ABSTRACT

Growth in Infused Virtue in the Work of Thomas Aquinas

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Thomas Aquinas inherits two distinct conceptions of the virtuous human being. From Aristotle, he receives a vision of harmony and human achievement: through the process of habituation, the distinct parts of the virtuous soul are operating as one under the guidance of reason. From Augustine, Aquinas receives a vision of moral struggle and victory through divine assistance: the virtuous person is able to resist the inclinations of the flesh through virtues that are given by God and only fully actualized in the next life. This dissertation explores an underappreciated area of Aquinas's thought—on the topic of growth in the infused virtues—where he brings these teachings of Aristotle and Augustine into a brilliant harmony.

In order to fully understand and appreciate Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue, one must first understand the essence of the infused virtues and their increase. This is the goal of Chapters Two and Three. In Chapter Two, I explore Aquinas's discussion of habits in the *Summa Theologiae* by tracing three important topics: the essence of habits, the cause of habits, and the increase of habits. In Chapter Three, I elucidate Aquinas's teaching on the essence of the infused virtues and situate

these important virtues within his picture of the flourishing human life. The fourth chapter lays out Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue. I develop a metaphysical account of increase in infused virtue and pay careful attention to the associated stages. The chapter concludes with a close examination of the important imperfections that Aquinas associates with the infused virtues. I demonstrate that growth in infused virtue—rather than the development of the acquired virtues (as many contemporary commentators suggest)—is an effective remedy for these imperfections. In the concluding chapter, I emphasize the ways in which Aquinas's understanding of growth in infused virtue represents the deepest point of his harmony of Aristotle and Augustine. I also situate my project among two prominent interpretive trends in Thomistic literature and highlight two important implications of the project.

Growth in Infused Virtue in the Work of Thomas Aquinas

by

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DEDICATION

To Courtney

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Thomas Aquinas inherits two distinct conceptions of the virtuous human being. From Aristotle, he receives a vision of harmony and human achievement: through the process of habituation, the distinct parts of the virtuous soul are operating as one under the guidance of reason. From Augustine, Aquinas receives a vision of moral struggle and victory through divine assistance: the virtuous person is able to resist the inclinations of the flesh through virtues that are given by God and only fully actualized in the next life. In his teaching on human flourishing, Aquinas brings these two conceptions into a brilliant and complex harmony. This dissertation explores an underappreciated area of Aquinas's thought—on the topic of growth in the infused virtues—where this harmony of Aristotle and Augustine is most clearly on display.

1.1 Auctoritates *in Tension*

The project of harmonizing Aristotle and Augustine had already begun when Aquinas began his work. As Bonnie Kent points out,

> When Aquinas was teaching at the university of Paris, all of his colleagues were Christians; Augustine… was the most revered father of the Western church; Aristotle's works were required reading; and, while certain Aristotelian doctrines continued to be controversial, a good deal of his philosophy had already worked its way into the intellectual mainstream.[1]

[1] Bonnie Kent, *Virtues of the Will* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1995), 27.

In fact, Aquinas's teacher, Albert, was one of the greatest advocates for Aristotelian philosophy within the Dominican order.[2] Hence, Aquinas was trained with a respect for Aristotle's thought and an eye for integrating it with Augustine and the rest of Christian teaching.

In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle lays out a compelling and attractive account of human flourishing and the virtuous person. Human flourishing (*Eudaimonia*), he teaches, consists in "activity of the soul in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and most complete" (*NE* 1098a).[3] Rather than wealth or honor, human beings must seek to cultivate and exercise their virtues if they are to experience authentic flourishing. According to Aristotle, virtues are habits—stable character traits—that bring the different parts of the soul into accord with reason. They are of two sorts: intellectual virtues, which arise and develop through teaching, and moral virtues, which are the result of habituation (*NE* 1103a). Aristotle describes this process of habituation in the following way: "we become just by doing just actions, temperate by temperate actions, and courageous by courageous actions" (*NE* 1103b). The virtuous person, however, does not merely perform the correct actions; she performs those actions in the correct manner. This means, among other things, that her actions issue from her virtues. Virtuous activity, on Aristotle's view, exhibits three important characteristics. First, the virtues enable action that is consistent. As we develop virtues through the process of habituation, we become the kind of people who consistently perform the

[2] Michele Mulchahey. *"First the Bow is Ben in Study..." Dominican Education before 1350* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1998).

[3] All translations of the *Nicomachean Ethics* are from Roger Crisp, trans., *Nicomachean Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

actions associated with those virtues. Second, the virtues allow us to perform the associated actions quickly and easily. The courageous person does not have to work through a long process of deliberation in order to act courageously; instead, she quickly perceives the particulars of the situation, along with the appropriate course of action, and acts accordingly (*NE* 1117a). In other words, virtues make it natural to act in accordance with reason. Third, when an agent acts out of her virtues, she experiences pleasure. Aristotle describes the generous person, for example, as one who gives to others in the right way, and "with pleasure, or at least without pain, because what is done in accordance with virtue is pleasant or painless, and certainly not painful" (*NE* 1120a).

To modern readers, Aristotle's account may seem to fit quite nicely with Christian theology. This apparent compatibility is supported by passages like the following: "If there is anything that the gods give to men, it is reasonable that [human flourishing] should be god-given, especially since it is so much the best thing in the human world" (*NE* 1099b). Nonetheless, medieval reception of Aristotle's thought was quite hesitant until the time of Albert and Aquinas, because of perceived tensions with Christian teaching (especially Augustine).[4]

To bring out these tensions, consider three aspects of Augustine's teaching on human flourishing: the source of the virtues, the place of contrary emotions and desires, and his account of temperance. First, Augustine teaches that God is the only source of the virtues. In describing the cardinal virtues, he writes that "these virtues are great goods. But you must remember that even the lowest goods can exist only from him from whom

[4] These tensions appeared more serious after Robert Grosseteste completed his Latin translation of the full *Nicomachean Ethics* in 1246-7 and Aristotle's teaching on continence was made accessible. As Bonnie Kent points out, before Grosseteste's translation, medieval exposure to the *Ethics* was limited to the first three books (*Virtues of the Will*, 40).

all good things come, that is, from God" (*On Free Choice of the Will* 2.19).[5] While this passage illustrates a general sense in which the virtues (along with all other good things) are from God, Augustine also claims that there is a stronger sense in which they are from God. In the *City of God*, he contrasts two sets of virtues—one that is true and genuine, and one that actually turns out to be vicious:

> It is for this reason that the virtues which [the soul] seems to itself to possess, and by which it restrains the body and the vices that it may obtain and keep what it desires, are rather vices than virtues so long as there is no reference to God in the matter. For although some suppose that virtues which have a reference only to themselves, and are desired only on their own account, are yet true and genuine virtues, the fact is that even then they are inflated with pride, and are therefore to be reckoned vices rather than virtues. For as that which gives life to the flesh is not derived from flesh, but is above it, so that which gives blessed life to man is not derived from man, but is something above him (*City of God* XIX.25).[6]

The true virtues are not derived from man, but are given by something above him (i.e., God). Etienne Gilson elaborates: For Augustine, "we should speak of [a divine] illumination of the virtues which matches the illumination of the sciences… The four cardinal virtues, prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice, have no other source than this."[7] In claiming that God is the only source of true virtue, we see that Augustine's views are in tension with Aristotle's account of habituation as the cause of the moral virtues (which are true virtues on his account).

The second aspect of Augustine's thought that brings him into tension with Aristotle involves the place of contrary emotions and desires in the flourishing human

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[5] All translations from *On Free Choice of the Will* are from Thomas Williams, trans., *On Free Choice of the Will* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993).

[6] All translations from *City of God* are from Marcus Dods' translation in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 2*. Ed. Philip Schaff. (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887).

[7] Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of Saint Augustine* (New York: Random House, 1960), 131.

being. Augustine teaches that Christians will always be subject to disordered emotions and desires in this life. In his view, Paul's comments in Romans 7 necessitate this idea: "For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members" (vs. 22-3).[8] For instance, Augustine writes:

> Carnal concupiscence is remitted, indeed, in baptism; not so that it is put out of existence, but so that it is not to be imputed for sin. Although its guilt is now taken away, it still remains until our entire infirmity be healed by the advancing renewal of our inner man, day by day, when at last our outward man shall be clothed with incorruption (*On Marriage and Concupiscence* I.28).[9]

And he goes on to say, "Nevertheless, our wish ought to be nothing less than the nonexistence of these very desires, even if the accomplishment of such a wish be not possible in the body of this death" (*On Marriage and Concupiscence* I.30). In these passages, Augustine makes it clear that the Aristotelian picture of the virtuous person—with all of her emotions and desires in accord with reason—is unattainable in the present life. Only in the next life, when we are "clothed with incorruption," will this inner harmony be possible.

The third aspect of Augustine's thought is closely related to the second—namely, his account of temperance. In the *City of God*, he describes virtue, and temperance in particular, in the following way:

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[8] All translations of Scripture, unless noted as those of Aquinas, are from the ESV. See *On Marriage and Concupiscence* I.33. As Kent notes, "According to Augustine, Paul's remark must apply to the recipient of grace, for only through grace can the inner man delight in God's law" (*Virtues of the Will*, 209).

[9] All translations from *On Marriage and Concupiscence* are from Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, trans., and revised by Benjamin B. Warfield in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series, Vol. 5.* ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887).

> what is [virtue's] occupation save to wage perpetual war with vices—not those that are outside of us, but within; not other men's, but our own—a war which is waged especially by that virtue which the Greeks call *sophrosune,* and we temperance, and which bridles carnal lusts, and prevents them from winning the consent of the spirit to wicked deeds? For we must not fancy that there is no vice in us, when, as the apostle says, 'The flesh lusts against the spirit;' (Galatians 5:17) for to this vice there is a contrary virtue, when, as the same writer says, 'The spirit lusts against the flesh.' 'For these two,' he says, 'are contrary one to the other, so that you cannot do the things which you would.' But what is it we wish to do when we seek to attain the supreme good, unless that the flesh should cease to lust against the spirit, and that there be no vice in us against which the spirit may lust? And as we cannot attain to this in the present life, however ardently we desire it, let us by God's help accomplish at least this, to preserve the soul from succumbing and yielding to the flesh that lusts against it, and to refuse our consent to the perpetration of sin… And who is there so wise that he has no conflict at all to maintain against his vices? (XIX.4).

This description reveals the great difference between Augustine and Aristotle on the virtue of temperance. Augustine's account of this cardinal virtue closely resembles Aristotle's description of continence—which is *not* a virtue (*NE* 1145b). Once again, inner harmony and Aristotle's version of temperance are declared unattainable in the present life.

In the face of these tensions, 13th Century theologians sought to bring the two thinkers into harmony. This is not to suggest, however, that they saw Aristotle and Augustine as *auctoritates* (authorities) on the same level. Aquinas and his contemporaries saw themselves as engaged in *sacra doctrina*: the science that takes the articles of faith—as laid out in Scripture—as its first principles. As displayed in the *Summa Theologiae*, *sacra doctrina* makes use of a diverse range of *auctoritates,* but they do not all carry the same level of authority. Scripture occupies the highest place, followed by Doctors of the

Church (like Augustine), and pagan philosophers occupy the lowest place.[10] Aquinas describes the use of philosophy in *sacra doctrina* in the following way: "those who use philosophical texts in *sacra doctrina,* by subjugating them to faith, do not mix water with wine, but turn water into wine," (*Super De Trinitate* 1.2.3 ad 5).[11] Nevertheless, there was an expectation of consistency between the teachings of Scripture and the truths that can be known about God from studying his creation.[12] As Aquinas writes,

> *sacra doctrina* essentially treats of God viewed as the highest cause—not only so far as He can be known through creatures just as philosophers knew Him—'That which is known of God is manifest in them' (as is said in Romans 1)—but also as far as He is known to Himself alone and revealed to others (*STh* I.1.6).[13]

Since the common object of the two sciences makes this consistency possible, the insights of Aristotle (along with other philosophers) could be incorporated into theological works like the *Summa*. Of course, these insights often had to be nuanced or corrected—after all, "the truth about God such as reason could discover, would only be known by a few, and that after a long time, and with the admixture of many errors" (*STh*

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[10] For good discussions of the *auctoritates* in *sacra doctrina*, see Mark Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy" in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. Norman Kretzmann, & Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 232-51, and Victor Preller, "Water into Wine," in *Grammar and Grace: Reformulations of Aquinas and Wittgenstein,* eds. Jeffrey Stout and Robert MacSwain (London: SCM Press, 2004), 253-67.

[11] Qtd. and trans. in Jordan, "Theology and Philosophy," 235. (*Unde illi, qui utuntur philosophicis documentis in sacra doctrina redigendo in obsequium fidei, non miscent aquam vino, sed aquam convertunt in vinum.*)

[12] For an illuminating discussion of Aquinas's use of Aristotle in *sacra doctrina*, see David Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue.* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 56-71.

[13] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of the *Summa* are from Fathers of the English Dominican Province, trans. *Summa Theologica* (Benziger Bros, 1947). The Latin text is from *Summa Theologiae: Leonine Edition*, transcribed by Roberto Busa SJ, rev. by Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2012). (*Sacra autem doctrina propriissime determinat de Deo secundum quod est altissima causa, quia non solum quantum ad illud quod est per creaturas cognoscibile (quod philosophi cognoverunt, ut dicitur Rom. I, quod notum est Dei, manifestum est illis); sed etiam quantum ad id quod notum est sibi soli de seipso, et aliis per revelationem communicatum.*)

I.1.1).[14] Even still, the philosophers are legitimate *auctoritates*, and Aquinas thinks that Christians have much to learn from them. In this dissertation, I focus on a particular area of Aquinas's thought which illuminates the manner in which he incorporates philosophy (especially Aristotle) into *sacra doctrina*—an area in which he harmonizes Aristotle and Augustine.

1.2 Growth in Infused Virtue: A Key Site of Harmony

On the most basic level, Aquinas's harmony of Aristotle and Augustine appears to involve an affirmation of the teaching of both thinkers. For example, Aquinas claims that there are two ways of conceiving of what is good for a human being: "man's good must needs be appraised with respect to some rule. Now this rule is twofold… viz. human reason and divine law" (I.II.63.2).[15] Corresponding to these two conceptions of the good are two sets of virtues:

> human virtue directed to the good which is defined according to the rule of human reason can be caused by human acts: inasmuch as such acts proceed from reason, by whose power and rule the aforesaid good is established. On the other hand, virtue which directs man to good as defined by the divine law, and not by human reason, cannot be caused by human acts, the principle of which is reason, but is produced in us by the divine operation alone (I.II.63.2).[16]

[14] *veritas de Deo, per rationem investigata, a paucis, et per longum tempus, et cum admixtione multorum errorum*

[15] *oportet quod bonum hominis secundum aliquam regulam consideretur. Quae quidem est duplex… scilicet ratio humana, et lex divina*

[16] *Virtus igitur hominis ordinata ad bonum quod modificatur secundum regulam rationis humanae, potest ex actibus humanis causari, inquantum huiusmodi actus procedunt a ratione, sub cuius potestate et regula tale bonum consistit. Virtus vero ordinans hominem ad bonum secundum quod modificatur per legem divinam, et non per rationem humanam, non potest causari per actus humanos, quorum principium est ratio, sed causatur solum in nobis per operationem divinam.*

Additionally, this passage suggests that the first set of virtues—the acquired virtues—are caused by habituation (just as Aristotle had taught), while the second set—the infused virtues—are caused by God (just as Augustine had taught). Thus, Aquinas seems to endorse both Aristotle and Augustine: they were both right, one might think, they were simply referring to different virtues. Furthermore, when Aquinas goes on to describe these types of virtue, he suggests that the acquired virtues bring the inner harmony that Aristotle sought, whereas the infused virtues involve the continued struggle characterized by Augustine. Consider the following passage:

> sometimes the habits of [infused] moral virtue experience difficulty in their works, by reason of certain [contrary] dispositions remaining from previous acts. This difficulty does not occur in respect of acquired moral virtue: because the repeated acts by which they are acquired, remove also the contrary dispositions (I.II.65.3 ad 2).[17]

In sum, an initial look at Aquinas's account of human flourishing suggests that his harmony of Aristotle and Augustine amounts to a simple combination.

Of course, this overly simplistic account is not entirely accurate, and it has been challenged for many reasons. For example, those who emphasize the Augustinian nature of Aquinas's thought have pointed out the many ways in which Aquinas recognizes the limitations of Aristotle's teaching on human flourishing. As Alasdair MacIntyre puts it, Aquinas saw those teachings as "incomplete in a way which involves radical

[17] *habitus moralium virtutum infusarum patiuntur interdum difficultatem in operando, propter aliquas dispositiones contrarias ex praecedentibus actibus relictas. Quae quidem difficultas non ita accidit in virtutibus moralibus acquisitis, quia per exercitium actuum, quo acquiruntur, tolluntur etiam contrariae dispositiones.*Translation modified: For some reason the English Fathers of the Domincan Province left out "infused," and translated *contrarias* as "ordinary" instead of "contrary."

defectiveness."[18] For example, Aquinas refers to the human flourishing that Aristotle sought as imperfect in comparison to that identified by Augustine:

> imperfect happiness that can be had in this life, can be acquired by man by his natural powers, in the same way as virtue, in whose operation it consists: on this point we shall speak further on. But man's perfect happiness, as stated above, consists in the vision of the divine essence. Now the vision of God's essence surpasses the nature not only of man, but also of every creature… Consequently neither man, nor any creature, can attain final happiness by his natural powers (I.II.5.5).[19]

Furthermore, Aquinas teaches that there is an important difference between the Aristotelian acquired virtues and the Augustinian infused virtues:

> only the infused virtues are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply: since they direct man well to the ultimate end. But the other virtues, those, namely, that are acquired, are virtues in a restricted sense, but not simply: for they direct man well in respect of the last end in some particular genus of action, but not in respect of the last end simply (I.II.65.2).[20]

From this passage and others like it, some commentators have gone as far as claiming that, for Aquinas, the Aristotelian acquired virtues are not real virtues at all.[21] These commentators challenge the very notion that Aquinas's view of human flourishing

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[18] Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: Notre Dame Press, 1989) 192-3.

[19] *beatitudo imperfecta quae in hac vita haberi potest, potest ab homine acquiri per sua naturalia, eo modo quo et virtus, in cuius operatione consistit, de quo infra dicetur. Sed beatitudo hominis perfecta, sicut supra dictum est, consistit in visione divinae essentiae. Videre autem Deum per essentiam est supra naturam non solum hominis, sed etiam omnis creaturae… Unde nec homo, nec aliqua creatura, potest consequi beatitudinem ultimam per sua naturalia.*

[20] *solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter. Aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter, ordinant enim hominem bene respectu finis ultimi in aliquo genere, non autem respectu finis ultimi simpliciter.*

[21] For example, see Thomas Osborne, "The Augustinianism of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67, no. 2 (April 2003), 279-305, Eleonore Stump, "The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions," *Faith and Philosophy* 28, no. 1 (2011), 29-43, and Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas' Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

achieves a harmony of Aristotle and Augustine—in the end, they claim, Aquinas is only faithful to Augustine.[22]

In response to this interpretive tendency, other commentators have sought to preserve the Aristotelian influence in Aquinas's moral thought and the idea of a genuine harmony. These commentators recognize the important differences between infused and acquired virtues, but argue that Aquinas thinks the acquired virtues are authentic virtues, nonetheless.[23] In the words of I.II.65.2, while the acquired virtues are not virtues *simply speaking* (*simpliciter*)—like the infused virtues—they are genuine virtues—albeit *in a restricted sense* (*secundum quid*). In this way, we can preserve the important sense in which Aquinas is engaged in harmonizing Aristotle and Augustine, for he thinks that both types of virtue are authentic virtues.

David Decosimo advances an even stronger account of Aquinas's harmonization of these two figures. He claims that Aquinas's view of acquired virtue (especially as it appears in non-Christians) reflects not just Aristotelian, but both Augustinian and Aristotelian influence. On Decosimo's reading, those virtues that are typically taken as paradigmatic examples of the Aristotelian side of the harmony, are themselves a site of harmony. It is on the topic of the acquired virtues that we find Aquinas being "Augustinian by being Aristotelian and vice versa" as Decosimo often puts it.[24] Aquinas's commitment to charity and Augustine's teachings is what compels him to

[22] This comes out clearly in the titles of their works: "The *Augustinianism* of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory" and "The *Non-Aristotelian* Character of Aquinas's Ethics" (emphasis mine).

[23] For example, see Brandon Dahm, "The Acquired Virtues are Real Virtues: A Response to Stump." *Faith and Philosophy* 32, no. 4 (2015): 453-470, and Decosimo "*Ethics as a Work of Charity*."

[24] See *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, 253, for one of numerous places where Decosimo uses this memorable phrase.

welcome and celebrate the authenticity of pagan acquired virtue (2014, 256-7). Conversely, it is his commitment to Aristotle's etymological understanding of virtue as a perfection of a power that leads Aquinas to recognize the limitations of sin and the imperfections of pagan acquired virtue in a way that honors Augustine (2014, 264-7). This account allows Decosimo to present a more unified picture of Aquinas's thought. It is not as if Aquinas is Aristotelian in his view of acquired virtue by abandoning Augustine; rather, he is "Augustinian by being Aristotelian and vice versa."

Along these lines, this dissertation will illustrate the important ways in which Aquinas's account of growth in infused virtue is, itself, a site of his harmony between Aristotle and Augustine.[25] This is an important conclusion for two main reasons. First, the infused virtues are at the heart of Aquinas's account of human flourishing. Like Aristotle, Aquinas teaches that the virtues are key elements in the flourishing of a human being. Not only do they help us achieve that flourishing—they themselves partly constitute it. Revelation teaches, however, that we are oriented toward an ultimate end that is more complete than that imagined by Aristotle; namely, the vision of the divine essence, or *beatitudo*. We are created for communion with God—it is our characteristic activity. Since, as Aristotle correctly teaches (*NE* 1097b), virtues perfect us in relation to our characteristic activity, a new characteristic activity requires new virtues. Furthermore, the infused virtues are also determinative for our experience of *beatitudo*. Aquinas teaches that one person can be happier (*beatior*) than another if she is "better disposed or

[25] While other interpreters have gestured in this direction, the current project is the first sustained examination of Aquinas's views on growth in infused virtues that advances this claim. See, for example, Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, 103-5 and 256-62, Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2008), 86-97, and Sheryl Overmyer, *Two Guides for the Journey: Thomas Aquinas and William Langland on the Virtues* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2016), 81-90.

ordered to the enjoyment of [God]" (I.II.5.2).[26] Since it is through the infused virtues (especially charity) that we are disposed to the enjoyment of God, growth in the infused virtues will enrich our experience of *beatitudo*.

Second, an accurate understanding of Aquinas's view of growth in the infused virtues can combat some important misunderstandings prevalent in the secondary literature. These misunderstandings are frequently the result of separating the Aristotelian and Augustinian elements of Aquinas's moral thought. For instance, some interpreters privilege Aquinas's commitment to the Aristotelian characteristics of virtues—that they enable action that is consistent, easy, and pleasing—which these interpreters associate solely with the acquired virtues. As a result, they conclude that Christians need to develop the acquired virtues (in addition to their infused virtues) in order to achieve true human flourishing. Other interpreters privilege Aquinas's commitment to Augustine's views on the permanence of moral struggle in this life by highlighting the imperfections of the infused virtues. They conclude that the imperfections are permanent features of these virtues. As we will see, Aquinas avoids these conclusions through his teaching on growth in infused virtue. Moreover, he does this while preserving a fidelity to both Aristotle and Augustine.

1.3 Outline

When approaching any important topic in the work of Aquinas, it is tempting to search for the question or article which most closely fits with the topic, and to base one's understanding of Aquinas's view entirely on that single question or article. Our topic—

[26] *melius dispositus vel ordinatus ad eius fruitionem*

growth in infused virtue[27]—can be especially susceptible to this procedure because Aquinas devotes one article of the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* to it.[28] Here, perhaps more than anywhere else, however, Aquinas's thought violently resists this encyclopedic approach. Consider the opening line of his response: "Many make mistakes about forms by treating them as if they were substances" (*QDV* 1.11).[29] Absent a deep familiarity with Aquinas's views on virtue, habit, and quality, it is not clear how this opening line relates to the topic of the article. How much less, then, can one expect to understand the teaching of the article as a whole? In order to fully understand and appreciate Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue, one must first understand the essence of the infused virtues (i.e., what they are) and what it means for them to increase. This is the goal of Chapters Two and Three.[30]

In Chapter Two, I discuss Aquinas's view of habit—the genus to which virtue belongs. The first article in both of Aquinas's sustained treatments of the virtues in

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[27] In this dissertation I will speak synonymously of *growth* in infused virtue and *increase* in infused virtue. Aquinas also uses two words to describe this phenomenon: a verb, "*augeo*:" to increase, augment, enlarge; and the associated noun "*augmentum:*" an increase.

[28] This is one article of only 13 in the first question, which addresses virtues in general. This fact highlights the importance of the infused virtues—and their increase—for Aquinas's understanding of human flourishing.

[29] Unless otherwise noted, all translations from the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* come from E. M. Atkins, trans. *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, ed. E. M. Adkins and Thomas Williams, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). The Latin text is from *Questiones Disputatae de Virtutibus*, Taurini Edition, transcribed by Roberto Busa SJ, rev. by Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2011). (*multis error accidit circa formas ex hoc quod de eis iudicant sicut de substantiis iudicatur)*

[30] In this dissertation, I privilege Aquinas's teaching in the *Summa Theologiae* since it contains his most mature and comprehensive treatment of moral matters. I consider his discussions in other works insofar as they inform or extend what he says in the *Summa*. Among the other works, I hold the *Disputed Questions on Virtue* and the *Lectura romana* (Aquinas's second attempt at a commentary on Lombard's *Sentences*) in high regard, as they were written around the same time as the *Secunda Pars.* See Leonard Boyle "*Alia lectura fratris Thome*" *Medieval Studies* 45 (1983), 418-29, M. Michele Mulchahey's *First the Bow is Bent in Study*, 278-306, and, Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Vol. 1: The Person and His Work,* trans. Robert Royal (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 45-7 for the chronology of these works.

general (*STh* I.II.55-67 and *QDV* 1) asks whether virtues are habits. Thus, Aquinas's pedagogical strategy is to elucidate the virtues in terms of their nature as habits. Following this strategy, I explore Aquinas's discussion of habits in Questions 49-54 of the *prima secundae* by tracing three important topics: the essence of habits, the cause of habits, and the increase of habits. By the end of Chapter Two, the reader will have a strong grasp of the nature and types of habits and the different ways in which they can increase.

In Chapter Three, I elucidate Aquinas's teaching on the essence of the infused virtues. The chapter begins with the general picture of virtue, before honing in on infused virtue in particular. I explain the distinctive features of this important type of virtue and differentiate the two sub-types (theological and moral). The remainder of the chapter addresses two important issues. First, the existence of the infused *moral* virtues has been challenged by some important thinkers in the Christian tradition following Aquinas—most notably, Duns Scotus. I compare the views of Aquinas and Scotus on this point to illustrate the importance of the infused *moral* virtues. The second issue concerns the role that the infused virtues play in the moral life. To better understand Aquinas's complex psychology, I situate these unique habits among the important elements of grace, gifts, beatitudes, fruits, and even the acquired virtues.

Building upon the work of Chapters Two and Three, the fourth chapter lays out Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue. Drawing heavily on Chapter Two's discussion of the increase of habits, I begin by developing a metaphysical account of increase in infused virtue. This account helps us gain clarity regarding the different causes involved in this growth. Next, I lay out the three stages of infused virtue (as

presented in *STh* II.II.24.9) and situate them within the preceding metaphysical account. The chapter concludes with a close examination of the important imperfections that Aquinas associates with the infused virtues. These imperfections have led commentators to suppose that Aquinas thought Christians should be developing the acquired virtues to reinforce the infused virtues. Against this reading, I demonstrate how his teaching on growth in infused virtue can help Aquinas avoid this conclusion.

In the concluding chapter, I emphasize the ways in which Aquinas's understanding of growth in infused virtue represents the deepest point of his harmony of Aristotle and Augustine. We find an Aristotelian account of increase in habit ingeniously situated within a picture of the Christian life that preserves an Augustinian and Scriptural commitment to the priority of grace. I also situate my project among two prominent interpretive trends in Thomistic literature. Finally, I conclude by highlighting two important implications of the project.

CHAPTER TWO

Growth in *Habitus* in General

In order to understand Aquinas's notion of growth in infused virtue, it is necessary to consider the genus to which infused virtue belongs—*habitus*. In this chapter, I explore Aquinas's understanding of *habitus* by paying special attention to Questions 49-54 of the *prima secundae*. There, Aquinas lays much of the groundwork for his account of growth in infused virtue.

Before jumping into Aquinas's account of *habitus*, a short point about terminology is helpful: there are important differences in meaning between the Latin "*habitus*" and its English cognate "habit."[1] Aquinas uses "*habitus*" to refer to stable character traits that human beings use deliberately in action. In contrast, "habit" is associated more closely with mindless, repetitive behaviors, on the one hand, or with addictions, on the other. Given these important differences, I would prefer to use the Latin "*habitus*" throughout this dissertation. Unfortunately, that would introduce unnecessary and distracting grammatical ambiguities because the singular and plural forms of the Latin word are identical in the nominative case. Therefore, I ask the reader to keep in mind that "habit" here signifies the Thomistic concept. To facilitate this mindfulness, I retain the Latin term in the section headings.

[1] See Bonnie Kent, "Habits and Virtues" in *The Ethics of Aquinas,* ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington D.C., Georgetown University Press, 2002), 116, Robert Miner, "Aquinas on *Habitus*" in *History of Habit: From Aristotle to Bourdieu*, ed. Tom Sparrow and Adam Hutchinson (Blue Ridge Summit: Lexington Books, 2013), 69, and Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 225 for examples.

Of course, I am not the first to write about Aquinas's understanding of habit—Bonnie Kent's "Habits and Virtues" and Robert Miner's "Aquinas on *Habitus*" are both exemplary treatments of this topic.[2] This chapter will be unique in its focus on the increase of habits. This focus will necessitate spending more time on the metaphysical aspects of Aquinas's account of habit—that it is a quality, and more generally, an accidental form. General discussions of habit (such as those of Kent and Miner) can simply mention these aspects without much explanation. The present discussion, however, must explore these metaphysical aspects in greater detail, since they play such an important role in Aquinas's understanding of the increase of habits.

This chapter divides into three main sections: The Essence of *Habitus*, The Cause of *Habitus*, and The Increase of *Habitus*. In the first section, I explore Aquinas's concept of habit by looking at several key features it exemplifies. In the second section, I unpack Aquinas's understanding of the causes—with respect to generation—of habits. In the third section, I relate and elucidate Aquinas's understanding of increase or growth in habits.

2.1 The Essence of Habitus

In the *prima secundae*, Aquinas treats the rational creature's motion toward its end; namely, God. Since it is through their actions that human beings attain the beatific vision of God,[3] most of the *prima secundae* is made up of a lengthy discussion of human actions and their principles. Aquinas addresses the actions themselves in Questions 6-48,

[2] See also David Decosimo "The Perfection of Habit" in *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014), 72-105.

