universali: et haec quidem facit ad virtutem vel parum, si sit de operibus virtutis; vel nihil, si sit de aliis quae ad virtutem non pertinent. Alia scientia est directiva in particulari operatione, quam corrupit delectatio faciens ignorantiam electionis; et haec scientia multum facit ad virtutem; immo sine hac non est virtus, nec haec sine virtute; et haec pertinet ad prudentiam; quia, ut Philosophus dicit, exstitutionem prudentiae corrupit delectatio." ST, II-II, q 47, a 16: "Sed prudentia non consistit in sola cognitione, sed etiam in appetitu." See too De Virt, a 6, ad 1.

8Since we think of economics and politics as bodies of general explanatory theory, it is difficult to understand how they would enter into one's character. But Aquinas would take these sciences to have prescriptive aspects like ethics—that, for example, a good citizen should vote or save money for the future. Such prescriptions, like ethical duties and prohibitions, can reside in a person as scientia or as prudentia.

9In VI Ethic. lect 4, n 1174: "Et tamen quamvis prudentia sit in hac parte rationis sicut in subiecto, ratione cuius dicitur virtus intellectualis; non tamen est cum sola ratione sicut ars vel scientia, sed requirit rectitudinem appetitus. Et huius signum est, quia habitus qui est in sola ratione potest oblivioni tradi, sicut ars et scientia, nisi sit habitus naturalis, sicut intellectus: prudentia autem non datur oblivioni per dissuetudinem, aboletur autem cessante appetitu recto, qui quamdiu manet, continue exercetur circa ea quae sunt prudentiae, ita quod oblivio subrepare non potest."
We will see below that the praecipere is formative of the moral virtues, but we will also see the converse that practical wisdom depends on good order in the will and emotions. Hence, practical wisdom not only affects the emotions; there is also something of the will, namely its intention of the end, operating in the virtue of practical reason. Similarly, when Aquinas discusses divine providence he does so by constructing an analogy with human practical wisdom and argues that providence, like practical wisdom, differs from practical science in that science does not presuppose the willing or intention of the end ("non praesupponit voluntatem finis"), whereas practical wisdom does. In sum we see here that practical wisdom, though essentially an intellectual habit, would be a science and not practical wisdom at all except that it is more than an intellectual habit. This "more" is that wise practical reason reaches to the particular and to action, but it does not reach there except through the will and emotions. We can now explore this point in more detail.

10 ST, II-II, q 47, a 16: "Oblivio respicit cognitionem tantum. Et ideo per oblivionem potest aliquis artem totaliter perdere, et similiter scientiam, quae in ratione consistunt. Sed prudentia non consistit in sola cognitionem, sed etiam in appetitu: quia ut dictum est principalis eius actus est praecipere, quod est applicare cognitionem habitam ad appetendum et operandum. Et ideo prudentia non directe tollitur per oblivionem, sed magis corrumpitur per passiones."

11 De Ver, q 5, a 1: "In omnibus autem virtutibus et actibus animae ordinatis hoc est commune, quod virtus primi salvatur in omnibus sequentibus; et ideo in prudentia quodammodo includitur et voluntas, quae est de fine, et cognitione finis."

12 De Ver, q 5, a 1, ad 2: "Providentia plus habet de ratione voluntatis quam scientia practica absolute; scientia enim practica absolute communiter se habet ad cognitionem finis et eorum quae sunt ad finem; unde non praesupponit voluntatem finis, ut sic aliquo modo voluntas scientia includatur; sicut de providentia dictum est."

13 De Virt, a 6, ad 1: "Sed prudentia plus importat quam scientia practica: nam ad scientiam practicam pertinet universale iudicium de agendis; sicut fornicationem esse malam, furtum non esse (continued...)"
5.2.1 Prudentia is Connatural Knowledge

In Chapter 3 we delved into Aquinas’s notion of connatural knowing (§ 3.3.1). Recall that he distinguishes two kinds of knowledge, one which can be attributed to the perfect use of reason ("secundum perfectum usum rationis") and another which he calls connatural ("propter connaturalitatem quandam"). The texts which were cited (ST, I, q 1, a 6, ad 3; II-II, q 45, a 2) suggest that the former kind of knowing pertains to moral science and the latter to those who possess the moral virtues. Moreover, they also suggest that connatural judgments are more dependable in the immediate situation when something must actually be done, while the judgments of moral science are best made in the abstract, when the problem is remote, not calling for action on the part of the one who is reasoning. The notion of connatural knowledge (i.e., a felt knowledge) then, dovetails with our comparison here between scientia and prudentia. Indeed, to know connaturally is to know with the virtue of practical wisdom, a point which can be made evident by considering the impact of the emotions on practical reasoning and judgments of the singular.

Judgments made in the abstract often are not easily followed in the heat of the moment. As we approach the time to act, our judgments become increasingly

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13 (...) continued)  
facendum, et huiusmodi. . . . Sed ad prudentiam pertinet recte iudicare de singulis agilibus, prout sint nunc agenda."

14ST, I, q 1, a 6, ad 3: "Contingit enim aliquem iudicare, uno modo per modum inclinationis: sicut qui habet habitum virtutis, recte iudicat de his quae sunt secundum virtutem agenda, inquantum ad illa inclinatur. . . . Alio modo, per modum cognitionis: sicut aliquis instructus in scientia morali." ST, II-II, q 45, a 2: "Rectitudo autem iudicii potest contigere dupliciter: uno modo, secundum perfectum usum rationis; alio modo propter connaturalitatem quandam ad ea de quibus iam est iudicandum."
subject to our wills and passions because, increasingly, something of our existence is at stake. Moreover, our desires and fears draw us immediately toward or away from reality in a way in which our cognitional apprehensions do not because our appetites respond to the particular rather than the universal.15 Hence, disordered emotions are not likely to uproot our fundamental orientation toward doing good, nor threaten the abstract judgments of our moral science, but easily disturb our practical judgments in regard to particulars and concrete situations since they too are modes of responding to particulars:

Practical wisdom is right reason about conduct and not only in the universal, but also in the particular where actions occur. . . . With regard to universal principles of conduct, a person is put right through the natural understanding of principles [i.e., synderesis] . . . or even through some practical science. But this does not suffice for reasoning rightly about particulars since it happens sometimes that universal principles of this kind, which are known through understanding or science, are corrupted in the particular through some emotion.

(Prudentia est recta ratio agibilium; non autem solum in universali, sed etiam in particulari, in quibus sunt actiones. . . . Circa principia quidem universalia agibilium, homo recte se habet per naturalem intellectum principiorum . . . vel etiam per aliquam scientiam practicam. Sed hoc non sufficit ad recte rationcinandum circa particularia. Contingit enim quandoque quod huiusmodi universale principium cognitum per intellectum vel scientiam, corrumpitur in particulari per aliquam passionem, ST, I-II, q 58, a 5.)16

The emotions easily affect our practical judgments but not our abstract judg-

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15ST, I-II, q 22, a 2: "Magis autem trahitur anima ad rem per vim appetitivam quam per vim apprehensivam. Nam per vim appetitivam anima habet ordinem ad ipsas res, prout in scipsis sunt. . . . Vis autem apprehensiva non trahitur ad rem, secundum quod in scipsa est; sed cognoscit eam secundum intentionem rei, quam in se habet vel recipit secundum proprium modum." Ibid, q 66, a 3: "Ratio enim apprehendit aliquid in universali; sed appetitus tendit in res, quae habent esse particulare."

16Cf. In VI Ethic, lect 4, n 1174; lect 10, nn 1273-74; In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 5, ad 1; De Ver, q 17, a 1, ad 4; De Virt, a 6, ad 1.
ments because it is the unique nature of practical reason, as we discussed in Chapter 4 (§ 4.3), to work out an application in which particulars are understood in terms of universals, and which allows for a conclusion about action, a command. The practical judgment and command are the crucial moments when the cooperation of one’s various powers is most important. This reasoning process requires, as we have said, making judgments of the singular, and the discursive power is instrumental for this. Without the cooperation of the discursive power, the universal could not be grasped in the particular (§ 4.3.3). Hence, insofar as the discursive power is the instrument of reason, we are able to deliberate, judge and act wisely. Yet even the cooperation of the discursive power is not enough because the emotions also mediate between the universal good determined by reason and the will and the particular good experienced in the here and now. We now need to consider that just as the discursive power makes the apprehension of the universal in the particular possible, the emotions enable us to desire an universal good (i.e., the intended good) in the experience at hand.

Aquinas so often stresses that practical wisdom somehow reaches into the

17 *In VII Ethic*, lect 3, n 1352: "Patet enim ex praedictis, quod passio non sit in praesentia principalis scientiae quae est circa universale, quam passio sit solum in particulari. Neque universalis scientia trahitur a passione, sed solum existimatio sensibilis quae non est tantae dignitatis." The phrase "existimatio sensibilis" suggests the judgment of the singular. Cf. also *In III De Anima*, lect 16, n 846: "Nam operationes et motus in particularibus sunt; unde oportet ad hoc quod motus sequatur, quod opinio universalis ad particularia applicetur. Et propter hoc etiam peccatum in actionibus accidit, quando opinio in particulari operabili corrumpitur propter aliquam delectationem, vel propter aliquam aliam passionem, quae talem universalem opinionem non corrumpit."

18 *ST*, I, q 80, a 2, ad 3: "Opinio universalis non movet nisi mediante particuli: et similiter appetitus superior movet [nisi] mediante inferiori." *ST*, I-II, q 19, a 3: "Voluntas potest tendere in bonum universale, quod ratio apprehendit; appetitus autem sensitivus non tendit nisi in bonum particulare, quod apprehendit vis sensitiva."
affective powers because human judgments of good and bad made in the concrete, rather than the abstract, are affective as well as cognitive and require a well-ordered affective life as much as sound reasoning abilities. In other words, when a person knows connaturally, his or her judgments are mediated in the concrete both by the discursive power and by the sensitive appetites (i.e., the irascible and concupiscible faculties which ground our affective responses to immediate experiences and circumstances).

The importance of the emotions is discussed in detail in ST, I, q 81, a 3. The article asks whether reason influences the emotions ("Utrum irascibilis et concupiscibilis obediant rationi"). Thomas argues for the affirmative by working out the interaction of the various faculties involved. He notes first that the discursive power evokes and influences the sensitive appetites. That is, it draws out our affective responses to singular events and circumstances and influences the character of those responses. Our faculties for affective response (the irascible and concupiscible powers) are naturally disposed to the influence of the discursive power ("ab ea natus est moveri") because the character of such responses depends on how the particulars are apprehended and interpreted. Thus, it becomes crucial to recall here that the discursive power itself is the instrument of our intellects.

Through the cooperation of the discursive power and our capacity for abstract reasoning, we intentionally seek the order and coherence to be found in our apprehension of particulars ("ratio particularis ... est collativa intentionum individualium"; "nata est moveri et dirigi secundum rationem universalem"). Hence, reason
influences our emotions through the instrumentality of the discursive power, thereby bringing an interpretive coherence into our apprehension of images and immediate experiences. Our experiences take on an interpretation which shapes our affective response to them. Experience can confirm this analysis, Thomas tells us, because anyone can think general thoughts which will assuage anger, diminish fear or even arouse emotions. Accordingly, full pursuit of this analysis would lead us to a consideration of rhetoric and the art of persuasion (Aristotle’s study of enthymemes). Persuasive arguments are effective, even when they lack the full vigor of an argument which compels reason, because they evoke our imaginations and therefore our passions ("Applicando enim aliquas universales considerationes, mitigatur ira aut timor aut huiusmodi.").

Thomas goes on to explain, however, that the emotions may also be moved by sense experience and imagination alone, without the interjection of reason through the activity of the discursive power. A team of athletes, for example, may be moved to renewed determination by their coach’s eloquent words or discouraged by their own fatigue and the cheers of the crowd for the opposing team. Although our desires and fears may come under the influence of universal principles, they may also respond independently of reason to immediate or imagined circumstances, and may

19 ST, I, q 81, a 3: "Loco autem aestimativae virtutis est in homine, sicut supra dictum est [ibid, q 78, a 4], vis cogitativa; quae dicitur a quibusdam ratio particularis, eo quod est collativa intentionum individualium. Unde ab ea natus est moveri in homine appetitus sensitivus. Ipsi autem ratio particularis nata est moveri et dirigi secundum rationem universalem: unde in syllogisticis ex universalibus propositionibus conclusiones singulares. Et ideo patet quod ratio universalis imperat appetitus sensitivo, qui distinguitur per concupiscibilem et irascibilem, et hic appetitus ei obedit."