[3] See I.II.6 pro. While this claim might sound Pelagian, we will see throughout this dissertation that Aquinas is certainly not a Pelagian. It is only by the grace of God and the work of Christ, Aquinas thinks, that human beings can perform the acts through which they attain *beatitudo*.

and turns to their principles in Questions 49-114. Briefly, a principle of action is a source of action; it is that which gives rise to a particular action. It is important to keep in mind, though, that Aquinas uses the term "action" more broadly than most do today. While it includes those actions that we commonly think of (e.g., walking to the car, throwing a ball, etc.), it also encompasses our thoughts and feelings (e.g., deciding to wash the car, the sadness we feel when we lose a loved one, the fear we experience when we see a snake, etc.).

According to Aquinas, there are two main types of principles of action: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic principles of action are the sources of action that lie within the agent, while extrinsic principles of action originate outside the agent.[4] Generally speaking, the intrinsic principles of action are the powers of the soul. A human soul is equipped with five classes of powers, distinguished by their objects: 1) vegetative powers (like growth) that act only on the body; 2) sensitive powers (like sight and smell) that apprehend sensible bodies; 3) intellectual powers (like imagination and memory) that apprehend being in general; 4) appetitive powers (like desire and aversion) that orient the soul toward or away from some external thing; and 5) locomotive powers (like walking and reaching) that enable the soul to attain or avoid those external things through the movement of the body.[5] Aquinas discusses these powers in his treatment of the nature of the human being in the *prima pars* (Questions 75-102), so he does not repeat himself in the *prima secundae*. Instead, he focuses on a more proximate set of intrinsic principles of action: habits. While the powers of the soul are a general source of each of our actions,

[4] As we will see below, this rough characterization becomes much more complex when we examine infused virtues and grace in greater detail.

[5] See I.78.1, where Aquinas follows the list of powers found in Aristotle's *De Anima*.

Aquinas is more interested in the ways in which certain of those powers (i.e., the intellectual and appetitive) can be formed in such a way that they regularly incline us toward particular sorts of actions. This is the guiding idea behind his concept of habit.

In this section, I explicate Aquinas's concept of habit by looking at several key features it exemplifies. First, I situate habits within the genus of quality. Then I discuss the important distinction between act and potency, and demonstrate that habits fall midway between the two. Next, I relate the different parts of the human person that can be habituated, according to Aquinas, through a discussion of the subject of habits. Finally, I close the section with a description of the relationship between habits and the will, and its implications for our understanding of human freedom.

2.1.1 Habit as Quality

In Question 49, Aquinas begins his discussion of habit by situating it within Aristotle's Categories. Lest the reader think this is a simple matter of reciting Aristotle's teaching on habit in the *Categories*, Aquinas opens Article 1 by introducing some complications. First, Augustine provides etymological reasons to think that "habit" is more general and should not be restricted to a single category like quality. Next, two remarks from Aristotle show that he is not entirely uniform in his use of the word "habit."[6] On the contrary, of course, is Aristotle's claim in *Categories* 8, that habit is the first type of quality. In his response, Aquinas acknowledges that there are two main senses of the word "habit." There is the general sense featured in the first objection that applies to multiple categories. And there is a more specific sense in which "habit"

[6] To objections 2 and 3, Aquinas could have added a fourth, pointing out that Aristotle includes habit in the Category of Relatives (*Categories* 7).

designates a relation that a thing "has in regard to itself or to something else" (I.II.49.1). It is in this second sense that habit is a quality.

For readers unfamiliar with Aristotle's *Categories*, it will be helpful to review what he meant by the term "quality." He begins his discussion of this category with the following claim: "By 'quality' I mean that in virtue of which people are said to be such and such" (8b 25).[7] Aristotle goes on to give examples of qualities (e.g., knowledge, natural aptitude for boxing, sweetness, curvedness, etc.), but the diversity of the examples and the vagueness of the definition leave the reader with a very vague notion of quality. Since this vagueness is present throughout the *Categories*—alongside the immense importance of the text—it became a common medieval project to provide a philosophical justification for the Categories.[8] While Aquinas did not write a commentary on Aristotle's *Categories*, he did attempt to offer a philosophical justification in his commentaries on the *Physics* (Book III, lect. 3) and *Metaphysics* (Book V, lect. 9).[9] A brief look at the justification found in the commentary on the *Metaphysics* provides a better understanding of what Aquinas means when he claims that habit is a quality.

In *Metaphysics VII* (1017a 23-30), Aristotle divides essential being into the same ten Categories he employed in the *Categories*. Once again, however, he does not provide a justification for his list. In his commentary on the text, Aquinas endeavors to provide

[7] All translations from the *Categories* are from E.M. Edghill, trans., "Categories" in *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

[8] As Paul Symington points out in "Thomas Aquinas on Establishing the Identity of Aristotle's Categories," in *Medieval Commentaries on Aristotle's Categories*, ed. Lloyd A. Newton, (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2008), 119, medieval commentators referred to this task as "*sufficientia praedicamentorum*," and sought to show that Aristotle's list was both adequate and philosophically justified.

[9] See Symington, "Thomas Aquinas," 120.

such a justification, which rests upon the manner in which a predicate is related to a subject. First, Aquinas tells us, the predicate can state what the subject is—in which case we have the category **Substance**. Second, the predicate can be taken as being in the subject. There are three ways in which this can happen: a) the predicate is in the subject absolutely and as following from its *matter* (i.e., **Quantity**); b) the predicate is in the subject absolutely and as following from its *form* (i.e., **Quality**); or c) the predicate is in the subject in reference to something else and not absolutely (i.e., **Relation**). The third way a predicate can relate to a subject is when the predicate is taken from something extrinsic to the subject. This happens in two main ways: a) the predicate is taken from something that is *wholly* extrinsic (*omnino extra)* to the subject (generating the categories of **Habit**,[10] **Time**, **Place**, and **Position**);[11] or b) the predicate is taken from something that, while extrinsic to the subject, is in the subject in a certain respect (i.e., **Action**, if in the respect of *principle*, or **Passion**, if in the respect of *end*).[12]

From this justification, we discover an important feature of the category of quality. By distinguishing quality from substance, Aquinas (following Aristotle) indicates that qualities are accidental forms. In his early work, *De Principiis Naturae*, Aquinas divides everything that exists into two categories: substances, which exist in themselves, and accidents, which exist in something else. Thus, a particular horse is a substance,

[10] Here the word "*habitus*" is used to refer to clothing. For instance, think of the habit of a Dominican Friar.

[11] These four categories are distinguished by the manner in which the extrinsic thing (from which the predicate is taken) is related to the subject. I have omitted the actual derivation as it is not as relevant to our understanding of quality.

[12] *V Met*., lect. 9, nn. 891-2. For helpful discussions of this passage see John F. Wippel, *The Metaphysical Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 211ff, Nicholas Kahm, "Aquinas on Quality" *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 24, no. 1 (2016), and Symington, "Thomas Aquinas."

while that horse's brownness is an accident. Furthermore, Aquinas explains that "everything from which something has existence, whether that existence be substantial or accidental, can be called form" (*De Principiis Naturae*, 1.5).[13] If the existence that is caused is substantial, the cause is a substantial form; if accidental, it is an accidental form. In addition to causing different types of existence, these forms differ in terms of the matter they actualize. Substantial forms actualize prime matter—matter that is wholly lacking in form. Accidental forms, on the other hand, actualize substances (compounds of prime matter and substantial form) in determinate ways. On this view, some bit of prime matter is actualized by the substantial form of horseness, and the resulting compound is a substance (i.e., a particular horse). This substance is then actualized by the accidental form of brownness, resulting in the horse's particular shade of brown.

Aquinas repeatedly reminds his readers that forms do not exist in the way that substances or accidents do. To say that the form of horseness exists, is just to say that something exists as a horse. Similarly, the form of brownness does not exist on its own, but particular things, like our horse, exist as brown. Of course, the particular brownness of this horse does exist; it is an example of an accident. To generalize, individual instances of qualities are accidents, while the qualities themselves (e.g., sweetness, knowledge, etc.) are accidental forms. The qualities do not exist on their own; instead, subjects exist as having such and such a quality.

[13] Unless otherwise noted, all translations of *De Principiis Naturae* come from R. A. Kocourek, trans. "The Principles of Nature" in *An Introduction to the Philosophy of Nature* by R. A. Kocourek (St. Paul: North Central Publishing, 1956). The Latin text is from *De Principiis Naturae* Leonine Edition, transcribed by Roberto Busa SJ, rev. by Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2011). (*omne a quo aliquid habet esse, quodcumque esse sit sive substantiale, sive accidentale, potest dici forma*.)

Returning to Question 49 of the *prima secundae*, we are now in a better position to understand what Aquinas has established in claiming that habits are qualities. Habits are accidental forms that do not exist on their own. Rather, a particular subject will exist in a determinate way through a habit. Still, these basic features of habits will be true of all qualities in general. In the next section, we will see how Aquinas distinguishes habits from other qualities.

2.1.2 Habit as a Determinate Species of Quality

In arguing that habit is a determinate species of quality, Aquinas is once again relying on Aristotle's *Categories*. There, Aristotle divides quality into four species: habit/disposition, natural capacity, affective quality, and figure/shape. Like the Categories themselves, Aristotle's division of quality lacks a philosophical justification. If Aquinas is to convince his reader that habit belongs to a distinct species of quality, he needs to provide evidence that these distinct species actually exist. Interestingly, Aquinas turns to a Neoplatonist commentator—Simplicius—as a starting point for this project. Simplicius (490-560 CE) was among the last Neoplatonists and commented extensively on Aristotle's works. His *Commentary on the Categories*, written around 530 CE, was translated into Latin in 1266 by William of Moerbeke. While this work has long been used as a reference point in dating Aquinas's work, recent scholarship by Vivian Boland and Wayne Hankey has begun to explore the important influence that it had on Aquinas's understanding of Aristotle.[14]

[14] Wayne J. Hankey, "Thomas' Neoplatonic Histories: His following of Simplicius" *Dionysius* (2002) and Vivian Boland, "Aquinas and Simplicius on Dispositions" *New Blackfriars* (2001).

In Question 49, Article 2, Aquinas faithfully reports Simplicius's justification of the fourfold division of quality,[15] before proceeding to criticize it.[16] Despite this criticism, Aquinas includes Simplicius's justification because it is an important step in the dialectic. After the reader has worked through an inadequate justification, she is able to appreciate Aquinas's proposal.

To explain Aristotle's four-fold division of quality, Aquinas introduces a new way of speaking about quality. He says, "For quality, properly speaking, implies a certain mode of substance (*quendam modum substantiae*)."[17] This language of "mode" is accompanied by a quotation from Augustine, defining mode as "a certain determination according to a certain measure."[18] Generally speaking, for Augustine and Aquinas, a

[15] In his *Commentary on the Categories* (228, 15ff), Simplicius gives the following philosophical justification of Aristotle's four-fold division of quality. First, he claims that all qualities can be divided into two types: natural and acquired (i.e., caused by something external to the subject). The acquired qualities are the first species of quality, which Aristotle labeled habit/disposition. Next, the natural qualities are divided into those that are potential and those that are actual. The potential, natural qualities constitute Aristotle's second species of quality: natural capacity. Finally, the actual, natural qualities can be divided into two species depending on whether they are deeply ingrained or superficial. If deeply ingrained, we have the third species: affective quality. If superficial, we have the fourth species: figure/shape.

[16] He points out that some examples of qualities in the third and fourth species seem to be acquired instead of natural. For example, I might introduce a triangular shape to a piece of paper by cutting it. Conversely, some dispositions—which should all be acquired on this justification—appear to be natural. Here Aquinas cites health and beauty as examples. These criticisms are not original to Aquinas—Simplicius himself points out most of these problems in his commentary. He writes: "But everyone ought to observe, as Iamblichus himself clearly indicates, that it is quite possible for figure to be acquired…" (229,1). Furthermore, Simplicius goes on to suggest that dispositions can be natural and not acquired, and uses the same examples that Aquinas cites. While Boland (2001) fails to notice this point, it would strengthen her case for the claim that Simplicius had a positive influence on Aquinas. Kahm (2016) also overlooks this point. Aquinas goes on, however, to add one original criticism. He faults the proposed justification for reflecting an improper ordering of the species, since the natural should always precede the acquired. While Simplicius rightly rejects the proposed justification (229.5), he fails to offer an alternative in his *Commentary*, which leaves Aquinas to construct his own.

[17] *Proprie enim qualitas importat quendam modum substantiae.*

[18] *quandam determinationem secundum aliquam mensuram*

mode of substance refers to a particular way in which a substance can exist.[19] For example, a man can exist as virtuous or vicious. Furthermore, as the quotation from Augustine reveals, modes involve a determination according to some measure. Thus, for a man to exist as virtuous, there must be a measure in accordance with which that man's existence is determined.

Armed with the concepts of mode and measure, Aquinas is ready to offer a philosophical justification for the four-fold division of quality. Quality can be divided into distinct species based upon the type of measure that is involved. Aquinas identifies four possible types of measures: the nature of the subject, action resulting from the subject's natural principles, passion resulting from the subject's natural principles, and quantity. If the mode of the subject is determined according to a quantitative measure, it is the fourth species of quality: figure/shape. If the mode of the subject is determined according to a measure associated with passion resulting from the subject's natural principles, it represents the third species: affective quality. If the measure is associated with action resulting from those natural principles, the quality falls into the second species: natural capacity. Finally, if the mode of the subject is determined according to the very nature of the subject as its measure, then it is the first species of quality: habit/disposition.

Thus, Aquinas identifies the aspect of habit/disposition that distinguishes it from the other types of qualities. While all qualities are principles through which particular

[19] For an important and insightful discussion of Aquinas's use of "mode," see John Tomarchio, "Aquinas's Division of Being According to Modes of Existing" *Review of Metaphysics,* (2001).

subjects exist in determinate ways, habits/dispositions uniquely involve a reference to the *nature* of the particular subject.[20]

Throughout Article 2 of Question 49, Aquinas highlights an important implication of this teaching: among the species of quality, it is only through habits/dispositions that subjects are considered good and bad. For habit/disposition alone bears an appropriate relation to the end. Consider the fourth species of quality: figure/shape. This species is associated with a quantitative measure, which does not involve motion.[21] Without motion, there can be no relation to an end, so Aquinas claims that subjects are not called good or bad in reference to their figure/shape. Next, he argues that the notions of good and bad do not apply to subjects in virtue of qualities that belong to the second and third species. Qualities in these species involve the subject being determined according to measures associated with action (second species) or passion (third species) resulting from natural principles. Aquinas claims that in these species, "we do not consider anything pertaining to the notion of good or [bad]: because [motions] and passions have not the aspect of an end" (I.II.49.2).[22] Initially, this claim might strike the reader as suspect. How can Aquinas say that motions do not have the aspect of an end? Two points will help clarify Aquinas's claim in this passage.

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[20] Aquinas goes on to show that this way of differentiating habit/disposition from the other types of qualities is consistent with Aristotle's teaching on habit in *Physics* VII, where he claims that habits are "dispositions of the perfect to the best; and by perfect I mean that which is disposed in accordance with its nature" (qtd. in I.II.49.2). (*quod sunt dispositiones quaedam perfecti ad optimum; dico autem perfecti, quod est dispositum secundum naturam).*

[21] For Aquinas, the term "motion" (*motus*) is broader in meaning than just local motion. Thus, he can speak of any kind of desire (sensual or intellectual) as a kind of *motus.*

[22] *Non autem consideratur in his aliquid pertinens ad rationem boni vel mali, quia motus et passiones non habent rationem finis*

First, he is not talking about motions and passions in general. Rather, he has in mind those actions and passions that issue directly from natural principles. This brings us to the second point: as associated with movements and passions that issue directly from natural principles, these qualities are involuntary. Yet it is a voluntary relation to the end that is necessary for the notions of good and bad. Consider what Aquinas has to say about non-rational living things in his commentary on the *Metaphysics*:

> And non-rational living things apprehend an end or goal and desire it by an appetite of the soul, and they move locally toward some end or goal inasmuch as they have discernment of it; but their appetite for an end, and for those things which exist for the sake of the end, is determined for them by a natural inclination (*V Met.*, Lect. 16, n. 1000).[23]

While he is talking about non-rational living things in this passage, these are the types of motions that he has in mind in the *Summa*.[24] Since they issue directly from the natural principles of the subject, they do not involve the voluntary relation to the end necessary for the notions of good and bad. Therefore, when it comes to qualities, subjects are considered good or bad only with reference to the first species: habits/dispositions.

2.1.3 Habit as Distinct from Disposition

Having differentiated habit from the other species of quality, Aquinas must now differentiate it from the other member of the first species—disposition. In the *Categories*,

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[23] All translations from Aquinas's *Commentary on the Metaphysics* come from John P. Rowan, trans. *Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle*, (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1961). The Latin text is from *Sententia libri Metaphysicae*, Taurini Edition, transcribed by Roberto Busa SJ, rev. by Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2011). (Res *autem irrationales animatae cognoscunt quidem finem et appetunt ipsum appetitu animali, et movent seipsa localiter ad finem tamquam iudicium habentes de fine; sed appetitus finis, et eorum quae sunt propter finem, determinatur eis ex naturali inclinatione.*)

[24] Of course, Aquinas is talking specifically about local motion in this passage, but the crucial feature is that the motions issue directly from the natural principles (i.e., they are determined by those principles or inclinations). For Aquinas, any motions that share this feature will lack the voluntary relation to the end.

Aristotle is not entirely clear about this relationship. At times he seems to suggest that disposition and habit are distinct sub-species within the first species of quality. At other points, he seems to suggest that there is a genus/species relationship between disposition and habit, such that habits are just dispositions that are more lasting and permanent.[25]

Aquinas tackles this ambiguity in his reply to the third objection in Article 2. He begins by recognizing that disposition can be taken in two ways: as the genus of habit, or as divided against habit. He then identifies two ways dispositions (in the second sense) can be divided against habit. First, they can be divided "as perfect and imperfect within the same species" (ad 3).[26] On this view, the relationship between disposition and habit is analogous to that between a boy and a man (an example Aquinas borrows from Simplicius). Thus, habits are more perfect (i.e., more lasting) versions of dispositions and dispositions can become habits. Second, disposition and habit can be divided "as diverse species of the one subaltern genus" (ad 3).[27] The two species would be divided on the basis of whether they are naturally lasting or fleeting. If qualities are naturally fleeting—like sickness and health—they are dispositions. If naturally lasting—like science and virtue—they are habits.

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[25] In his *Commentary*, Simplicius relates the debate among interpreters that had taken place as a result of Aristotle's ambiguity (See 230.30-233.10). We learn that Iamblichus had rejected the genus/species relationship, claiming that habit and disposition, together, make up one species. On the other hand, Syrianus had tried to accommodate everything Aristotle said by recognizing two senses of "disposition": one that serves as the genus and one that serves as a species divided against habit. Nicostratus argued that Aristotle was just being sloppy—instead of identifying one species as the first species of quality, he had identified two species (habit and disposition). Although Simplicius is not entirely clear, he seems to side with Syrianus's interpretation and offers some reasons to think that Iamblichus was mistaken.

[26] *sicut perfectum et imperfectum in eadem specie*

[27] *sicut diversae species unius generis subalterni*

Simplicius endorses the first method of differentiation:

> We should not understand [habits] and [dispositions] as two species distinguished by specific differentiae in the way that man and ox are distinguished, but in the way that the man as a new-born baby differs from the man in his prime; for these ([habit] and [disposition]) do not differ in species, since the same account applies in both cases… (229, 12-4).[28]

It is unclear, however, which option Aquinas endorses. Initially, he seems to suggest the second; after laying out the two options, he says that "the latter explanation seems more in keeping with the intention of Aristotle" (ad 3).[29] Nevertheless, this seemingly straightforward endorsement is complicated by what he adds:

> for in order to confirm this distinction [Aristotle] adduces the common mode of speaking, according to which, when a quality is, by reason of its nature, easily changeable, and, through some accident, becomes difficultly changeable, then it is called a habit: while the contrary happens in regard to qualities, by reason of their nature, difficultly changeable: for supposing a man to have a science imperfectly, so as to be liable to lose it easily, we say that he is disposed to that science, rather than that he has the science (ad 3).[30]

[28] All quotations from Simplicius's *Commentary* come from Simplicius, *On Aristotle's Categories 7-8*, trans. Barrie Fleet (London: Gerald Duckworth & Co. Ltd., 2002).

[29] (*Et hoc videtur magis consonum intentioni Aristotelis*.) Miner takes this to be conclusive evidence that Aquinas endorses the second option. He writes that Aquinas "proposes a third way of construing the habit/disposition distinction, one that he takes to conform more closely to the *intentio Aristotelis*. Habits and dispositions are two 'diverse species of one subaltern genus'" (2013, 68). Furthermore, Miner goes on to refer to the first option as a qualification, while regarding the second as Aquinas's "ultimate position" (2013, 69).

[30] *Unde ad huius distinctionis probationem inducit communem loquendi consuetudinem, secundum quam qualitates quae secundum rationem suam sunt facile mobiles, si ex aliquo accidenti difficile mobiles reddantur, habitus dicuntur, et e converso est de qualitatibus quae secundum suam rationem sunt difficile mobiles; nam si aliquis imperfecte habeat scientiam, ut de facili possit ipsam amittere, magis dicitur disponi ad scientiam quam scientiam habere.*

This passage seems to support the first of the two ways of dividing disposition from habit, since the crucial feature is not whether a quality is *naturally* fleeting or lasting, but whether it is possessed in a fleeting or lasting way in that particular instance.[31]

Regardless of which option Aquinas endorses, the important take-away from his reply is found in the subsequent sentence: "From this it is clear that the word 'habit' implies a certain lastingness: while the word 'disposition' does not" (ad 3).[32] Thus, we do not need to settle the issue of whether habit and disposition are distinct species within the subaltern genus of disposition or members of the same species, to see that they are distinct from one another.[33] Habits and dispositions are similar in that they are both accidental forms through which subjects exist in determinate ways with reference to their nature. They are distinct in that habits are lasting, while dispositions are fleeting or easily lost.[34]

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[31] This would not be consistent, however, with what Aquinas goes on to say in I.II.50.1. There he suggests that the causes of a disposition need to be naturally lasting in order to have the nature of a habit perfectly.

[32] *Ex quo patet quod nomen habitus diuturnitatem quandam importat; non autem nomen dispositionis.*

[33] For those readers who are interested in settling the issue, I will offer two possible solutions. First, Aquinas's claim that "the latter (*hoc*) appears to be more consonant with the intention of Aristotle" is technically ambiguous. The '*hoc*' may refer to the second way of dividing disposition from habit—as Miner takes it—but it might also refer to the second sense of disposition mentioned at the start of the reply. On this reading, Aquinas would be saying that the sense of disposition in which it is divided against habit is the one that is more consonant with Aristotle's intention. This would make more sense of what he goes on to say, but it does not settle the question at hand. Second, the '*hoc*' might be a typographical error. Perhaps Aquinas meant to say (or originally said) '*illud*,' thus endorsing the first option. This, too, would make more sense of what he goes on to say. In *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, David Decosimo also puzzles over this passage. For his reading, which is similar to mine, see 88-90 (esp. fn. 26).

[34] One might wonder whether infused virtues—which can be lost instantly through a single act of mortal sin—will exemplify this feature of habits. Aquinas argues that they do, and we will address that argument in Chapter Four.

2.1.4 Habit as Midway between Act and Potency

Now that Aquinas has differentiated habits from the other types of qualities, and from dispositions, he addresses the way in which habits relate to action. This relationship is the topic of Article 3 of Question 49. From the prologue, we already know that habits are intrinsic principles of human acts, but Aquinas will now spell out the relationship in greater detail. In his response, he explains that there are two ways in which habits can relate to action. First, habits relate to action in virtue of the very nature (*ratio*) of habit. It is part of the nature of habit to bear a relation to the nature of the subject, which distinguishes habits and dispositions from the other species of quality. Furthermore, the nature of a subject, Aquinas claims, is always ordered to an end that is either an operation itself or a product of an operation. Thus, habits are ordered to nature, which is ordered to operation. All habits, therefore, are ordered to operation or action in this way. Second, some habits relate more directly to action, in virtue of being in a subject that is itself ordered to action. This is the case when the subject of a habit is a power, which is, itself, a principle of action. Most of the habits we will discuss relate to action in this stronger way.

One might wonder, however, what a habit adds to a power already ordered to action. Aquinas explains the addition that a habit brings through the Aristotelian notions of act and potency. For Aristotle, potency refers to a state in which a thing is capable of an operation, while act is the state associated with actually performing the operation. To say that a power is ordered to action is to say that it is in potency with respect to certain actions. Initially, one might think that a habit brings the power from the state of potency to the state of act. This appearance is partly true, but it is also partly false. To see why,

consider the example of learning a language. Growing up as a native English speaker, my intellectual and vocal powers are in a state of potency with respect to the act of speaking French. There is a sense in which I am capable of performing the act; albeit after extensive training and practice. Imagine that I go through this extensive training and practice, and acquire the ability to speak French whenever I wish. When I am actively speaking French, my intellectual and vocal powers are in the state of act. But what about when I'm not actively speaking? It is true to say that I have the potential to speak French, but this potential is different from the potential I had initially—it is closer to act in an important sense.

Examples like this led Aristotle to distinguish between two senses of potency: passive potency—my initial potential for speaking French (before learning)—and active potency—my later potential to speak French whenever I wish (after learning).[35] To these different senses of potency, correspond two senses of act: first act—identical to active potency—and second act—the actual operation (i.e., when I am actually speaking French). Aquinas follows Aristotle in taking habits as examples of first actuality (I.II.49.2 ad 1). The habits add to their powers by bringing them closer to act, in a way that is either suitable or unsuitable to the nature of those powers. Thus, habits are midway between act and potency in the hybrid state that is called first actuality.[36]

In the fourth article of Question 49, Aquinas explains that only certain powers require the presence of habits. He claims that the subject of a habit must be "capable of

[35] See *De Anima* II, Chapter 5.

[36] See Vernon J. Bourke "The Role of *Habitus* in the Thomistic Metaphysics of Potency and Act" in *Essays in Thomism* ed. Robert E. Brennan (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1942), 103-9 for a more extensive treatment of these matters.

determination in several ways and to various things" (49.4).[37] Some of our powers are not capable of determination in several ways because they are determined by the very nature of the power to one thing. For example, the vegetative powers of a human being work like this, according to Aquinas. As a result, we do not need habits that enable them to act in a way suitable to their nature—they are already determined by their nature to act according to it. On the other hand, the intellectual and appetitive powers are capable of being determined in different ways, so they need habits that determine them in ways that are appropriate to their nature.[38] In the next Question, Aquinas explores how these powers (and some other capacities in general) serve as the subjects of habits.

2.1.5 The Subject of Habit

By discussing the subject of habits in Question 50, Aquinas explains where it is that we find habits in the human being. On his hylomorphic view, human beings are composites of body and soul that are related as matter to form. Therefore, if habits are present in the human being, they will either be in the body or the soul. While Aquinas claims that genuine habits must be in the soul, he does leave room to talk about bodily 'habits' like health.

In Article 1, Aquinas takes up the issue of bodily habits. From Simplicius, he learned that some Aristotelians, notably Alexander of Aphrodisias, had maintained that

[37] *possit pluribus modis determinari, et ad diversa*

[38] In the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas explains that there are three types of capacities: those that only act, those that are only acted upon, and those that both act and are acted upon. While all of these capacities have virtues (in the general sense of being a fulfillment of a capacity), only the last type of capacity has virtues that are distinct from the capacity itself. Therefore, only that type of capacity requires habits, or virtues in the more narrow sense (*QDV* 1.1).

the body was not the subject of habits and dispositions.[39] Aquinas is reluctant to endorse this position; he cannot see how it is consistent with Aristotle's teaching. At the very least, Aristotle clearly includes bodily health as a disposition in the *Categories*, and he even lists it as a habit in *Physics VII.* Aquinas explains these complexities by distinguishing between two types of habits: those that involve a disposition to operation and those that involve a disposition to form or nature.[40] As he puts it in Question 50: "habit is a disposition of a subject which is in a state of potentiality either to form or to operation" (50.1).[41] Of those habits involving a disposition to operation, Aquinas claims that none are principally subjected in the body. The body's operations are either from nature—in which case habits are unnecessary—or the result of the activity of the soul—in which case the associated habits would reside principally in the soul. Of the habits involving a disposition to form, Aquinas does think they can be present in the body and cites health and beauty as examples. Nonetheless, instead of habits, he calls these qualities "habitual dispositions" (*habituales dispositiones*), claiming that they fall short of being genuine habits because "their causes, of their very nature, are easily changeable" (50.1).[42]

Consequently, Aquinas thinks that genuine habits only reside in the soul. Since, there are two types of habits (dispositions to form/nature and dispositions to operation),

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[39] See Simplicius, *On the Categories* 233, 10 ff.

[40] Later commentators refer to the habits that involve a disposition to operation as operative habits and those that involve a disposition to form as entitative habits. Aquinas often switches between form (*forma*) and nature (*natura*) when discussing the latter type of habit, but it is clear that he uses the terms synonymously.

[41] *habitus est quaedam dispositio alicuius subiecti existentis in potentia vel ad formam, vel ad operationem*

[42] *quia causae eorum ex sua natura de facili transmutabiles sunt*

there will be two ways habits can be present in the soul. First, they can be in the soul itself (i.e., with respect to its essence), insofar as the soul is disposed with reference to a nature. The need for these habits, however, depends on the nature to which the soul is disposed. A human soul does not need a habit disposing it toward human nature. Aquinas explains that, as the formal principle in the human being, the soul bestows that nature on the human being. Nonetheless, there is another nature toward which the soul does need to be further disposed—the divine nature.[43] It is with respect to that nature that the soul can serve as the subject of a habit. Grace is Aquinas's name for this habit (or habitual gift, as he often calls it), and he explores it in detail in Questions 109-114 of the *prima secundae*.

The second way that habits can be present in the soul is through being present in the powers of the soul. This is the primary way in which habits are present in the human soul. Aquinas spends the rest of Question 50 identifying the particular powers of the soul that serve as subjects of habits.

Recall that Aquinas holds that human beings are equipped with five types of powers: vegetative, sensitive, intellectual, appetitive, and locomotive. Other than the locomotive power, he addresses all of these in Question 50.[44] First, Aquinas denies that

[43] Aquinas supports this idea with a reference to 2 Peter 1:3-4, which says "His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire" (ESV).

[44] In fact, after mentioning the locomotive (*motivum secundum locum*) power in the *prima pars* (Question 78, Article 1), Aquinas never mentions it again in the *Summa*. As far as I can tell, he thinks that this power is primarily tied to the body (See I.78.1 ad 4), and that any habits that might inform this power would be there only in a secondary sense. As he says in Article 1 of Question 50: "dispositions to such operations [those operations that proceed from the soul through the body] are principally in the soul. But they can be secondarily in the body: to wit, insofar as the body is disposed and enabled with promptitude to help in the operations of the body." (*dispositiones ad tales operationes principaliter sunt in anima. In corpore vero possunt esse secundario, inquantum scilicet corpus disponitur et habilitatur ad prompte deserviendum operationibus animae*.)

the vegetative powers can be the subject of habits. In addition to the fact that they are determined to one thing, he also claims that they do not have the ability to obey the command of reason (50.3 ad 1). Next, he claims that the sensitive powers can be the subject of habits, insofar as they act according to the command of reason (50.3). These powers can also be considered insofar as they act from natural instinct, but Aquinas claims that habits cannot be in them in that sense. Consequently, the sensitive powers can be the subject of habits, but only inasmuch as they act according to reason's command.[45] Likewise, habits can also be present in the intellectual powers.[46] Finally, Aquinas turns to the appetitive powers. There are two main appetitive powers: the sensitive appetite and the rational appetite (i.e., the will). The sensitive appetite is oriented toward (or away from) objects that are apprehended by sensitive apprehension, while the intellectual appetite is oriented toward (or away from) objects that are apprehended by the intellect. In his discussion of the sensitive powers, Aquinas explains that the sensitive appetite serves as the subject of habits (50.3 ad 3). He turns to the rational appetite, or will, in Article 5. Since the will is a power that can be determined to act in various ways, Aquinas explains, it needs a habit through which it will be well disposed toward its acts.[47]

In sum, genuine habits are located in the soul: the habit (or habitual gift) of grace in the soul itself, and all other habits in the intellectual and appetitive (both sensitive and

[45] In his reply to the third objection, Aquinas clarifies that habits are present in both the sensitive appetite and the interior powers of sensitive apprehension. The exterior powers of sensitive apprehension, however, cannot serve as the subject of habits.

[46] As this verdict is in conflict with the opinion of Avicenna, Aquinas spends the majority of Article 4 explaining why Avicenna's inaccurate view of the active intellect led him to the wrong conclusion. This discussion is not vital to the current project; all we need to know is that the intellectual powers can serve as the subject of habits.

[47] In fact, a relation to the will is part of the very nature of habit on Aquinas's view. I will have more to say about this in the next section.

intellectual) powers of the soul. The body serves as the subject of habitual dispositions like health, but not genuine habits.

2.1.6 Habit, Will, and Freedom

Before closing this section, I will say a few words about the relationship between habits and the will, and the implications that this relationship has for our understanding of human freedom. In Article 5 of Question 50, Aquinas claims that it is part of the very notion of habit to be related to the will. In support, he cites a passage from a commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima* that was written by the Islamic philosopher Averroes: "habit is that which one uses when one wills" (50.5).[48] Also cited in the *sed contra* of the third Article in Question 49, this passage plays a crucial role in Aquinas's understanding of habits.[49] On Aquinas's view, our habits are not the source of automatic or mechanical action. Instead, it is up to the agent whether or not she will "use" her habit in each relevant situation. Consider his reason for claiming that non-human animals cannot have genuine habits: while they can be trained to perform certain actions repetitively, "the habit is incomplete, as to the use of the will, for they have not that power of using or of refraining, which seems to belong to the notion of habit" (50.3 ad 2).[50] Leaving aside the issue of whether this is an accurate account of the dispositions in non-human animals, it is clear that Aquinas endorses a strong connection between habits and the will.

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[48] *habitus est quo quis utitur cum voluerit*

[49] See Kent "Habits and Virtues," 119, for a helpful discussion of Aquinas's use of this passage from Averroes (esp. fn. 17).

[50] *Deficit tamen ratio habitus quantum ad usum voluntatis, quia non habent dominium utendi vel non utendi, quod videtur ad rationem habitus pertinere.*

Aquinas also stresses this idea in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*. In Article 1 of the first question, he describes habits as forms that rest and remain in their subjects or powers without necessitating those powers to particular actions.[51] Further, he claims that they are not "qualities that act in a necessary way… rather… such that someone is able to act with them when he wishes, as Averroes says in III *De Anima*," (*QDV* 1.1).[52] From these passages, it is clear that human beings cannot simply put their lives on autopilot after acquiring habits. The will is still going to play an important role as we endeavor to act from the habits that we have formed. The role of habits, Aquinas teaches, is to help us act in accordance with our nature (or against it, in the case of bad habits) consistently, readily, and with pleasure (*QDV* 1.1).[53]

By following Averroes in holding that habits allow us to "act when we will," Aquinas emphasizes the way in which they confer a new ability on their subject. When I acquire the habit of speaking French, I now have an ability that I did not have before—the ability to speak French whenever I want. As David Decosimo puts it, "habit transforms subject into a hair-trigger, fully formed capacity for determinate operation" (2014, 94). Recall that habits represent first actuality, which means that my capacity for

[51] *per modum formae quiescentis, et manentis in subiecto; ita tamen quod per eas non de necessitate potentia ad unum cogatur*

[52] *neque qualitates de necessitate agentes… sed… secundum quos potest quis agere cum voluerit ut dicit Commentator in III de anima.*

[53] Cf. I.II.71.4, where Aquinas writes, "Now the position of a habit in the soul is not the same as that of a form in a natural thing. For the form of a natural thing produces, of necessity, an operation befitting itself; wherefore a natural form is incompatible with the act of a contrary form: thus heat is incompatible with the act of cooling, and lightness with downward movement (except perhaps violence be used by some extrinsic mover): whereas the habit that resides in the soul, does not, of necessity, produce its operation, but is used by man when he wills." (*Aliter autem se habet habitus in anima, et forma in re naturali. Forma enim naturalis ex necessitate producit operationem sibi convenientem, unde non potest esse simul cum forma naturali actus formae contrariae; sicut non potest esse cum calore actus infrigidationis, neque simul cum levitate motus descensionis, nisi forte ex violentia exterioris moventis. Sed habitus in anima non ex necessitate producit suam operationem, sed homo utitur eo cum voluerit*.)

speaking French (which I have in virtue of being human) has been actualized through the learning process.

Returning to the *Summa*, how are we to understand Aquinas's claim, in Question 50 Article 5, that habits are principally related to the will by their very nature? Does this mean that the will is somehow the subject of all habits? No, Aquinas's claim does not commit him to this conclusion. Recall that it is part of the nature of habit to be ordered to action (49.3). Earlier in the *prima secundae,* Aquinas had established that "the will moves the other powers of the soul to their acts" (9.1). Decosimo sums up these connections in the following way: "Will alone is the efficient cause of the exercise of any of those habit-bearing powers, insofar as they can obey reason's command" (2014, 95). Thus, habits bear an essential relation to the will because habits are related to operation and the will is essential to operation. This does not require, however, that all habits are subjected in the will. As we saw in the last section, Aquinas holds that habits can be present in the soul itself, the sensitive powers (both apprehensive and appetitive), and the intellectual apprehensive powers, in addition to the will. It is in the exercise of these habits that the will is involved.

For some interpreters of Aquinas, this connection between habits and the will serves as an important advancement from Aristotle's view of habit, on which it was supposed to be impossible to act out of a habit in a free manner.[54] As Miner points out, however, habitual action and free action were not in tension on Aristotle's account.[55] It is

[54] See Katharine Breen, *Imagining an English Reading Public, 1150-1400* (New York: Cambridge, 2010) and Kent, "Habits and Virtues."

[55] See Miner, "Aquinas on *Habitus*," Section 4 and Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity,* 95 fn. 46.

only when we import later notions of freedom that tensions arise. For Aristotle, actions are free as long as they are voluntary, and all actions that arise from internal sources are voluntary.[56] Therefore, as habitual action arises from an internal source, it is voluntary, and consequently free. Aquinas has a similar understanding of human freedom, which allows him to maintain that humans act freely when they act out of habits. In fact, Miner and others have argued, persuasively in my opinion, that acting out of habits represents the highest form of human freedom.[57]

2.2 The Cause of Habitus

After discussing the essence of habit and its subject, Aquinas addresses its cause. He divides this topic into three parts: the cause of the generation of habits (Question 51), the cause of their increase (Question 52), and the cause of their diminution and corruption (Question 53). In this section, I focus on the causes associated with the generation of habits.

Before examining Aquinas's discussion, it will help to review what Aristotle says about the cause of habits in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. While Aristotle is mainly concerned with virtues, his comments apply to habits in general. He begins Book II by claiming that the cause of the intellectual virtues is teaching, while that of the moral virtues is habituation (*ethos*). Hence, Aristotle claims, "it is clear that none of the [moral virtues] arise in us by nature" (1103a). Instead, "nature gives us the capacity to acquire them, and completion comes through habituation" (1103a). Aristotle describes the process of habituation in terms of action: "we become just by doing just actions, temperate by

[56] See *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, Chapter 1.

[57] See Miner, "Aquinas on *Habitus*," and Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics*, Chapters 14-17.

temperate actions, and courageous by courageous actions" (1103b). Aquinas endorses much of this account, but he also expands it in important ways.

In the first article of Question 51, Aquinas makes it clear that there is no simple and generic answer to the question of whether habits arise from nature. After a fascinating discussion that would take us too far afield, he lands on the following view: while some habits are wholly caused by nature, most are not. Furthermore, for the habits that will be most relevant for our project—the virtues—nature has a very minimal role to play in the causal story. Next, Aquinas, like Aristotle before him, turns to action as a possible cause of habit.

2.2.1 Habituation as a Cause of Habit

Aristotle teaches that our actions are the cause of our habits of virtue and vice; it is by acting justly or unjustly that we become just or unjust. Unfortunately, Aristotle does not have much to say about how this process works. Additionally, the objections that Aquinas discusses in Article 2 of Question 51 reveal that the process is metaphysically suspect. To give one example, the agent would have to be both mover and moved, both active and passive, in the process, which would be impossible on Aristotle's picture (objection 2).

In Articles 2 and 3, Aquinas endorses the Aristotelian view, but seeks to explain how acts can cause habits. First, Aquinas notes that the process of habituation requires a specific type of agent. Habituation cannot take place in those agents—like fire—that are only the active principle of their actions. Instead, the agent must be the active *and* passive principle of its action, which is just what we find with human beings. As Aquinas points out, the appetitive power in human beings serves as both an active power and a passive

power. It is passive insofar as it is moved by an object presented by the apprehensive power, but it is active insofar as it moves the person to act. Likewise, the intellective power is both active (in reasoning) and passive (in being moved by the self-evident proposition).

Second, Aquinas explains in Article 3 that the active principle must entirely overcome the passive principle to cause the habit.[58] Back in Article 2, he seemed to suggest that this only happens when the relevant acts are repeated: "For everything that is passive and moved by another, is disposed by the action of the agent; wherefore if the acts be multiplied a certain quality is formed in the power which is passive and moved, which quality is called a habit" (51.2).[59] Aquinas qualifies this initial claim, however, in the third article. There are some situations in which a passive principle can be entirely overcome by an active principle in one act, and in these cases, habits can be caused by a single act. In human beings, this phenomenon only occurs in two types of habits. First, "a habit of science can be caused by a single act of the reason"[60] insofar as the possible intellect is entirely overcome by a self-evident proposition (51.3). Second, bodily habits (or habitual dispositions) can be caused in this way, provided that the active principle is powerful enough. Here Aquinas cites strong doses of medicine as potential examples.

The other types of habits cannot be caused by a single act. For example, Aquinas teaches that "the habits of moral virtue are caused in the appetitive powers, according as

[58] *Ad hoc autem quod aliqua qualitas causetur in passivo, oportet quod activum totaliter vincat passivum.*

[59] *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.*

[60] *habitum autem scientiae possibile est causari ex uno rationis actu*

they are moved by the reason" (51.2).[61] In the third article, he explains that reason is not capable of overcoming the appetitive powers in a single act. Reason can only judge particulars (i.e., what should be done in a particular situation), but the appetitive powers are involved in many different situations and acts. Thus, it is only through many acts of reason that the habits of moral virtue are caused. Similarly, the habits that reside in the lower apprehensive powers can only be caused through repeated acts.

What does Aquinas mean when he claims that the active principle must *entirely overcome* the passive principle to cause a habit? He illustrates this idea with a helpful analogy: "Whence we see that because fire cannot at once overcome the combustible, it does not enkindle at once; but it gradually expels contrary dispositions, so that by overcoming it entirely, it may impress its likeness on it" (51.3).[62] In the example, the combustible material is in potency with respect to being on fire, and the existing fire is striving to actualize that potential. As Aquinas argues, this cannot be done instantaneously; the fire must first expel contrary dispositions until it has overcome the combustible material. Only then can it actualize the material's potency for being on fire. The process is analogous in the generation of habits. Take a habit of moral virtue, for example. The active principle—reason—seeks to actualize the potential of an appetitive power to be inclined to act in accord with reason. It cannot do this all at once because the appetitive power is directed toward many different acts, and because there might be dispositions in the appetitive power that are contrary to reason. Therefore, reason needs

[61] *habitus virtutum moralium causantur in appetitivis potentiis, secundum quod moventur a ratione*

[62] *Unde videmus quod, quia ignis non potest statim vincere suum combustibile, non statim inflammat ipsum, sed paulatim abiicit contrarias dispositiones, ut sic totaliter vincens ipsum, similitudinem suam ipsi imprimat.*

to act on the appetitive power in many different situations and in a way capable of removing contrary dispositions. Only then does reason entirely overcome the appetitive power "so as to be inclined like nature to the same thing, in the majority of cases, which inclination belongs to the habit of virtue" (51.3).[63] This is the process that generates most of the habits of virtue.[64]

2.2.2 Divine Infusion as a Cause of Habit

Aquinas concludes Question 51, however, with a query that is entirely foreign to the Aristotelian virtue framework—whether any habits are infused (*infundere*) by God? In Article 4, Aquinas argues—on the basis of two reasons—that some habits are infused into man by God. First, there are some habits in us that simply could not be present any other way. Second, for any effect of a secondary cause, God can produce that effect

[63] (*ut feratur in idem ut in pluribus, per modum naturae, quod pertinet ad habitum virtutis.*) Aquinas elaborates in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*: "things that can go in either direction [i.e., things that are not determined by nature to one thing] do not possess the kind of form that makes them incline in one determinate direction. Rather, it is their own motivating force that directs them in one determinate direction. But the very fact that they are directed towards this, in some way also disposes them towards this. Then, when they repeatedly incline and are directed in the same direction by their own motivating force, then their inclination in that direction becomes determinate and reinforced. In this way, they acquire a [disposition] towards it, like a sort of form, similar to a natural one, which tends in a single direction. Because of this, we speak of habit as 'second nature'" (1.9). (*Sed ea quae sunt ad utrumlibet, non habent aliquam formam ex qua declinent ad unum determinate; sed a proprio movente determinantur ad aliquid unum; et hoc ipso quod determinantur ad ipsum, quodammodo disponuntur in idem; et cum multoties inclinantur, determinantur ad idem a proprio movente, et firmatur in eis inclinatio determinata in illud, ita quod ista dispositio superinducta, est quasi quaedam forma per modum naturae tendens in unum. Et propter hoc dicitur, quod consuetudo est altera natura*.)

[64] In the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas appeals to another analogy with nature to explain the generation of virtuous habits: "practical matters are contingent and no more than plausible, and therefore one action is not enough to create virtue; several are needed. Even if they do not all occur at once, they can still bring into being the [habit] of virtue. This is because the first action creates a [disposition]; the second, finding its matter disposed in that way, so disposes it even more; and the third still more. In this way, the final action, acting on the strength of all the previous ones, completes the process of generating virtue; it works in the way that many raindrops can hollow out a stone" (1.9 ad 11). (*quod agibilia sunt contingentia et probabilia, ideo unus actus non sufficit ad causandum virtutem, sed requiruntur plures. Et licet illi plures non sint simul, tamen habitum virtutis causare possunt: quia primus actus facit aliquam dispositionem, et secundus actus inveniens materiam dispositam adhuc eam magis disponit, et tertius adhuc amplius; et sic ultimus actus agens in virtute omnium praecedentium complet generationem virtutis, sicut accidit de multis guttis cavantibus lapidem*.) See also *STh* II.II.24.6 ad 2.

directly (i.e., without the use of that secondary cause). Thus, God can produce, by direct means, the sort of habits that are normally caused by habituation.

The first thing to notice about these two reasons is that they are very different types of reasons. The former explains why it is *necessary* that divine infusion is the cause of at least some of our habits. The latter explains why it is *possible* that divine infusion could be the cause of some of our habits. The second reason is simply a general point about God's relation to the effects of secondary causes and is not relevant for our inquiry for two reasons. First, the situation it describes is not the norm. While it is possible for God to cause habits in this way, Aquinas suggests that he rarely does so.[65] Second, habits caused by God in this way are not the sort of habits that Aquinas has in mind when discussing the infused virtues. We learn this in I.II.63.4 ad 3, where Aquinas recognizes that God could cause virtues that are of the same species as the acquired virtues, but claims that these virtues are not "infused virtues" in the proper sense.[66] For these reasons, I focus on Aquinas's first reason for the presence of habits that are infused by God.

Once again, the first reason is that we find habits in us that can be caused only by divine infusion. Aquinas's argument for this point employs some implicit premises and relies on claims that he has made earlier in the *prima secundae*, both of which need to be made explicit. The argument runs like this:

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[65] He gives the example of the apostles at Pentecost, which can be safely labeled as a rare occurrence.

[66] There Aquinas says: "God gave the man born blind an eye for the same act as the act for which other eyes are formed naturally: consequently it was of the same species. It would be the same if God wished to give a man miraculously virtues, such as those that are acquired by acts. But the case is not so in the question before us, as stated" (*oculum caeci nati Deus fecit ad eundem actum ad quem formantur alii oculi secundum naturam, et ideo fuit eiusdem speciei. Et eadem ratio esset, si Deus vellet miraculose causare in homine virtutes quales acquiruntur ex actibus. Sed ita non est in proposito, ut dictum est*).

1. There are some habits which dispose human beings to an end that exceeds the proportion of human nature.
2. Habits need to be in proportion to the end to which they dispose the human being.
3. So, these habits exceed the proportion of human nature.
4. So, these habits can only be present by divine infusion.[67]

Aquinas begins with the claim that human beings have habits that dispose them to an end that "exceeds the proportion [or ability] of human nature" (51.4).[68] This end is the "ultimate and perfect *beatitudo* of man"[69] which Aquinas discusses in Questions 1-5 of the *prima secundae*.[70] There, he explains that God is the last end for human beings—as for all creatures—and that perfect *beatitudo* is the human being's vision of the divine essence.[71] In contrast, human beings can also be disposed toward an end that does not exceed their capacities, which Aquinas calls "imperfect *beatitudo*" (I.II.3).[72] Such *beatitudo* is a certain participation in perfect *beatitudo*, but falls short of the true notion. Furthermore, imperfect *beatitudo*—unlike perfect *beatitudo*—is possible in this life (I.II.5.3).

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[67] This argument is a paraphrase of the following text: *Prima ratio est, quia aliqui habitus sunt quibus homo bene disponitur ad finem excedentem facultatem humanae naturae, qui est ultima et perfecta hominis beatitudo, ut supra dictum est. Et quia habitus oportet esse proportionatos ei ad quod homo disponitur secundum ipsos, ideo necesse est quod etiam habitus ad huiusmodi finem disponentes, excedant facultatem humanae naturae. Unde tales habitus nunquam possunt homini inesse nisi ex infusione divina, sicut est de omnibus gratuitis virtutibus.*

[68] *excedentem facultatem humanae naturae*

[69] *ultima et perfecta hominis beatitudo*

[70] While "*beatitudo*" is generally translated as "happiness," many scholars have remarked on the inadequacies of this translation. For instance, Miner writes: "'happiness' as heard by most English speakers today falls short of the condition that Thomas means to indicate. This is more adequately conveyed as 'beatitude' or 'blessedness' (Latin *beatus* = 'blessed')" (2016, 11-2). Since even these terms can carry errant connotations, I will simply leave the term untranslated.

[71] See I.II.1.8 and 3.8.

[72] In 3.2 ad 4, Aquinas claims that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was referring to this imperfect *beatitudo*, which is actually a different species of *beatitudo* from perfect *beatitudo* (see I.II.5.5 ad 3).

The *prima secundae* begins, therefore, with Aquinas establishing that the true end for human beings exceeds their natural capacities. In the argument for infused habits, premise (1) is merely the claim that we have habits that dispose us to that end. Aquinas would not have sensed a need to support this claim further—its truth can be seen in numerous ways: revelation speaks of habits like faith, hope, and love; through experience we find ourselves becoming more or less disposed to know and love God; and reason suggests that God would not have created us for an end without disposing us toward that end in some way.

This brings us to premise (2), which is a general claim about the nature of habits. Aquinas says that they must be proportionate (*esse proportionatos*) to that toward which the human being is disposed by them. This principle—let's call it the Proportionality Principle—is crucial for Aquinas's claims about infused habits and for his later discussion concerning infused virtues. Back in Article 1 of Question 50, Aquinas evoked this principle to show that the habits that relate to the operations of the body (as it is moved by the soul) are principally in the soul. Since those habits dispose the human being to operations that principally belong to the soul, the habits themselves principally belong to the soul. In that discussion, the relevant sort of proportionality is one of subject (i.e., location in the human being). In 51.4, however, the proportionality at issue is a proportionality of nature. That is, since human beings are disposed to a supernatural end (i.e., an end beyond their natural capacities), the habits that dispose them to that end must be supernatural as well. Given the nature of habits, it is not surprising that they must follow this sort of proportionality. Hence, Aquinas does not worry about supporting the Proportionality Principle with additional evidence.

Premise (3) clearly follows from (1) and (2). The move from (3) to (4), however, requires explanation. How can Aquinas move from the idea that these habits exceed the proportion or capability of human nature to the claim that they can only be caused by God? Once again, the implicit premises were set in place earlier in the *prima secundae*. In Question 5, Aquinas employs these premises to argue that human beings can only attain perfect *beatitudo* through the work of God. Because the vision of the divine essence surpasses the nature of the human being, it cannot be achieved by natural powers. So concludes Article 5. In Article 6, Aquinas asks whether human beings attain *beatitudo* through the action of some higher creature. The objections give reasons to think that an angel could be instrumental in a human being's attaining *beatitudo*. In his response, he asserts that human beings attain *beatitudo* through the work of a higher being, but that this higher being cannot be a creature. All created things, Aquinas explains, are subject to the laws of nature. As a result, no created thing can perform something that exceeds nature—even if it is the nature of a lower creature. Thus angels are ruled out. Hence, "if anything need to be done that is above nature, it is done by God immediately" (I.II.5.6).[73] With this argument in the background, we see why Aquinas can reach his conclusion that God must be the cause of the habits in question. Since these habits exceed the nature of the human being, they can only be caused by God himself.

In sum, Aquinas addresses three main causes of the generation of habits. First, nature can be a cause of habits, but it has a minimal role to play in the generation of habits of virtue. Second, our own actions can cause habits through the process of habituation. While some habits (of the intellect and body) can be caused by a single act,

[73] *Si quid fieri oporteat quod sit supra naturam, hoc fit immediate a Deo.*

most can only be caused through numerous repeated acts. Third, Aquinas claims that God can be the cause of habits through a process called infusion (*infundere*). So far, Aquinas has not explained this process, but he will have more to say about it in his discussion of the virtues.

2.3 The Increase of Habitus

In Question 52 of the *prima secundae,* Aquinas works through a series of articles concerning the increase of habits. These articles lay the foundation for his account of growth in infused virtue; as such, they are vital for the chapters that follow.

2.3.1 Whether Habits Increase

Article 1 asks whether habits can increase at all. This might not seem like a controversial topic today, as it is widely accepted that, for example, our knowledge can increase or we can become more just than we have been in the past. Nonetheless, Article 1 begins with a series of objections from Aristotle's *Physics* that suggest that habits cannot increase. In *Physics VII* (246a 10) Aristotle claims that habits are perfections. Combining this premise with the intuitive idea that perfection cannot be more or less, we are left with the conclusion that habits cannot be more or less (i.e., they cannot increase). Similarly, for habits to increase, there must be some alteration in them. In *Physics VII*, however, Aristotle says that there is no alteration in habits.[74] Therefore, habits must not increase. In contrast to these initial Aristotelian appearances, Aquinas cites Luke 17:5 in the *sed contra*, where the Apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith. Hence, we have reason to think that habits—of which faith is a particular example—can increase.

[74] Technically, Aristotle does not say that there can be no alteration in habits; rather, his claim (in 246a 10 ff) is that habits are not, themselves, alterations.

Aquinas responds by pointing out that we are justified in attributing quantitative terms like "increase" to intelligible things like forms. In light of the "natural connection between our intellect and corporeal things,"[75] we can speak of increase in both realms. With respect to forms, Aquinas sides with Augustine,[76] holding that "to be greater is the same as to be better."[77] In other words, Aquinas has taken a first step toward an answer by showing that it is not a simple category mistake to apply increase to habits. When we speak of the increase of habits, as with forms in general, we are referring to the perfection of the form.

Immediately, Aquinas explains that there are two ways of considering the perfection of a form. First, the form can be perfect with respect to itself. Second, the form can be perfect in terms of the subject's participation in it.[78] When we speak of the first sort of perfection, Aquinas says, we use the adjectives "little" or "great." For example, in the case of a habit like science, the form is perfect with respect to itself, when it extends to all the possible objects of science—which we would call "great" science. Yet, the same habit of science can be perfect with respect to the subject's participation, as when one person possess the habit in a stronger or more lasting way than another. According to Aquinas, the adjectives "more" or "less" apply to this sense of perfection. Before

[75] *propter connaturalitatem intellectus nostri ad res corporeas*

[76] See Augustine, *De Trinitate* vi, 8, in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers, First Series Vol. 3*. trans. Arthur West Haddan, ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887).

[77] *idem est esse maius quod melius*

[78] *uno modo, secundum ipsam formam… alio modo, secundum quod subiectum participat formam*

continuing his response, Aquinas issues a warning: "Now this distinction is not to be understood as implying that the form has a being outside its matter or subject" (52.1).[79]

He elaborates on this idea in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*. When addressing the question of whether the infused virtues may be increased,[80] he begins with the following claim: "Many make mistakes about forms by treating them as if they were substances" (*QDV* 1.11).[81] This claim is followed by a lengthier version of the warning issued in the *Summa*. Aquinas explains that forms do not have being on their own; instead, being belongs to a subject by means of a form. Similarly, "the process of coming into being (which concludes with there being a form) does not belong to the form, but to the subject" (*QDV* 1.11).[82] When these features of forms are forgotten, philosophers tend to slip into error when speaking about the increase of habits.

Aquinas sees a record of these errors in Simplicius's *Commentary on the Categories*. In the *prima secundae* (52.1), Aquinas relates (virtually verbatim) the four schools of thought that Simplicius lays out in his commentary. These schools pertain to the intension and remission of qualities in general, but all the parties involved follow Aristotle in including habits as one of the types of quality. Plotinus and other Platonists held that the qualities themselves were subject to degree. Another group held that it is

[79] *Non autem ista distinctio procedit secundum hoc, quod forma habeat esse praeter materiam aut subiectum*

[80] While this Article concerns the increase of infused virtues, which will be the topic of Chapter Four, Aquinas's comments about forms and qualities in general will apply here. Aquinas has to do more preparatory work when discussing the increase of infused virtue in the *Disputed Questions on Virtue* since he cannot rely on preceding Questions as he can in the *Summa*.

[81] *Dicendum, quod multis error accidit circa formas ex hoc quod de eis iudicant sicut de substantiis iudicatur*.

[82] *ita nec fieri, quod terminatur ad esse, est formae, sed subiecti.*

only the qualified things (i.e., the subjects of qualities), and not the qualities themselves, that are susceptible to degree. Simplicius points out that Aristotle was at least aware of this position—though Aristotle only presents it as a possibility (*Categories* 10b 31). The Stoics claimed that certain habits were subject to degree (e.g., the intermediate arts) while other habits were not (e.g., the virtues). And a final school made a distinction between two types of qualities: immaterial qualities and material qualities. The former were not susceptible to degree, but the latter were.[83]

Unlike Simplicius, Aquinas does not walk through each of these positions and offer specific criticisms. He merely records the views and then lays out the true account—in the manner most conducive to learning. He frames the discussion with the two ways of speaking of the perfection of a form.

As we saw, the first way relates to the form itself. In this way, some forms are susceptible to degree and some are not. It depends upon how the form receives its specific nature: Aquinas explains that some forms receive their specific nature in respect of themselves or something belonging to them (type 1), while other forms receive their specific nature from something to which they are related (type 2). As this distinction is very abstract, examples will help. The number 6 is an example of a form of type (1); it receives its specific nature with respect to itself. In other words, the number 6 has a definite nature, and adding to or subtracting from it will yield a different form. As a result, forms of type (1) are not susceptible to degree in terms of the form itself. Beauty is an example of a form of type (2), as it receives its species from something to which it relates. By itself, beauty is a general form, and is divided into distinct species based upon

[83] Simplicius identifies Porphyry as a critic of this view, though he does not identify its proponents.

the nature of subject that it informs. Thus, we have the beauty of a horse, the beauty of a human being, the beauty of a flower, etc. Forms of type (2) are susceptible to degree in terms of the form itself because their species is determined by that to which they relate. Consequently, one form of horse beauty might be greater than another, simply by being more closely related to the nature of a horse. Despite the difference in degree, they share the same species because they are related to the same nature.[84]

The second way of speaking about the perfection of a form pertains to the subject's participation in the form. Once again, Aquinas explains that some forms are susceptible to degree in this way (type A) and some are not (type B).[85] There are two reasons a form can fall in type (B). First, if the subject receives its species from that form. Twice in Article 1, Aquinas reminds his reader that "that from which a thing receives its species must remain indivisibly fixed and constant in something indivisible" (52.1).[86] Second, if the form is essentially indivisible. This applies to quantitative forms and the fourth species of quality (figure/shape), which can only participate in the form in one way. For example, something cannot be more triangular than something else; given the definition of the shape, something is either a triangle or it is not. Nonetheless, these two reasons apply to a small number of forms, so most forms fall in type (A), and are susceptible to degree in terms of the subject's participation in the form.

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[84] Aquinas notes, however, that we might reserve the term "beauty" (or other such forms) for "the most perfect measure" (*perfectissimae commensurationi*). In that case, beauty would not be susceptible to degree. This qualification will be important when we discuss virtue below.

[85] In his *Commentary on the Categories* (288.35-289.14), Simplicius makes the same claim, but Aquinas worries that Simplicius's explanation does not get at the heart of the matter. Simplicius claims that substantial forms (and substantial-like forms like quantity) are not susceptible to degree, because substance itself cannot be more or less (e.g., one thing cannot be more dog than something else). Aquinas largely agrees, but seeks to offer a better explanation.

[86] *id a quo aliquid habet speciem, oportet manere fixum et stans in indivisibili*

To sum up, there are two ways of speaking about the perfection of form. If we are speaking in terms of the form itself, it is susceptible to degree as long as it does not receive its specific nature from itself (type 1). And if we are speaking in terms of the subject's participation in the form, forms are susceptible to degree unless the subject receives its species from that form or the form is essentially indivisible.