20 Ibid: "Hoc etiam quilibet experiri potest in seipso: applicando enim aliquas universales considerationes, mitigatur ira aut timor aut aliquid huiusmodi, vel etiam instigatur."
therefore be a response contrary to reason.\textsuperscript{21} One may panic, be unduly afraid, angry or pessimistic all because good reasoning is not shaping one's affective response.

Indeed, since the emotions may operate independently of reason according to their own impetus, there must be something like a political negotiation between them and reason ("\textit{Intellectus . . . dicitur principari irascibili et concupiscibili politico principatu.}"). Our passions may yield to our reasonable thoughts, but not always easily and readily because our affective lives have their own internal logic, their own conflicts and tensions which our best reasoning does not always discern or successfully mediate ("\textit{Quia appetitus sensibilis habet aliquid proprium, unde potest reniti imperio rationis.}\textsuperscript{22}"") Accordingly, a person cannot command the emotions "despotically" like he can an arm or leg, but must discern the common ground, the median, as Aristotle discusses it, in which one's desires and fears are neither neglected nor indulged excessively (\textit{NE, II, 2, 1106a25 ff; cf. ST, I-II, q 64, aa 1-2}).\textsuperscript{23} Thus, virtue

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{ST, I, q 81, a 3, ad 2: "Natus est enim moveri appetitus sensitivus, non solum ab aestimativa in alius animalibus, et cogitativa in homine, quam dirigit universalis ratio; sed etiam ab imaginativa et sensu. Unde experimur irascibilem vel concupiscibilem rationi repugnare, per hoc quod sentimus vel imaginamus aliquod delectabile quod ratio vetat, vel triste quod ratio praecipit."} \textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid, ad 2: "Intellectus autem, seu ratio, dicitur principari irascibili et concupiscibili politico principatu: quia appetitus sensibilis habet aliquid proprium, unde potest reniti imperio rationis. Natus est enim moveri appetitus sensitivus, non solum ab aestimativa in alius animalibus, et cogitativa in homine, quam dirigit universalis ratio; sed etiam ab imaginativa et sensu. Unde experimur irascibilem vel concupiscibilem rationi repugnare, per hoc quod sentimus vel imaginamus aliquod delectabile quod ratio vetat, vel triste quod ratio praecipit."} \textsuperscript{23}\textit{Ibid: "Dicitur enim despoticus principatus, quo aliquis principatur servis, qui non habent facultatem in aliquo resistendi imperio praeceptentis, quia nihil sui habent. Principatus autem politicus et regalis dicitur, quo aliquis principatur liberis, qui, etsi subdantur regimini praesidentis, tamen habent aliquid proprium, ex quo possunt reniti praeceptentis imperio."}
does not consist in the repression of emotion by reason, but in the reasoned cultivation of emotion, a point which will become clearer in the next section. Nor is this cultivation contrary to the well-being of our affective life (as some psychological theories of repression would suggest) because our capacity for affect must be understood as part of the person’s essential unity as a subject whose various faculties are oriented toward a learned cooperation and integrity of purpose.24

Now when the emotions become overwhelmed by experience, reasoned judgment is distorted and reasonable action unlikely. Due to the intensity of one’s emotions, the imagination is no longer guided by the discursive power, the instrument of reason. Instead, one becomes fixated on the affect-laden experiences or images, causing the passions to deform judgments, which in turn deform the act of the will:

For the judgment and apprehension of reason is hindered by the intense and disordered apprehension of the imagination and the judgment of the estimative power, as we experience with the insane. For clearly the emotions of the sensitive appetite follow the apprehension of the imagination and the judgment of the estimative power25 just as the discernment of taste follows the condition of the tongue. Thus, we see that people suffering some emotion cannot easily turn the imagination from what has affected them. As a result, the judgment of reason usually follows the emotion of the sensitive appetite and consequently the movement of the will [follows as well] which naturally follows the

24See on this point Mark D. Jordan, "Aquinas’s Construction of a Moral Account of the Passions," Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie 33 (1986): 71-97. Jordan writes: "The emotions are subject to moral control precisely because they appear within the configuration of the soul’s teleology. The ground behind the ‘assumption’ of control is the ground of the unity of the soul’s form in its teleological ordination" (96).

25Thomas seems to be using this term loosely since the vis aestimativa of other animals becomes the instrument of reason in human beings and is therefore properly called the vis cogitativa or ratio particularis. If, however, we consider that he is speaking here of the discursive power when it is not being guided by reason as it should, there is a certain appropriateness in using vis aestimativa since the specific difference--i.e., that it serves as the instrument of reason--is not in effect. See Chapter 4, § 4.3.3, ST, I, q 78, a 4; q 81, a 3.
judgment of reason.

(Impeditur enim iudicium et apprehensio rationis propter vehementem et inordinatam apprehensionem imaginationis, et iudicium virtutis aestimativae; ut patet in amentibus. Manifestum est autem quod passionem appetitus sensitivi sequitur imaginationis apprehensio, et iudicium aestimativae: sicut etiam dispositionem linguae sequitur iudicium gustus. Unde videmus quod homines in aliqua passione existentes, non facile imaginationem avertunt ab his circa quae afficiuntur. Unde per consequens iudicium rationis plerumque sequitur passionem appetitus sensitivi; et per consequens motus voluntatis, qui natus est sequi iudicium rationis, ST, I-II, q 77, a 1.)

Whether something tastes sweet or bitter depends not only on what is being tasted, but also on the health of the tongue. Similarly, our affective response to experiences depends not only on what is being experienced, but also on the condition of our capacity for making judgments, and thus in part on the condition of our interior sense faculties. Intense emotion distorts this judgment because one no longer discerns the universal in the particular as when reason guides the discursive power, but instead responds to the object which captivates the exterior senses and imagination. The senses and imagination remain focused on such an object because of the intensity of emotion, and consequently reason, through the aid of the discursive power, cannot draw on other images needed for the reasoned and wise judgment. Thus, practical reason is impotent to form our will insofar as the discursive power is impotent to order our imagination. 26 The object which captivates the dis-

26 That the practical judgment requires the appropriate images is clear from Chapter 4, § 4.3, but consider the following. ST, I, q 86, a 1, ad 2: "Ex universali autem propositione directe non potest concludi singularis, nisi mediante aliqua singulari propositione assumpta. Unde universalis ratio intellectus practici non movet nisi mediante particulari apprehensione sensitivae partis." In VI Ethic, lect 7, n 1215: "Et ad istum sensum, idest interiorem, magis pertinet prudentia, per quam perficitur ratio particularis ad recte existimandum de singularibus intentionibus operabilia." Other relevant texts are (continued...)
ordered imagination and emotions, rather than the well reasoned command of practical wisdom, may become the object of the will in its act of choice.\textsuperscript{27} The discernment of good and bad, therefore, may be a reasoned judgment based on universal considerations or an emotional response to actual or imagined circumstances.\textsuperscript{28}

Can practical judgment, however, be a matter of both? That is, can emotion draw us in the same direction as reason? This is what Aquinas has in mind when he discusses connatural knowledge. Such judgments are more perfect than the abstract judgments of a science because the immediate affective response accords with reason; the judgment is due to both the spontaneous response of one’s emotions and practical reason. However, this connatural response must be learned; it is the formed and habituated response of a moral virtue. Hence, as we have contrasted abstract science with practical wisdom and noted that practical wisdom mediates between the universal and the concrete, we can also think of moral habits as mediating--between the universal good determined by reason and the particular good discerned by one’s

\textsuperscript{26}(...continued)

\textit{ST, I, q 78, a 4, ad 2; q 84, a 8 and ad 2; II-II, q 51, a 3; q 154, a 5--all of which make it clear that judgments (theoretical as well as practical) and free choice depend on the proper operation of the interior senses. ST, I-II, q 33, a 3 discusses that excessive pleasure impedes theoretical judgments by distraction and corrupts practical judgments with contrary inclinations.}

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{ST, I-II, q 9, a 2, ad 2: "Actus et electiones hominum sunt circa singularia. Unde ex hoc ipso quod appetitus sensitivus est virtus particularis, habet magnam virtutem ad hoc quod per ipsum sic disponatur homo, ut eí aliquid videatur sic vel alíter, circa singularis." ST, I-II, q 10, a 3: "Passio appetitus sensitivi movet voluntatem ex ea parte qua voluntas movetur ab obiecto: inquantum scilicet homo alienaliter disjousus per passionem, iudicat aliquid esse conveniens et bonum, quod extra passionem existens non iudicaret."}

\textsuperscript{28}Jordan writes on this topic: "The more intense an act of will, the more it causes an accompanying passion. Alternately, one might cultivate an emotion precisely in order to make an act of will easier and more intense" ("Aquinas’s Moral Account of the Passions," 92). We can cultivate our emotions in order to support our choices, but our choices become easier when our emotions are already taking us in the same direction. Yet as there is need for cooperation, there is also the possibility for distortion.
affective response to the moment.

5.2.2 The Mediation of the Moral Virtues

We are concerned to understand how knowledge influences action, and have seen that science, even moral science, does not easily shape action so long as practical judgments tend to be distorted by our emotions. To know connaturally and with practical wisdom, then, is to know the good to be done here and now, not only conceptually but also affectively. We can now consider the how moral virtues make this integration of reason and affect possible.

Aquinas, following Aristotle's lead, explains that the virtuous differ from the continent and the incontinent in that the virtuous feel in the moment what the others reason to during the calm of abstract discourse and analysis. Both the continent and incontinent, however, feel compelled to act contrary to what the "perfect use of reason" would have them do (ST, II-II, q 45, a 2). That the continent, unlike the incontinent, manage to act in accord with reason does not alter the fact that their emotions also urge them away from the reasoned course of action:

In this way continence possesses some aspect of virtue inasmuch as reason stands firm against the emotions lest [reason] be dominated by them. Continence, nevertheless, does not achieve the complete character of moral virtue since [with moral virtue] even the sensitive appetite yields to reason so that intense emotions opposed to reason do not erupt in it.

(Hoc autem modo continentia habet aliquid de ratione virtutis, inquantum scilicet ratio firmata est contra passiones, ne ab eis deducatur: non tamen attingit ad perfectam rationem virtutis moralis secundum quam etiam appetitus sensitivus subditur racioni sic ut in eo non insurgant vehementes passiones rationi contrariae, ST, II-II, q 155, a 1.)
The virtuous do not differ from the continent in how they actually conduct themselves since the continent are those who can struggle to overcome their own affective resistance to right reason. Yet practical reason in the continent is not strengthened by the virtue of practical wisdom, for if it were—if, that is, practical reason benefitted from the support of the emotions as practical wisdom does—one’s emotions would incline one in the same direction as reason itself ("etiam appetitus subditur rationi," ST, II-II, q 155, a 1). Thus, those who possess a virtue or a vice are inclined in only one direction, whereas both the continent and incontinent are pulled in opposite directions, one way by reason and another way by their emotions.29

How then do the continent and incontinent differ? They do not differ in how they reason since the incontinent as well as the continent know in the abstract the good to be done. Nor do they differ in their emotional pull toward conduct contrary to reason. The continent and incontinent differ, rather, only in the act of the will itself, the one choosing to follow reason and the other the passions.30 Hence, the continent easily act or become incontinent, but the virtuous do not easily act or become

29 Aquinas works out this point in terms of the practical syllogism: the temperate and intemperate (virtuous and vicious) both proceed according to a simple practical syllogism with an universal major premise, a minor affirmation about the particular and a conclusion. The continent and incontinent, however, both struggle between the conflicting principles of reason and desire. Hence, De Malo, q 3, a 9, ad 7: "Sed tam continens quam incontinentis duplicitier motetur; secundum rationem quidem ad vitandum peccatum, secundum concupiscientiam vero ad commitendum. . . . Continens enim sic syllogizat: Nullum peccatum est faciendum; et secundum vero motum concupiscentiae versatur in corde eius quod omne delectabile est prossequendum; sed quia iudicium rationis in eo vincit, assumit et conclutit sub primo: Hoc est peccatum; ergo non est faciendum. Incontinentis vero, in quo vincit motus concupiscientiae, assumit et conclutit sub secundo: Hoc est delectabile; ergo est prossequendum; et talis propric est qui peccat ex infirmitate. Et ideo patet quod licet sciat in universali, non tamen scit in particulari; quia non assumit secundum rationem sed secundum concupiscientiam." Cf., ST, I-II, q 77, a 2, ad 4; In VII Ethic, lect 3, nn 1339-53.