Aquinas concludes his response by situating habits within this framework. With respect to the forms themselves, habits receive their species through a relation to something else—namely, the nature of the subject (as was pointed out above). This means that they fall under type (2), and are subject to degree. With respect to the subject's participation, habits are neither that by which the subject receives its species (they are accidental forms) nor essentially indivisible. As such, they fall under type (A) and are subject to degree. Aquinas sums up: "in two ways intensity and remission may be observed in habits and dispositions. First, in respect of the habit itself… Secondly, in respect of participation by the subject" (52.1).[87]

It is the second of these two ways that is most relevant for the current project; most virtues are not susceptible to degree in the first way. Interestingly, here in Question 52 Aquinas gives his readers two possible reasons that might explain why habits are susceptible to degree in the second way. He explains that different subjects can participate in habits like science to different degrees, "according to a diverse aptitude arising either from nature, or from custom" (52.1).[88] Think of these reasons in terms of

[87] *dupliciter potest intensio et remissio in habitibus et dispositionibus considerari. Uno modo, secundum se… Alio modo, secundum participationem subiecti*

[88] *secundum diversam aptitudinem vel ex natura vel ex consuetudine*

the distinction between act and potency.[89] Thus, the diverse aptitude for the habit (i.e., the form) is the result of diverse levels of potentiality for that habit.[90] In this passage, Aquinas explains that these diverse levels of potentiality arise from two sources: nature or custom.

First, consider what it would mean for two subjects to have different levels of potentiality for a certain form by nature. Consider a lump of clay and a piece of marble that are roughly the same size. Both have the potential to take on the form of Rodin's Gates of Hell. Nevertheless, it would be much easier to actualize that form in the lump of clay than in the marble. This is the result of the clay's greater potentiality for the Gates of Hell form, which in turn, is the result of its natural properties (esp. its high pliability). Thus, by nature, the lump of clay has greater potentiality for this particular form than the piece of marble. Similarly, in the case of habits, two powers can possess diverse levels of potentiality for a single habit by nature. For example, in Question 51 Aquinas teaches that "a habit of knowledge is natural as to its beginning, in so far as one man, from the

[89] Aquinas makes this connection for us in his *Commentary on the Sentences* when discussing the virtue of charity—specifically, how different people can have different levels of charity. He explains that different levels of charity are the result of differences in the recipients of charity. "Now this diversity of recipients is viewed in terms of the extent to which something is more apt and prepared for receiving than another. But as we see among natural forms that matter is rendered more or less disposed to receiving form by accidental dispositions like heat and cold and things of this sort, so too in regard to perfections of the soul, the soul is made more or less capable of attaining its perfections by the soul's very operations" (I Sent. D. 17 (Paris), q. 1, a. 3). Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from the *Commentary on the Sentences* are from Kwasniewski, Bolin, and Bolin, trans. *On Love and Charity: Readings from the "Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard"* (Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 2008). (*Diversitas autem recipientium attenditur, secundum quod aliquid est magis aptum et paratum ad recipiendum. Sicut autem videmus in formis naturalibus, quod per dispositiones accidentales, sicut calorem et frigus et hujusmodi, materia efficitur magis vel minus disposita ad suscipiendum formam; ita etiam in perfectionibus animae ex ipsis operibus animae anima efficitur habilior vel minus habilis ad consequendum perfectionem suam*.)

[90] Later in the *Summa* (II.II.24.7), Aquinas explains that the subject's capacity for a form is one of the ways in which that form's increase can be fixed in advance (*praefigi*).

disposition of his organs of sense, is more apt than another to understand well" (51.1).[91] Through the natural disposition of his organs, this man has a greater potentiality for the habit of knowledge than the other.[92] The case is similar with the appetitive habits. Aquinas tells us that some people are "disposed from their own bodily temperament to chastity or meekness or such like" (51.1).[93] These lucky individuals are simply born with a greater potentiality for those particular appetitive habits.

The second reason human beings can differ in their level of potentiality for a form, Aquinas tells us, is custom (*consuetudo*).[94] Compare the following men. Bill has been consistently prone to overeating and visits the local Golden Corral twice a week (nearly eating himself sick each time). On the other hand, Gene has been more moderate, occasionally overeating—on special occasions, for instance—but tends to eat about the right amount. Which of these two will be more apt to develop the habit of temperance with respect to food? Gene, of course. But why? The explanation lies with the customs or dispositions that the two men have developed through their behavior. Bill's consistent overeating has created dispositions within his sensitive appetite that are directly opposed

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[91] *est aliquis habitus cognoscitivus secundum inchoationem naturalis, inquantum unus homo, ex dispositione organorum, est magis aptus ad bene intelligendum quam alius*

[92] Aquinas explains, in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* 1.3, that the manner in which a subject can receive accidents is mediated (*mediante*) by the other accidents that it possesses. See also, Gloria Frost "On Increase and Decrease in Qualitative Intensity: Aquinas's neo-Platonic transformation of Aristotelian hylomorphism," (manuscript), 35ff.

[93] *Sunt enim quidam dispositi ex propria corporis complexione ad castitatem vel mansuetudinem, vel ad aliquid huiusmodi.*

[94] The term "*consuetudo*" had enjoyed a rich history in the Latin philosophical and theological traditions. As Bonnie Kent explains, "when writing without any special reference to Aristotle, Latin authors commonly spoke of 'custom' or 'usage' (*consuetudo*) rather than habit (*habitus*) as 'another nature' or a 'second nature'" (2002, 117). Importantly, Augustine consistently favored "*consuetudo"* over "*habitus"* when he discussed the virtues. Nevertheless, Aquinas does not seem to be making a substantive point with his use of "*consuetudo"* in this passage. He is simply claiming that the other habits and dispositions that we have developed can make us more or less apt (i.e., having greater or less potentiality) to develop a particular habit.

to the habit of temperance. Consequently, he has a lower potentiality for that habit. Gene has been developing dispositions that are consonant with (or at least not opposed to) temperance, which leaves him with a higher level of potentiality for temperance.

To sum up, Aquinas claims that habits can increase in two ways: on the part of the habit itself and in terms of the subject's participation in the habit. With regard to the latter, increase can happen when the subject gains a greater potentiality for the habit through custom (i.e., through his or her associated behaviors and dispositions).[95]

2.3.2 The Manner in Which Habits Increase

Having established that habits can increase, Aquinas now addresses the manner in which they increase. Article 2 of Question 52 asks whether habits increase by addition. This query might not make sense for us, but in Aquinas's day the most popular view of qualitative intensification held that qualities increase through addition.[96] On this view, when Socrates gets a nice tan in the summer, that tan (or increased brownness) is the result of more forms of brownness being added to him through the action of the sun.

In his response to this query, Aquinas builds on the distinction that he made in Article 1 between increase in the form itself and increase in terms of the subject's participation in the form. Those habits that are susceptible to increase in terms of the form itself, do increase by addition. Aquinas gives the example of the habit of science, which increases by addition when the agent learns new truths. This explains why certain virtues like faith and prudence can undergo increase by addition. Those habits that are

[95] The subject's potentiality for the form that is due to nature is one of the ways that we can see different degrees of participation in a form across different subjects, but is involved when a single subject increases with respect to his or her participation in a form.

[96] For a great discussion of the different theories of qualitative intensification and Aquinas's rejection of them, see Gloria Frost, "On Increase and Decrease" (esp. 12ff).

only susceptible to increase in terms of the subject's participation in the form, however, do not increase by addition. Instead, this increase happens "by the subject participating [in] more… perfectly, one and the same form" (52.2).[97] Next, Aquinas goes on to explain why there cannot be increase by addition when it comes to the subject's participation in the form. He notes that this addition would be added either to the form itself or to the subject. If it were the former, we would not have increase, but a new species. If it were the latter, we would not have qualitative increase, but simply a greater subject (i.e., a greater qualified thing). Since neither option is true qualitative increase, habits do not increase (in this manner) by addition. To recap: all habits are capable of increase with respect to the subject's participation in the form, but this does not happen through addition. Some habits (e.g., faith and prudence) are capable of increase with respect to the habit itself, and it is only in this way that increase happens through addition.

In this way, Aquinas explains that all habits are capable of increase with respect to the subject's participation in the habit, but he has not said much about how this happens.[98] In his reply to the third objection of Article 2, however, we find some important comments on this topic:

> What is not already white, is potentially white, as not yet possessing the form of whiteness: hence the agent causes a new form in the subject. But that which is less hot or white, is not in potentiality to those forms, since it has them already actually; but it is in potentiality to a perfect mode of participation, and this it receives through the agent's action.[99]

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[97] *sed fit per hoc quod subiectum magis (vel minus) perfecte participat unam et eandem formam.*

[98] In what follows, I am indebted to Frost's "On Increase and Decrease."

[99] *id quod nondum est album, est in potentia ad formam ipsam, tanquam nondum habens formam, et ideo agens causat novam formam in subiecto. Sed id quod est minus calidum aut album, non est in potentia ad formam, cum iam actu formam habeat, sed est in potentia ad perfectum participationis modum. Et hoc consequitur per actionem agentis.*

These comments allow Aquinas to maintain that there can be change (i.e., the actualization of potential) without the addition of form, but it also helps us to understand how subjects can increase with respect to their participation in a form. Even when a subject's potentiality for a form has been actualized, the subject retains a potentiality for a greater degree of participation. As with the first potentiality, this second potentiality is susceptible to degree and must be actualized by some agent.

In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas explains that a subject's participation in a form can increase in two ways:

> either because the power of the agent is increased, as from a bringing together of many lights illumination is increased, or on the part of [the subject] itself, insofar as it is made more receptive of that act, as air, when more rarefied, is made more receptive to light" (I Sent. D. 17 (Paris), q. 2, a. 2).[100]

Therefore, the subject's degree of participation in the form depends upon two factors: the agent and the subject's potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the form. Consider these in turn.

First, the agent will partly determine the degree to which the subject participates in the form. Consider Gloria Frost's example of a pot of lukewarm water. The water has a potential for a greater degree of participation in the form of heat. The final degree of participation in that form will depend (at least in part) on the agent that strives to actualize the potential. Thus, a small match, while not able to actualize the full potential, is able to actualize it to some degree (i.e., it will increase the degree to which the water

[100] *vel quia augetur virtus agentis, sicut ex conjunctione plurium luminarium intenditur illuminatio; vel ex parte ipsius materiae, secundum quod efficitur susceptibilior illius actus, sicut aer quanto plus attenuatur, fit susceptibilior luminis.*

participates in the form of heat). On the other hand, a large burner on the high setting will be able to actualize the water's full potential for a greater degree of participation in heat.

Likewise, in the case of habits, the subject's degree of participation in the habit depends upon the agent. With acquired appetitive habits, repeated acts of reason serve as the agent, while God is the agent with the infused habits. For the former, the acts of reason have to be of sufficient strength to actualize the subject's potential for greater participation in the habit.[101] In the latter case, there are no limits on the power of God, so one might think that God will always actualize any un-actualized potential that we might have with respect to a greater degree of participation in an infused habit. As we will see, however, the degree to which God actualizes this potential is determined by his will. Thus, for some people he chooses to fully actualize the potential, while for others he does not. Aquinas hints at this in Question 51, Article 4. In the reply to the fourth objection, he writes, "God, in respect of His nature, is the same to all, but in respect of the order of His wisdom, for some fixed motive, gives certain things to some, which He does not give to others" (51.4 ad 4).[102] I say more on this point in Chapter Four.

Second, the subject's potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the habit partly determines the final degree of participation. Once again, consider the example of the pot of lukewarm water. The water has a determinate potentiality for a perfect mode of participation in the form of heat—represented by the boiling point (212° F). There are two ways in which this potential can be increased: through the removal of contrary forms

[101] Recall Aquinas's analogy of the drops of water hollowing out a stone (*QDV* 1.9 ad 11).

[102] *Deus, quantum ad suam naturam, aequaliter se habet ad omnes, sed secundum ordinem suae sapientiae certa ratione quaedam tribuit aliquibus, quae non tribuit aliis.*

or through the addition of disposing forms.[103] With the water, forms that are contrary to heat include forms like coldness. By removing any forms of coldness in the water, an agent could increase the water's potential for a greater degree of participation in the form of heat. An example of a disposing form that could be added to the water is the form of saltiness. By adding salt to the water, one raises the boiling point of the solution, thus increasing the potential for a greater degree of participation in heat.

The situation is analogous in the case of habits. Consider the virtue of temperance. Contrary forms would include dispositions toward incontinence and intemperance. By eliminating these contrary dispositions, an agent can increase the concupiscible power's potentiality for greater participation in the form of temperance. Likewise, the virtue of fortitude might be a form that disposes one to an increase of temperance. In that case, an agent can increase the concupiscible appetite's potentiality for greater participation in temperance by generating the form of fortitude in the irascible power.

Article 3 of Question 52 raises the following question: "Whether every act increases its habit?"[104] As the objections and the *sed contra* illustrate, there are Aristotelian reasons that support either answer. In his response, Aquinas reveals that the issue is entirely too complex to receive a simple yes or no answer. While it is possible for a single act to increase the associated habit, Aquinas introduces two important

[103] See I.48.1, *QDV* 1.3 and Frost (37-9). As she explains, "the prior ways in which a subject is actualized make it more or less susceptible to becoming actual in other ways" (37-8).

[104] As with the rest of Question 52, Aquinas does not differentiate between infused and acquired habits in this article. We learn from his discussions of increase in infused virtue, however, that only God can increase infused habits. Hence, he must have acquired habits exclusively in mind in this article. Nevertheless, the principles that he lays out here will be relevant for his views on growth in infused virtue, as we will see in Chapter Four.

qualifications. First, acts must be of a certain kind to cause the increase of their habits: "the intensity of the act [must] correspond in proportion to the intensity of the habit, or even surpass it" (52.3).[105] This is a consequence of the way in which habits are related to the will on Aquinas's account. With her will, an agent can choose to act out of her habit, and it is when she acts in this way that her act increases the habit.[106] Furthermore, at the end of his response, Aquinas explains that acts that fail to match the intensity of the habit can actually diminish the habit.

The second qualification regards the efficacy of these acts with respect to increasing the habit. Aquinas shows that even acts that meet or exceed the intensity of the habit do not always increase the habit directly. In some cases, these acts merely dispose (*dispono*) the habit to increase. This idea of dispositive growth will be crucial when it comes to understanding Aquinas's account of growth in infused virtue. He introduces the idea here in Question 52, but he will have more to say about it later. In this initial introduction, Aquinas explains the idea through analogies with natural processes:[107] "For not every morsel of food actually increases the animal's size as neither does every drop of water hollow out the stone: but the multiplication of food results at last in an increase

[105] *intensio actus proportionaliter aequetur intensioni habitus, vel etiam superexcedat*

[106] In his *Commentary on the Sentences*, Aquinas elaborates on this idea: "Now what I have described happens precisely because man is lord of his acts. Hence he is able to act either according to the whole power of his nature or according to part of that power, which does not happen in things that act out of a necessity of nature, for such things always act by their whole power" (I Sent. D. 17 (Paris), q. 2, a. 3.). (*Hoc autem ideo contingit, quia homo est dominus sui actus. Unde potest agere secundum totam virtutem naturae suae vel secundum partem: quod non contingit in illis quae agunt ex necessitate naturae: semper enim agunt tota virtute sua*.)

[107] See Eileen C. Sweeney, "From Determined Motion to Undetermined Will and Nature to Supernature in Aquinas" *Philosophical Topics* 20, no. 2 (1992): 189-214, for an interesting discussion of these natural analogies in the context of Aquinas's theory of action. We find these same analogies throughout Aquinas's corpus; all the way from the early *Commentary on the Sentences* to the relatively late *Secunda Secundae*. Sweeney argues that interpreters have been misled by taking these analogies too literally. While I think her conclusion is overstated, the note of caution is well-received.

of the body" (52.3).[108] The central insight is this: just as a single act does not typically generate a habit all by itself, so a single act does not typically increase a habit by itself. Rather, it is the consistent repetition of similar acts that leads to both the generation and increase of habits in the powers of the soul. Like the individual bits of food, each individual act disposes the power to a greater participation in the habit. Eventually, these individual acts accumulate enough power to entirely overcome the passive power, resulting in the increase of the habit.

In sum, Aquinas lays out two ways in which habits can increase: in terms of the habit itself and in terms of the subject's participation in the habit. Increase by addition is possible, but only in the first way. With the second way, subjects can increase in their participation in the habit for three reasons: (1) an agent actualizes more of their potential, (2) their potential increases through the removal of contrary forms, or (3) their potential increases through the addition of disposing forms. Lastly, addressing the way in which acts can increase habits, Aquinas makes two important qualifications. First, only those acts that meet or exceed the intensity of the habit can cause the habit to increase. Second, not every such act will cause the increase of the habit directly; some acts only dispose the habit to increase.

2.4 Conclusion

We began this chapter by looking at Aquinas's understanding of the essence of habit. We learned that habits are qualities (a particular type of accidental form) through which their subjects exist in determinate ways that make reference to the nature of those

[108] *Non enim quodlibet alimentum assumptum actu auget animal, sicut nec quaelibet gutta cavat lapidem, sed, multiplicato alimento, tandem fit augmentum.*

subjects. On his view, good habits are those through which a subject exists in a way that is consistent with its nature. We saw that both habits and dispositions occupy the metaphysical state of first actuality—a state between pure act and pure potency—but that habits differ from dispositions in being more lasting. When it comes to the subject of habits, we learned that all genuine habits are in the soul: the habit (or habitual gift) of grace in the soul itself and all other habits in the intellectual and appetitive powers of the soul. This includes, most notably, the will, which is the subject of some specific habits and yet is involved in the exercise of all the habits.

In the next section, we explored the different causes of habits. Aquinas taught that nature—while the sole cause of some habits—has a minimal role to play in causing the habits of the virtues and vices. Rather, those habits are caused either by habituation or by divine infusion (in the case of virtues only).

Finally, we introduced a topic that will be foundational for this project by discussing Aquinas's view of increase in habits. We learned that there are two main ways in which habits are susceptible to increase: in terms of the habit itself and in terms of the subject's participation in the habit. While the former will be important for some habits (e.g., faith and prudence), the latter will be most relevant when it comes to growth in the infused virtues. As we just saw, Aquinas envisioned three ways that subjects can increase in their participation in a habit: (1) an agent actualizes more of their potential, (2) their potential increases through the removal of contrary forms, or (3) their potential increases through the addition of disposing forms.

Now that we understand Aquinas's view of growth or increase in habits in general, we will be in a much better position to appreciate his teaching on growth in the

infused virtues. After focusing on the essence of the infused virtues (a particular type of habit) in the next chapter, we will turn our attention to the increase of those virtues in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER THREE

The Essence of Infused Virtue: A Particular Kind of *Habitus*

Following the pedagogical structure of the *Summa Theologiae*, I move from the general discussion of habits to the specific treatment of the virtues. My aim is to elucidate the nature or essence of the infused virtues in particular, but before that, I must lay out Aquinas's account of virtue in general. Consequently, the chapter unfolds as a movement from the general to the particular. In Section I, I lay out Aquinas's general picture of virtue, while highlighting its essence, subject, and the different types of virtues that he discusses. In Section II, I hone in on infused virtue in particular. I explain the distinctive features of this important type of virtue and differentiate the two sub-types (theological and moral). In Section III, I address the necessity of the infused *moral* virtues by comparing the views of Aquinas and Scotus. Finally, in Section IV, I elucidate the role that the infused virtues play in the moral life. To that end, I situate these unique habits among the important elements of grace, gifts, beatitudes, fruits, and even the acquired virtues.

3.1 Virtue in General

In the *prima secundae*, when Aquinas turns his attention to good habits (i.e., virtues) in particular, he faces an important decision: How should one arrange the material in order to best facilitate learning?[1] He decides on an outline very similar to that

[1] As Aquinas says in the prologue to the *Summa*: "Because the Master of Catholic Truth ought not only to teach the proficient, but also to instruct beginners, according to the Apostle: As unto little ones in Christ, I gave you milk to drink, not meat (1 Corinthians 3:1-2), we propose in this book to treat of

which he followed in discussing habits in general.[2] He begins, in Question 55, with the essence (*essentia*) of virtue. Before one can say much about virtue, one must explain what virtue is. Next, Aquinas explains where we find virtue (i.e., the subject) in Question 56. Then, the bulk of the discussion (six of the thirteen total questions) is devoted to the division of virtue (Questions 57-62). Here Aquinas addresses and distinguishes the main types of virtue. The discussion concludes with one question on the cause of virtue (63) and four questions which he groups under the heading "Certain Properties of Virtue."[3] In this section, I'll highlight the most important elements of this discussion, which will prepare us for later sections that focus on infused virtue in particular. To that end, I address the essence, subject, and types of virtue.

3.1.1 The Essence of Virtue

Aquinas opens Question 55 with a series of articles that present a thoroughly Aristotelian account of virtue. The first article opens with an etymological definition of virtue as a perfection of a power, and proceeds—via two simple arguments—to the conclusion that virtue is a habit.[4] Next, the second and third articles establish two

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whatever belongs to the Christian Religion, in such a way as may tend to the instruction of believers." (*Quia Catholicae veritatis doctor non solum provectos debet instruere, sed ad eum pertinet etiam incipientes erudire, secundum illud apostoli I ad Corinth. III, tanquam parvulis in Christo, lac vobis potum dedi, non escam; propositum nostrae intentionis in hoc opere est, ea quae ad Christianam religionem pertinent, eo modo tradere, secundum quod congruit ad eruditionem incipientium*.)

[2] There, the outline was as follows: Substance (49), Subject (50), Cause (51-3), and Distinctions (54).

[3] These four questions address the following topics: Virtue and the Mean (64), the Connection of Virtue (65), Equality among the Virtues (66), and the Duration of Virtues after this Life (67).

[4] The first argument establishes that virtue involves the determination of a power to its act:

1. Virtue is a perfection of a power.
2. Perfection depends on the end.
3. The end of a power is act.
4. So, a power is perfected (i.e., we have a virtue) when it is determined to its act.

necessary features of the habits that count as human virtues: they must be operative (Article 2) and good (Article 3). Thus, after three articles we find that Aquinas has presented the essence of virtue—as a good, operative habit—in typical Aristotelian fashion.

When we come to the fourth article of Question 55, however, Aquinas abruptly switches gears. He seems to abandon the project of the first three articles, and now asks whether the "usual" definition of virtue is suitable. This "usual" definition is as follows: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us" (55.4 arg.1).[5] Aquinas seems to take the definition from Lombard's *Sentences* (2.27 chap. 5), though it also appears in the *Sentences* of Peter of Poitiers (3.1).[6]

(*virtus nominat quandam potentiae perfectionem. 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*) (55.1).

The second argument brings us to the conclusion that human virtue is a habit:

1. Virtue involves the determination of a power to its act.
2. The rational powers (proper to man) are determined to their acts by habits.
3. So, human virtue is 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, sicut ex supradictis patet. Et ideo virtutes humanae habitus sunt*) (55.1).

[5] (*virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, qua nullus male utitur, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur.*) While Aquinas does not explain who is employing this definition, he gives its origin in the *sed contra* of Article 4: "We have the authority of Augustine, from whose words this definition is gathered, and principally in *De Libero Arbitrio* II." (*Sed contra est auctoritas Augustini, ex cuius verbis praedicta definitio colligitur, et praecipue in II de libero arbitrio*.) Thus, while Augustine never presented the definition in this form, Aquinas is confident that it is consistent with his teaching.

[6] Despite this definition's prevalence, however, the objections in Article 4 reveal that there are important reasons to question whether it is suitable. For instance, objection 4 challenges the clause that claims it is impossible to make bad use of virtue. The objector rightly recognizes that some people can take a blameworthy pride in their virtue. Additionally, objection six challenges the last clause of the definition: "which God works in us, without us." As the objector shows, this clause does not appear consistent with Augustine's understanding of justification.

The juxtaposition of the Aristotelian treatment of virtue (in Articles 1-3) with the Augustinian treatment (in Article 4) has contributed to two types of misinterpretation. On the one hand, many commentators emphasize the Aristotelian elements in Question 55 and conclude that Aquinas simply follows Aristotle in his understanding of virtue.[7] On the other hand, some commentators have emphasized the Augustinian elements and conclude that Aquinas's understanding of virtue is not Aristotelian at all.[8] In this section, I demonstrate that both of these interpretations fail to do justice to Aquinas's account of the essence of virtue and his use of these *auctoritates*.

In Article 4, Aquinas begins his response with an emphatic endorsement of the definition: "This definition comprises perfectly the whole essential notion of virtue" (55.4).[9] It is interesting, then, that after praising the Augustinian definition, Aquinas proceeds to explain its merits in Aristotelian terms.[10] As he explains, "the perfect essential notion of anything is gathered from all its causes" (55.1).[11] Since the definition addresses all four causes of virtue, it perfectly comprises the notion of virtue.

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[7] One finds this interpretation in Shields and Pasnau, *The Philosophy of Aquinas,* Second Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), Section 9.3, Ralph McInerny, *The Question of Christian Ethics* (Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 25-6, and Anthony Kenny, "Aquinas on Aristotelian Happiness," in *Aquinas's Moral Theory,* ed. Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 15-27.

[8] Recently, this interpretation has been advanced by Thomas Osborne, "The Augustinianism of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67, no. 2 (April 2003), 279-305, Eleonore Stump, "The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions," *Faith and Philosophy* 28, no. 1 (2011), 29-43, and Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas' Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012).

[9] *ista definitio perfecte complectitur totam rationem virtutis.*

[10] While Stump and Pinsent are certainly right to highlight the ways in which Aquinas goes beyond Aristotle, this fact, among others, reveals that they go too far in distancing Aquinas from the Aristotelian framework on which he builds.

[11] *Perfecta enim ratio uniuscuiusque rei colligitur ex omnibus causis eius.*

Consider, first, the formal cause, which is taken from the genus and difference. This is captured by the first clause of the definition, which identifies virtue as a good quality. Here quality is the genus, while good is the difference which distinguishes virtue from vice.[12] Next, Aquinas turns to the material cause of virtue.[13] As the Augustinian definition relates, all virtues are "of the mind." This clause expresses the material cause of virtue, since the matter "in which" all the virtues exist is the mind. This brings us to the final cause of virtue. Since virtues are operative habits (as established in Articles 1 and 2), Aquinas explains that the end is operation. He specifies that there are three possibilities for the kinds of ends/operations toward which operative habits can be directed. First, they can be directed only toward bad ends, in which case they are vicious. Second, they can be directed to both good and bad ends (at different times), in which case they are somewhere between virtue and vice. Third, some operative habits can be directed only to good ends; these are the virtues. Aquinas praises the Augustinian definition for successfully identifying virtue with the third class of operative habits: the clause "by which we live righteously" rules out the first class, while the clause "of which no one makes bad use" rules out the second class. Finally, Aquinas addresses the efficient

[12] While this suffices to account for the formal cause of virtue, Aquinas notes that the definition would be improved if the more proximate genus of habit was substituted for that of quality. It is not surprising that Lombard would not have included the word "habit" in gathering this definition from the work of Augustine. As Bonnie Kent has pointed out in her "Habits and Virtues (Ia IIae, qq. 49-70)," Augustine tended to avoid "*habitus*" in his discussions of virtue. He even came to regret including Cicero's definition of virtue ("a habit of the soul…") in his *Div. quaest.* 1.31 (2002, fn. 6 & 7).

[13] Normally, the material cause is associated with the matter "out of which" (*ex qua*) something is formed; for instance, the material cause of a statue is the bronze out of which it is formed. Since virtue is an accident, Aquinas explains, it does not have matter "out of which" it is formed. Despite this, there are two other ways that virtue is associated with matter that might serve as the material cause. First, there is the matter "about which" (*circa quam*) virtue is concerned. Thus the virtue of temperance, for example, concerns the matter of food and drink. Matter in this sense could not be the material cause of virtue in general, because Aquinas tells us that virtues are individuated based upon the matter "about which" they are concerned. What is needed is a material cause that will apply to all the members of the genus of virtue. This leads Aquinas to turn to the matter "in which" (*in qua*) virtue exists.

cause of virtue: "Lastly, God is the efficient cause of infused virtue, to which this definition applies; and this is expressed in the words 'which God works in us without us'" (55.4).[14] In this passage, Aquinas reveals a surprising feature of the Augustinian definition; he claims that it applies only to the infused virtues. Furthermore, he goes on to say that "if we omit this phrase, the remainder of the definition will apply to all virtues in general, whether acquired or infused" (55.4).[15]

This development raises an interesting question: how does this qualification relate to the initial claim that "this definition comprises perfectly the whole essential notion of virtue" (55.4)?[16] First, it might mean that the infused virtues are those virtues that fulfill the notion of virtue most perfectly.[17] Second, it could mean that the definition captures the essential notion of virtue perfectly, but *only when the last clause is removed*.[18] There are two reasons to think that Aquinas held the first position. First, he begins his response by claiming that the Augustinian definition perfectly encompasses the whole notion (*ratio*) of virtue. He explains this claim with the following principle: "the perfect essential notion of anything is gathered from all its causes" (55.4).[19] As Aquinas suggests

[14] *Causa autem efficiens virtutis infusae, de qua definitio datur, Deus est. Propter quod dicitur, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur.*

[15] *Quae quidem particula si auferatur reliquum definitionis erit commune omnibus virtutibus, et acquisitis et infusis.*

[16] (*ista definitio perfecte complectitur totam rationem virtutis.*) As we will see, the definition will be qualified again in I.II.68.1 ad 3.

[17] Mark Jordan, in "Theology and Philosophy" (1993, 238), and David Decosimo, in *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue* (2014, 117-9) take this interpretation. Jordan calls the infused virtues the primary case in the analogical term "virtue," while Decosimo points out that only infused virtues fully satisfy the Aristotelian definition of virtue as the perfection or limit of a power.

[18] Kent seems to take this interpretation in "Habits and Virtues," 120.

[19] *Perfecta enim ratio uniuscuiusque rei colligitur ex omnibus causis eius.*

at the end of the response, the definition would apply to acquired virtues (in addition to the infused) if the last clause were left off. Leaving this clause off, however, would mean that the definition makes no mention of the efficient cause of virtue. Thus, the abbreviated form would not, by Aquinas's own principle, encompass the whole notion of virtue. The second reason to think that Aquinas believed the infused virtues fulfill the notion of virtue most perfectly, is found later in his discussion of virtue. In Question 65 of the *prima secundae,* he makes the following claim:

> Only the infused virtues are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply: since they direct man well to the ultimate end. But the other virtues, those, namely, that are acquired, are virtues in a restricted sense, but not simply: for they direct man well in respect of the last end in some particular genus of action, but not in respect of the last end simply (65.2).[20]

Thus, acquired virtues are virtues in a "restricted sense," while the infused virtues are virtues "simply speaking."[21] In light of these two reasons, I conclude that the Augustinian definition (as it is) perfectly encompasses the whole notion of virtue and that the infused virtues fulfill the notion of virtue most perfectly. Nevertheless, *contra* Stump and Pinsent I do not deny the important influence of Aristotle on Aquinas's account of virtue.[22]

Before leaving Question 55, Article 4, we must consider Aquinas's reply to the sixth objection. That objection challenges the last clause of the definition—"which God

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[20] *solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter. Aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter, ordinant enim hominem bene respectu finis ultimi in aliquo genere, non autem respectu finis ultimi simpliciter.*

[21] This is not to say that acquired virtues are not real virtues. They simply do not fulfill the notion of virtue as perfectly as the infused virtues. See Decosimo (2014) for a clear and engaging treatment of this issue.

[22] More on this in the next section. For more balanced treatments of Aquinas's use of Aristotle in moral matters, see Mark Jordan, "The Alleged Aristotelianism of Thomas Aquinas" in *The Gilson Lectures on Thomas Aquinas,* ed. James Reilly (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 2008) 73-106, and "Theology and Philosophy."

works in us, without us"—on the grounds that it is inconsistent with Augustine's understanding of justification. The objector quotes from Augustine's commentary on the Book of John: "He who created thee without thee, will not justify thee without thee" (55.4 arg.6).[23] If God works virtue (by which we are justified) in us, without us, it looks like he is justifying us without us. Aquinas responds to this objection by noting that it is not entirely without us that God causes virtue in us. He causes it "without any action on our part, but not without our consent" (55.4 ad 6).[24] Thus, Aquinas is able to preserve the definition of virtue without compromising the idea that God chooses to involve us in the process of our own justification.[25]

In sum, the essence of virtue, while generally captured in the phrase "good, operative habit," is most perfectly expressed in the Augustinian definition: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us" (55.4 arg.1).

3.1.2 The Subject of Virtue

The groundwork for Aquinas's discussion of the subject of virtue lies back in Question 50 with his teaching on the subject of habits in general. Recall that all genuine habits are located in the soul: the habitual gift of grace in the soul itself, and all other habits in the intellectual and appetitive powers of the soul.[26] Since all human virtues are

[23] *qui creavit te sine te, non iustificabit te sine te*

[24] *sine nobis agentibus, non tamen sine nobis consentientibus.*

[25] See also I.II.111.2 ad 2. One might worry that this qualification makes infused virtue just like all other human acts, which, according to Aquinas, also depend upon God's causal involvement. This is not the case because, on Aquinas's view, God causes all our other actions with (or through) our actions (*agentibus*), as opposed to the infused virtues, which he causes without our actions (*agentibus*).

[26] The body, recall, was the site of certain "habitual dispositions," but no genuine habits.

habits, we can anticipate that all human virtues are found in the soul. Furthermore, since human virtues are operative habits, we can rule out the soul itself as a possible subject of human virtue.[27] Thus, before we begin looking at Question 56, we can anticipate that virtues will be in the powers of the soul (specifically, the intellectual and appetitive powers). In fact, this is just what Aquinas concludes in Article 1.

In the second article of Question 56, Aquinas demonstrates that human actions and passions are not simplistic processes in which single powers operate on their own to affect something or to be affected. On his picture, action and passion involve different powers of the soul acting on one another (and being acted upon). Consequently, he concludes that virtues can be subjected in more than one power. Virtues cannot, however, be equally present in more than one power—rather, "one virtue can belong to several powers, so that it is in one chiefly, while it extends to others by a kind of diffusion, or by way of a disposition, insofar as one power is moved by another, and one power receives from another" (56.2).[28] The rest of Question 56 looks at the ways in which the intellectual and appetitive powers of the soul serve as the subject of virtues.

The expressed topic of the third article is whether virtue can be in the intellect, but the article's importance lies in the distinction that Aquinas draws between two ways in which habit can relate to good acts. First, he explains that habit can confer an aptness or ability (*facultas*) to do good action. This is the most basic way that habits are related to good action. Some habits, however, are related to good action in a stronger way. In

[27] As we saw in Chapter Two, grace is the only habit that is in the soul itself, and grace is not an operative habit—it is a disposition to form/nature.

[28] *sic una virtus pertinere potest ad plures potentias; ita quod in una sit principaliter, et se extendat ad alias per modum diffusionis, vel per modum dispositionis; secundum quod una potentia movetur ab alia, et secundum quod una potentia accipit ab alia.*

addition to conferring the ability to do good actions, they add the right use of that ability.[29] Aquinas maintains that only those habits that confer both the ability and the right use should be called virtues *simpliciter*. There are two reasons for this claim. The first involves the way that "good" is predicated of things: "good, and, in like manner, being, is said of a thing simply, in respect, not of what it is potentially, but of what it is actually" (56.3).[30] Second, Aquinas explains that virtues *simpliciter* make their possessor good "simply," while virtues that merely confer an ability (and not right use) make their possessor good *secundum quid*.[31] In sum, virtues that confer both ability and right use are classified as virtues *simpliciter*, while virtues that confer ability alone are classified as virtues *secundum quid.*

In Article 3, Aquinas points out that right use must involve the will. Therefore, the subject of virtues *simpliciter* "can only be the will, or some power insofar as it is moved by the will" (56.3).[32] Hence, virtues *simpliciter* can be present in the intellect, but

[29] To see the difference, consider Aquinas's examples: the habit of grammar and the habit of justice. Aquinas explains that the grammar habit only confers the ability to speak correctly; it does not ensure that the possessor will actually speak correctly at all times. Justice, however, confers both the ability and the right use of that ability. Thus, Aquinas says that "justice not only gives man the prompt will to do just actions, but also makes him act justly" (I.II.56.3) (*iustitia non solum facit quod homo sit promptae voluntatis ad iusta operandum, sed etiam facit ut iuste operetur).*

[30] (*bonum, sicut et ens, non dicitur simpliciter aliquid secundum id quod est in potentia, sed secundum id quod est in actu*) Through the habit of grammar, a grammarian is potentially good (i.e., she will be good if she uses the habit rightly), but not actually good (since she could still fail to use the habit rightly).

[31] For example, the habit of grammar only makes a person good in a certain respect (a good grammarian), and not good "simply" (i.e., a good human being). Justice, on the other hand, does make a human being good "simply." Furthermore, it makes its possessor good actually (and not just potentially) since it confers right use of the ability.

[32] *non potest esse nisi voluntas; vel aliqua potentia secundum quod est mota a voluntate*

only insofar as it is moved by the will. In contrast, virtues *secundum quid* can be present in the intellect by itself (i.e., independent of the will).[33]

Thus, in addition to explaining how the intellect can serve as the subject of virtues, the third article of Question 56 reveals an important connection between virtues and the will. On Aquinas's account, virtues *simpliciter* are only found in the will or in another power of the soul insofar as it is moved by the will. This gives the will pride of place when it comes to evaluating whether a human being is good or bad. As Aquinas says, "if man do well actually, this is because he has a good will" (56.3).[34] Furthermore, the close connection between the will and virtue allows Aquinas to make sense of Augustine's claim (cited in Objection 1) that all virtue is love.[35] While Aquinas does not think that every virtue ought to be identified with love, he does say that every virtue depends upon love.[36]

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[33] Examples of virtues *simpliciter* in the intellect are faith (in the speculative intellect) and prudence (in the practical intellect). The intellectual virtues discussed by Aristotle—science, wisdom, understanding, and art—are examples of virtues *secundum quid*.

[34] *ideo quod homo actu bene agat, contingit ex hoc quod homo habet bonam voluntatem*

[35] In *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, Augustine says, "As to virtue leading us to a happy life, I hold virtue to be nothing else than perfect love of God. For the fourfold division of virtue I regard as taken from four forms of love. For these four virtues (would that all felt their influence in their minds as they have their names in their mouths!), I should have no hesitation in defining them: that temperance is love giving itself entirely to that which is loved; fortitude is love readily bearing all things for the sake of the loved object; justice is love serving only the loved object, and therefore ruling rightly; prudence is love distinguishing with sagacity between what hinders it and what helps it" (Chapter 15). All translations from *On the Morals of the Catholic Church* are from Richard Stothert, trans. "On the Morals of the Catholic Church" in *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* ed. Philip Schaff (Buffalo: Christian Literature Publishing, 1887).

[36] Each virtue *simpliciter* depends upon love "in so far as it depends on the will, whose first movement consists in love" (56.3 ad 1) (*inquantum dependet a voluntate, cuius prima affectio est amor*). For an extended exploration of the relationship between virtues and the will in the 13th Century, see Bonnie Kent's *Virtues of the Will*.

In Articles 4 and 5 of Question 56, Aquinas turns to the sensitive powers of the soul, and asks whether they can serve as the subject of virtue.[37] We learn, in Article 4, that the powers of the sensitive appetite—the irascible and the concupiscible—can be the subject of virtue, but only insofar as they participate in reason. This position is not surprising, given that Aquinas teaches that the passions of the soul (i.e., the movements of the sensitive appetite) are only good or bad insofar as they are subject to reason.[38] Aquinas is committed to the idea that movements of the powers of the soul can only be morally good or bad if they are voluntary. For a movement of the sensitive appetite to be voluntary, he explains, it must be subject to the will.[39] Therefore, movements of the sensitive appetite can be good or bad only when they are subject to the will. Since it is by our virtues that we are called good or bad, it follows that virtues will be present in the sensitive appetite, but only insofar as it is subject to the will and reason. This is what Aquinas means by the phrase "participates in reason."[40]

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[37] Article 5 explains that there are habits in the powers of sensitive apprehension, but that these habits are not virtues because they are merely preparatory for knowledge (which is in the intellect).

[38] As he writes in I.II.24.1: "We may consider the passions of the soul in two ways: first, in themselves; secondly, as being subject to the command of the reason and will. If then the passions be considered in themselves, to wit, as movements of the irrational appetite, thus there is no moral good or evil in them, since this depends on the reason, as stated above. If, however, they be considered as subject to the command of the reason and will, then moral good and evil are in them." (*passiones animae dupliciter possunt considerari, uno modo, secundum se; alio modo, secundum quod subiacent imperio rationis et voluntatis. Si igitur secundum se considerentur, prout scilicet sunt motus quidam irrationalis appetitus, sic non est in eis bonum vel malum morale, quod dependet a ratione, ut supra dictum est. Si autem considerentur secundum quod subiacent imperio rationis et voluntatis, sic est in eis bonum et malum morale.)*

[39] See I.II.24.1. There Aquinas explains that there are two ways that a movement of the sensitive appetite can be subject to the will: through the will's command or through the will not prohibiting the movement (when it could have prohibited it).

[40] Furthermore, Aquinas explains that it is necessary that virtues exist in the sensitive appetite. In support of this position, he cites the following general principle: "an act, which proceeds from one power according as it is moved by another power, cannot be perfect, unless both powers be well disposed to the act" (56.4) (*Actus enim qui progreditur ab una potentia secundum quod est ab alia mota, non potest esse perfectus, nisi utraque potentia sit bene disposita ad actum*). For example, a baker's act of baking bread

Thus far we have learned that virtue *simpliciter* is present in the intellect and in the sensitive appetite, but only insofar as these powers are "moved by the will" or "participate in reason." Aquinas concludes Question 56 by asking whether virtue is present in the will itself. Since the will plays such an important role in the presence of virtue in these other powers, it might seem obvious that it will be a subject of virtue. Contrary to this appearance there are important reasons—from Aquinas's own discussion of the will—to think that it does not need virtues. As he explains, powers need virtues when their own natures fail to perfect them in acting well. When it comes to the will, Aquinas seems to suggest that its nature is sufficient for its perfection,[41] which would entail that it does not need a virtue to perfect it.[42]

In the sixth article of Question 56, Aquinas grants this appearance, while also maintaining that there are virtues in the will. He maintains this seemingly contradictory position by distinguishing between different objects toward which the will can be directed. First, the will can be directed toward the good of reason—which it tends toward naturally—so virtue is unnecessary. Second, the will can be directed to "a good that exceeds its capacity" (56.6).[43] This can happen in two ways: the good can exceed human

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will only be perfect if the baker is a good baker *and* the oven is working properly. Similarly, for perfect movements of the sensitive appetite, virtue must be present in both the reason—which moves the sensitive appetite—and the sensitive appetite itself—which is moved by the reason. Aquinas sums up the article by defining the virtue present in the sensitive appetite as "a certain habitual conformity… to reason" (56.4) (*quaedam habitualis conformitas… ad rationem*).

[41] In Question 10 of the *prima secundae*, for example, he explains that "man wills naturally not only the object of the will, but also other things that are appropriate to the other powers" (Article 1) (*naturaliter homo vult non solum obiectum voluntatis, sed etiam alia quae conveniunt aliis potentiis*).

[42] For a helpful discussion of the will's orientation toward the good, see Mark Jordan "The Transcendentality of Goodness and the Human Will" in *Being and Goodness: The Concept of the Good in Metaphysics and Philosophical Theology*, ed. Scott MacDonald (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 129-150.

[43] *bonum… quod excedat proportionem volentis*

nature itself (e.g., the divine good) or it can exceed the good of that particular individual (e.g., a neighbor's good, the good of a community, etc.). In the former case, the will is in need of the theological virtues,[44] and in the latter, it is in need of the virtue of justice.

In sum, Aquinas holds that virtues can be present in the will, sensitive appetite and intellect. He also makes an important distinction between virtues *simpliciter* and virtues *secundum quid,* and claims that virtues *simpliciter* can only be in the will or in other powers of the soul insofar as they are moved by the will.

3.1.3 Types of Virtue

Having discussed the essence and subject of virtue, I turn the different types of virtue as Aquinas lays them out in Questions 57-62. In the prologue to Question 57, he opens this set of questions with the following claim: "We now have to consider the various kinds of virtue: [first,] the intellectual virtues; [second,] the moral virtues; [third,] the theological virtues" (57).[45] Of the questions that follow, 57 covers the intellectual virtues, 58-61 cover the moral virtues, and 62 is devoted to the theological virtues. Thus, it seems clear that Aquinas envisions three types of virtue. As we have seen, however, he enjoys showing that reality is more complicated than the initial appearances. This case is no different. Instead of three categories, Aquinas ends up dividing the moral virtues into two types: the infused moral virtues and the acquired moral virtues. Consequently, there are four main types of virtue for Aquinas. In this section, I briefly consider his reasons for sorting virtue into these four types.

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[44] While charity and hope are both in the will, faith is more complicated. As we will see, Aquinas thinks that it involves two habits (one in the intellect and one in the will), though it is said most properly to be in the intellect.

[45] *Deinde considerandum est de distinctione virtutum. Et primo, quantum ad virtutes intellectuales; secundo, quantum ad morales; tertio, quantum ad theologicas.* Translation modified.

The major division between types of virtues concerns the subject of the virtues. As Aquinas explains in the third article of Question 58, all virtues will perfect one of the two principles of action in the human being: intellect and appetite. Those perfecting the intellect are the intellectual virtues, while those perfecting the appetite are the moral virtues.

Next, Aquinas sorts virtues on the basis of their objects. As he explains, "the object of every virtue is a good considered as in that virtue's proper matter" (I.II.63.4).[46] For example, the objects of the moral virtues are goods present to the appetitive powers of the soul.[47] Aquinas goes on to distinguish between two aspects of a virtue's object: the formal aspect, which refers to the way the object is apprehended by the intellect, and the material aspect, which is taken from the power that serves as the virtue's subject.[48] It is the formal aspect of the object that is relevant when it comes to distinguishing between different types of virtues. For instance, Aquinas distinguishes the theological virtues from the moral and intellectual virtues on this basis:

> Now the object of the theological virtues is God Himself, who is the last end of all, as surpassing the knowledge of our reason. On the other hand, the object of the intellectual and moral virtues is something comprehensible to human reason" (I.II.62.2).[49]

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[46] *Obiectum autem virtutis cuiuslibet est bonum consideratum in materia propria*

[47] Since the virtues are operative habits, the goods that serve as the objects of the virtues are operations of the powers of the soul.

[48] For example, Aquinas describes the object of temperance in the following way: "The formal aspect of this object is from reason which fixes the mean in these concupiscences: while the material element is something on the part of the concupiscences" (I.II.63.4) (*Cuius quidem obiecti formalis ratio est a ratione, quae instituit modum in his concupiscentiis, materiale autem est id quod est ex parte concupiscentiarum*). In addition to 63.4, see 54.2 ad 1 for Aquinas's distinction between formal and material objects.

[49] *Obiectum autem theologicarum virtutum est ipse Deus, qui est ultimus rerum finis, prout nostrae rationis cognitionem excedit. Obiectum autem virtutum intellectualium et moralium est aliquid quod humana ratione comprehendi potest.*

While the theological virtues are also either moral (charity and hope) or intellectual (faith) virtues, this difference in formal object explains why Aquinas treats them as a distinct category.

In the fourth article of Question 63, we find that a difference in formal object also explains why Aquinas divides the moral virtues into two categories: the infused and acquired. In the case of the infused moral virtues, the formal object is determined according to divine rule, whereas it is determined according to human reason, in the case of the acquired moral virtues.[50]

[50] In Question 63, Aquinas also points out that the infused and acquired moral virtues differ in terms of the end toward which they are directed. While the acquired moral virtues are directed toward "behaving well in respect of human affairs" (*se bene habet in ordine ad res humanas*), the infused moral virtues are directed toward "behaving well in respect of their being fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (63.4) (*bene se habent in ordine ad hoc quod sint cives sanctorum et domestici Dei*). Of course, these two types of virtues also differ in their causes—the acquired virtues are caused by habituation, while the infused are caused by God. So why does Aquinas fail to mention the difference in cause—especially when that is the topic of the Question and when he had claimed that a difference in cause meant a difference in species of habit (in Question 54)? We find the answer to this question in Aquinas's reply to the third objection. This objection pointed out that "acquired and infused virtue differ as that which is wrought by God immediately, from that which is wrought by a creature" (63.4 arg. 3) (*virtus acquisita et infusa differunt secundum illud quod est immediate a Deo factum, et a creatura*). This difference alone, however, is not sufficient for a difference in species. The objector cites the examples of Adam and an eye that God made for a man born blind. In both cases, God made these things directly (i.e., without using the typical secondary causes) but they share the same species with the things of the same type which are generated naturally. For Aquinas, God can produce any effect that is normally produced mediately (i.e., through the work of secondary causes) immediately and directly (I.II.51.4 and I.105.6.). Thus, if the infused virtues only differ from the acquired in that their cause is God, then it looks like they will share the same species. In his reply, Aquinas grants this appearance: God could give man—through a miracle—the same kind of virtue that is normally acquired by human acts. In that case, the cause would be different, but the species would be the same. But Aquinas emphasizes that this is not what he means by "infused virtues." In addition to being caused by God, these virtues are distinctive because they have a formal object determined according to the divine rule and are ordered toward being a good citizen in the kingdom of God. Therefore, the infused virtues do differ in species from the acquired virtues, but we must remember that by "infused" Aquinas means more than a simple difference in cause. This means that William Mattison's third basis of categorization of virtue—Categorization by Cause—is not a legitimate basis of categorization (see "Thomas's Categorizations of Virtue: Historical Background and Contemporary Significance." *The Thomist*, 2010: 189-235). Instead, the specific difference between the acquired and infused virtues reduces to the first two bases: Categorization by Object and Categorization by Ultimate End. The difference in cause can be useful as a heuristic—which is how Aquinas seems to use it—but it does not, by itself, differentiate the two categories of virtue.

The following table represents the main types of virtues on Aquinas's picture:

Table 1: The four main types of virtues.

Type	Subject	Object	Nature/End	Cause
Intellectual	Intellect	Truth (comprehensible to reason)	Human nature/natural human happiness	Habituation
Acquired Moral	Appetite	Good (according to reason)	Human nature/natural human happiness	Habituation
Infused Moral	Appetite	Good (according to Divine rule)	Grace-completed nature/*beatitudo*	Divine infusion
Theological	Intellect or Appetite	God	Grace-completed nature/*beatitudo*	Divine infusion

3.2 Infused Virtue in Particular

Having laid out the different types of virtue that Aquinas envisioned, I now explore the infused virtues in more detail. First, I identify and explain the two types of infused virtue that Aquinas discusses—infused moral virtue and infused theological virtue. Second, I relate what Aquinas has laid out concerning infused virtue, back to his initial discussions of habit and virtue. These connections begin to highlight the way in which Aquinas's teaching on infused virtue is not simply Augustinian, but is both Aristotelian and Augustinian.

3.2.1 Two Types of Infused Virtue: Moral and Theological

As presented in the last section, Aquinas operated with two types of infused virtues: the infused moral virtues and the infused theological virtues. Having seen how these virtues are distinguished from other virtues, I now examine their essence and

properties. To that end, I begin with the infused moral virtues before moving to the theological virtues.

Of course, in order to understand Aquinas's infused moral virtues, one must begin with moral virtue in general. The moral virtues are perfections of the appetitive part of the human being. Since the appetitive part can be subdivided into several parts, there will be several moral virtues. First, there are two main appetites: the intellectual appetite (i.e., will) and the sensitive appetite. As we learned in 56.6, virtues like justice and charity (among others) are present in the will. Next, the sensitive appetite is made up of two parts (which Aquinas often calls powers): the concupiscible and the irascible. The concupiscible is drawn toward objects that the senses perceive as good and repulsed by objects that the senses perceive as bad. The irascible is drawn toward objects that the senses perceive as good *yet difficult*, and helps the human being avoid/resist objects that the senses perceive as bad *and difficult to avoid/resist*.[51]

So far, we have established that moral virtues are perfections of the different parts of the appetite. But what does it look like for these parts to be perfect? Aquinas's answer: it depends upon which part of the appetite is under discussion. In the general sense, "moral virtue perfects the appetitive part of the soul by directing it to good as defined by reason" (59.4).[52] Thus, in the person with moral virtue, her desires (both intellectual and

[51] Here I am using "senses" broadly to include both interior and exterior senses.

[52] (*virtus moralis perficit appetitivam partem animae ordinando ipsam in bonum rationis*) It might seem like this comment could only apply to the acquired moral virtues, since the mean is determined according to reason for them, whereas it is determined according to the divine rule for the infused moral virtues (see 63.4). In the passage quoted in the text, however, Aquinas is using "the good of reason" (*bonum rationis*) in a general way that refers to the good as determined by reason or the intellect. Since reason can determine what is good according to either human reason itself or divine rule, this phrase applies to moral virtue in general. For further evidence, see *QDV* 1.10 ad 10, where Aquinas says that reason can determine the mean in situations in a way that is ordered toward the ultimate end of *beatitudo*.

sensual) are in line with reason—that is, she is appropriately moved by the objects and situations that she perceives. Differences arise when we begin to specify how the different appetites are moved. In Question 59, Article 4, Aquinas explains that the movements of the sensitive appetite are the passions—discussed in Questions 22-48 of the *prima secundae*—while the movements of the will are operations.[53] Therefore, the virtues in the sensitive appetite regulate the passions in accord with reason, and the virtues in the will regulate its operations in accord with reason.

Despite these complexities, Aquinas thinks that all the moral virtues can be reduced to the four cardinal virtues.[54] In the second article of Question 61, he explains that these four virtues—prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude—are principal or cardinal in two ways. First, they are principal when it comes to the formal principle of the virtues, which is the good as defined by reason. In other words, there are four ways that the good of reason can serve as the formal cause of virtue, and each of these ways is represented by one of the cardinal virtues.[55] Second, these virtues are principal when it comes to the subject of the virtues. There are four possible subjects of moral virtue—the intellect[56] (or reason), the will, the concupiscible, and the irascible—to which correspond the virtues of prudence, justice, temperance, and fortitude.

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[53] The operations of the will include volition, enjoyment, and intention (in reference to the end), and counsel, choice, consent, and use (in reference to the means). The will is also able to command the actions of the other parts of the soul and of the human being in general. See I.II.8-21 for Aquinas's treatment of the will and its role in human action.

[54] Aquinas does not simply abandon the eleven virtues that he identified in 60.5. Instead, these virtues—along with numerous others—show up in the *secunda secundae* as parts of the cardinal virtues.

[55] See 61.2 for Aquinas's actual derivation.

[56] Specifically the practical intellect, which directs the truth that it apprehends toward operation. This explains why prudence is considered a moral virtue despite residing in the intellect. See I.79.11.

From these two ways of identifying the cardinal virtues, it might appear that they merely represent the four classes within which we find moral virtues. On this view, the cardinal virtues would not be virtues themselves, but rather classes of virtues.[57] Aquinas takes a different view, however, on which the cardinal virtues are themselves virtues. On his account, these four are distinguished from the others in that they deal with "that which is foremost in its respective matter" (61.3).[58] For example, the cardinal virtue of temperance deals with the pleasures of touch, which are the most important of the concupiscible passions, while fortitude deals with the dangers of death, which are the most important of the irascible passions. While this is all that Aquinas says in Question 61, he has the resources to give a better account of the way in which all the moral virtues reduce to these four.[59] Recall that virtues are, in the most basic sense, perfections of powers. Since there are four powers that can serve as the subject of moral virtues—the practical intellect, will, concupiscible, and irascible—then there will be four primary virtues which are the perfections of each of those powers. In this way we can see how the more specific virtues (e.g., liberality, love of honor, etc.) will be parts of the cardinal virtues.

With a good grasp of moral virtue in general, we can take note of the distinctive features of infused moral virtue. All moral virtues are perfections of one of the four

[57] Aquinas recognizes that this is a legitimate way of thinking about the cardinal virtues, and that "many, both holy doctors, as also philosophers, speak about these virtues in this sense" (61.3) (*sic multi loquuntur de istis virtutibus, tam sacri doctores quam etiam philosophi*).

[58] *eo quod est praecipuum in unaquaque materia.*

[59] A better account is needed because Aquinas's explanation in 61.3-4 is problematic. If the cardinal virtues have a special determinate matter—even if it is foremost in the respective matter, as with temperance and the pleasures of touch—it will be hard to show how all the moral virtues reduce to these four. For example, if the cardinal virtue of temperance deals with the pleasures of touch, how can it be that the virtue of love of honor reduces to temperance?

subjects just mentioned, but these subjects can be perfected in different ways. While all moral virtues perfect human beings in relation to good, Aquinas points out, in Question 63, Article 2, that there are different notions of what is good for human beings. One notion comes from human reason and is accessible independent of revelation. The other notion comes from the divine law and is expressed in revelation. As pointed out in the last section, these different notions are associated with different formal objects, which explains why the acquired moral virtues (pertaining to human reason) are distinct from the infused moral virtues (pertaining to divine law).

Aquinas illustrates this difference with the example of temperance:

> in the consumption of food, the mean fixed by human reason, is that food should not harm the health of the body, nor hinder the use of reason: whereas, according to the divine rule, it behooves man to chastise his body, and bring it into subjection by abstinence in food, drink and the like (63.3).[60]

Similarly, the difference in formal object is related to a difference in end for the two types of virtue. Aquinas claims that the acquired virtues are directed toward "behaving well in respect of human affairs,"[61] while the infused virtues are directed toward "behaving well in respect of their being fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God" (63.4).[62] As mentioned above, Aquinas argues that the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues differ in species on the basis of the difference in formal object and the difference in end.

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[60] *in sumptione ciborum, ratione humana modus statuitur ut non noceat valetudini corporis, nec impediat rationis actum, secundum autem regulam legis divinae, requiritur quod homo castiget corpus suum, et in servitutem redigat, per abstinentiam cibi et potus, et aliorum huiusmodi.*

[61] *se bene habet in ordine ad res humanas*

[62] *bene se habent in ordine ad hoc quod sint cives sanctorum et domestici Dei*

In sum, the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues are similar in that they are found in the same subjects and they have the same structure—viz. a power of the soul is perfected in relation to some good. The primary difference between the two concerns the good toward which they are oriented. The acquired moral virtues are oriented toward the good as determined by human reason, while the infused moral virtues are oriented toward the good as determined by divine rule. This difference is associated with a difference in formal object, a difference in end, and a difference in cause.

Next, consider the second type of infused virtues that Aquinas discusses: the infused theological virtues. He treats these crucial virtues in Question 62, and the first article begins with an argument for their existence. In order to understand this argument, there is an important feature of the acquired moral virtues that we must discuss. In answering the question of whether virtue is present in us by nature, Aquinas explains that there is a way in which it is present naturally—albeit incompletely:

> in man's reason are to be found instilled by nature certain naturally known principles of both knowledge and action, which are the nurseries of intellectual and moral virtues, and in so far as there is in the will a natural appetite for good in accordance with reason" (63.1).[63]

[63] (*in ratione homini insunt naturaliter quaedam principia naturaliter cognita tam scibilium quam agendorum, quae sunt quaedam seminalia intellectualium virtutum et moralium; et inquantum in voluntate inest quidam naturalis appetitus boni quod est secundum rationem*) He had elaborated on this point back in Question 79 of the *prima pars*. There he explains that the naturally known principles of knowledge and action are actually habits that are natural to the human being. Thus, the speculative intellect is naturally equipped with a habit (the understanding of principles) by which it understands certain things without any investigation (I.79.12). Aquinas thinks the proposition "every whole is greater than its parts" is an example of something we understand through this habit (I.II.94.2). Similarly, the practical intellect is naturally equipped with a habit (*synderesis*) by which it is inclined to command good actions and to refrain from bad actions (I.79.12). These two habits—the understanding of principles and *synderesis*—are the naturally known principles of knowledge and action, respectively. When Aquinas says that these habits are the nurseries (*seminalia*) of virtue, he means that they are the seeds or early stages of the virtues. Thus, it is out of these habits that the virtues grow.

Along with these natural principles, the passage from 63.1 makes it clear that the will is equipped with a natural desire for the good of reason. That the will tends toward this good naturally, is one of the key insights of Aquinas's treatment of the will (I.II.8-17).[64]

With these features of human nature in mind, consider Aquinas's argument for the existence of the theological virtues. In the first article of Question 62, Aquinas reminds the reader of the twofold happiness of human beings (I.II.5). The first happiness is proportional to human nature, and, consequently, can be attained through the natural principles just discussed. The second happiness surpasses human nature (being proportional to the divine nature, inasmuch as human beings can participate in that nature[65]), which means that it can be obtained by the power of God alone. Since that happiness surpasses human nature, the natural principles will be of no help. Aquinas concludes: "It is necessary for man to receive from God some additional principles, whereby he may be directed to supernatural happiness, even as he is directed to his connatural end, by means of his natural principles" (62.1).[66] These additional principles are the theological virtues. Aquinas explains that there are three reasons these virtues are

[64] Once again, Jordan's "The Transcendentality of Goodness and the Human Will" is helpful on this point. Jordan brings out some of the important nuances of Aquinas's understanding of the relationship between the will and the good of reason.

[65] Aquinas quotes, as he often does, from 2 Peter 1:4 to support this idea.