30 On the contrast between the continent and incontinent see ST, q 155, a 3; In VII Ethic, lect 10, n 1463.
Moral habits reconcile reason and emotion, making one’s affections receptive to the influence of reason. Yet the moral virtues are not exactly knowledge nor feelings; they are most properly thought of as habits of intention. We can see this by considering how Aquinas contrasts an emotional disorder, incontinence, with a disordered habit or vice, intemperance. Intemperance is more grave than incontinence because a habit is more engraved in the personality than an impulse. The error of the incontinent survives only in the heat of the moment, and such a person regrets his action as soon as emotion abates ("statim poenitet, transeunte passione"). An intemperate person, however, continues in her error without regret ("gaudet se peccasse"), even after the emotions have calmed because she has operated out of a connatural principle which does not pass away like an emotion. Moreover, an intemperate person inclines to bad conduct as to a principle or end ("ignoratiam circa ipsum finem"; "errat circa principia"), whereas the error of an incontinent person remains limited to the particular without expressing the person’s notion of the end and per se good ("prout scilicet aestimat hoc nunc esse eligendum"). Consequently, the intemperate person is complacent in error, deceived into finding to be good what is actually bad. Again, the intemperate are not easily drawn out of their error,
whereas the incontinent are open to change since they themselves recognize their error. 32

Thus, a moral habit differs from an emotion as a principle of an operation differs from the operation itself (cf. ST, I-II, q 55, a 1; q 59, a 1). An emotion, in other words, is an immediate response to the experience of unique circumstances, whereas a virtue or vice determines the character of the emotional response over a range of circumstances. Accordingly, the good sought by an emotion remains focused on the immediate ("bonum prout nunc"), while the good intended by a moral habit is general, an end or good unto itself ("bonum secundum rationem finis"). 33 This is not to say that habitual intentions substitute for affective responses or repress them. Rather, the moral habit forms the emotions so that the intention of the end, the willingness to pursue the per se good, operates in the immediate affective

32 ST, II-II, q 156, a 3, ad 1 contrasts the incontinent choice for the immediate object with the intemperate choice governed by an immoral principle: "Nam ignorantia incontinentis attenditur quantum ad aliquod particulare eligibile, prout scilicet aestimat hoc nunc esse eligendum: sed intemperatus habet ignorantiam circa ipsum finem, inquantum scilicet iudicat hoc esse bonum, ut irrefrenate concupiscientias sequatur." De Malo, q 3, a 13 stresses that incontinent errors about particular conclusions can be rectified more easily than intemperate errors about principles: "Sed ille qui peccat ex malitia, habet voluntatem ordinatam in malum finem. . . . Ille autem gravissime ignorat et periculosissime, qui errat circa principia, quia talis non potest reduci per aliqua principia priora. Ille autem qui errat tantum circa conclusiones, potest reduci per principia, in quibus non errat." In VII Ethic, lect 8, n 1425 discusses the greater degree of ignorance and deception in a vice than in incontinence: "Malitia enim latet ei cui inest, qui est deceptus, ut aestimet bonum illud quod facit. Sed incontinentia non latet eum cui inest; scit enim per rationem malum esse id in quod a passione ducitur. Malum autem latens est periculosius malo non latente. Ergo incontinentia est peior incontinentia."

33 In III Ethic, lect 13, n 519: "Alio modo potest aliquid apparere bonum alicui quasi practica cognitione per comparatione ad opus. Et de huiusmodi judicio nunc Philosophus loquitur, quod quidem potest super aliquo ferri, quod sit bonum, dupliciter. Uno modo ut aliquid videatur alicui simpliciter et secundum se bonum; et hoc videtur bonum secundum rationem finis. Alio autem modo ut videatur alicuod alicui bonum non simpliciter et secundum se, sed prout nunc." Ibid, n 520 correlates these two types of intentions with two manners of desiring: "uno modo secundum animae passionem; alio modo secundum habitum. . . ."
response to the actual situation. A moral habit, then, overcomes the struggle between conflicting claims vying in the one person because the habit serves as a principle operating in the appetitive faculty (*appetitus sensitivus*). As a result of the habit, the intention of the *per se* good is mediated by the desire for the good here and now, and the intention of the end operates in the desire for the good at hand.

This structure parallels and supports the interplay between general principles of reason and judgments of the singular which apprehend the universal in the singular. Just as practical wisdom, through the cooperation of the discursive power, discerns the universal in the particular, a person of moral virtue intends the universal good in his or her affective response to present circumstances:

An abstract opinion does not move [one to action] except through the mediation of a particular [judgment], and similarly the superior appetite [of the will] does not move [one] except by the mediation of the inferior [appetite of the sensitive appetite].

(Opinio universalis non movet nisi mediante particulari: et similiter appetitus superior movet [ nisi] mediante inferiori, *ST*, I, q 80, a 2, ad 3. Cf. *ST*, I-II, q 9, a 2, ad 2 in note 27 above.)

The practical judgment, we know, discerns the universal in the particular because the discursive power is the instrument of reason. But that analysis is incomplete without the further point that the will's intention of the good as an end and principle can also be intended in the concrete because the affective response may also become in a way intentional of the good principle in the singular act.

Accordingly, when the habit is a vice, the error is one of ignorance, not just of emotional impulse. A base or vicious moral habit, in other words, constitutes not only disordered emotion, but also disordered thought. So an intemperate person
believes that pleasure is an end and per se good ("cui persuasum est quod tales delectationes sint eligendae, quasi per se bonae"). The moral virtues then operate in the opposite way of vices, namely as intelligent principles reaching into one's emotions, protecting one's practical judgments from disordered feelings. The virtuous person's judgments are connatural judgments in which an intended good functions as a principle shaping her immediate desires. Connatural knowing, as Aquinas understands it, is not, therefore, an alternative to an intelligent and reasonable discernment of the good, not another way of knowing. It is rather the fruit of that knowledge shaping one's intentions and feelings. Still, if the moral virtues mediate between reason and emotion, giving us connatural knowledge, they can only do so because of practical wisdom. Reciprocally, practical wisdom is not possible without the virtuous intention of good ends. We must now turn our attention to understanding this interdependence.

5.3 Practical Wisdom and the Moral Virtues

Scientia and prudentia differ because the latter requires the cooperation of the moral virtues. Questions of conduct challenge the whole person as questions of truth in the abstract do not. Something of one's self is at stake, and practical judgments about what to do cannot be made in isolation from one's character, desires

34 In VII Ethic, lect 8, n 1430: "Aliquis est qui prosequitur superabundanter et praeter ordinem rectae rationis corporales delectationes, non quia sic est dispositus, ut sit ei persuasum quod tales delectationes sint sequendae sicut bonae. Et iste est incontinens. Alius autem est, scilicet intemperatus, cui persuasum est quod tales delectationes sint eligendae, quasi per se bonae; et hoc propter dispositionem quem habet ex habitu."
and intentions. Questions of conduct and right action challenge a person to achieve a level of integration beyond what is necessary for the achievements of art or science. Prudentia enables us to respond well to these questions. The exercise of Practical wisdom, however, is not only part of this higher level of integration; it is constitutive of the form it takes, bringing order into the human heart. That this is so becomes most clear by considering the interdependence between practical wisdom and the moral virtues. We noted above that practical wisdom reaches into human affectivity and that this sets it apart from abstract science. This "reaching into" refers to the process by which the moral virtues are formed. Indeed, the foundations of our character are at stake in this process because our moral habits determine what is dear to us, what we truly value, the "reasons of the heart."

In a recent article John Treloar notes that after Aquinas the virtue of practical wisdom begins to lose philosophical currency, so that by the early modern period the term implies the ability to manipulate circumstances in order to achieve one's ends, whether they be noble or base. The machinations of a Machiavellian power player who seeks power without regard for principles would be just as aptly described as "prudent" as would be someone who aspires to just, generous or courageous deeds. With this understanding of practical wisdom, it is clear why its importance in moral philosophy would diminish. Treloar argues that the later or post-Thomistic understanding of practical wisdom stems from the failure to grasp its connection with the
moral virtues.\textsuperscript{35}

In Aquinas's treatment, practical wisdom is impossible without the moral virtues, and they in turn are impossible without it. The implication of this is that one cannot be wise in the discovery of means ordered to ends if the ends one intends are base. Hence, in \textit{ST}, II-II, q 47, a 13 Aquinas says that one who reasons in light of a bad end has a "\textit{prudentia falsa}." Moreover, Aquinas's distinction of ends and means is not meant to imply consequential thinking in which one discerns which actions will best produce certain results. Efficient causality is the operative principle in consequential thinking. The focus is on what will be produced. We shall see, however, that with regard to practical wisdom, Aquinas's distinction of ends and means is best understood in terms of participation. The end desired is the principle, say justice or temperance, and the means is the way to act here and now so as to participate in or act in accord with that principle. The act has intrinsic value as an expression or enactment of the intended good.

The relationship between the moral virtues and practical wisdom is complex. We can first note that the relationship is symbiotic because Aquinas argues both that moral virtue is a necessary condition for being practically wise and that practical wisdom is a necessary condition for being morally virtuous.\textsuperscript{36} Yet we must also

\textsuperscript{35}John L. Treloar, S.J., "Moral Virtue and the Demise of Prudence in the Thought of Francis Suarez," \textit{American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly} 65 (summer, 1991), 387-405. His article focuses on Suarez's treatment of practical wisdom (prudence), and he argues that Suarez's work was instrumental in the deformation of the notion of practical wisdom because Suarez did not adequately understand the relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues.

\textsuperscript{36}Judith Barad deals with the relationship in just this way: "Insofar as our emotions participate in reasoning, they may intensify our moral life by becoming the instruments of moral virtue... . Kant could (continued...)
grasp that the interplay between practical reason and will, between practical wisdom and the moral virtues, leads to a dynamic process which forms one's character. Aquinas clearly argues that in a virtuous character the relationship among the virtues is symbiotic, but there is also need to understand how one's character develops. That requires a more complex analysis, one which he also provides.

We shall first examine why practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues (§ 5.3.1) and then consider why the moral virtues presuppose practical wisdom (§ 5.3.2). At this juncture, we will have understood the symbiotic relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues. Still, something more must be made of the strange claim that the moral virtues are the first principles of practical reason. Section 5.4 extends the analysis begun in § 5.3 in order to grasp how the human character emerges. It seems more like Hume than Aquinas to stress that one's desires and passions determine the ends, while reason decides the means. Does Thomas's emphasis on the virtuous intention of ends parallel Hume's appeal to the passions as determinative of the moral life? Instead of a sharp dichotomy between will and intellect and a rigid division of functions, Aquinas is offering us an analysis of the development of character, a development which requires that will reinforce reason and reason will. This dynamic has its core in the principle of synderesis, but has its development in the interplay between the virtues.

36(...continued)
not accept this symbiotic relationship between emotion and virtue because he excluded the component of emotion from morality as something foreign to reason. "Aquinas on the Role of Emotion in Moral Judgment and Activity," The Thomist 55 (1991), 410-11. The emphasis is mine.
5.3.1 Practical Wisdom Presupposes the Moral Virtues

On occasion, Aquinas states that practical wisdom should be considered a moral virtue, but elsewhere argues that it presupposes the moral virtues. One might well ask how practical wisdom can be what it presupposes. As was already discussed in Chapter 3, Aquinas understands the various virtues by relating them to the powers and operations which they perfect. Thus, there are intellectual virtues which are habits perfecting some set of cognitional operations and moral virtues which perfect the will and emotions. Now it is clear from the previous chapter that practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue, and yet it is also clear from the previous section that only that knowledge which reaches beyond the intellect to influence our will and emotions has the true character of practical wisdom. Accordingly, Aquinas also insists on including this intellectual habit among the moral virtues. We seem then to have an ambiguity in the use of terms. Let us first consider his reasons for including practical wisdom among the moral virtues, and then see if we can resolve the dilemma. As we clarify the way in which practical wisdom is a moral virtue and the way in which it presupposes the moral virtues, we shall see the importance of the distinction of ends and means in his analysis. However, the full significance and subtlety of the use Aquinas makes of the dichotomy of ends and means in his psychology will only come to light below in § 5.4.

To begin, in the following text Aquinas attempts to clarify the ambiguity in the status of practical wisdom as a virtue:

According to its essence, practical wisdom is an intellectual virtue, but according to its matter [i.e., its determination of good action], it fits
with the moral virtues. For it is right reason about matters of conduct, and for this reason is counted among the moral virtues.

(Prudentia, secundum essentiam suam, est intellectualis virtus. Sed secundum materiam, convenit cum virtutibus moralibis: est enim recta ratio agibilium. Et secundum hoc, virtutibus moralibis connumeratur, ST, I-II, q 58, a 3, ad 1.)

The point here is that when we engage in practical reasoning, we are concerned about practical or moral matters. We are concerned, in other words, about discerning the good to be done, and in this regard practical wisdom has the same object as the moral virtues. Nonetheless, practical reason, since it is a cognitive operation, does not operate with regard to this common object in quite the same way as the moral virtues, which perfect volitional and affective operations. To be practically wise is to reason well in order to determine what ought to be done (recta ratio agibilium), but to be morally virtuous is to desire right conduct as a good. To deal, then, with good conduct with the virtue of practical wisdom is to seek out a practical truth ("sub ratione veri"), whereas to deal with good conduct precisely as a good ("sub ratione boni") is to desire it with the right desire ("rectitudinem appetitus"), which constitutes a moral virtue.

In Chapter 3 we have already discussed the interplay of intellect and will in

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37 Cf. ST, II-II, q 47, a 5: "Sed a virtutibus moralibus distinguetur prudentia secundum formalem rationem potentiarum distinctivam: scilicet intellectivi, in quo est prudentia; et appetitivi, in quo est virtus moralis."

38 ST, II-II, q 47, a 5, ad 3: "Agibilia sunt quidem materia prudentiae secundum quod sunt objectum rationis, scilicet sub ratione veri. Sunt autem materia moralium virtutum secundum quod sunt objectum virtutis appetitivae, scilicet sub ratione boni."
determining the good. One key point that comes out of this aspect of Aquinas's analysis stems from Aristotle's observation that the good is what is desired. Aquinas takes this to mean not only that the objective good is intrinsically desirable, but also that something becomes a good in the estimation of an individual only when it becomes the object of that person's will as he or she intends, chooses and desires the object apprehended by intellect. Thus, exercise may be truly good for my health, but it does not become my good until I am inclined to exercise, and similarly justice is a principle of practical truth, but it is not my principle unless I have the desire and intention to be just.

I make this point here because it will allow us to make sense out of a rather difficult aspect of Thomas's treatment of practical truth. He claims that right desire stands to practical truth as first principles stand to theoretical truth. In other words, just as the conclusions of a theoretical inquiry must conform to established principles,

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39 On the interaction of the intellect and the will and the interrelation of the "verum in communi" and the "bonum in communi" see Chapter 3, § 3.4.2.

40 ST, I, q 5, a 1: "Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetibile." The implication is that something becomes good for me when I desire it. Accordingly, we read in In VI Ethic, lect 10, n 1273: "Sed quod hoc sit optimum non apparat nisi bono, idest virtuoso, qui habet rectam existimationem de fine, cum virtus moralis faciat rectam intentionem finis." Ralph McInerny makes the same point: "To speak of the good, to relate to it cognitively, to know it under the guise of truth, is not yet to relate to the good as good. The good is the object of appetite; it is what we seek, pursue, aspire to. Even at the level of very general principles, if the goods which are enunciated are not my goods, if I am not effectively ordered to them as to the objects of my appetite, then these principles are not in the full sense moral principles." "Prudence and Conscience," The Thomist 38 (1974), 302. Klaus Riesenhuber finds it significant that Aquinas claims that something becomes a final cause or good ("sub ratione boni") only if it becomes an object of the will, otherwise it remains a formal cause in the intellect; see his "The Bases and Meaning of Freedom." Cf. ST, I-II, q 19, a 2, ad 1 on the point that the object of the will has the formal character of both end and good.
so the conclusions of practical inquiry must conform to "appetitum rectum."\(^{41}\) In essence, Aquinas is telling us that the will operates as a principle in practical cognition. How do we make sense of this claim? Can the will or its habits operate as principles of truth? We have already established in Chapter 4 (§ 4.4) that in practical reason ends operate as the principles with which right reason about means must accord. The further point to be grasped here is that the principles and ends of practical reason gain the status of principles only through the assent of the will. An end does not operate as a principle in one’s character and practical reasoning unless it is actually intended, and intention is an act of the will. Thus, only when one’s desires and intentions are right are one’s principles of practical reason right. This is the reason why Aquinas states that practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues:

> In order to be practically wise, therefore, which is right reason about matters of conduct, a person needs to be inclined by a right desire about ends. Practical wisdom, therefore, requires the moral virtues which make desire right.

\[(\text{Et idea ad prudentiam, quae est recta ratio agibilium, requiritur quod homo sit dispositus circa fines: quod quidem est per appetitum rectum. Et ideo ad prudentiam requiritur moralis virtus, per quam fit appetitus rectus, ST, I-II, q 57, a 4.)^{42}\]\n
\(^{41}\)ST, I-II, q 57, a 5, ad 3: "Verum autem intellectus practici accipitur per conformitatem ad appetitum rectum." ST, I-II, q 65, a 1: "Unde sicut scietia speculativa non potest haberi sine intellectu principiorum, ita nec prudentia sine virtutibus moralibus." In VI Ethic, lect 2, n 1120: "Sed bonum practici intellectus non est veritas absoluta, sed veritas 'confesse se habens,' idest concorditer ad appetitum rectum, sicut ostensum est, quod sic virtutes morales concordant." In III Sent, d 33, q 1, a 1, sol 2: "Sicut speculativa ratio dicitur esse recta secundum quod se conformiter ad prima principia habet; id estiam ratio practica dicitur recta ratio secundum quod se habet conformiter ad rectos fine. Inclinatio autem ad finem ad appetitum pertinet; et ideo . . . veritas et rectitudo rationis practicae est secundum quod se habet conformiter ad appetitum rectum."

\(^{42}\)Aquinas does use the verb praesupponere in this context: De Virt, a 7, ad 1: "Licet habitus intellectus practici, ex eo quod ordinat ad bonum sub ratione boni, prout praesupponitur voluntati, magis (continued...
We cannot expect to find practical wisdom without moral virtue because the moral virtues determine what one is after, what one values and why one acts. Hence, wise practical reasoning differs from mere shrewdness or cunning because one’s intended ends, that is, one’s operative principles, in reasoning differ.

We can now make sense of the two disparate claims which we noted at the beginning of this section, that practical wisdom both is and presupposes the moral virtues. Taken separately, both analyses afford insights into the nature of practical wisdom. The point of including practical wisdom among the moral virtues is to indicate the unique object or concern which distinguishes practical wisdom from other forms of reasoned inquiry. To reason practically is to consider the human act and the human good, and not in the abstract as one might do through moral science. Rather, practical reason is about something particular--one’s own self, one’s conduct, intentions and desires. The second point--that practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues--is not meant to gainsay the first by denying what practical wisdom reasons about. It does, however, bring to light that one’s practical reasoning requires more than intrinsic reasonableness in order to be virtuous, for the act chosen is good only if the purpose for which it is chosen is also good ("quod velit bonum, et porpter bonum").

In a word, therefore, practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues because

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42 (continued)

proprie habeat rationem virtutis." ST, I-II, q 57, a 4: "Prudentia autem non solum facit boni operis facultatem, sed etiam usum: respicit enim appetitum, tanquam praesupponens rectitudinem appetitus."

43 ST, I-II, q 19, a 7, ad 3: "Sed ad hoc quod sit voluntas bona, requiritur quod sit boni sub ratione boni; idest quod velit bonum, et porpter bonum."
ends differ from means. Practical wisdom is a moral virtue in the sense that its "matter" or object of concern is moral: right human conduct and a good will. It determines what ought to be chosen here and now. Yet practical wisdom does not directly determine one's purpose and intention, which must also be right and good if the act is to be good:

A moral virtue is an elective habit, that is, one making choice good. Two factors are needed, however, in order for a choice to be good. The first is the due intention of the end, and this is brought about through a moral virtue which inclines the appetitive power to the good befitting reason, which is the due end. The second is that a person discern the means relevant to the end. Now this cannot be [accomplished] except through reason, deliberating, judging and commanding rightly, which pertains to practical wisdom and the virtues attached to it.

(Moralis virtus est habitus electivus, idest faciens bonam electionem. Ad hoc autem quod electio sit bona, duo requiruntur. Primo, ut sit debita intentio finis: et hoc fit per virtutem moralem, quae vim appetitivam inclinat ad bonum conveniens rationi, quod est finis debitus. Secundo, ut homo recte accipiat ea quae sunt ad finem: et hoc non potest esse nisi per rationem recte consilientem, iudicantem et praecipientem; quod pertinet ad prudentiam et ad virtutes sibi annexas, ST, I-II, q 58, a 4.)

Aquinas understood that conduct is right only insofar as good principles or ends are intended in that conduct, and as we have seen, practical principles and ends become one's own not by reason alone, but only through intention and desire, operations of the will and emotions. In sum, practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues and is itself a kind of moral virtue so long as the moral virtues are operating in one's practical deliberations. We can turn now to the converse point—that the moral virtues presuppose practical wisdom.
5.3.2 The Moral Virtues Participate in Practical Wisdom

Thomas argues that practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues because right desire operates as a principle, defining the good and the end, in matters of conduct. Yet it remains to understand what constitutes right desire. In addressing this question Thomas routinely appeals to practical wisdom, stating that one cannot possess the moral virtues unless the virtue of practical wisdom is also possessed.\(^{44}\)

But why is practical wisdom a necessary condition for being morally virtuous? There seem to be three answers to this question. The first is to note that moral virtues are habits facilitating rightness of desire and rightness of choice and that to say that such habits are right means that they enable the will and emotions to participate in reason ("virtutis moralis subiectum est aliquid participans ratione").\(^{45}\) The second reason is that practical wisdom causes or forms the moral virtues ("est perfectiva omnium virtutum moralium").\(^{46}\) The third answer returns us to the analysis of means and ends. The moral virtues give a right inclination toward the end, but there must also be a right choice about the means relevant to the end, and that requires practical reason. The moral virtues cannot operate without practical wisdom because ends can

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\(^{44}\) ST, I-II, q 65, a 1: "Nulla virtus moralis potest sine prudentia haberi." Cf. ibid, q 58, a 4.

\(^{45}\) ST, II-II, q 47, a 5, ad 1: "Quia sicut virtutis moralis subiectum est aliquid participans ratione, ita virtus moralis habet rationem virtutis inquantum participat virtutem intellectualem." Cf. ST, I-II, q 58, a 2 et ad 4; In III Sent, d 33, q 1, a 1, sol 2.

\(^{46}\) De Virt, a 6: "Et haec virtus dicitur prudentia, cujus subiectum est ratio practica; et est perfectiva omnium virtutum moralium quae sunt in parte appetitiva, quorum unaquaque facit inclinationem appetitus in aliquod genus humani boni." In III Sent, d 33, q 1, a 1, sol 2: "Recitudo appetitus ex ratione causatur, secundum quod appetitus aliquamiter ratione participate." In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 5: "Prudentia inter alias virtutes cardinales principalior est, et ad ipsam reducuntur omnes aliae quasi ad causam."
only be achieved through the intelligent pursuit of means.\textsuperscript{47}

The first and second points seem obviously related in that to \textit{participate} in reason implies that the emotions take on a form or order which reason provides, while to say that practical wisdom \textit{causes} the moral virtues is to argue that it provides this form or order. Yet if, as the third point has it, the moral virtues intend the end, but practical wisdom only determines the means to the end, how is it that practical wisdom can form the order and character of the intention of the moral virtues with regard to the end? If practical wisdom has the task of determining the means to achieving the end, how does it come to pass that it forms the intention of the end itself? In this section we shall look more closely at the first two points, and save consideration of the third for § 5.4.

The definition of moral virtue which Aristotle provides includes within it the notion of practical wisdom: "Virtue is a characteristic involving choice, and consists in observing the [median] relative to us, a [median] which is defined by a rational principle, such as a man of practical wisdom would use to determine it" (\textit{NE}, II, 6, 1106b36-1107a2).\textsuperscript{48} Does it follow from the inclusion of practical wisdom in the definition that there is no real distinction between practical wisdom and the moral

\textsuperscript{47}ST, I-II, q 57, a 5: "Ad debitum autem finem homo convenienter disponitur per virtutem quae perfect 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; quia consiliari et eligere, quae sunt eorum quae sunt ad finem, sunt actus rationis." There are a multitude of early, middle and late texts making this same point. Cf. ST, I-II, q 58, a 4 (quoted in the text above); q 65, a 1; \textit{In III Sent}, d 33, q 1, a 1, sol 2; q 2, a 3 et ad 3; \textit{De Ver}, q 5, a 1; \textit{De Virt}, a 6.

\textsuperscript{48}I have substituted "median" for "mean" in what is otherwise Ostwald's translation (p 43) in order to avoid confusion between my discussion of ends and means and Aristotle’s notion of right proportion in an act or emotion. The notion of the median was discussed briefly in § 5.2.1 and will be discussed again below in § 5.3.3.
virtues? In addressing this question Aquinas first insists upon the distinction by arguing—in a manner consistent with what we have seen—that it is rooted in the difference between intellect and desire: "Therefore, as desire is distinguished from reason, so moral virtue is distinguished from intellectual virtue." He goes on, however, to explain why practical wisdom is included in the definition of a moral virtue even though it is not to be identified with it, and in explaining he appeals to the notion of participation:

Right reason which is due to practical wisdom is put in the definition of moral virtue, not as a part of its essence, but as a certain participant in all moral virtues, inasmuch as practical wisdom directs all the moral virtues.