[66] (*oportet quod superaddantur homini divinitus aliqua principia, per quae ita ordinetur ad beatitudinem supernaturalem, sicut per principia naturalia ordinatur ad finem connaturalem*) This argument is incomplete as it stands in 62.1. Nothing explains why it is necessary that God provide these additional principles. Aquinas seems to be operating with the following implicit assumption, which we find in I.II.65.3: "God operates no less perfectly in works of grace than in works of nature" (*Deus non minus perfecte operatur in operibus gratiae, quam in operibus naturae*). We see a very similar idea in I.II.110.2: "it is not fitting that God should provide less for those He loves, that they may acquire supernatural good, than for creatures, whom He loves that they may acquire natural good" (*non est conveniens quod Deus minus provideat his quos diligit ad supernaturale bonum habendum, quam creaturis quas diligit ad bonum naturale habendum*). As John Harvey (1955, 176) and Robert Coerver (1949, 9) explain, this was a common scholastic dictum in Aquinas's day.

called “theological.” First, their object is God himself; second, their cause is God (they are infused into us by Him); and third, we would remain ignorant of their existence, were it not for God’s revelatory activity.[67]

In the third article of Question 62, we learn that there are three theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity. Of course, we find these three virtues delineated in Scripture, but Aquinas extends his analogy between the theological virtues and the natural principles/inclinations of human nature by offering a derivation. As we saw, the human intellect is equipped, by nature, with certain principles or habits (the understanding of principles and *synderesis*) that serve as the seeds of the acquired virtues and help the human being attain natural happiness. Analogously, God supplies the intellect with “certain supernatural principles, which are held by means of a divine light” (62.3).[68] These principles are the articles of faith. Also, the human will is naturally inclined to the good of reason, which conduces to the moral virtues and, ultimately, natural happiness. Analogously, God supplies the will with (1) a habit that directs it toward the ultimate good (i.e., God himself), which is hope, and (2) a habit that brings about conformity with the ultimate end, which is charity.

In sum, happiness is twofold for Aquinas: natural happiness and supernatural happiness. The natural principles of the intellect and inclination of the will are the seeds of the acquired virtues, by which human beings achieve natural happiness. With respect

[67] From this last reason, we learn that Aquinas sees the theological virtues as a deliverance of revelation, which cannot be known independently. This shapes our understanding of the argument that he offers in the body of Article 1. That argument is not meant to establish the existence of these virtues—Scripture already does that, as evidenced in the *sed contra*. Rather, the argument in the response seems to be offering a reason for why God would choose to operate this way.

[68] *quaedam principia supernaturalia, quae divino lumine capiuntur*

to the supernatural happiness, Aquinas claims that the theological virtues take the place of the natural principles of the intellect and inclination of the will.

By taking the analogy one step further, he claims that the infused moral virtues play the corresponding role, regarding supernatural happiness, that the acquired moral virtues play regarding natural happiness. Aquinas sums up this picture in the following way:

> Now all virtues, intellectual and moral, that are acquired by our actions, arise from certain natural principles pre-existing in us, as stated above: instead of which natural principles, God bestows on us the theological virtues, whereby we are directed to a supernatural end, as stated above. Wherefore we need to receive from God other habits corresponding, in due proportion, to the theological virtues, which habits are to the theological virtues, what the moral and intellectual virtues are to the natural principles of virtue (63.3).[69]

Thus, the infused moral virtues relate to the infused theological virtues in much the same way that the acquired moral virtues related to the natural principles/inclinations of virtue. This means that the infused moral virtues will involve more particular perfections of the will's general orientation toward God (and conformity with God) that is the result of the theological virtues. Aquinas elaborates on this point in his reply to the second objection of 63.3: "The theological virtues direct us sufficiently to our supernatural end, inchoatively: i.e., to God Himself immediately. But the soul needs further to be perfected by infused virtues in regard to other things, yet in relation to God" (ad 2).[70] According to

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[69] *Omnes autem virtutes tam intellectuales quam morales, quae ex nostris actibus acquiruntur, procedunt ex quibusdam naturalibus principiis in nobis praeexistentibus, ut supra dictum est. Loco quorum naturalium principiorum, conferuntur nobis a Deo virtutes theologicae, quibus ordinamur ad finem supernaturalem, sicut supra dictum est. Unde oportet quod his etiam virtutibus theologicis proportionaliter respondeant alii habitus divinitus causati in nobis, qui sic se habeant ad virtutes theologicas sicut se habent virtutes morales et intellectuales ad principia naturalia virtutum.*

[70] *virtutes theologicae sufficienter nos ordinant in finem supernaturalem, secundum quandam inchoationem, quantum scilicet ad ipsum Deum immediate. Sed oportet quod per alias virtutes infusas perficiatur anima circa alias res, in ordine tamen ad Deum.*

this passage, the infused theological virtues get the believer started on the path to virtue by bringing her intellect and will into a right relation to God, while the infused moral virtues bring the will, practical intellect, and sensitive appetite into a right relation to those other things that can be ordered to God. For instance, it is through charity that a person can come to love God above all else, but it is through the infused virtue of temperance that this person can use alcohol in a manner honoring to God.[71]

There are three important features of infused virtues that will be important in what follows. First, Aquinas holds that the infused virtues (both theological and moral) are all infused together in a single moment. For example, when discussing the order of generation of the theological virtues, he explains that faith precedes hope and hope precedes charity—but only according to the acts of these virtues, "because [the] habits are all infused together" (62.4).[72] This proves that the theological virtues, in Aquinas's view, are infused simultaneously. He goes on to extend this view to the infused moral virtues: "All the moral virtues," he writes, "are infused together with charity" (65.3).[73]

Second, the infused virtues, unlike the acquired virtues, can be present alongside contrary dispositions.[74] It is easy to see why Aquinas needs to say this. If all the virtues

[71] One might wonder why Aquinas does not include infused versions of the intellectual virtues. Two points are relevant here. First, it is important to note that he does include some infused habits that perfect the intellectual part of man. For example, the theological virtue of faith perfects the intellect in relation to God, as does the gift of wisdom. Second, the reason that there is no set of infused intellectual virtues corresponding to the acquired intellectual virtues is because the object of intellectual virtue is truth. Therefore, the acquired intellectual virtues will remain effective in perfecting the intellect with respect to supernatural truths (once we have gained access to those truths through faith and the gift of wisdom).

[72] *fides praecedit spem, et spes caritatem, secundum actus (nam habitus simul infunduntur).*

[73] *cum caritate simul infunduntur omnes virtutes morales*

[74] See Fr. Michael Sherwin "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtue" *The Thomist* 73, (2009), 29-52, for a great discussion of this feature of the infused virtues.

are infused into a believer at the moment of baptism, how will we explain the fact that so many believers struggle to perform acts of the virtues after baptism? If there is no mortal sin present, then they must have the infused virtue.[75] Therefore, Aquinas explains that "sometimes the habits of [infused] moral virtue experience difficulty in their works, by reason of certain [contrary] dispositions remaining from previous acts" (65.3 ad 2).[76] It is not uncommon, in his view, for interfering factors to make it difficult for a person to exercise her habits. Sleepiness and sickness, for example, can make it difficult for someone to understand, even when that person has the virtue of science (65.3 ad 2). These contrary dispositions, however, are unique to the infused virtues. As Aquinas explains, "This difficulty does not occur in respect of acquired moral virtue: because the repeated acts by which they are acquired, remove also the contrary dispositions" (65.3 ad 2).[77] In other words, while the person with acquired moral virtue may occasionally experience difficulty in performing the acts of the virtues, this difficulty will never be the result of contrary dispositions. The same cannot be said in the case of the infused virtues. If a person had cultivated dispositions toward intemperance, for instance, before becoming a Christian, those dispositions will remain after baptism (at least initially). As a result, this person will often find it difficult to perform temperate actions, though she will

[75] For the distinction between mortal and venial sin, see I.II.88. More on the relationship between infused virtue and mortal sin below.

[76] *habitus moralium virtutum infusarum patiuntur interdum difficultatem in operando, propter aliquas dispositiones contrarias ex praecedentibus actibus relictas.* Translation modified: For some reason the English Fathers of the Domincan Province left out "infused," and translated *contrarias* as "ordinary" instead of "contrary."

[77] *Quae quidem difficultas non ita accidit in virtutibus moralibus acquisitis, quia per exercitium actuum, quo acquiruntur, tolluntur etiam contrariae dispositiones.*

always be capable of performing those actions in virtue of the infused temperance.[78] While infused virtue can coexist with contrary dispositions, Aquinas is clear that it cannot coexist with contrary habits (i.e., vices). In his discussion of vice and sin, he explains that vices are directly contrary to their corresponding virtues (I.II.71). This means that the two cannot be present at the same time.[79]

The third important feature of the infused virtues is that they can be lost instantaneously through mortal sin. Aquinas's position on this point depends upon two claims: first, as was just mentioned, all the infused virtues are infused with charity and depend upon charity, and, second, that charity is lost instantaneously through mortal sin. Recall that charity is the orientation of the will toward conformity with God. Contrary to this, Aquinas describes mortal sin as an orientation of the will away from God. Through mortal sin, one corrupts the very principle of one's spiritual life—namely, the fundamental orientation toward God (I.II.88.1). In acts like this, one loses charity because one, in a sense, erects a boundary between oneself and God. In his discussion of charity in the *secunda secundae,* Aquinas explains this quite clearly through the metaphor of light:

> God is to the infusion and preservation of charity as the sun is to the illumination of the air, as was said. And so, just as light would at once cease to be in the air, were some obstacle to be set against the sun's illumination, so too charity at once fails to be in the soul when some

[78] I will return to this topic in greater detail in the next chapter.

[79] Also, in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas explains that "if someone has the [habit] of intemperateness, when he repents it no longer remains there alongside the infused virtue of temperateness in the character of a [habit]. Rather, it is already in the process of being destroyed, and has become instead a sort of [disposition]" (1.10 ad 16).(*in eo qui habuit habitum intemperantiae, cum conteritur, non remanet cum virtute temperantiae infusa habitus intemperantiae in ratione habitus, sed in via corruptionis, quasi dispositio quaedam.)*

> obstacle is set against the inflowing of charity from God into the soul (II.II.24.12).[80]

This passage reveals that God's infusion of charity and the other infused virtues is not a one-time event; rather, it is an ongoing process. It is not as if we receive these virtues when we become Christians and then God sends us off to do his work. Instead, God is constantly sustaining the infused virtues in us, and any interruption in that activity means the loss of the virtues. Since mortal sin is synonymous with just such an interruption, it brings about the instantaneous loss of all the infused virtues.

3.2.2 Infused Virtues: Peculiar Habits, True Virtues Simpliciter

As we saw in Section 3.1.1, Aquinas makes a startling claim about the nature of virtue in his discussion of the connection of the virtues. He writes, "only the infused virtues are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply" (65.2).[81] The acquired virtues, in contrast, he calls "virtues in a restricted sense, but not simply" (65.2).[82] These claims are startling because the infused virtues do not seem to fit the notion of habit very well. If virtues are good, operative habits (as we learned in Question 55), it is hard to see how these qualities—which seem barely to qualify as habits—can turn out to be the paradigmatic case of virtue. In this section, I draw out some of these tensions more

[80] Trans: Robert Miner trans. *Questions on Love and Charity: Summa Theologiae, Secunda Secundae, Questions 23-46,* ed. Robert Miner (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016). *Sed caritas, cum sit habitus infusus, dependet ex actione Dei infundentis, qui sic se habet in infusione et conservatione caritatis sicut sol in illuminatione aeris, ut dictum est. Et ideo, sicut lumen statim cessaret esse in aere quod aliquod obstaculum poneretur illuminationi solis, ita etiam caritas statim deficit esse in anima quod aliquod obstaculum ponitur influentiae caritatis a Deo in animam.*

[81] *solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes*

[82] *sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter*

clearly, before showing why Aquinas maintains that the infused virtues are true virtues *simpliciter*.

Recall that Aquinas followed Aristotle in distinguishing habits from dispositions on the basis of the stability of the quality. Both habits and dispositions are accidental forms through with subjects exist in determinate ways with reference to their nature. Habits are lasting, while dispositions are fleeting or easily lost. Since the infused virtues are easily lost through mortal sin, they seem to share more in common with dispositions than habits. Furthermore, Aquinas notes that acquired virtues are not lost through a single mortal sin (63.2 ad 2). Thus, they seem to exhibit the characteristics of habits more clearly than the infused virtues. Those commentators who emphasize the Augustinian nature of Aquinas's moral thinking tend to cite these points in support of the idea that Aquinas's understanding of virtue is Augustinian and *not* Aristotelian.[83]

Aquinas addresses this very question in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*. The tenth objection of Article 1 points out that infused virtues are easy to change because they can be lost through one mortal sin, and concludes that they are not habits. Aquinas responds as follows:

> Nothing is so stable that it will not by itself disappear at once, if the cause that sustains it disappears. Therefore it is unsurprising if infused virtue disappears when the link with God disappears because of mortal sin. This fact does not conflict with its resistance to change, which can only be understood by assuming the persistence of its cause (*QDV* 1.1 ad 10).[84]

[83] See Osborne, "The Augustinianism," Stump, "The Non-Aristotelian," and Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective*.

[84] *quod nulla res est adeo stabilis, quae non statim ex se deficiat, sua causa deficiente. Unde non est mirum, si deficiente coniunctione ad Deum per peccatum mortale, deficiat virtus infusa. Nec hoc repugnat suae immobilitati, quae intelligi non potest nisi sua causa manente*.

Thus, Aquinas is able to provide a technical way in which the infused virtues can meet the condition of stability and qualify as habits. In other places, he accounts for this stability by pointing out that it is not easy for those with developed infused virtues to commit mortal sins.[85] Therefore, while they would be lost instantaneously upon mortal sin, the rarity of those sins means that the infused virtues enjoy a kind of stability. In both of these ways, Aquinas is able to maintain that the infused virtues meet the Aristotelian condition of stability and are, as a result, genuine habits. Nevertheless, Aquinas would have to concede that the acquired and infused virtues are stable in different ways, and that, at least initially, the acquired seem more stable.

Another way the infused virtues seem to fall short of the notion of habit is in their compatibility with contrary dispositions. As we saw, Aquinas thinks that the infused virtues, unlike their acquired counterparts, can exist alongside contrary dispositions which render their works difficult (65.3 ad 2). Habits, however, are supposed to enable action that is consistent, easy, and pleasurable (*QDV* 1.1). Once again, it seems like the acquired virtues are better candidates for the title of "true virtue *simpliciter*."[86]

Despite these features of the infused virtues, Aquinas maintains that they—and not the acquired virtues—are the paradigmatic examples of virtue.[87] How can this be? First, consider the context of Aquinas's important claim, which occurs in the second article of Question 65. He had just distinguished between the acquired and infused moral

[85] See, for examples, *QDV* 2.6 ad 1 and *QDV* 2.13 ad 1.

[86] We find further evidence for this in Aquinas's discussion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. In I.II.68.2, he explains that the gifts are necessary because the infused virtues (both theological and moral) are imperfect when it comes to moving human beings toward the supernatural end. The acquired virtues, on the other hand, are sufficient for moving human beings toward the natural end, which explains why there are no dispositions that are analogous to the gifts yet aimed at the natural end.

[87] I address these problematic features of the infused virtues in more detail in the next chapter.

virtues on the basis of the end toward which they are directed. The acquired virtues "produce good works that are directed to an end not surpassing the natural power of man," whereas the infused virtues "produce good works in proportion to a supernatural last end" (65.2).[88] Then he concludes his response with the following passage:

> It is therefore clear from what has been said that only the infused virtues are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply: since they direct man well to the ultimate end. But the other virtues, those, namely, that are acquired, are virtues in a restricted sense, but not simply: for they direct man well in respect of the last end in some particular genus of action, but not in respect of the last end simply (65.2).[89]

From this, it is clear that the end toward which a habit is directed is the most important feature, for Aquinas, when evaluating the extent to which that habit exemplifies the nature of virtue.

Aquinas does not explain, in Question 65, why this feature takes pride of place, but we can see why this is the case if we return to Question 55—the first question on the topic of virtue. In the first article of Question 55, Aquinas begins his response in the following way: "Virtue denotes a certain perfection of a power. Now a thing's perfection is considered chiefly in regard to its end" (55.1).[90] In its most basic sense, then, virtue is a perfection of a power. This Aristotelian "definition" serves as the foundation for everything Aquinas goes on to say in Question 55—including his remarks about the Augustinian definition of virtue in Article 4. Therefore, whichever habits perfect their

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[88] *sunt operativae boni in ordine ad finem qui non excedit facultatem naturalem hominis… sunt operativae boni in ordine ad ultimum finem supernaturalem*

[89] *Patet igitur ex dictis quod solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter. Aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter, ordinant enim hominem bene respectu finis ultimi in aliquo genere, non autem respectu finis ultimi simpliciter.*

[90] *virtus nominat quandam potentiae perfectionem. Uniuscuiusque autem perfectio praecipue consideratur in ordine ad suum finem*

powers in the highest sense of "perfect," will be virtues *simpliciter* and not *secundum quid*.[91] As we saw in 65.1, moral virtue is said to be "perfect" when it is a habit that inclines us to do a good deed well. Aquinas applies this sort of perfection to both the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues. In 55.1, however, Aquinas explains that perfection is considered *chiefly* in regard to the end. Since the infused virtues alone are directed toward the ultimate end, they are the only virtues that truly "perfect" their powers. This, I submit, is the reason why Aquinas calls them virtues *simpliciter*, and the acquired virtues merely virtues *secundum quid*. While the acquired virtues might surpass the infused in other respects (e.g., in stability or in ease of use), the infused virtues are superior when it comes to the chief sense of "perfect."[92] In this way, Aquinas's account of the infused virtues achieves a brilliant harmony between Aristotle and Augustine: it is for Aristotelian reasons that Augustinian infused virtue is recognized as fulfilling the *ratio* of virtue most perfectly.

3.3 The Necessity of the Infused Moral Virtues

While the majority of philosophers and theologians in the Thomistic tradition have agreed with Aquinas on the existence of the infused *theological* virtues, there has been less agreement concerning the existence of the infused *moral* virtues. John Duns

[91] This is where we find an important difference between Aquinas's use of "*perfectio*"/ "*perficio*" and the English terms "perfection"/ "perfect" (verb). Whereas the English terms seem specific (i.e., there is only one way in which a thing can be perfected), the Latin terms—at least in Aquinas's use—are generic (i.e., there is more than one way in which a thing can be perfected). Thus, Aquinas can say things like "*non omne perfectum est perfectissimum*" (not everything that is perfect is most perfect) (*QDV* I.11 ad 18). Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that the "perfect" virtue discussed in I.II.65.1 is not the highest or most perfect form of virtue. See also Thomas Osborne's "Perfect and Imperfect Virtues in Aquinas," where he distinguishes between five different stages of virtue in Aquinas's work.

[92] See Decosimo (2014, 104-5) for another good explanation of why the infused virtues achieve the full *ratio* of habit.

Scotus, in particular, was an influential thinker who denied the existence of the infused moral virtues. There were two reasons for his denial: first, he denied that a clear case could be drawn from Scripture for their existence, and second, he rejected arguments from reason concerning the necessity of these virtues.[93] In his view, the infused moral virtues were a case of multiplying entities beyond necessity, and consequently, their existence should be denied.[94] In this section, I will briefly present Aquinas's case for why the infused moral virtues are necessary, before addressing Scotus's arguments to the contrary. I conclude by examining some popular Thomistic responses to Scotus, before presenting a more promising alternative.

3.3.1 Aquinas's Arguments

First, it is important to note that Aquinas does find support for the existence of the infused moral virtues in Scripture. He frequently cites Wisdom 8:7, which states, "She [divine wisdom] teacheth temperance and prudence and justice and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in life."[95] Aquinas also finds a traditional precedent in favor of the existence of the infused moral virtues in Augustine and in official church teachings.[96]

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[93] In her "Rethinking Moral Dispositions: Scotus on the Virtues," Bonnie Kent claims that Scotus did not think that reason could lead one to posit the existence of the infused theological virtues either, but he accepted their existence on the basis of the testimony of Scripture (2006, 365).

[94] While this principle has come to be known as Ockham's Razor, Kent (2006, 354) points out that it was known as Scotus's Rule in the fourteenth century.

[95] This quotation comes from I.II.57.5 sc, though the verse also appears in I.II.63.3 sc. (*cum dicitur de divina sapientia, sobrietatem et prudentiam docet, iustitiam et virtutem, quibus utilius nihil est in vita hominibus*.) Despite the difference in the Latin terms, Aquinas takes the verse to be referring to the traditional cardinal virtues. He also finds Scriptural support in Luke 24:49, where Jesus tells the disciples that they will be clothed with virtue from on high (see *QDV* 1.10 sc).

[96] See Coerver, *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues*, 6-8. Coerver also mentions that II Peter 1:3 was often used to support the existence of these virtues.

In addition to this evidence, Aquinas presents two closely-related arguments for the necessity of the infused moral virtues: one based on proportionality (63.3) and one based on the perfection of activity (65.3). Both arguments depend upon the scholastic axiom that "God operates no less perfectly in the works of grace than in the works of nature" though Aquinas only makes it explicit in 65.3.[97] The argument from proportionality goes like this:

1. God operates no less perfectly in works of grace than in works of nature.
2. By nature, human beings have natural principles/inclinations which give rise to the acquired moral virtues.
3. By grace, human beings have theological virtues which correspond to the natural principles/inclinations of human nature.
4. So, human beings in the state of grace need some virtues to relate to the theological virtues as the acquired moral virtues relate to the natural principles/inclinations of human nature.
5. Effects must be proportional to their principles.
6. Only the infused moral virtues are proportional to the theological virtues.
7. So, the infused moral virtues are necessary.[98]

In his response in 63.3, Aquinas moves straight from (2) and (3) to (4). I have supplied the first premise because it justifies this inference. Since God designed human nature in such a way that we have certain principles of virtue that can give rise to acquired virtues, we can conclude that he designed the state of grace similarly. The theological virtues correspond to the principles of virtue, so we must have some virtues which correspond to the acquired virtues. This establishes the need for virtues that meet this correspondence

[97] *Deus non minus perfecte operatur in operibus gratiae, quam in operibus naturae*. See John Harvey, "The Nature," 176, and Robert Coerver, *The Quality of Facility*, 9.

[98] This is a reformulation of Aquinas's response in Article 3 of Question 63 (though premise 1 is implicit): *oportet effectus esse suis causis et principiis proportionatos. Omnes autem virtutes tam intellectuales quam morales, quae ex nostris actibus acquiruntur, procedunt ex quibusdam naturalibus principiis in nobis praeexistentibus, ut supra dictum est. Loco quorum naturalium principiorum, conferuntur nobis a Deo virtutes theologicae, quibus ordinamur ad finem supernaturalem, sicut supra dictum est. Unde oportet quod his etiam virtutibus theologicis proportionaliter respondeant alii habitus divinitus causati in nobis, qui sic se habeant ad virtutes theologicas sicut se habent virtutes morales et intellectuales ad principia naturalia virtutum.*

requirement. Next, Aquinas brings in the idea of proportionality with (5) and (6). Since effects must be proportional to their principles, these virtues must be proportional to the theological virtues. As we saw in Chapter Two, the notion of proportionality of habits typically applies to the end toward which the habits dispose their subjects. Since the theological virtues dispose their subjects to happiness that exceeds the capacity of human nature, the additional virtues must dispose their subjects to the same happiness. Thus, Aquinas sets up two requirements for the set of virtues under discussion: (1) they must correspond to the acquired moral virtues, and (2) they must be proportional to the theological virtues. Neither the acquired moral virtues nor the theological virtues can satisfy both requirements, so a new class of virtues is necessary; namely, the infused moral virtues.

The argument from the perfection of activity is as follows:

1. God operates no less perfectly in works of grace than in works of nature.
2. In the works of nature, we find that whenever a thing has a principle of certain works, it has also whatever is necessary for their execution.
3. The theological virtues are the principles of good works aimed at the supernatural end.
4. The infused moral virtues are necessary for the execution of good works aimed at the supernatural end.
5. Christians have the theological virtues.
6. So, Christians also have the infused moral virtues.[99]

Since premise (4) will be the most controversial, consider Aquinas's reasons for endorsing it. He has two ways of supporting this premise. First, he claims that the

[99] This argument is based on the following passage from 65.3 (One also finds a very similar argument in *QDV* 1.10 ad 5): *cum caritate simul infunduntur omnes virtutes morales. Cuius ratio est quia Deus non minus perfecte operatur in operibus gratiae, quam in operibus naturae. Sic autem videmus in operibus naturae, quod non invenitur principium aliquorum operum in aliqua re, quin inveniantur in ea quae sunt necessaria ad huiusmodi opera perficienda, sicut in animalibus inveniuntur organa quibus perfici possunt opera ad quae peragenda anima habet potestatem. Manifestum est autem quod caritas, inquantum ordinat hominem ad finem ultimum, est principium omnium bonorum operum quae in finem ultimum ordinari possunt. Unde oportet quod cum caritate simul infundantur omnes virtutes morales, quibus homo perficit singula genera bonorum operum.*

theological virtues perfect us in those works which aim at the supernatural end *directly*, but that we also need to be perfected in works that aim at the supernatural end *indirectly*. For example, he writes, "The theological virtues direct us sufficiently to our supernatural end, inchoatively: i.e., to God Himself immediately. But the soul needs further to be perfected by infused virtues in regard to other things, yet in relation to God" (63.3 ad 2).[100] Second, Aquinas defends this idea through the use of an analogy. Imagine a world-class violinist playing an imperfect and damaged violin. Aquinas holds that this playing would be imperfect because, despite the relevant virtues of the violinist, the instrument falls short. As he puts it,

> In order that the act of a lower power be perfect, not only must there be perfection in the higher, but also in the lower power: for if the principal agent were well disposed, perfect action would not follow, if the instrument also were not well disposed" (65.3 ad 1).[101]

Therefore, in order to execute good works aimed at the supernatural end, our will and sensitive appetite must be well disposed toward their objects (insofar as those objects relate to God). The will and sensitive appetite are well disposed in just this way by the infused moral virtues.

3.3.2 Scotus's Denial

Now that we have seen Aquinas's arguments for the necessity of the infused moral virtues, we can turn to Scotus's arguments to the contrary. While Scotus was familiar with Aquinas's view, he does not address the specific arguments we have just

[100] *virtutes theologicae sufficienter nos ordinant in finem supernaturalem, secundum quandam inchoationem, quantum scilicet ad ipsum Deum immediate. Sed oportet quod per alias virtutes infusas perficiatur anima circa alias res, in ordine tamen ad Deum.*

[101] *quod ad hoc quod actus inferioris potentiae sit perfectus, requiritur quod non solum adsit perfectio in superiori potentia, sed etiam in inferiori, si enim principale agens debito modo se haberet, non sequeretur actio perfecta, si instrumentum non esset bene dispositum.*

laid out. Nonetheless, his writings on the topic will reveal how he would have responded to these particular arguments.

The question of the infused moral virtues is raised most directly in Scotus's *Ordinatio*—his commentary on the *Sentences* of Lombard. In *Ordinatio* III, Suppl. Dist. 34, Scotus argues that there are only three types of virtues—intellectual, moral, and theological—and that there are only four moral virtues (all acquired) and three theological virtues.[102] He begins with the following principle: "We ought to postulate only such habits in a person in the present life as perfect such a one in regard to every object that one can be perfected [in reference to] at present" (III.34 [241]).[103] According to Scotus, the only objects toward which one can be perfected at this time are God and creatures. In the case of God, "the three theological virtues perfect one sufficiently in his regard" (III.34 [241]).[104] Furthermore, the four cardinal virtues—which Scotus clearly identifies as acquired[105]—perfect one sufficiently in regard to creatures. He concludes:

> These seven virtues… provided they are most perfect in themselves, suffice to make man most perfect in an unqualified sense as regards God in himself and all things other than God. As intelligibles of practical reason and as things desirable either for self or for others, the appetitive

[102] It is interesting to note that Scotus is addressing the relationship between the virtues, gifts, beatitudes, and fruits in this distinction. He ends up with the view that there are only seven habits among the whole group, which go by the names of the virtues. The gifts, beatitudes, and fruits are one of the following: (1) different names for the same habits, or (2) species of those habits, or (3) delights that follow upon acts of those habits.

[103] Trans: Wolter (1997). Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of Scotus are from Alan B. Wolter, trans. *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality*, ed. William A. Frank (Washington, D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1997). Page numbers to this edition will appear in brackets in the parenthetical citation. The Latin text is from Ordinatio (prologus et libri I - IV) - s. 14 p.C. ed. Commissio Scotistica, 1950-2013 [Opera omnia, vol. 1-14], accessed online at http://clt.brepolis.net/LLTB/pages/TextSearch.aspx?key= MDUSCORDCP (*soli illi habitus ponendi sunt in viatore quibus perficitur - circa omne obiectum - quantum potest perfici in via*).

[104] *sufficienter perficitur tribus virtutibus theologicis*

[105] See III.34[Wolter (1997, 242-3)].

> virtues are suited to attain such in themselves *or in relation to man's ultimate end, which is in the power of the acquired virtues when they are joined to charity* (III.34 [246]).[106]

Thus, Scotus limits the moral virtues to the four acquired cardinal virtues, and he claims that human beings are able to attain their ultimate end (i.e., *beatitudo*) through the combination of these acquired virtues and charity. While these passages from Distinction 34 do not explicitly reject the infused moral virtues, they reveal that Scotus did not include them in his enumeration of the virtues and, with the last passage, we begin to see why. On his view, charity seems to be ordering the acquired virtues toward the ultimate end. This idea will feature prominently in Scotus's more explicit argument against the necessity of the infused moral virtues.

A few pages later, in *Ordinatio* III, Suppl. Dist. 36, Scotus addresses the connection between the moral and theological virtues. In the midst of this discussion, the topic of the infused moral virtues is raised, and Scotus offers his most concise expression of the view:

> Although much might be said about these infused moral virtues, namely, that they seem necessary because of the manner or the medium or the end, nevertheless (inasmuch as every end which they cannot have of their specific nature, is sufficiently specified by the inclination of charity, whereas the mode and the medium are specified by infused faith) it does not seem necessary to postulate infused moral virtues (III.36 [271-2]).[107]

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[106] (emphasis added) *Per istas quippe septem virtutes, intelligendo de eis et de speciebus earum necessariis (de quibus postea dicetur), si sint in se perfectissimae, simpliciter perfectissimus est homo et circa Deum in se et circa omnia alia a Deo, et ut intelligibilia ratione practica et ut appetibilia sibi vel alteri, - et hoc in ordine ad se, in quod possunt virtutes appetitivae ex se, vel in ordine ad finem ultimum, in quem possunt virtutes acquisitae cum caritate*.

[107] *Licet de istis virtutibus moralibus multa dicantur, silicet quod videntur necessariae propter modum, medium et finem, quia tamen omnis finis, quem non possunt habere ex specie sua, determinatur sufficienter ex inclinatione charitatis; modus autem et medium determinatur per fidem infusam; ideo non videtur necessitas ponendi virtutes morales infusas*

Scotus recognizes that arguments for the necessity of the infused moral virtues tended to depend—like those of Aquinas—on some notion of the manner, medium, or end of the acquired virtues. In other words, something about the manner, medium, or end associated with the acquired virtues prevents them from being ordered toward the supernatural end of *beatitudo*, making the infused moral virtues necessary. In this passage, Scotus argues that these limitations can be remedied by the theological virtues, without having to posit infused moral virtues. As he says, the acquired virtues can be ordered toward supernatural ends through charity and raised to a supernatural mode/manner and medium through faith.[108] This does not require a new virtue that is distinct in essence from the acquired virtue—instead, the theological virtues simply provide an "extrinsic perfection" (III.36 [272]).[109]

From these passages, we can see how Scotus would respond to Aquinas's arguments. First, in response to the argument from proportionality, Scotus would deny

[108] He describes the relationship between charity and the acquired virtues in the following way: "lt can be said that no virtues incline a person to his ultimate end except through the mediacy of that which regards the ultimate end *per se*; and thus, if only charity immediately regards the ultimate end, the other virtues do not order one to that end except by means of charity. However, in so far as the virtues are certain instruments perfecting man, they must also be instruments for ordering him to the ultimate end in which his supreme perfection lies, and therefore they are imperfect without charity, to which end they cannot otherwise be ordained. However, since this imperfection is not something that pertains to them by virtue of their specific nature, therefore each of the other virtues in their own nature can be perfect without such a virtue. Inasmuch, then, as they are without charity they are said to be "unformed," and they are "formed" through charity in the sense that charity orders these and their respective ends to the ultimate end, in which ordination they achieve their true and highest extrinsic perfection." (III.36 [271]). (*Potest dici quod nullae virtutes inclinant ad finem ultimum, nisi mediante illa cuius est per se respicere finem ultimum; et ita si sola caritas respicit finem ultimum immediate, aliae virtutes non ordinant ad finem ultimum nisi mediante caritate. Quatenus autem sunt quaedam instrumenta perficiendi hominem, debent esse instrumenta ordinandi ipsum ad finem ultimum, in quo est summa perfectio; et ideo sunt imperfectae sine caritate, ad quam non possunt sic ordinari; tamen quia ista imperfectio non est earum in specie sua (nam nullius earum est ordinare ad illum finem immediate in specie sua), ideo quaelibet aliarum in sua specie potest esse perfecta sine tali virtute. Pro tanto ergo dicuntur esse informes sine caritate et formatae per caritatem, pro quanto caritas ordinat ipsas et fines earum in finem ultimum, in qua ordinatione est summa et vera earum perfectio extrinseca*.)

[109] *virtutes morales non requirere theologicas ad hoc ut ipsae morales sint perfectae in specie sua, licet non sint perfectae sine eis perfectione ulteriore quam possent sic habere*

premise (6)—he would say that the acquired virtues can be extrinsically perfected (by the theological virtues) in a way that achieves the desired proportionality. In response to the argument from the perfection of activity, Scotus would deny premise (4)—he would argue that the combination of the acquired virtues and the theological virtues is sufficient for perfect activity. As he sees it, charity orders the acquired virtues toward the supernatural end of union with God, while faith allows them to operate in a supernatural way.

3.3.3 Thomistic Responses to Scotus

Robert Coerver levels two criticisms against Scotus's view on this topic.[110] First, he argues that Scotus fails to appreciate what Aquinas says in I.II.63.3 ad 2 regarding the way in which the theological virtues dispose us in regard to the end (God himself) and the infused moral virtues dispose us well in regard to the means to that end. In other words, if the theological virtues perfect the acquired moral virtues extrinsically, then the human person will only be well-disposed toward the end, and not the means. But this criticism does not give Scotus enough credit. The acquired virtues, by themselves, serve to dispose the human person toward the means to her natural end. Therefore, through the extrinsic perfection of the theological virtues, it appears that the acquired virtues would begin to dispose the person toward the means to her supernatural end. What else would the extrinsic perfection amount to if not this? Coerver's second criticism pertains to the very notion of extrinsic perfection. He follows Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange in claiming that "it is fitting that [the acts of the moral virtues] should be intrinsically

[110] See Coerver, *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues,* 14-6. See also Harvey, "The Nature of the Infused Moral Virtues," who follows Coerver closely.

supernaturalized."[111] As John Harvey puts it, the extrinsically perfected moral virtues "would remain… alien ministers of an inferior order" (1955, 178). In effect, these Thomists are reemphasizing Aquinas's claim that an act is not perfect unless both the higher power and the lower power are perfect, and asserting that an extrinsic perfection is not a true perfection.

While these criticisms may have some merit, they distract us from the commonalities between Aquinas and Scotus on the question of the infused moral virtues. As it turns out, the disagreement is not as deep as it initially seems. Aquinas and Scotus agree on the following important point: moral virtue looks quite different in the Christian than it does in the non-Christian. It is ordered to a different end and its mode of operation is different, according to both thinkers. Furthermore, they agree that the source of this difference is something that is infused by God. Recall that Aquinas identifies three respects in which habits are specifically distinct: cause, end/nature, and formal object (54.2). If he were to compare the sort of moral virtues that Scotus places in the Christian with the acquired moral virtues, Aquinas would find habits that differ in cause (the extrinsic perfection is caused through infusion), end (ordered to distinct end through charity) and formal object (manner and mode supernaturalized by faith). Given his understanding of habit, then, Aquinas would conclude that these habits differed in species from the acquired moral virtues. In other words, Scotus's extrinsic perfection would count as an intrinsic difference on Aquinas's picture. Put this way, the difference between the two thinkers is not that significant.

[111] Coerver, *The Quality*, 16. See also Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione* (Rome, Ferrari, 1918).

By emphasizing these commonalities, I hope to expose the source of the disagreement between Scotus and Aquinas. Rather than a substantive disagreement regarding the nature of Christian virtue, we are dealing with a disagreement about theory construction.[112] Scotus places more value on theoretical simplicity, which leads him to prefer a minimal number of virtues. Similarly, Aquinas and Scotus seem to disagree about differentiating between different species of habits, which leads them to different conclusions on this point.

Since the disagreement pertains to the construction of theories, I propose that we evaluate it on the basis of theoretical virtues. Prima facie, Scotus's theory has an advantage when it comes to theoretical simplicity. Nonetheless, simplicity is only a good-making feature of a theory provided that the theory can account for all the relevant data. We must, therefore, consider the explanatory power of the two theories. In most cases, the two are on par in this respect, but there is a notable exception. Consider the case of people who convert to Christianity from a life of vice. Father Michael Sherwin explores this case in his "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtue." Many of these converts are able to live without the acts of their previous vices (i.e., they are performing the acts of the virtuous person), though they may still struggle with contrary inclinations in their appetitive powers. Because of these contrary inclinations, both Aquinas and Scotus would say that

[112] Bonnie Kent makes a similar point in *Virtues of the Will*, 252-3, when she distinguishes between Scotus's question—whether it is necessary to posit habits in the will—and Aquinas's question—why people need habits: "The question about *positing* habits focuses on the value of habits in explaining the psychological phenomena, while the question about why we *need* habits focuses more on their value as psychological correctives. The first question reflects a preoccupation with theory construction, especially with economical theory construction, that the second does not. Considering that Aquinas belonged to the first generation to attempt a synthesis of Aristotle's ethics and Christian moral theology, and that Scotus was teaching more than a generation later, it should not be surprising to find the later master preoccupied with questions of theory" (emphasis in original).

these converts do not have the acquired moral virtues.[113] What, then, has been perfected? Aquinas can say that these converts have received the infused moral virtues, which, on his view, are compatible with contrary inclinations that result from acquired vices (I.II.65.3 ad 2). What can Scotus say about these converts? The presence of the contrary inclinations shows that the acquired moral virtues are not present to be extrinsically perfected by the theological virtues. Hence, Scotus can only appeal to the theological virtues. But even Scotus agrees that the theological virtues deal with God himself, and not the things of this world. Therefore, Scotus lacks an explanation for the vicious convert's new ability to engage with the things of this world in a way that honors God. A more promising response to Scotus, then, is to appeal to the superior explanatory power of Aquinas's account of virtue, and its infused moral virtues. For the remainder of this dissertation, I will employ that account.[114]

3.4 Infused Virtue in the Moral Life

I conclude this chapter by addressing the role that the infused virtues play in the moral life. First, I explore the relation between grace and the infused virtues. Second, I situate the infused virtues among the gifts, fruits, and beatitudes. Third, I address an issue that has given rise to a great deal of recent interpretive work; namely, the relationship between the acquired and infused virtues.

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[113] Recall from Section 3.2.1 that Aquinas teaches that the contrary inclinations do not exist with acquired moral virtues (I.II.65.3 ad 2). See also Scotus, *Ordinatio* III.34.

[114] I hope that those who follow Scotus (and are not convinced by my response) will be able to apply my conclusions regarding growth in infused virtue to the theological virtues and the extrinsically-perfected moral virtues.

3.4.1 Grace and the Infused Virtues

In addition to the intrinsic principles of action that we have discussed—habit and virtue—Aquinas teaches that God serves as an extrinsic principle of action who "both instructs us by means of his law, and assists us by his grace" (I.II.90 pr).[115] This provides us with an initial understanding of grace: the assistance that God provides in leading the rational creature toward its good. In the last few questions of the *prima secundae* (109-114), Aquinas builds upon this initial understanding in insightful and instructive ways. Human beings need grace, he explains in Question 109, because our natural powers can only produce actions in proportion to the natural state. In order to perform actions proportional to our supernatural state (e.g., the acts of the infused virtues) we require extra assistance from God.[116] According to Aquinas, this extra assistance (i.e., grace) comes in two forms. First, our souls can be "moved by God to know or will or do something" (110.2).[117] For example, God might move my will such that I choose to perform an action out of love for Him. Second, the human being can be "helped by God's

[115] *Principium autem exterius movens ad bonum est Deus, qui et nos instruit per legem, et iuvat per gratiam.*

[116] To give some more examples, he argues that we need grace in order to know certain truths (i.e., those that go beyond our natural knowledge) (109.1), to be healed from our sinful nature (109.2), to do and wish supernatural good (109.2), and to merit eternal life (109.5). While these activities require extra assistance from God in the form of grace, Aquinas is careful to remind his readers that God's involvement is necessary for human beings (and all creatures for that matter) to perform any action whatsoever. As he says in the first article, "no matter how perfect a corporeal or spiritual nature is supposed to be, it cannot proceed to its act unless it be moved by God" (109.1) (*quantumcumque natura aliqua corporalis vel spiritualis ponatur perfecta, non potest in suum actum procedere nisi moveatur a Deo)*. Not only is all movement dependent upon the First Mover (I.2.3), but each and every event is immediately subject to God's providence (I.22.3).

[117] *movetur a Deo ad aliquid cognoscendum vel volendum vel agendum*

gratuitous will, inasmuch as a habitual gift (*habituale donum*) is infused by God into the soul" (110.2).[118]

With a basic grasp on Aquinas's view of grace, we can consider the relationship between grace and the infused virtues. As we saw, Aquinas describes one aspect of grace as a "habitual gift" and as a "certain form or supernatural quality" that is infused into the soul. Since the infused virtues are habits of the soul that aim at the supernatural end, they fit these descriptions equally well. How, then, might grace differ from the infused virtues? Interestingly, Peter Lombard seemed to hold that these two elements of the moral life were identical in essence and that there was only a logical difference between them.[119] In third article of Question 110, Aquinas argues against this view by appealing to the analogous relationship between the acquired and infused virtues. The acquired virtues are dispositions to act in accordance with one's nature as a human being and are determined by (or ordered toward) reason. The infused virtues, on the other hand, are dispositions to act in accordance with a higher nature—one that participates in the divine nature. Aquinas reasons as follows:

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[118] (*adiuvatur homo ex gratuita Dei voluntate, secundum quod aliquod habituale donum a Deo animae infunditur*) Once again, Aquinas evokes the same principle that he used to support his claims about the existence of the infused virtues: "it is not fitting that God should provide less for those He loves, that they may acquire supernatural good, than for creatures, whom He loves that they may acquire natural good" (110.2) (*non est conveniens quod Deus minus provideat his quos diligit ad supernaturale bonum habendum, quam creaturis quas diligit ad bonum naturale habendum*). In the case of the natural good, God does two things: first, he moves them to their acts, and second, "he bestows upon them certain forms and [virtues], which are the principles of acts, in order that they may of themselves be inclined to these movements" (110.2) (*etiam largiatur eis formas et virtutes quasdam, quae sunt principia actuum, ut secundum seipsas inclinentur ad huiusmodi motus*). Consequently, Aquinas claims that, in the case of the supernatural good, God infuses "certain forms or supernatural qualities, whereby [human beings] may be moved by Him sweetly and promptly to acquire eternal good" (110.2) (*aliquas formas seu qualitates supernaturales, secundum quas suaviter et prompte ab ipso moveantur ad bonum aeternum consequendum*). The habitual gift of grace is one of these supernatural qualities.

[119] See *Sentences* II, Distinction 27, Sections 3 & 9 especially.

> Even as the natural light of reason is something besides the acquired virtues, which are ordained to this natural light, so also the light of grace which is a participation of the Divine Nature is something besides the infused virtues which are derived from and are ordained to this light… For as the acquired virtues enable a man to walk, in accordance with the natural light of reason, so do the infused virtues enable a man to walk as befits the light of grace. (110.3).[120]

Simply put, the infused virtues differ from grace just as the acquired virtues differ from reason.

While this passage explains why Aquinas thinks the infused virtues are different from grace, it also offers insights into his understanding of the relationship between the two. We learn that the infused virtues are both "derived from" grace and "ordained to" grace. Thus, grace is both the source of the infused virtues and the end toward which they are directed.

Expanding on the idea that grace is the source of the infused virtues, Aquinas calls it a "certain [habit] which is presupposed to the infused virtues, as their principle and root" (110.3 ad 3).[121] Recall, from I.II.50.2, that the only habit subjected in the soul itself is grace.[122] No other habit could exist in the soul itself because the soul cannot be more disposed to human nature than it already is. Through grace, however, the soul is disposed toward the higher nature. In this way, grace is able to play a role that is analogous to the role of the soul in the state of nature. It gives the believer a new, spiritual way of being. This explains why Aquinas refers to grace as the soul's

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[120] *Sicut… lumen naturale rationis est aliquid praeter virtutes acquisitas, quae dicuntur in ordine ad ipsum lumen naturale; ita etiam ipsum lumen gratiae, quod est participatio divinae naturae, est aliquid praeter virtutes infusas, quae a lumine illo derivantur, et ad illud lumen ordinantur… Sicut enim virtutes acquisitae perficiunt hominem ad ambulandum congruenter lumini naturali rationis; ita virtutes infusae perficiunt hominem ad ambulandum congruenter lumini gratiae.*

[121] *habitudo quaedam quae praesupponitur virtutibus infusis, sicut earum principium et radix*

[122] Aquinas echoes this same conclusion in I.II.110.4.

participation "in the divine nature, after the manner of a likeness, through a certain regeneration or recreation" (110.4).[123] The infused virtues are rooted in the habitual gift of grace just as the acquired virtues are rooted in the soul.

Grace can also serve as the end toward which the infused virtues are directed since it is a participation in the divine nature. Aquinas explains, in his reply to the second objection of 110.2, that grace involves an imperfect participation in the divine nature. Since, the infused virtues are directed toward a greater participation in the divine nature, this is the sense in which they are directed toward grace.

In sum, grace is God's assistance in moving the rational creature toward its good, which comes in two forms: a direct movement of the will and actions, and a habitual gift. Together, these forms of grace bestow a new, spiritual way of being on the rational creature that amounts to a certain participation in the divine nature. The infused virtues are distinct from grace—even in its habitual form—though they arise out of grace and are directed toward grace.

3.4.2 The Infused Virtues and the Gifts, Beatitudes, and Fruits

Aquinas concludes his discussion of the virtues, in the *prima secundae*, with three questions on "other matters connected with them" (I.II.55 pro.).[124] These "other matters" are the gifts (68), beatitudes (69), and fruits (70). In this section, I briefly describe each attribute, while focusing on the way in which they are connected to the infused virtues.

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[123] (*animae participat, secundum quandam similitudinem, naturam divinam, per quandam regenerationem sive recreationem*) Also, in the *Disputed Questions on Virtue*, Aquinas explains that it is through grace that "the soul acquires a certain spiritual way of being" (*QDV* 1.10) (*habet anima quoddam spirituale esse*).

[124] *alia eis adiuncta*

In Question 68, Aquinas describes the gifts as "[certain] habits perfecting man so that he is ready to follow the promptings of the Holy [Spirit]" (68.4).[125] As certain habits, the gifts reside in the powers of the soul along with the virtues. Whereas the virtues perfect those powers in accordance with some rule (human reason for the acquired virtues and divine law for the infused virtues), the gifts perfect them insofar as they can be moved by God.[126] Along with the habitual gift of grace, the gifts of the Holy Spirit are more examples of the "forms or supernatural qualities, whereby [human beings] may be moved by [God] sweetly and promptly to acquire eternal good" (I.II.110.2).[127]

Aquinas distinguishes the gifts from the virtues in the first article of Question 68.[128] Historically, theologians had struggled to provide an adequate philosophical justification for this distinction. Aquinas critiques three faulty justifications, before offering his own, which distinguishes the virtues from the gifts according to the source of motion to which the human being is disposed by them. He reminds the reader that "in man there is a twofold principle of movement, one within him, viz. the reason; the other extrinsic to him, viz. God" (68.1).[129] The virtues are those habits that dispose us to being

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[125] *quidam habitus perficientes hominem ad hoc quod prompte sequatur instinctum spiritus sancti,*

[126] See I.II.68.8. As we saw in the previous section, the first way in which human beings are assisted by God's grace involves Him moving us to will or to act in a certain way. This means that the gifts are dispositions to receive God's grace—they help prepare us to be moved by Him.

[127] *formas seu qualitates supernaturales, secundum quas suaviter et prompte ab ipso moveantur ad bonum aeternum consequendum*

[128] While there is nothing about the meaning of the terms "gift" and "virtue" that prevent them from referring to the same thing—for example, the infused virtues are given to us by God—Aquinas thinks that we must distinguish the two if we are going to preserve the traditional lists. The traditional list of gifts of the Holy Spirit includes: wisdom, knowledge, understanding, counsel, fortitude, piety, and fear. If we do not distinguish between the gifts and virtues, we will have to explain why this list is not identical to the list of seven virtues.

[129] *in homine est duplex principium movens, unum quidem interius, quod est ratio; aliud autem exterius, quod est Deus*

moved by the intrinsic principle of movement (reason), whereas the gifts are certain habits that dispose us to being moved by the extrinsic principle of movement (God).[130]

Aquinas concludes his discussion of the gifts by comparing them to the virtues in terms of perfection.[131] He argues that the theological virtues are more perfect than the gifts because while the latter dispose us to be moved by God, the former are responsible for uniting us with God. Thus, the theological virtues come before the gifts (logically speaking) and regulate them.[132] Aquinas claims that the gifts are more perfect, however, than the intellectual and moral virtues (both acquired and infused). This is because the gifts perfect the human being insofar as she is moved by the Spirit, while the intellectual and moral virtues perfect her insofar as she is moved by the reason or intellect. Since, "the more exalted the mover, the more excellent the disposition," the gifts are more perfect than these virtues.[133] Think of the relationships like this: the theological virtues

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[130] While this justification identifies a principled reason to distinguish the virtues from the gifts, it may not be clear how the infused virtues fit into the picture. The infused virtues make us well-disposed to be moved according to the divine law—as opposed to human reason—so they do not seem to fit with the other virtues in this distinction. On the other hand, while the infused virtues come from God (an extrinsic source), they do not dispose us to being moved by an extrinsic principle of movement. Thus, they do not seem to fit with the gifts either. To understand the place of the infused virtues, we must understand what Aquinas means when he says that the virtues dispose us to being moved by the intrinsic principle of "reason." Here he is using the term "reason" in the general sense that identifies a power of the soul. As he explains in I.79.8, "reason" is another name for the intellect. In this way, we can see that both the acquired and infused virtues dispose the human being to being moved by the intellect, for all these virtues either perfect the intellect or the other powers of the soul insofar as they are moved by the intellect. The difference between the infused and acquired virtues is found in the rule according to which the intellect (or reason) moves the human being. If that rule is human reason (in the more narrow sense), then we have acquired virtues, if divine law, then infused virtues. In both cases, however, the human being is moved by the intrinsic principle of reason or intellect. This explains why Aquinas treats the virtues (both acquired and infused) together, and distinguishes them from the gifts, which dispose the human being to being moved by God.

[131] Throughout 68.8 he uses the following comparative terms: *praeferendae* (from *praefero*, lit. to carry in front), *potior*, and *perfectior*. I have decided that the best way to capture the sense of these terms in English is to speak of a comparison in terms of perfection.

[132] *virtutes theologicae praeferuntur donis spiritus sancti, et regulant ea*

[133] *Manifestum est autem quod ad altiorem motorem oportet maiori perfectione mobile esse dispositum. Unde perfectiora sunt dona virtutibus.*

perfect us insofar as we relate to God, while the gifts and remaining virtues perfect us insofar as we relate to created things, yet in relation to God. The gifts and the remaining virtues differ in terms of the source of the movement. The gifts dispose us to being moved by the Holy Spirit to relate well to created things and the virtues dispose us to being moved by our intellects to relate well to created things.[134]

Next, Aquinas addresses the beatitudes in Question 69. These are the seven statements of Christ in his Sermon on the Mount, as recorded in Matthew's gospel.[135] Unlike the virtues and gifts, which are habits, Aquinas describes the beatitudes as the acts of the virtues and gifts, through which we approach or achieve the end of happiness. In other words, the beatitudes are the actions that are produced by the virtues and gifts. As Aquinas says in his prologue to the sixth question of the *prima secundae*, "happiness (*beatitudo*) is to be gained by means of certain acts," (6, pro.).[136] Thus, we see that the beatitudes represent some of the acts by which we attain *beatitudo*. In Question 70,

[134] For a helpful and insightful treatment of Aquinas's understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, see Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts,* (New York: Routledge, 2012). Pinsent argues that interpreters of Aquinas have tended to understand the infused virtues and the gifts in terms of the Aristotelian understanding of virtue, and that this has led them to misunderstand Aquinas. Instead, Pinsent draws on contemporary work in social cognition to offer a new "metaphoric understanding" within which to understand Aquinas's writing on the infused virtues and gifts. He uses the phenomenon of joint attention as a metaphor through which we might better understand the way in which the Gifts attune us to the vision and movement of God and remove a state of "spiritual autism." Pinsent's book is very helpful in understanding the phenomenology of the gifts and virtues, but it has some shortcomings, which I address in Chapter Five.

[135] Matthew 5:3-9: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God," (ESV). Aquinas claims that the eighth statement—"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"—is general and sums up or corresponds to the first seven (I.II.69.3 ad 5).

[136] *ad beatitudinem per actus aliquos necesse est pervenire*

Aquinas clarifies that the beatitudes apply to the works of the gifts most properly, since they imply a certain degree of perfection.[137]

Finally, Aquinas concludes with the fruits of the Holy Spirit. Like the beatitudes, the fruits are acts produced by the virtues and gifts. In fact, Aquinas explains that the fruits represent the genus, of which the beatitudes are one species. Of all the acts produced by the virtues and gifts, the beatitudes are those that are perfect and excellent. This, then, is the reason that Aquinas restricts the proper sense of beatitude to those acts that flow from the gifts of the Spirit. Nevertheless, he makes a corresponding distinction within the fruits:

> If then man's operation proceeds from man in virtue of his reason, it is said to be the fruit of his reason: but if it proceeds from him in respect of a higher [virtue], which is the [virtue] of the Holy [Spirit], then man's operation is said to be the fruit of the Holy [Spirit], as of a divine seed (70.1).[138]

Thus, Aquinas understands Paul's list in Galatians 5:22-23 to represent the actions that are produced under the direction of the Holy Spirit.[139]

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[137] It is not initially clear, however, how Christ's statements represent actions flowing from virtues and gifts. Some of the statements—"Blessed are the merciful," or "Blessed are the peacemakers"—make sense, but others do not. For example, what action is represented by "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"? Aquinas interprets the first three beatitudes as representing actions by which believers renounce the life of sensual pleasure. Thus, the poor in spirit are those whole hold external goods in moderation or withdraw from them altogether. Furthermore, those who are meek and those who mourn are those who resist the rule of the passions (irascible and concupiscible, respectively). The remaining four beatitudes pertain to right conduct within the active life, while the rewards for each beatitude pertain to the contemplative life.

[138] *Si igitur operatio hominis procedat ab homine secundum facultatem suae rationis, sic dicitur esse fructus rationis. Si vero procedat ab homine secundum altiorem virtutem, quae est virtus spiritus sancti; sic dicitur esse operatio hominis fructus spiritus sancti, quasi cuiusdam divini seminis*

[139] Since the term "fruit" is more general for Aquinas, Paul's list is not exhaustive. In fact, we learn, in Article 2 of Question 70, that "any virtuous deed in which one delights" will count as a fruit. Hence, there will also be versions of love, joy, peace, etc. that count as fruits of man's reason. Given the nature of virtue—as causing us to act consistently, readily, and with pleasure (*QDV* 1.1)—this usually means that any virtuous deed whatsoever will count as a fruit. Recall, however, that the infused moral virtues can be present alongside contrary dispositions that can render their acts difficult and unpleasant (I.II.65.3 ad 2). Strangely enough, then, all the acts produced by acquired virtue will count as fruits, while

In sum, the gifts are habits disposing us to be moved by the Holy Spirit (i.e., to receive one form of God's grace). They are similar to the infused virtues in that they perfect us with regard to things other than God, yet in relation to God. The two types of habits differ in regard to the source of the movement toward which they dispose their subjects: the infused virtues dispose us to be moved by our intellect in accord with divine law, while the gifts dispose us to be moved directly by God. Both the beatitudes and the fruits represent the acts that come from the virtues and gifts.[140] Along with grace, the infused virtues, gifts, beatitudes, and fruits are the key attributes present in the Christian.[141] Every part of her—from her nature to her actions, and all the powers in between—is perfected in accord with God's will and rule.

3.4.3 The Infused Virtues and the Acquired Virtues

The relation between the infused and the acquired virtues in the life of the Christian[142] has been the locus of much recent debate among interpreters of Aquinas. Some argue that the Christian can possess both the acquired and infused versions of all

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many of the acts produced by infused moral virtue will not. I will have more to say on this point in the next chapter.

[140] In the third article of Question 70, we learn that all the acts of the virtues and gifts can be reduced to twelve representative fruits (ad 4). These twelve include those listed in Galatians, but also long suffering (*longanimitatem*), modesty (*modestiam*), and chastity (*castitatem*). Aquinas divides them into three groups: those which set the human being's mind in order in regard to itself (love, joy, peace, patience, and long suffering), those which set the mind in order with regard to things near it (kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness), and those which set the mind in order with regard to things below it (modesty, self-control, and chastity).

[141] Pinsent refers to these attributes as the VGBF network to emphasize their interrelatedness. I support this label, though I would encourage him to include grace as part of the network.

[142] I am using the term "Christian" in this section to refer to someone in the state of grace and possessing charity.

the cardinal virtues.[143] Thus, when a virtuous pagan is converted, she will retain her acquired moral virtues, while gaining the infused theological and moral virtues. Other interpreters, however, claim that the Christian will only possess one set of moral virtues—namely, the infused moral virtues.[144] This view comes in different forms: some maintain that the acquired moral virtues are unified with (or taken up into) the infused moral virtues,[145] some claim that the acquired moral virtues are transformed into the infused moral virtues,[146] and some hold that the infused moral virtues replace the acquired moral virtues.[147]

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[143] Knobel calls this the "Coexistence Theory" in her "Two Theories of Christian Virtue" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010), 599-618. Proponents include: Denis Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good* (Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 1997), Thomas Osborne, "Perfect and Imperfect," and "What is at Stake in the Question of whether Someone Can Possess the Natural Moral Virtues without Charity?" in *The Virtuous Life: Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Nature of the Moral Virtues* (Peeters, 2017), 117-130, Andrew J. Dell'Olio, *Foundations of Moral Selfhood* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2003), Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), David Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity* and "More to Love: Ends, Ordering and the Compatibility of Acquired and Infused Virtues," in *The Virtuous Life* (Peeters, 2017), 47-72, and Anthony Falanga, *Charity the Form of the Virtues According to Saint Thomas,*(Washington D.C., The Catholic University of America Press, 1948). Brandon Dahm and Scott Cleveland, in "The Virtual Presence of the Acquired Virtues in the Christian," (manuscript), argue that the acquired virtues are virtually present in the Christian's infused virtue.

[144] Knobel, "Two Theories," calls this the "Unification Theory."

[145] See Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,* trans. L.K. Shook (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), Terrence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Romanus Cessario, *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), Servais Pinckaers, "The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology," in *The Pinckaers Reader*, ed. John Berkmann and Craig Steven Titus (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 67, W. D. Hughes, "The Mean of Virtue" in *Summa Theologiae v. 23,* ed. by W.D. Hughes (Blackfriars, 1969), and John Inglis, "Aquinas's Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22 (2002), 3-27. Also, Renee Mirkes, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Moral Virtue and its Significance for Theories of Facility," *The Thomist* 61 (1997), 189-218, advocates a view on which the Christian's virtues are hylomorphic compounds of the acquired virtue (material element) and infused virtue (formal element).

[146] Proponents include: Stump, "The Non-Aristotelian," Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective,* and Jean Porter, "The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtue in the *Summa Theologiae*," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992), 19-41. Also, William Mattison III suggests this possibility in "Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues?" *Theological Studies* 72 (2011), 558-85.

[147] Mattison, "Can Christians," suggests this possibility.

Part of the reason there has been so much debate over Aquinas's views on this question is that he does not directly address it. But this very fact should give interpreters pause. Why has so much interpretive work been done on an issue that Aquinas himself fails to address?[148] Part of the answer to this question is obvious: the fact that Aquinas fails to make a definitive statement on the issue means that, not only is there room for interpretive disagreement, but interpreters must work hard to figure out what Aquinas would have said if he had addressed it. Another part of the answer, however, might be that this issue seems to carry far more importance for readers of Aquinas than it did for Aquinas himself.[149] Why might this be? Perhaps, Aquinas took the answer to be obvious. Perhaps the rarity of the situation that many interpreters describe—that of a virtuous pagan who converts—gave Aquinas reason to omit the topic. [150] Whatever the reason, it seems clear that the relation between the infused and acquired virtues in the Christian was not a pressing topic for Aquinas. For this reason, I limit my discussion of the topic to this short section. I have more to say, however, when I discuss the imperfections in acts of the infused virtues, in the next chapter.

Here, my aim is to show that, for Aquinas, the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues cannot coexist as distinct virtues in the life of the Christian. In other words, if the acquired moral virtues are to remain after conversion, they must be united

[148] In "The Subversion of Virtue," Jean Porter even suggests that it is one of the most important topics for contemporary interpreters to investigate. She claims that an adequate account of the relation between the acquired and infused virtues must be given before Aquinas's account of the virtues could be persuasive in today's culture (38).

[149] One might also suggest that Aquinas simply overlooked this topic. This strikes me as exceedingly unlikely.