(Recta ratio, quae est secundum prudentiam, ponitur in definitione virtutis moralis, non tanquam pars essentiae eius: sed sicut quiddam participatum in omnibus virtutibus moralibus, inquantum prudentiam dirigit omnes virtutes morales, ST, I-II, q 58, a 2, ad 4.)

In § 5.3.1 above, we looked at a text which states that practical wisdom in its essence is an intellectual virtue (ST, I-II, q 58, a 3, ad 1). The same point is at work here. The essential character of a virtue depends on whether it perfects cognitive or affective operations, and on this point practical wisdom and the moral virtues differ. Yet the moral virtues participate in practical wisdom because it directs them. We can clarify what Aquinas means by participation and direction with some additional textual analysis.

49 ST, I-II, q 58, a 2.: "Sicut igitur appetitus distinguittur a ratione, ita virtus moralis distinguittur ab intellectualii."

50 Cf. the response of the same article: "Unde sicut appetitus est principium humani actus secundum quod participat aliqualiter rationem, ita habitus moralis habet rationem virtutis humanae, inquantum rationi conformatur."
In the Commentary on the Ethics, Aquinas discusses the difference between natural inclinations and moral virtues. Although our natural inclinations are good in themselves, they must be perfected through the acquisition of the moral virtues. This happens only when such an inclination "co-receives" ("coaccipiat") into its own operation the discernment of the intellect. Then the habit—which, like any habit, is similar to the act from which it is formed—will be a virtue in the full sense of the term ("proprie et perfecte"), that is, a moral virtue.

This comment helps us get at what Thomas means by participation. A habit takes on the character of the act which formed it, and the act itself of a moral virtue is due to an act of the will, but one which has received into itself—or has had "imprinted" into itself, to use another verb Aquinas offers—something of reason. What's more, moral habits fall short of being virtuous to the extent that the reasoning in which they participate is defective. It is participation in right reason which constitutes the virtuous character of a moral habit. Thus, as habits form, operations become cooperations, enabling practical judgments to become connatural.

We can expand on these points by considering how an act forms a habit. In the Summa Theologiae Thomas explains (1) that though appetitive acts are distinct

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51 *In VI Ethic*, lect 9, n 1279: "Sed si huiusmodi inclinatio coaccipiat in operando intellectum, ut scilicet cum discretione operetur, tunc multum differt secundum excellentiam bonitatis. Et habitus, qui erit similis tali operationi cum discretione factae, erit proprie et perfecte virtus, quae est moralis."

52 *Cf. In II Ethic*, lect 1, n 249: "Perficiuntur autem in nobis per assuetudinem, inquantum scilicet ex eo quod multoties agimus secundum rationem, imprimitur forma vi rationis in appetitiva. Quae quidem impressio nihil est aliud quam virtus moralis."

53 *In II Ethic*, lect 7, n 326: "Tota bonitas virtutis moralis dependet ex rectitudine rationis. Unde bonum conventi virtuti morali, secundum quod sequitur rationem rectam; malum autem utrique; vitio, scilicet superabundantiae et [defectus], inquantum recedet a ratione recta."
from apprehensive acts, still they are always a response to some object, (2) that the
to must be apprehended by an apprehensive power (i.e., external
sense, internal sense and intellect), and (3) that the appetitive response, if repeated
often enough, will form a habit:

An act of an appetitive power issues from the appetitive power when
it is moved by the apprehensive power which presents the object [to it].
. . . Now anything which is affected and moved by something else,
becomes disposed by the act of the [moving] agent. Thus, from multi-
ple acts, a quality which is named a habit arises in the passive and
moved power. In this way, the habits of the moral virtues are caused
in the appetitive powers because they are moved by reason.

(Nam actus appetitivae virtutis procedunt a vi appetitiva secundum
quod movetur a vi apprehensiva repraesentate objectum. . . . Nam
omne quod patitur et movetur ab alio, disponitur per actum agentis:
unde ex multiplicatis actibus generatur quaedam qualitas in potentia
passiva et mota, quae nominatur habitus. Sicut habitus virtutum
moralium causantur in appetitivis potentiis, secundum quod moventur
a ratione, ST, I-II, q 51, a 2.)

The focus here is on how an act of an appetitive power ("actus appetitivae virtutis")
becomes habitual. Although the act is appetitive, the intellect and reason are
brought into the analysis because the appetitive act and the subsequent habit get
their character, their form, from the object. The inclination to the act becomes
habitual through repeated acts of the power. Still, appetitive acts of desire, choice
or intention are responses to objects, and the objects are made present by sensitive
and intellectual apprehension. The intellect, then, moves the will and the emotions
not by being an efficient cause, putting them in motion, but by providing the object
which is desired, chosen, intended. This object does not initiate the act, i.e., the
movement to the object, but gives the act its form or character (see ST, I-II, q 13, a
Accordingly, if the object is determined by right reason, the habit will be a virtue because it will have received right reason into its own operation. It will have participated in reason, and reason will have formed the kind of habit which it is, just as any passive power is formed ("disponitur") by the agent which acts on it.

Moral acts and habits participate in reason because appetitive operations are rational operations by specification. We can take another tack on this. In Aquinas's psychology the human act is always a composite of intellect and will, and this composite can be understood by way of analogy to the substantive composition of form and matter. George Klubertanz has explored this use of the terms form and matter in Aquinas's psychology. In regard to the act of choice (electio) he writes:

The act of choice, too, is one act with which two powers are concerned as matter and form. And so the act of choice is a composite act, in which the material yet substantial part (tendency, adherence) is from the will, and the formal part (order of means contingently related to end) is from reason. Because reason in the act of choice is formal cause, it can give the specification and formal determination to that act.54

Klubertanz's statement explains quite nicely why there is a principle of participation operative in Aquinas's psychology and what is behind Aquinas's comment that the moral virtues participate in practical reason. In the human act, the affective inclination is to matter as the reasoned object is to form, and reason forms the moral

54 "Unity of Human Activity," The Modern Schoolman 27 (1950), 102. Cf. ST, I-II, q 13, a 1: "Sic igitur ille actus quo voluntas tendit in aliquid quod proponitur ut bonum, ex eo quod per rationem est ordinatum ad finem, materialiter quidem est voluntatis, formaliter autem rationis." Ibid, q 67, a 1: "In huiusmodi virtutibus aliquid est formale; et aliquid quasi materiale. Materiale quidem est in his virtutibus inclinatio quaedam appetitiva ad passiones vel operationes secundum modum aliquem. Sed quia iste modus determinatur a ratione, ideo formale in omnibus virtutibus est ipse ordo rationis." Cf. ST, I-II, q 17, a 1.
habit because it specifies the object chosen.

Recall too that in Chapter 4 (§ 4.2) we noted that Thomas attributes the order or form of the human act to the command (praecipere) which is the culminating operation of practical wisdom.\textsuperscript{55} As the person of practical wisdom determines what ought to be done here and now, so the person of moral virtue readily chooses this action and participates in right reason. This too seems to be what is behind the comment in the introduction to the \textit{Commentary on the Ethics} that there is an \textit{ordo} which reason brings into the operations of the will (\textit{In I Ethic}, lect 1, n 1). Practical wisdom forms our wills by directing us in our choices, and our wills and the ends we intend shape our identities. Thus, practical wisdom is an existential knowledge, a knowledge determining who we are. We shall have more to say about this as we continue.

Practical wisdom depends on the moral virtues in so far as deliberation about means depends on the right intention of ends, but Aquinas also understands practical wisdom in another way--as the agent which forms the moral virtues. This analysis seems circular and therefore untenable, but there is also an indication of what will prove to be the way to disentangle a difficult problem: practical wisdom depends on the moral virtues for the good intention of ends, whereas the moral virtues depend on practical wisdom for the determination of means. Careful consideration of Aquinas's analysis of the virtues in terms of the dichotomy of means and ends reveals an account of their emergence, the coming to be of moral character and the principle

\textsuperscript{55}ST, II-II, q 47, a 8, ad 3: "Movere absolute pertinet ad voluntatem. Sed praecipere importat motionem cum quadam ordinatione. Et ideo est actus rationis."
role of practical wisdom in that process. Yet at the core of this process lies desire for meaning and integrity in our lived existence.

5.4 Integrity and Action

Our discussion of practical wisdom and the moral virtues presents us with a difficulty which perhaps by now is quite apparent. Practical wisdom, we have found, presupposes the moral virtues, but we also find that the moral virtues participate in practical wisdom. We can now examine whether this claim of mutual interdependence constitutes a vicious circle. Can practical wisdom both presuppose the moral virtues and be presupposed by them? The way out of this dilemma, I argue, lies in conceiving of a virtuous rather than a vicious circle. Such a circle outlines the dynamic process out of which one's character is formed. Practical wisdom presupposes principles, which are given in matters of conduct by right intentions of ends, and the moral virtues make intentions right. Yet the intention of ends leads to the choice of means and purposeful conduct—that is, choices and conduct specified by practical reason. Hence, volitional acts participate in practical wisdom, and practical wisdom is the formal cause of their habituation. This process forms an emerging integrity that has its fruition in meaningful action, action which expresses and participates in the good one intends. In § 5.4.1 we outline the dynamic process, driven by our desire for meaningful existence, which forms our integrity of character. In § 5.4.2 we consider the notion of meaningful action and make the argument that it is consti-

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56 Thomas offers similar summaries himself: Cf. § 5.3.1; In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3; De Ver, q 5, a 1; ST, I-II, q 58, aa 4-5; I-II, q 65, a 1; II-II, q 47, a 7.
5.4.1 The Virtuous Circle

The relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues seems to be circular because it suggests two contradictory orders of dependence. Practical wisdom presupposes the moral virtues and yet it forms them. Moreover, as I mentioned above, it is difficult to understand why practical wisdom which defines the means is said to be constitutive of habits which consist in the virtuous intention of ends. Does practical wisdom presuppose the right intention of ends or form those intentions? Thomas himself gives mixed signals on the question, as the following two comments show:

And therefore practical wisdom does not have the task of presenting the end to the moral virtues, but only to guide them about the means which are [ordered] to the end.

Practical wisdom not only directs the moral virtues in choosing the means which are [ordered] to the end, but also in presenting the end.

(Et ideo ad prudentiam non pertinet praestituere finem virtutibus moralibus, sed solum disponere de his quae sunt ad finem, ST, II-II, q 47, a 6. Prudentia non solum dirigit virtutes morales in eligendo ea quae sunt ad finem, sed etiam in praestitudendo finem, ST, I-II, q 66, a 3, ad 3.)

Clearly, there is a knotty problem here. The relationship of practical wisdom to the end and the moral virtues is not yet clear. Indeed, Aquinas himself acknow-

ledges the difficulty of circularity which one author has dubbed the "virtuous circle." The first comment cited suggests something like Hume's view that the passions define our objectives and ends, while reason determines the means to satisfaction. The second comment seems more true to Aquinas's clear emphasis on right reason as determinative of the good. Although the second comment is more true in the larger context of his thought, it is also misleading (perhaps explaining his willingness to write the first comment) because practical wisdom does not present the end to the moral virtues (or will) as the end. Rather, the means proposed by the practical judgment and command becomes, through the act of choice, a habit of intention, an end. Acts of choice are always in reference to means proposed by practical reason, but as acts of the will they are also formative of our characters, of the ends we come actually to intend. Thus, practical wisdom, in defining the means, also defines our intended ends, but only because one's choice of means forms one's habitual intention of ends.

I have been struck by the fact that in his own attempts to clarify the relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues Aquinas always appeals to the distinction between ends and means. Moreover, he also interjects a second crucial distinction into the same analysis, the distinction between our natural and our acquired inclinations and desires. Thus, he often attributes our relationship to the

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58 In VI Ethic, lect 2, n 1131: "Nam si veritas intellectus practici determinatur in comparatione ad appetitum rectum, appetitus autem rectitudo determinatur per hoc quod consonat rationi verae, ut prius dictum est, sequitur quaedam circulatio in dictis determinationibus." Ralph McInerny writes, "As we know, there is a virtuous circle . . . at this point: the moral virtues presuppose prudence, prudence presupposes the moral virtues." Prudence and Conscience, The Thomist 38 (1974), 302.
end to our natural inclination and our relationship to the means to reasoned choice. It would seem, according to this analysis, that our intention of ends is natural, while our choice of means is learned though the contribution of practical wisdom. Yet the moral virtues, which are not natural but acquired, are habits forming our intentions of ends. Thus, despite Thomas's preference for correlating the end with the natural desire, he also is quite clear that our acquired habits incline us to ends as well.

What is the point and advantage of this rather complex analysis? His analysis not only reveals the interdependence of the cognitive and affective powers, but also explains the achievement or emergence of this symbiotic relationship. For the interdependence and cooperation in question is itself learned, not natural. It arises out of our natural disposition toward meaningful action, but is formative of the virtues that ensure the fulfillment of that desire. It makes good sense to label his analysis a "virtuous circle." A vicious circle consists in a downward spiral in which bad consequences become the causes of worse consequences. So Aquinas's circle is virtuous in the sense that there is a cumulative good effect in which choices form habits of intention, which in turn facilitate further good choices. Thus, Aquinas

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59 In VI Ethic, lect 2, n 1131 correlates the end with our natural desire and the means with reason: "Et ideo dicendum est quod appetitum est finis et corum quae sunt ad finem: finis autem determinatus est homini a natura.... Ea autem quae sunt ad finem, non sunt nobis determinata a natura, sed per rationem investiganda." De Ver, q 5, a 1, however, contrasts natural cognition of the end with learned or acquired intentions of the end which the moral virtues give: "Sed finis agibilium praexistit in nobis dupliciter: scilicet per cognitionem naturalem de fine hominis.... Alio modo quantum ad affectionem; et sic fines agibilium sunt in nobis per virtutes Morales, per quas homo afficitur ad iustce vivendum vel fortiter vel temperate, quod est quasi finis proximus agibilium." Other texts, including the first one quoted here, make it clear that the "cognitionem naturalem" mentioned here is complemented by a natural desire. See Chapter 4, § 4.4.1.
provides a theory of development, an outline of the movement from the natural and nascent dispositions of human consciousness to the achievement of truly moral character. The interaction between practical wisdom and the moral virtues constitutes a formative process in which the natural is transformed into the connatural and the potential into the actual. Wise choice--that is, recta electio or choice informed by practical wisdom--seems to play the pivotal part in this development inasmuch as it not only establishes that we act well here and now, but also forms habits or moral virtues which habituate the intention of good ends.

This problem of circularity dissolves once we understand that wise choice has a double-sided relationship to the moral virtues. It can stand both as cause and as expression of them. First, the wise choice of means causes or forms habits of intention. Just as coming to understand one or two examples of, say, a math problem allows one to grasp a general principle of mathematics, so choosing to be just in particular instances forms a moral character disposed to justice for its own sake. There is a cumulative effect in which the natural disposition to the end develops into the connatural disposition of the moral virtues. Second, wise choice is the consequence and expression of moral virtue. Right choice becomes increasingly likely as the good end becomes increasingly connatural, as what one regularly, easily and enjoyably intends. Hence, it is just as appropriate to say that the moral virtues depend on practical wisdom, which defines right choice, as it is to say that practical wisdom depends on the moral virtues since they incline us to the ends of temperance, courage and justice, as if these ends were natural to us.
Much of the ground work has already been laid for this interpretation of the dynamic relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues. We have already seen how moral habits determine which ends we intend, how acts of choice form our moral habits, and why Aquinas considers the moral habits to participate in practical wisdom. I would like, however, to focus in more detail on three important points. The first is that the virtues develop or emerge by degrees through the choices which we make. The second is that this development arises out of our natural orientation and forms that nature, realizing its fulfillment. The human orientation toward integrity is realized in the existential knowledge of practical wisdom, the knowledge that forms our character and determines what we actually do. The third is that this process is integrative and that practical wisdom is constitutive of this integration.

First, then, the virtues develop over time as a function of the choices we make. Thomas makes it clear that moral virtues are not an all or nothing proposition so that one either is or is not virtuous. To the contrary, some individuals are more virtuous than others and more virtuous at some periods of life than at others. This may be due to one’s native talents and dispositions, clarity of judgment, a gift of divine grace or merely due to a greater habituation ("maiorem assuetudinem").

Now the Commentary on the Ethics makes clear what is meant by a greater habituation:

\[ST, \text{I-II, q 66, a 1}: \text{Si vero consideretur virtus ex parte subiecti participantis, sic contingit virtutem esse maiorem vel minorem: sive secundum diversa tempora, in eodem; sive in diversis hominibus. . . . Unus est melius dispositus quam alius: vel propter maiorem assuetudinem, vel propter meliorem dispositionem naturae, vel propter perspicacius iudicium rationis, aut etiam propter maius gratiae donum.}\]
Aristotle shows that virtues cause acts similar to those from which they are generated. He says that [both] the genesis and the growth of the virtues come from the same acts (and [their] degeneration if they are taken in the contrary way). . . . For since we avoid pleasures, we become temperate, and when we have become temperate, we are much more able to avoid pleasures. And this holds similarly in the virtue of courage. We become courageous when we accustom ourselves to minimizing and enduring frightening things, and when we have become courageous, we are all the more capable of doing this.

(Ostendit quod virtus similes operationes producit eis ex quibus generatur. Et dicit quod ex eisdem operibus fiunt generationes virtutum et augmentationes et corruptiones si contrario modo accipiantur.... Quia ex hoc quod recedimus a voluptatibus efficimur temperati; et quando facti sumus temperati, maxime possumus recedere a voluptatibus. Et similiter se habet in virtute fortitudinis: quia per hoc quod sumus assueti contemnere et sustinere terribilia, efficimur fortes, et facti fortes maxime hoc possumus facere, In II Ethic, lect 2, n 264.)

In this passage Aquinas is clearly describing a cumulative process and claiming that the choices we make are the dynamic that drives us forward toward greater ability. Hence, right choice precedes virtue and follows from it. The difference, of course, between the preceding, "pre-virtuous choice" and the consequent "virtuous choice" resides in the character of the one who makes the choice. From the variety of contexts one faces and the many choices one makes, one can move toward an unified identity which determines how one will be disposed for new contexts and new choices. These many choices form one's character, form the intentions that will be operative in future deliberations and choices.61

Hence, we turn to the second point. We become all the more capable of virtuous choice because connatural intentions of ends follow upon our natural inclina-

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61Thus, we saw in § 5.2.2 that a moral habit establishes an end and principle of action, the bonum secundum se, not the bonum hic et nunc.
tion. Now the natural inclination to the end may be understood as what precedes the moral virtues and enables us to choose rightly prior to acquiring the virtues. Hence, we read that the per se or essential act of the will consists of the natural intention of the end, whereas electio is formed by reason and regards the means to the end. The natural inclination, however, may also be understood as the essential principle which each of the moral virtues augments or develops in a specific way. For instance, in his Commentary on the Sentences Thomas discusses the general end to which the end of all the virtues can be reduced as to an essential principle. This general principle which governs in the emotions and in actions is to do the good as determined by reason ("intentum in omnibus virtutibus moralibus, ut passiones et operationes ad rectitudinem rationis reducantur").

We have already discussed this principle, the natural habit of synderesis, in Chapter 4 (§ 4.4.1), but I want to stress here that each moral virtue is a particular or specified way of intending this same end. It is this extension of nature, this emergence of the connatural out of the natural, which I have in mind when I embrace the term "virtuous circle." The point that the moral virtues further develop our natural intention is confirmed in the Summa:

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62. ST, III, q 18, a 4: "Voluntas per se loquendo, est ipsius finis; electio autem eorum quae sunt ad finem. Et sic simpliciter voluntas est idem quod voluntas ut natura; electio autem est idem quod voluntas ut ratio." Cf. ST, I, q 60, a 2. Aristotle correlates choice with the means relevant to the end at NE, III, 2, (1111b26).

63. In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3: "Finis autem proximus humanae vitae est bonum rationis in communi; unde dicit Dionysius quod malum hominis est contra rationem esse: et ideo est intentum in omnibus virtutibus moralibus, ut passiones et operationes ad rectitudinem rationis reducantur. Rectitudo autem rationis naturalis est; unde hoc modo praestitutio finis ad naturalem rationem pertinet." Thomas also uses this quotation from Pseudo-Dionysius in ST, I-II, q 18, a 5 and q 71, a 2.
The proper end of any moral virtue is this very thing: to conform to right reason. Temperance, for instance, intends this [conformity to reason] lest the desire for pleasure divert a person from reason. Similarly, courage [intends the same] lest fear or recklessness divert one from the right judgment of reason. And natural reason presents this end to the person, for natural reason dictates to each that he act according to reason.

(Hoc ipsum quod est conformari rationi rectae est finis proprius cuiuslibet moralis virtutis: temperantia enim hoc intendit, ne propter concupiscientias homo divertat a ratione; et similiter fortitudo ne a recto iudicio rationis divertat propter timorem vel audaciam. Et hic finis praestitus est hominì secundum naturalem rationem: naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique ut secundum rationem operetur, ST, II-II, q 47, a 7.)

Temperance differs from courage because our desire for pleasure differs from our fear of danger or hardship, yet each of these virtues better enables us to do what we are already naturally inclined to do--to act in accord with reason ("conformari rationi rectae"). As we acquire the moral virtues we become more fulfilled in our nature, more able to pursue what we naturally desire despite the complex and myriad circumstances which we experience.64 We see then that individual acts of temperance or courage make us more capable of such acts because we become connaturally inclined to intend the reasonable over the pleasurable or safe course. Yet becoming temperate or brave is possible only because we already possess a natural inclination which precedes the supervening connatural habits.65

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64 De Virt, a 6: "Per naturalem siquidem appetitum homo inclinatur ad appetendum proprium bonum; sed cum hoc multipliciter varietur, et in multis bonum hominis consistat; non potuit homini inesse naturalis appetitus huius boni determinati, secundum conditiones omnes quae requiruntur ad hoc quod sit ei bonum; cum hoc multipliciter varietur secundum diversas conditiones personarum et temporum et locorum, et huiusmodi."

65 ST, II-II, q 155, a 2: "Est autem considerandum quod naturales inclinationes principia sunt omnium supervenientium." On courage and the desire to act according to reason see ST, II-II, q 123, a 4.
Finally, we return to considering the role of practical wisdom in the development of one’s moral character. Thomas argues that the virtues in one person have a kind of proportionate equality like the fingers on one hand, so that, for example, one who is just will also be courageous to a proportionate degree. Moreover, practical wisdom is the reason for this proportionality among the moral virtues because it is the formal principle for each of the virtues. Accordingly, although Aquinas outlines a symbiotic or interdependent relationship between practical wisdom and the moral virtues, he nonetheless gives priority to practical wisdom over the moral virtues. This is because "ordo" or integration is the discovery and achievement of reason.

In *ST*, I-II, q 61, a 2 Aquinas seeks to defend the fundamental or foundational character of the four cardinal virtues. All other virtues are rooted in practical wisdom, justice, temperance and courage, these four being essential to human moral character. Yet practical wisdom is principle among these four. We can see that this is so, he argues, if we consider that the formal principle in all human virtues is "rationis bonum," the good found through reason. Now this good may be considered, in one way, in the very activity of reason itself, and so there is the virtue of practical wisdom. It also may considered, however, as the "ordo" which reason brings to oper-

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66 *ST*, I-II, q 66, a 2: "Sic igitur et ratio aequalitatis virtutum potest accipi ex parte prudentiae, quantum ad id quod est formale in omnibus virtutibus moralibus: existente enim ratione aequaliter perfecta in uno et eodem, oportet quod proportionaliter secundum rationem rectam medium constituatur in qualibet materia virtutum."

67 *ST*, I-II, q 61, a 2, ad 3: "Omnès aliae virtutes quarum una est principalior alia, reducuntur ad praedictas quatuor;" *ibid*, ad 1: "Prudentia est simpliciter principalior omnibus. Sed aliae ponuntur principales unaquaque in suo genere."
ations and emotions.\textsuperscript{68} Hence, there are the virtues of justice (\textit{ordo} in the will itself), temperance (\textit{ordo} in the concupiscible power), and courage (\textit{ordo} in the irascible power). The just person intends fairness and respect for what is due to another in his human relationships. The temperate person intends moderation in the indulgence of his desires, and the courageous person intends commitment in his pursuit of the good, despite pressures, obstacles and dangers. These habits and ends are universal human goods, but the means of putting them into affect depends on practical wisdom. Thus, the priority of practical wisdom rests with the fact that the moral virtues are habits which allow the various faculties to participate in reason.\textsuperscript{69}

This much is now clear: in the emergence of the connatural out of the natural, practical wisdom is formative and integrative, building on our natural desire for a coherent character and life.\textsuperscript{70} We can now find in this analysis the way to resolve two seemingly disparate claims. I have noted several times Aquinas's comment that human goodness is essentially the goodness of the will or heart, and not a function of the knowledge or skills one possesses (\textit{ST}, I-II, q 56, a 3; \textit{De Virt}, a 7, ad 2). Yet we also read that practical wisdom is superior to the moral virtues,

\textsuperscript{68} \textit{Ibid}, "Principium enim formale virtutis de qua nunc loquimur, est rationis bonum. Quod quidem dupliciter potest considerari. Uno modo, secundum quod in ipsa consideratione rationis consistit. Et sic erit una virtus principalis, quae dicitur prudentia. Alio modo, secundum quod circa aliquid ponitur rationis ordo. Et hoc vel circa operationes... vel circa passiones."

\textsuperscript{69} \textit{Ibid}: "Quadruplex enim inventur subiectum huius virtutis de qua nunc loquimur: Scilicet rationale per essentiam, quod prudentia perficit; et rationale per participationem, quod dividitur in tria; idest in voluntatem, quae est subiectum iustitiae; et in concupiscibilem, quae est subiectum temperantiae; et in irascibilem, quae est subiectum fortitudinis."

\textsuperscript{70} \textit{In III Sent}, d 33, q 1, a 1, sol 2: "Appetitus autem respectu alicuius est rectus naturaliter, sicut respectu finis ultimi, prout quilibet naturaliter vult esse felix: sed respectu aliorum rectitudo appetitus ex ratione causatur, secundum quod appetitus aliqualiter ratione participate."
which participate in reason, because reason is the cause and root of human goodness ("causa et radix humani boni est ratio"). It seems, then, quite clear that in Aquinas's psychology the perfection of human character is found neither in knowledge (science) nor in the heart alone (natural inclination), but in the knowledge which reaches to the heart (the participation of the will and emotions in practical wisdom). Practical wisdom is knowledge which forms the whole person because it determines not merely what a person knows, but one's reasons and purposes for acting, the reasons of the heart.

We began this section by noting a confusion about the relationship of practical wisdom to the end. There are a plethora of texts in which Aquinas divides up the labor of making a right choice between the intention of the end (the moral virtue) and the determination of means (practical wisdom). Yet several texts, including ST, I-II, q 66, a 3, ad 3 which I quoted at the beginning of this section, state that practical wisdom presents the end to the moral virtues (cf. In III Sent, d 33, q 2, aa 3 & 5). In clarifying this difficulty an important point has become clear. If we think of the virtues in terms of their genesis, the determination of means precedes the connatural (but not the natural) intention of ends. The electio is the choice of what to do here and now, and therefore its object is the means relevant to some intended end. Still, reasoned choice is formative of habits, and when the wise choice of a

71 ST, I-II, q 66, a 1: "Causa et radix humani boni est ratio. Et ideo prudentia, quae perficit rationem, praefertur in bonitate aliis virtutibus moralibus, perficientibus vim appetitivam inquantum participat rationem." Cf. In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 5.

72 For example, ST, I-II, q 58, a 4, quoted in § 5.3.1. Cf. In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3 et ad 2; De Ver, q 5, a 1; In VI Ethic, lect 10, n 1269; ST, I-II, q 65, a 1; II-II, q 47, a 7.
certain object, say an act of fairness or honesty, is habituated, that object then operates as a principle or end in one's character. So, for example, when a person has chosen to tell the truth, honesty itself may become an end and *per se* good, something this person chooses for its own sake. Aquinas explains this as follows:

The inclination of [appetites] to the proper end, which is the intention of the end in the acquired virtues, is due to right reason. For from acts governed by reason the habits of these virtues are inculcated, causing the inclination, and in this respect [practical wisdom] is called the engenderer of the virtues.

(Per rationem rectam est inclinatio earum in finem proprium, quae est intentio finis in virtutibus acquisitis, inquantum ex operibus ratione regulatis habitus virtutis praedictam inclinationem causans inductur; et quantum ad hoc [prudentia] dicitur genitrix virtutum, *In III Sent*, d 33, q 2, a 5.)

Honesty becomes an element in a person's character only after he or she has chosen to act honestly at specific moments in life. Hence, practical wisdom forms our intentions by defining our choices. As we act in the specific contexts of our daily lives, we define ourselves, our characters and the ends we seek. In the debate over whether the passions or reason dominate in our moral existence, Aquinas offers a complex and mature analysis; he articulates wholeness which at first is our aspiration and which later through living and acting day to day may be our fulfillment.

5.4.2 Meaning in Action

There is a final, important point regarding the dichotomy of means and ends. When Aquinas uses this dichotomy in his analysis of practical wisdom he means something different from his use of it in regards to artistic or productive endeavors.
The end of practical wisdom is some good act chosen for its own sake, some kind of activity intended as an end in itself, possessing intrinsic value ("perfectio est ipsum agere"). The end of an artistic or productive activity, however, is not in the good activity itself, but in the art or thing produced. Thus, the work produced is the measure of the value of one's art, but the deed itself—that is, the deed chosen for the sake of some end—is the measure of the value of one's character. Accordingly, we have found that the virtuous intention of ends, which operates as a principle in wise practical reasoning, is not essential for judgments in productive activity ("non diiudicantur a nobis bene vel male secundum dispositionem appetitus nostri"). Such judgments determine what needs to be done in order to accomplish the work, but do not determine whether or not the work should be done. That is, they are not moral judgments about the value of the activity itself, as are judgments of practical wisdom (which explains why practical reason culminates in a command, whereas artistic reason culminates in a judgment, stopping short of the determination to act: cf. § 4.2; ST, II-II, q 47, a 8).

To say, then, that practical wisdom determines the means relevant to a good end refers to the participation of the means, that is, the chosen action, in the end,  

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73 ST, I-II, q 57, a 5: "Sed prudentiae bonum attenditur in ipso agente, cuius perfectio est ipsum agere: est enim prudentia recta ratio agibilium." In VI Ethic, lect 2, n 1136: "Facit enim omnis faciens propter aliquid, quod est alcius, idest quod habet aliquem usum, sicut usus domus est habitatio; et talis quidem est finis facientis, sicut factum et non actu. Quia in agibilibus ipsa bona actio est finis, puta bene concupiscere vel bene irasci." Cf. In VI Ethic, lect 4, n 1167.

74 ST, I-II, q 58, a 5, ad 2: "Principia artificialium non diiudicantur a nobis bene vel male secundum dispositionem appetitus nostri, sicut fines, qui sunt moralium principia: sed solum per considerationem rationis. Et ideo urs non requirit virtutem pericientem appetitum, sicut requirit prudentia."
the intended good. It does not refer to the activity insofar as it is the means of producing a certain object or state of affairs. Another way of putting this is to note that the end of practical wisdom is intrinsic to the action, whereas the end of productive activity is extrinsic to the action. To be sure, through one and the same action, one may intend both types of ends. That is, one may intend an act both for its own sake (as an expression of a per se good) and for its good consequences. Such an action will be the means to the achievement of both a value and a good effect. For example, a heroic deed may result in others being saved from hardship or death (a good effect), but also has intrinsic value as an expression of human bravery. We honor heroic acts, therefore, even if they do not succeed since the willingness to undertake the risk is itself commendable. Brave action is itself a good.

Though both types of ends may be intended in one action, the virtues which allow us to realize these distinct ends remain distinct. The skill that allows one to achieve good results--the skill of a fireman, for example, that allows him to rescue someone--remains distinct from the practical wisdom which allows one to discern what is worth doing. Despite all of a person's experience, know-how, education and skill (i.e., despite one's art and practical science), there remains the need for practical wisdom, the wisdom of knowing when to act and of being able to evaluate what is worth doing in light of one's ultimate horizon. Wise and meaningful conduct expresses what one values in a manner suitable for the situation at hand. The act will have value if it expresses the intention of a good; it will be suitable if it is likely
to result in the realization of this good in these circumstances.\textsuperscript{75}

To clarify this further, notice how the following text deals with Aristotle's concept of the median.\textsuperscript{76} The text requires us to understand the median both as the end intended by each of the moral virtues, and as the means chosen for sake of realizing the end:

For natural reason dictates to each that he act according to reason. But whether and how a person attains the reasonable median in conduct depends on being practically wise. For although the attainment of the median is the end of moral virtue, nonetheless, the median is found through the right determination of the means relevant to the end.

(Naturalis enim ratio dictat unicuique ut secundum rationem operetur. Sed qualiter et per quae homo in operando attingat medium rationis pertinet ad dispositionem prudentiae. Licet enim attingere medium sit finis virtutis moralis, tamen per rectam dispositionem eorum quae sunt ad finem medium inventur, ST, II-II, q 47, a 7.)

The median is the end which each moral virtue intends in its own way, but it can only be found and acted out as the means ordered to the end. It can only be found, that is, in the concrete as a particular action under particular circumstances. \textit{Recta agibilita} are the means in the sense that they are the actual expression of the intended end. They are the median as defined in the particular by practical wisdom; they are justice, temperance and courage as those principles can be enacted and realized here and now. Indeed, it is only when the intention finds expression in actual conduct that

\textsuperscript{75} L. Yearley writes in this regard: "Even more important, unlike slavish people, virtuous people recognize not only \textit{acquisitive} but also \textit{expressive} motives for action. They will choose a virtuous action not only because it contributes to goods they pursue but also because it expresses their conception of the good." \textit{Mencius and Aquinas}, 22. Yearley's emphasis.

\textsuperscript{76} I.e., the proportionate and reasonable emotion or action. On Aristotle's treatment of the median in regard to the emotions see § 5.2.1, and § 5.3.2 where his definition of moral virtue is given.
practical wisdom has achieved its true end ("operationes quae sunt fines"). Through the operations of practical wisdom and right choice, intended ends achieve esse, existence.

We have seen that in practical reason it is necessary, if one is to determine what actually ought to be done, that the person discern the universal in the singular. We have also seen that with moral virtue the good principle intended as an end comes to be desired in one’s affective response to the present situation. This theme of an interplay between the abstract and the particular has its climax in the notion of meaningful action. We now conclude that the act itself which practical wisdom commands is the singular and actual expression of the universal and potential good to which one aspires. An action is meaningful because it is the actual expression of an intended value and the concrete realization of the principle of synderesis: it is doing good and avoiding evil in a manner congruent with one’s understanding of the human good, with one’s virtuous intention, one’s affect and judgment. One’s ultimate horizon of concern becomes manifest in one’s lived existence.

5.5 Conclusion

Aquinas’s analysis of the virtues focuses primarily on their definitions, their interrelationships, their mutual interdependence. He defines the virtues by noting that habits form powers and that powers dispose us to operations. The virtues, then,

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77 Cf. In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 3, ad 4: "Non quaelibet operatio est finis moralis virtutis, sed illa qua attingitur medium, in quo est bonum rationis. Sed operationes illae in quibus quae sunt fines."
must be understood ultimately in relation to the natural orientation and operations which they perfect. This point has proven crucial to my argument because the possible alternative methods of definition would never reveal the inescapable link between virtue and human fulfillment. We cannot define the virtues in relation to some specific culture or form of societal organization, some set of hypostatized duties or fundamental precepts, or even to some set of minimum conditions of social existence if we are to grasp their centrality to the study of ethics. The virtues enable us to be human, to fulfill the yearning and potential within us, to discover the good and act with meaning.

This notion of virtue arises out of Thomas’s insistence on defining them relative to the perfection of our given human powers, not in some endeavor to limit or channel those powers in order to accommodate the exigencies of some feudal, renaissance or capitalist culture. Indeed, we must question a society and its institutions, as for example Josef Pieper does in his Leisure, in light of this notion of fulfillment. Culture and society properly serve human existence and provide the context in which persons may flourish as human beings, but neither do human beings flourish except in and for a social context. A civilization falters to the extent that it inhibits the realization of our humanity.

Aquinas’s approach to the virtues, his definitions and mapped out interrelationships, have given way in this chapter to a theory of emergence. Beyond an account of what the virtues are, Aquinas offers us an account of how they come to be. This theory allows us to understand better the relationship between virtue and
culture because both emerge out of the dynamic of human operations. In his theory of the emergence of the virtues, his analysis of operations comes to the fore. We must grasp how practical judgments about means relate to intentions of ends, how choices form intentions and judgments form choices. Through such operations, cooperations between intellect, will, emotions and the discursive power become routine, easy and enjoyable. One moves toward integrity and meaningful existence. On the intellectual side, one begins with the desire to know and moves from sensation to memory, from memory to experience, and from experience to abstract ideas. On the volitional side, one begins with a disposition to the good and moves from desire to choice and from choice to intention. One’s will is formed by one’s practical reasoning, and one’s wisdom becomes rooted in one’s heart. Thus, we see that practical wisdom begins as a seed, a seed which Aquinas calls synderesis, and grows one choice at a time, forming one’s heart, one’s character and identity.

This dynamic process may yield not only persons of character, but also societies grounded in the insights and choices of persons of character. To pit culture over against the individual is as naive as pitting affectivity and passion over against reason. Aquinas, we have found, rejects the latter approach for a theory of development in which one’s drive for integrity and wholeness as a person takes passion, will and reason up into itself, thereby forming the identity and integrity of a person. Thus, the moral virtues stand as the first principles of practical reason, but, in turn, are called moral because they are habits participating in practical wisdom. This interdependence does not constitute an untenable circularity, but rather describes the
results of a dynamic process leading to an integrated self. Similarly, this same drive
takes us beyond the imaginary borders of an asocial individualism to the reality of
human society where interdependence is also the true reality, where the endeavor to
be human gets played out publically, and where culture tries to speak to the well-
being of the person as much as the person tries to find fulfillment through his or her
participation in the well-being of society. Here too we find the possibility of an
emerging interdependence. Thus, neither the virtues nor a specific culture provides
the foundation for Aquinas’s theory of ethics. Instead, both unfold in the inevitable
interplay between individual and society as human beings strive for human fulfill-
ment. It is this question of fulfillment which provides the normative parameters for
the virtues and for a viable civilization.

Finally, we must admit that this dynamic is in process, not completed. We
have seen in Chapter 4 that the priority Aquinas gives to contemplation over practi-
cal reason has merit because the question of meaning and the search for the whole
seem always to remain before us. The values of a culture, the grasp of the human
good, the discovery of the whole from which the person of practical wisdom reasons
about what to do here and now, the search for the unity in the multiple goods of
one's life--these are never finished achievements. The search for meaningful exist-
ence moves forward both as the search for a theoretical horizon and as the formation
of one’s heart and lived existence.
CONCLUSION

In the introductory chapter I indicated that our investigation was to be concerned more with the conditions necessary for being ethical than with an investigation into the foundations for a theory of ethical precepts. As I have argued, the conditions needed for an ethical life extend beyond the need for an adequate theory of ethics. We have been about the task of articulating what these cognitive, volitional and affective conditions are. It is quite common for those opposed to an ethics of virtue to argue that one must first establish the fundamental and normative precept of ethics before concerning oneself with the virtues that would enable one to abide by this fundamental duty. There seems to be a clear logic to this argument, but, in fact, if accepted it causes one to overlook the real basis and foundation for ethics. The argument can cause us to lose sight of the real existential problem in the drive to find the clear and certain theoretical justification for ethical precepts. We, on the other hand, have been concerned with understanding our existential situation, that is, the human condition and the problem of living a fulfilling life.

Ethics too often remains for the philosopher a theoretical or even a logical problem. When this happens, finding a theory of ethics seems more important than obtaining practical wisdom, but if one focuses on the task of actually being ethical, then practical wisdom, as we have discussed it, is clearly of more import than having
a theory. A person trained in a theory may not be able to mediate between abstract ideas and real situations that challenge one to respond justly, bravely, temperately and wisely. The person of practical wisdom is the person who has become able to do just this. Thus, the abstract quality of philosophical investigations into ethics become all too easily abstractions from the reality of the human situation and the human struggle to live meaningfully. When, however, we attend to the real problem, the need for the virtues is easily grasped.

Thinking about Hume's claim that judgments of fact can never yield duties or "oughts" illustrates my point. Perhaps Hume's argument would be true if human beings had no vested interest in their own existence, no interest in the character and story which that existence is in the process of becoming, no interest in the question of the good to be done. Then the established facts would never yield a logic of duties. Yet nothing could be further from the truth: the principle of synderesis is the dynamic human orientation toward meaningful existence, toward action informed by reasoned judgment and judgment informed ultimately by the broadest reaches of human inquiry into the human situation and the human good. In other words, the precept to do good and avoid evil does not need to be derived from any fact other than the fact that it is in the nature of human existence to seek out a reasonable way of being. The problem of being ethical is one we are born with, one we always live with, and one we are disposed to by nature. For by nature the human will is a rational appetite, a desire, that is, to intend and choose according to one's own best judgment. When we fall short of that good, the regret we feel is not the internalized
guilt imposed on us by a demanding social order, not the learned regret of a super-ego. It is rather the regret of our own selves, regretting the loss of our own self-governance, our own reasonableness and integrity.

Human integrity cannot fall short of action. It cannot, that is, be an integration of thoughts, intentions and feelings unless this integration takes up into itself how we actually choose and act. For as the last chapter argued, it is through our choices that our characters are formed, one choice at a time. The coherence of one's identity and one's self-understanding depends finally on the coherence between intellect and will. This is the coherence we are born to achieve, for if we are disposed to it by nature, we accomplish it only through the actual achievement of the virtues. Thus, we have argued that the moral virtues satisfy an universal human and not a cultural need.

Thomas Hobbes asserted in his *Leviathan* that there is no *summum bonum*. Human beings, he argued, live out of ego in a tireless pursuit of self-interest, a pursuit ending only in death. Each gain and accomplishment is but the means to further gain and accomplishment, and there is, therefore, no intrinsic or *per se* good. That is, there is no way of being which is itself a good, no authenticity, only the struggle for power. From this point of view, the virtues must necessarily lose their centrality to practical philosophy because the ethics of virtue rests on the opposite claim—that there is a *telos* and an authenticity, a way of being, that we strive for and can achieve to some imperfect extent. Once this claim that there is a way of being which is an end in itself is denied, the idea of the virtues must be reinterpreted.
Since the virtues cannot be the conditions of human fulfillment (for there is no such thing), they come to be understood as the socially defined conditions for the conformity of the individual with the social order. Understood this way, the virtues have no clear relation to the well-being of the person, no justification in an intrinsic human good. Rather, their justification depends on one or another concept of the social order, and as concepts of the social order vary so also do concepts of the virtues.

This modern notion of virtue has survived up to the present time, and even Alasdair MacIntyre, who has so impressively put his hopes on a revival of an ethics of virtue, has not fully seen his way through to a normative account of the virtues. If, however, one begins as we have with the problem of reconciling knowledge and action and with the question of how knowledge contributes to one's lived existence, then the analysis yields a normative account of ethics and the virtues. For we find that the breach between knowledge and action is not merely a philosophical problem, but is first and foremost an existential problem. To be human is to strive for the integration of one's broadest theoretical, philosophical and religious insights with one's day-to-day life. To be human, therefore, is to strive for the virtues, the effective habits which establish this integration.

The human struggle moves forward through both theoretical and practical investigations, through inquiry that ends in the achievement of truth and through inquiry that ends in good action. These often seem disparate and unrelated efforts, and indeed Aquinas, as we have seen, clearly stresses that the theoretical endeavor
matters for little if one's heart is sour and one's character false. Yet the two endeavors are also interdependent. We have seen that practical wisdom and the moral virtues can inform and sustain one's pursuit of theoretical wisdom and also that practical wisdom begins from the end, that is, from an individual's or a culture's grasp of the human good. Both the theoretical and the practical endeavors are true goods of human life; both inform and support each other, and both aim toward the same fulfillment. In the final analysis the effort to know cannot be divorced from the effort to achieve a meaningful existence; it is part of that effort. Human action expresses one's self-understanding of one's place in society, history, the totality. Nothing less would satisfy our search for meaning.
Primary Sources and Research Tools

Editions

Work is on-going, and we can expect that in the future there will be a definitive and critical edition of St. Thomas's works. This will be: Editio Leonina. S. Thomae Aquinatis Opera Omnia. Iussu Leonis XIII edita. Rome: 1882-present. The Leonine edition is incomplete and the earlier volumes, which includes the Summa Theologiae, need to be redone. For this reason, as well as because of easy access, my standard source is the Parma edition: S. Thomae Opera Omnia, 25 vols. Secundum Impressionem Petri Fiaccadori. Parma: 1852-1873; photographic reproduction: New York: Musurgia Publishers, 1948/9.

In addition to the Parma Edition, I consulted other editions, including the Leonine. Most helpful is the Ottawa edition of the Summa Theologiae (College Dominicain d'Ottawa, 1941) because of its notes and references to parallel texts. I also depended on the volumes published by Casa Marietti, Torino-Rome. Marietti often begins from the Leonine, but with the advantage that they provide paragraph numbers for Aquinas's commentaries on Aristotle's works and for the Summa Contra Gentiles. These have been standardized somewhat insofar as they have been carried over to English translations. Wherever possible I have provided these numbers even though they are not found in the Parma edition.

All translations of Aquinas's texts are my own. Other English translations have been consulted, however, and these are cited below.

Works Cited: Dates and Abbreviations

The difficulties in establishing the chronology of Thomas's works stems from the great number of them and from the questions of authenticity about lesser works. The larger picture and the sequence of the major works is well established (I have
cited no works of questionable authenticity). One might for instance be unsure whether the De Virtutibus was written before or after the Pars Prima Secundae of the Summa Theologiae, but it is clear that both are late works reflecting Aquinas's mature thought. There is no doubt that both were written after the Summa Contra Gentiles, as there is no doubt that the Scriptum Super IV Libros Sententiarum is his earliest major work. Books addressing the state of the Opera Omnia and the chronology are cited below. Most reliable is Weisheipl's second, revised edition of Friar Thomas D'Aquino, listed below.

The following is a list of Aquinas's works cited along with my abbreviations and forms of citation. They are listed chronologically according to the order of the Thomistic Bibliography, 1940-1978, compiled by Terry L Miethe and Vernon J. Bourke. Their dating is given, followed by Weisheipl's in brackets when there is disagreement. Generally, Weisheipl's dates are later. His dating of De Malo is a notable exception, but this is because he holds that the crucial question 6 on the free will (giving one of Aquinas's most important statements on that question) was a later work inserted by editors into De Malo. Thomas's mature work can be dated from about 1268--many commentators find some developments between the Pars Prima and Pars Prima Secundae of the Summa Theologiae--but the continuity of Thomas's thought from the Sentences to his last works is much more impressive than any developments.

Scriptum Super IV Libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi. 1254-1256 [1252-1256] (In I-IV Sent, division, question, article, solution, response ad objection. E.g., In III Sent, d 33, q 2, a 1, sol 2, ad 3.)

Questiones Disputatae de Veritate. 1256-1259 (De Ver, question, article, response ad objection. E.g., De Ver, q 2, a 2, ad 2.)

Expositio Super Boetium de Trinitate. 1257-1258 [1258-1259] (In Boeth De Trin, question, article, response ad objection.)

Summa Contra Gentiles. 1258-1264 [1259-1264] (SCG, books I-IV, chapter #. When known, the Marietti number is given. E.g., SCG, III, 25, #3.)

In X Libros Ethicorum ad Nicomachum Expositio. 1266-1269 [1271] (In I-X Ethic, lecture #, Marietti note #. E.g., In I Ethic, lect 1, n 1.)

In II Primos Libros Politicorum Expositio. 1266-1268 [1269-1272] (In I-III Politic, lecture #, Marietti note #.)

Summa Theologiae. 1266-1273 (ST, I, I-II, II-II or III, question, article, response ad objection. E.g., ST, I-II, q 47, a 8, ad 1.)
Questiones Disputatae de Malo. 1268-1269 [1266-1267] (De Malo, question, article, response ad objection.)

In Libros Perihermeneias Expositio. 1269-1272 [1270-1271] (In I-II Periherm, lecture #, Marietti note #.)

In Libros Posteriorum Analyticorum Expositio. 1268 [1269-1272] (In I-II Post Anal, lecture #, Marietti #.)

In XII Libros Metaphysicorum Expositio. 1268-1272 (In I-XII Meta, lecture #, Marietti #.)

Questiones Disputatae de Anima. 1269-1270 (De Anima, article, response ad objection.)

Questiones Disputatae de Virtutibus in Communi. 1269-1272 (De Virt, article, response ad objection.)

In Libros de Anima Expositio. 1270-1272 [1269-1270] (In II-III De Anima, lecture #, Marietti #.)

English Translations Consulted


Research Tools


Busa, Roberto, ed. Index Thomisticus, 49 vols. Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag and Gunter Holzboog, K.G., 1976-80. (Indices and concordances of all words in the opera omnia.)


Secondary Sources: Book Length


**Secondary Sources: Journal Articles and Chapters in Books**


VITA

Stephen A. Calogero was born in Utica, New York. He attended Hamilton College and Boston College and earned his Bachelor of Arts in 1982. Upon graduation, he taught for one year at St. John's High School in Belize City, Belize, Central America. Studying under the auspices of a Lonergan Fellowship, he received his Master of Arts in philosophy from Boston College in 1985. He then enrolled at Loyola University of Chicago to pursue his doctorate in philosophy. At Loyola, Calogero benefitted from several awards, including two teaching assistantships, a teaching fellowship and an Arthur J. Schmitt dissertation fellowship. Since 1990, Calogero has been teaching philosophy at St. Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, and has been concentrating on ethics, Thomism and the thought of Bernard Lonergan.
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15 December 1993
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