[150] After all, as Aristotle points out, virtue itself is rare. Sherwin's "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice" addresses the more common—and I think, more interesting—situation of the convert who struggles with the remnants of vice that he had acquired before conversion.

with, or transformed into, the infused moral virtues. In doing this, I am building upon the work of Angela Knobel and William Mattison III, who have both argued for the same conclusion.[151]

To see why the acquired moral virtues cannot remain as distinct virtues in the Christian, we can return to Aquinas's discussion of the specific difference between the two types of virtue. In Question 63, Article 4 of the *prima secundae,* Aquinas explains that there are two ways in which habits differ specifically, and that the infused and acquired virtues differ in both ways. First, habits are distinguished into different species according to the "specific and formal aspects of their objects" (63.4).[152] This is important because while the corresponding infused and acquired virtues share the same material object, they have different formal objects. Consider what Aquinas goes on to say:

> Now the object of every virtue is a good considered as in that virtue's proper matter: thus the object of temperance is a good in respect of the pleasures connected with the concupiscence of touch. The formal aspect of this object is from reason which fixes the mean in these concupiscences: while the material element is something on the part of the concupiscences. Now it is evident that the mean that is appointed in such like concupiscences according to the rule of human reason, is seen under a different aspect from the mean which is fixed according to divine rule (63.4).[153]

Infused and acquired temperance share the same material element, since that belongs to the power which these habits perfect. In the acquired virtue, however, the formal element

[151] See Angela Knobel, "Can Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Life?" *Studies in Christian Ethics* 23 (2010), 381-96, and "Relating Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues: Some Problematic Texts for a Common Interpretation" *Nove et Vetera* 9, no, 2 (2011), 411-31, along with Mattison's "Can Christians."

[152] *speciales et formales rationes obiectorum*

[153] *Obiectum autem virtutis cuiuslibet est bonum consideratum in materia propria, sicut temperantiae obiectum est bonum delectabilium in concupiscentiis tactus. Cuius quidem obiecti formalis ratio est a ratione, quae instituit modum in his concupiscentiis, materiale autem est id quod est ex parte concupiscentiarum. Manifestum est autem quod alterius rationis est modus qui imponitur in huiusmodi concupiscentiis secundum regulam rationis humanae, et secundum regulam divinam*.

is tied to human reason, while the infused virtue's formal element is tied to divine rule. As Aquinas puts it in his response to the second objection, they moderate the same desires, but for different reasons (63.4 ad 2). This explains why the Christian cannot possess both the acquired moral virtues and the infused moral virtues at the same time. The relevant powers will either be perfected according to the rule of human reason, in the case of the acquired virtues, or according to the divine rule, in the case of the infused virtues. Those powers cannot be perfected in accordance with both rules. Of course, there will likely be significant overlap between the ways in which the different rules perfect the powers (and the kinds of acts that issue from the different virtues), but this does not suggest that both virtues are present. For the Christian, all of her powers will be perfected according to the divine rule.[154]

The second way habits are specifically distinct is according to the things toward which they are directed (63.4). As we have seen, Aquinas maintains that the acquired virtues are directed toward the natural end, whereas the infused virtues are directed toward the supernatural end. In fact, in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas cites this difference as the reason that the acquired cardinal virtues do not remain in heaven. He writes:

> It is clear that the acquired [virtues], which the philosophers discuss, are ordered only to perfecting human beings in civic life, not to perfecting them as ordered towards the winning of heavenly glory… On the other hand, the cardinal virtues as given by grace and infused, which we are

[154] This explanation is similar to Mattison's second argument for the conclusion that Christians cannot possess the acquired cardinal virtues (2011, 565-6). Decosimo challenges this explanation by claiming that it rests on two errors (2017, p. 64). First, he claims that it ignores the possibility of a higher virtue "using" a lower virtue. While Aquinas does allow for this, he typically applies it to virtues that are distinct in matter (e.g., II.II.47.11 ad 3 and II.II.32.1 ad 2). It would be strange for there to be two virtues perfecting the exact same matter, one of which "uses" the other. Second, Decosimo claims that the explanation fails to imagine the relation between the virtues from the inside (i.e., as they would exist for someone who has both). This criticism, however, simply assumes the point to be proved.

> now discussing, perfect us in the present life for being ordered towards heavenly glory (*QDV* 5.4).[155]

This passage reveals two important points: (1) the Christian is ordered toward the supernatural end (i.e., heavenly glory) even in the present life, and (2) the acquired virtues are not ordered toward the supernatural end.[156] Thus, all the Christian's virtues will be ordered toward that end; all her virtues will be infused.[157]

In sum, the acquired moral virtues cannot exist alongside the Christian's infused moral virtues for two reasons. First, the two types of virtue share the same matter, yet perfect it according to different rules. In the Christian the relevant matter will only be perfected according to the divine rule. Second, the acquired virtues are ordered toward a last end that is not the last end of the Christian.[158]

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[155] *Manifestum est autem quod virtutes acquisitae, de quibus locuti sunt philosophi, ordinantur tantum ad perficiendum homines in vita civili, non secundum quod ordinantur ad caelestem gloriam consequendam… Sed virtutes cardinales, secundum quod sunt gratuitae et infusae, prout de eis nunc loquimur, perficiunt hominem in vita praesenti in ordine ad caelestem gloriam* (translation modified).

[156] The structure of Aquinas's argument reveals an even stronger point. In *QDV* 5.4, he writes, "If, then, the upper limit attained by virtue on our journey is ordered to the upper limit attained by virtue in our homeland, there will have to be one type of virtue, but different types of action. If, on the other hand, the one is not understood as ordered to the other, then the virtues will not be the same either as activities or as dispositions." (*Si igitur ultimum illud ad quod pertingit virtus viae, ordinetur ad ultimum illud ad quod pertingit virtus patriae, necesse est quod sit eadem virtus secundum speciem; sed actus erunt differentes. Si autem non accipiatur unum in ordine ad aliud, tunc non erunt eaedem virtutes nec secundum actum nec secundum habitum*). In the passage quoted in the text, Aquinas reveals that the relationship between the acquired virtues and the supernatural end falls in the second category. That is, he claims that the acquired virtues are not capable of being ordered toward the supernatural end.

[157] Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, and Osborne, "What is at Stake," claim that the Christian could be ordered toward both the natural and the supernatural ends, which would allow her to have both acquired and infused virtues. Aquinas is quite clear, however, in I.II.1.5, that human beings can only have one last end. Mattison, "Can Christians," 560-5, makes this point well in his first argument for the conclusion that Christians cannot possess the acquired cardinal virtues. Thus, Christians will only be directed toward the natural or civic good insofar as it is directed toward the supernatural good. But this is just what the infused moral virtues do. As Aquinas points out in I.II.63.3, the infused moral virtues perfect us with respect to the things other than God (including the things of this world), yet in relation to God.

[158] Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, also suggests that the acquired virtues can be directed toward the supernatural end of *beatitudo*, which allows them to remain in the Christian. He and others who share the "Coexist View" often point to *QDV* 1.10 ad 4, where Aquinas claims that "the actions of an acquired virtue can be meritorious only by [mediation] of an infused virtue" (*actus virtutis acquisitae non*

3.5 Conclusion

Over the course of this chapter, we moved from Aquinas's discussion of virtue in general to a close study of the nature of the infused virtues and the role they play in the flourishing human life. Along with the treatment of growth in habit (Chapter Two), the stage is set for a detailed exploration of growth in infused virtue. In the chapters that follow, I draw out a metaphysical account of this important phenomenon and use this account to clear up important misunderstandings about the nature of the infused virtues.

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potest esse meritorius nisi mediante virtute infusa). In the passage from *QDV* 5.4 just quoted, however, Aquinas clearly states that the acquired virtues are not ordered toward the supernatural end, and cannot be so ordered. In light of these seemingly contradictory passages in the same work, it is quite possible that Knobel may be right in suggesting that "Aquinas… may simply not have had a well-worked out theory of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues" (2017, 115).

CHAPTER FOUR

Growth in Infused Virtue

The topic of growth in infused virtue was of the utmost importance to scholastic theologians because of the connections between infused virtue (especially charity) and *beatitudo*.[1] For Aquinas, *beatitudo* is the ultimate end for human beings, consisting in union with God. As Aquinas devotes the first five questions of the *prima secundae* to the topic of *beatitudo*, there is much that could be said about it, but the constraints of space limit us to a brief overview. Aquinas teaches—contrary to the opinions of the masses—that *beatitudo* cannot consist in external or bodily goods (I.II.2). Instead, it is a good of the soul: an intellectual vision of the divine essence (I.II.3.8). While *beatitudo* principally involves an operation of the intellect, the other powers of the soul (e.g., will, sensitive appetite, etc) are also involved (I.II.3.3-5).

The importance of the infused virtues lies in their relationship to *beatitudo*. In I.II.4 Aquinas explains that "rectitude of will" is necessary for *beatitudo.* He describes the person with rectitude of will as being "duly ordered to the last end" (4.4).[2] As we saw in the last chapter, it is primarily through the infused virtues that human beings are ordered toward the last end (i.e., God): the infused theological virtues order us toward

[1] While "*beatitudo*" is generally translated as "happiness," many scholars have remarked on the inadequacies of this translation. For instance, Miner writes: "'happiness' as heard by most English speakers today falls short of the condition that Thomas means to indicate. This is more adequately conveyed as 'beatitude' or 'blessedness' (Latin *beatus* = 'blessed')" (2016, 11-2). Since even these terms can carry errant connotations, I will simply leave the term untranslated.

[2] *per debitum ordinem ad finem ultimum*.

God himself, while the infused moral virtues order us toward all other things in relation to God. Thus, the infused virtues are necessary for *beatitudo*.

Furthermore, on Aquinas's account these virtues are determinative of our experience of *beatitudo*. In the fifth question of the *prima secundae*, he claims that one person can be happier (*beatior*) than another if she is "better disposed or ordered to the enjoyment of [God]" (5.2).[3] Since it is through the infused virtues (especially charity) that we are disposed to the enjoyment of God, growth in the infused virtues will enrich our experience of *beatitudo*. For the scholastic theologians, this explained the importance of growth in infused virtue. Not only was this growth pleasing to God in the present, it was also a way of storing up treasures in heaven—through the growth, one would enjoy *beatitudo* even more.[4]

In light of these connections to *beatitudo*, it is unsurprising that Aquinas devotes an entire article of the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*—one of only thirteen on the virtues in general—to the question of whether the infused virtues may be increased. He begins his response in that article with the claim that "many make mistakes about forms" (1.11).[5] This suggests that an adequate understanding of the increase of infused virtues

[3] *melius dispositus vel ordinatus ad eius fruitionem*

[4] One might wonder whether a person could grow in infused virtue while participating in *beatitudo*. In this way, Christians might start out with different levels of happiness, but over time all would reach perfect participation in the infused virtues (or perfect rectitude of will) and so experience the highest level of happiness that is possible for human beings. In fact, Aquinas claims that rectitude of will is not only necessary for *beatitudo*—it is also a consequence of *beatitudo* (I.II.4.4). This seems to undermine the case that I'm making for the importance of growth in the infused virtues. There are two things to say in response. First, while Aquinas does not directly address this question, he suggests that it is not possible to grow in infused virtue after experiencing *beatitudo*. For example, he claims that *beatitudo* is had altogether unchangeably (I.II.5.4 ad 1), and that there is no room left for advancement through merits (II.II.182.2 ad 2). Second, this is not the only reason that growth in infused virtue is important. That growth will better help us to fulfill God's commands to love Him and our neighbors (Matthew 22:36-40), and to be perfect as He is perfect (Matthew 5:48).

[5] *multis error accidit circa formas*

requires a strong grasp of the metaphysical nature of these virtues. This is what I have sought to provide in Chapters Two and Three of this dissertation, which means that we are now in position to understand Aquinas's views on increase in the infused virtues.

The chapter will unfold as follows. In Section 1, I draw from Chapter Two's discussion of growth in habit and from Aquinas's teaching on the increase of infused virtue to develop a metaphysical account of growth in infused virtue. Then I turn, in Section 2, to the three stages of infused virtue (as presented in II.II.24.9), situating them within the preceding metaphysical account. Finally, in Section 3, I address some important imperfections in the infused virtues. These imperfections have led commentators to suppose that Aquinas thought Christians should be developing the acquired virtues to reinforce the infused virtues. Against this reading, I show that the imperfections are associated with the first stages of infused virtue only, and that growth in the infused virtues—not developing the acquired virtues—is an effective remedy.

4.1 A Metaphysical Account of Growth in Infused Virtue

As we discovered in Chapter Two, Aquinas maintains that habits can increase in two ways: in terms of the habit itself (as when a person's knowledge extends to more objects) and in terms of the subject's participation in the habit (as when a person gains a deeper knowledge of a particular truth). Since the infused virtues are particular kinds of habits, they will undergo increase in the same two ways. In this section, I draw on Aquinas's teachings on the increase of habits and virtues to develop a metaphysical account of growth in infused virtue. I begin by looking at two puzzles associated with the very idea of increase in virtue. Then, I explain each of the two types of increase before concluding with a look at the causes of these increases.

4.1.1 Two Puzzles Regarding Increase in Virtue

Aquinas endorses the following propositions: 1) all habits can increase, and 2) virtues are habits. Clearly, these propositions entail that virtues can increase. There are aspects of the nature of virtue, however, that seem to be inconsistent with this conclusion. In this section, I look at two such aspects and the puzzles they raise.

First, we have learned that Aquinas follows Aristotle in describing virtues as perfections of powers. If virtues are perfections, how can there be any room for increase? A version of this puzzle is raised in an objection in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtue*:

> Nothing advances beyond its own completeness (*perfectio*) because that is a thing's finishing-point. However, virtue is what completes whatever has it; for [Physics VII] says that virtue is the tendency of something complete towards what is best. Therefore, virtue does not increase" (*QDV* 1.11 arg. 18).[6]

Aquinas's response is illuminating because it reveals that his use of "*perfectus*" is not identical to the English terms "perfection" and "completion" which are often used in translations. He writes: "Not everything that is [complete (*perfectum*) is most complete (*perfectissimum*)], but only what is actualized to its upper limit. Therefore, nothing prevents something from being complete with respect to virtue, and then being completed still further" (ad 18).[7] While the English terms have connotations that exclude increase, this is not the case with "*perfectus.*" Therefore, virtues can be perfections of powers and yet have room for increase. Thus, we see that the first apparent puzzle regarding the

[6] *Praeterea, nulla res procedit ultra suam perfectionem, quia perfectio est terminus rei. Sed virtus est perfectio habentis eam; dicitur enim VII Physic., quod virtus est dispositio perfecti ad optimum. Ergo virtus non augetur.*

[7] *quod non omne perfectum est perfectissimum, sed solum illud quod est in ultimo actualitatis; et ideo nihil prohibet, quod est perfectum secundum virtutem, adhuc magis perfici.* (translation modified).

increase of virtue is the result of linguistic differences that are difficult to capture in translation. Once these differences are recognized, the problem dissipates.

The second puzzle involves the idea that virtue extends to all possible objects. This puzzle is raised in Question 66 of the *prima secundae*, when Aquinas investigates the equality of the virtues. In the first article, he explains that we can compare virtues of different species—for instance, faith is greater than temperance—or we can compare virtues of the same species. In the second way, we can compare the faith of one person to the faith of another, or even the faith of a single person at different times. When we do this, Aquinas reminds us that we have to consider both ways that virtues can increase. Regarding the first type of increase (i.e., with respect to the virtue itself), Aquinas raises the second puzzle. On the one hand, virtues are habits, which means they are capable of increasing in this way when they extend to more objects. On the other hand, it is part of the nature of virtue that it extends to all the possible objects of the virtue. As Aquinas says, "Now whosoever has a virtue, e.g., temperance, has it in respect of whatever temperance extends to" (66.1).[8] This means that the temperate person has a stable disposition to follow the rule of reason with respect to the pleasures associated with food, drink, and sex—even if she has never encountered a certain type of food, for instance. If this is part of the nature of virtue, then it looks like there cannot be increase in terms of the virtue itself.

[8] (*Quicumque autem habet aliquam virtutem, puta temperantiam, habet ipsam quantum ad omnia ad quae se temperantia extendit.*) Aquinas makes the same point in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* when he writes, "it is part of the character of virtue that it acts virtuously in every respect" (1.11 ad 10) (*de ratione virtutis est quod in omnibus virtuose se agat*). See also, II.II.24.5, where Aquinas says of charity that even "the smallest charity extends to everything that should be loved from charity" (Trans: Miner, 2016. *etiam minima caritas se extendit ad omnia illa quae sunt ex caritate diligenda*).

Aquinas resolves this puzzle by distinguishing between the intellectual virtues and the moral virtues. While it is part of the nature of the moral virtues to extend to all possible objects, this is not so with the intellectual virtues. For example, "[not] every grammarian knows everything relating to grammar" (66.1).[9] This does not mean that these grammarians lack the virtue of knowledge; instead, they have the virtue, but their virtue is not as great as that possessed by the master grammarians.[10] Therefore, the nature of moral virtue—as extending to all possible objects—prevents this type of virtue from increasing in terms of the virtue itself. While intellectual virtues can increase in both ways, the moral virtues can only increase in terms of the subject's participation in the virtue. Thus, the second puzzle has brought us back to the two types of increase, which we will examine further in the next two sections.

4.1.2 Increase of the Virtue Itself: Infused Virtues in the Intellect

Having resolved the apparent incompatibility of virtues with the idea of increase, we can now turn our attention to Aquinas's understanding of increase in infused virtue in particular. We will look at the ways in which certain infused virtues can increase in terms of the virtue itself, in this section, before turning to the ways in which all the infused virtues can increase in terms of the subject's participation, in the next.

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[9] *non enim quicumque est grammaticus, scit omnia quae ad grammaticam pertinent.* (translation modified)

[10] In the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, he writes: "since it is not part of the character of knowledge that it actually embraces all objects, there is no need for someone knowledgeable to know everything that can be known" (1.11 ad 10) (*quia de ratione scientiae non est quod se extendat in actum respectu omnium obiectorum: non enim est necesse quod sciens omnia scibilia cognoscat*).

As we saw in Chapter Two, Aquinas's paradigmatic case of a habit increasing in terms of the habit itself involves the habit of science extending to more objects.[11] In this way, Copernicus's habit increased when he learned that the sun—rather than the earth—was at the center of our solar system. His habit of knowledge or science extended to one more truth than it had before. While it is not the case that something in Copernicus's brain became larger, Aquinas maintains that we can say that the habit has increased, in much the same way that we say that one person has greater vision because she sees more things in the distance.

In the previous section, we learned that Aquinas denies that the moral virtues can undergo this manner of increase. Since they extend, by nature, to all possible objects, they cannot come to extend to more objects.[12] While most of the infused virtues are moral virtues, there are two notable exceptions: faith and prudence. These intellectual infused virtues will be susceptible to increase in terms of the virtue itself. I discuss each in turn.

Aquinas describes faith as the intellect's assent, at the command of the will, to the first truth (i.e., the truths that have been revealed by God) (II.II.1-5). It involves a dual habit which resides in both the intellect and the will, though faith principally names the habit in the intellect. In the fourth article of Question 5, Aquinas discusses whether faith can be greater in one person than in another, which will help us to understand the increase of faith. He begins by reminding the reader of the two ways of speaking about

[11] Aquinas sometimes refers to this type of increase as "increase in terms of the object." See, for example, II.II.5.4.

[12] Craig Steven Titus misses this point in his "Moral Development and Making All Things New in Christ," *The Thomist* 72 (2008), 233-58. He mistakenly claims that "A person's charity increases according to the excellence of the object and the number of objects known, but also according to the intensity of the act of the will" (253). This claim is the result of a misreading of II.II.24.4 ad 1, and a failure to appreciate II.II.24.5, where Aquinas explicitly denies that charity increases in the first way that Titus mentions.

quantity in relation to habit: in terms of the habit itself (object) or in terms of the subject's participation in the habit. We will leave his discussion of the latter for the next section. Concerning the former, Aquinas claims there are two ways of considering the object of faith: the first pertains to the formal object of faith, which is first truth, while the second pertains to the material object of faith, which is the actual truths that are believed. Regarding the formal object, Aquinas says that there cannot be diversity of degree among believers, because everyone believes God's revelation under the same formal aspect. For the same reason, there cannot be increase in faith in regard to this object. Regarding the material object of faith, however, Aquinas claims that there can be diversity among believers. He writes,

> the things which are proposed as the matter of our belief are many and can be received more or less explicitly; and in this respect one man can believe explicitly more things than another, so that faith can be greater in one man on account of its being more explicit (II.II.5.4).[13]

From this passage, we can gather what it would mean for a believer's faith to increase in terms of the faith itself. When the believer comes to believe more of the truths of faith explicitly, her faith increases in just this way.

In order to understand this point, it is helpful to see what Aquinas says about the objects of faith. In the first question of the *secunda secundae*, Aquinas compares the articles of faith to the self-evident principles of the understanding (II.II.1.7). Just as those self-evident principles are implicitly contained in the Principle of Non-Contradiction, so too "all the articles [of faith] are contained implicitly in certain primary matters of faith"

[13] *ea quae materialiter credenda proponuntur sunt plura, et possunt accipi vel magis vel minus explicite. Et secundum hoc potest unus homo plura explicite credere quam alius. Et sic in uno potest esse maior fides secundum maiorem fidei explicationem.*

(II.II.1.7).[14] There are only two primary matters—God's existence and His redemptive plan—and Aquinas maintains that all of the substance of faith is contained within these two tenets. Thus, Moses and Paul have same faith, but Paul's is greater in the sense that he believes more of the truths of the faith explicitly. Likewise, a believer's faith grows when she moves from the primary belief that God exists to the more specific belief that the Triune God exists. Aquinas believes that the theologian can help believers grow in faith by offering proofs for conclusions that follow from the principles of faith (II.II.1.5 ad 2). Here again, by working through these proofs, the believer comes to believe another truth of the faith in an explicit way, and her faith increases.

Like faith, infused prudence resides in the intellect, which means that it is capable of increasing in the way we have been discussing—namely, in terms of the virtue itself. While Aquinas never directly addresses the increase of infused prudence, he makes some comments which serve to illuminate his view. In the first question on prudence in the *secunda secundae*, he takes up the question of whether prudence is present in everyone who has grace (II.II.47.14). While the determination is important—Aquinas ends up answering in the affirmative—it is the objections and replies that are germane to our current inquiry.

The first objection argues that prudence is not present in all those who have grace, since not all of them have diligence (*industria*), which is (the objector asserts) a necessary part of prudence. In his reply, Aquinas does not challenge the objector's claim about the necessity of diligence for prudence. Instead, he points out that there are two types of diligence: one that is "merely sufficient with regard to things necessary for

[14] *omnes articuli implicite continentur in aliquibus primis credibilibus*

salvation" and one that is "more than sufficient, whereby a man is able to make provision both for himself and for others, not only in matters necessary for salvation, but also in all things relating to human life" (II.II.47.14 ad 1).[15] According to Aquinas, the first type of diligence is present in all who have grace, whereas the second is not.

The third objection appeals to Aristotle's claim (*Topics* III) that young people are not known to be prudent. Since there are some young people who have grace, the objector concludes that prudence is not present in all who have grace. Aquinas's reply is one of the few places in the *secunda secundae* where he distinguishes between the acquired and infused forms of a virtue. He writes that acquired prudence cannot exist in young people, but that "gratuitous" (*gratuita*) prudence can.[16] Once again, Aquinas seems to restrict this gratuitous or infused prudence "to the things that are necessary for salvation" (II.II.47.14 ad 3).[17] He ends his reply, however, by pointing out that infused prudence "merits increase [through exercise] until it becomes perfect, even as the other virtues" (ad 3).[18]

Before exploring the implications of these passages for our understanding of increase in infused prudence, we should note that commentators are prone to misinterpretation here. As we saw in the last chapter, there has been much debate regarding Aquinas's view of the relation between the infused and acquired moral virtues

[15] *est sufficiens ad ea quae sunt de necessitate salutis… plenior, per quam aliquis sibi et aliis potest providere, non solum de his quae sunt necessaria ad salutem sed etiam de quibuscumque pertinentibus ad humanam vitam.*

[16] Aquinas is nuanced concerning the presence of infused prudence in young people. I address this below.

[17] *ad ea quae sunt de necessitate salutis*

[18] *per exercitium meretur augmentum quousque perficiatur, sicut et ceterae virtutes*

in the Christian. The two replies under discussion are often cited in support of the idea that full Christian virtue requires the combination of both acquired and infused virtue.[19] Whether or not this view is correct—and that will depend upon what is meant by "combination"[20]—it is clearly not supported by Aquinas's comments in the replies of 47.14.[21] While he distinguishes between two types of diligence in the first reply, there is no reason to think that the first corresponds to infused prudence alone, while the second corresponds to the combination of infused and acquired prudence. Rather, we have one diligence that extends to a certain set of objects (i.e., those necessary for salvation), and a second diligence that extends to a larger set of objects, while still including the first set. But as we saw with faith, one and the same intellectual virtue can increase by extending to more objects. Therefore, there is no reason to suppose that Aquinas is referring to a combination of different virtues. The much more natural reading is to see the second diligence as corresponding to a more developed infused prudence.

This interpretation is confirmed by what Aquinas goes on to say in his third reply. After distinguishing between acquired and infused (gratuitous) prudence and claiming that only the latter can be present in young people, he makes an important clarification. Infused prudence, Aquinas says, will be present in different ways depending upon whether the young person has reached the age of reason. Those in a state of grace prior to this age possess prudence "as to habit but not as to act" (*secundum habitum, sed non*

[19] See, for example, Josef Pieper *Prudence* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1959), 14, Dell'Olio, *Foundations of Moral Selfhood*, 136, Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 87-8, and Kent, "Habits and Virtues," 124-5. Robert Miner hints at this view in "Non-Aristotelian Prudence in the *Prima Secundae*" *The Thomist* 64 (2000), 421, and cites Pieper approvingly (fn. 43). I will address other important reasons for holding this view in the last section of this chapter.

[20] See Chapter Three, Section 3.4.3.

[21] See Angela Knobel "Relating Aquinas's," 424 ff, for a wonderful demonstration of this point.

secundum actum), whereas those who have the use of reason have it "also as to act" (*etiam secundum actum*).[22] Regarding the second stage, Aquinas goes on to say that it is possessed "as to act, with regard to things necessary for salvation, [but through exercise] merits increase until it becomes perfect, even as the other virtues" (47.14 ad 3).[23] While this type of prudence initially applies only to the things necessary for salvation, Aquinas clearly thinks that it can increase. Consequently, there is no reason to suppose, as many commentators do, that infused prudence is necessarily restricted to things necessary for salvation, and that acquired prudence must account for other domains of life. Instead, infused prudence can increase and come to extend to these domains as well.[24]

[22] Though children in the first category cannot yet use their practical reason in acting, Aquinas seems to hold that their practical reason has already been shaped by God to have a stable disposition toward performing the acts of infused prudence. Those young people who do have the use of reason have the virtue as to habit and as to act. Thus far, we have two stages of infused prudence: that which exists only as to habit (in children without the use of reason) and that which exists as to habit and as to act (in children who have the use of reason).

[23] For convenience, I include the entire text of the third reply, and have underlined the passage just quoted: (*Ad tertium dicendum quod prudentia acquisita causatur ex exercitio actuum, unde indiget ad sui generationem experimento et tempore, ut dicitur in II Ethic. Unde non potest esse in iuvenibus nec secundum habitum nec secundum actum. Sed prudentia gratuita causatur ex infusione divina. Unde in pueris baptizatis nondum habentibus usum rationis est prudentia secundum habitum, sed non secundum actum, sicut et in amentibus. In his autem qui iam habent usum rationis est etiam secundum actum quantum ad ea quae sunt de necessitate salutis, sed per exercitium meretur augmentum quousque perficiatur, sicut et ceterae virtutes. Unde et apostolus dicit, ad Heb. V, quod perfectorum est solidus cibus, qui pro consuetudine exercitatos habent sensus ad discretionem boni et mali.*) This reveals that there are actually three stages of infused prudence: (1) infused prudence in habit alone; (2) infused prudence in habit and in act (with regard to the things necessary for salvation); and (3) perfect infused prudence. How might Aquinas differentiate between the second and third stages? Clearly they will be alike in that prudence is present as to habit and as to act in both. The key difference seems to be the objects over which the prudence is extended. The second stage of infused prudence only extends to the things that are necessary for salvation, whereas there is no restriction on the objects over which perfect infused prudence extends.

[24] As I mentioned, I will have more to say in the last section of this chapter regarding the reasons that commentators give for supposing that the acquired virtues remain in the Christian. In claiming that acquired prudence is not necessary for the Christian, I am not denying that it can play an important role in preparing older converts to receive infused prudence. Developing acquired prudence prior to conversion will increase one's potentiality for infused prudence. See Dahm, "The Acquired Virtues," 466-8, and Harm Goris, "Acquired and Infused Moral Virtues in Wounded Nature," In *The Virtuous Life: Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Nature of Moral Virtues* (Peeters, 2017), 21-46.

In sum, faith and prudence are unique among the infused virtues in that they reside in the intellect. As such, they are susceptible to increase in a way that the other infused virtues are not—namely, increase in terms of the virtue itself. In this section, we have seen how Aquinas applies his teachings from the *prima secundae* on this type of habitual increase to these particular virtues in the *secunda secundae*. Just as the habit of knowledge increases when one comes to know more truths, so faith and prudence increase when they extend to more objects. With faith, this involves a person coming to believe explicitly more of the truths that had been implicitly contained in her initial faith beliefs. With prudence, this increase involves a movement from right practical reason regarding the things necessary for salvation, to right practical reason regarding all facets of human life.

4.1.3 Increase of the Subject's Participation in the Virtue: Infused Virtues in General

As we saw in Chapter Two, Aquinas claims that all habits can increase in terms of the subject's participation in the habit. In Question 52 of the *prima secundae*, he offers a paradigmatic case of this type of increase: when one's habit of science increases—not through learning more facts—but through becoming "quicker and readier… in considering the same conclusions" (52.2).[25] What exactly is going on at the level of power and form when this increase takes place? As we pointed out in Chapter Two, it involves the actualization of the subject's potentiality for a *more perfect participation* in the habit.[26] In the science of geometry, for instance, one might know the Pythagorean

[25] *expeditius et clarius… in eisdem conclusionibus considerandis.*

[26] As he puts it in 52.2 ad 3: "that which is less hot or white, is not in potentiality to those forms, since it has them already actually: but it is in potentiality to a perfect mode of participation." (*id quod est*

Theorem in the most basic way, while remaining in potentiality to the sort of knowledge that would enable one to recall it quickly and effortlessly. Aquinas gives us three factors that impact this type of increase: (1) an agent actualizing more of the subject's potentiality, (2) the potentiality increasing through the removal of contrary forms, and (3) the potentiality increasing through the addition of disposing forms. In this section, we will see Aquinas apply these teachings to the infused virtues.

There are three important passages in which Aquinas addresses this type of increase in the infused virtues: in his *Commentary on the Sentences* (I Sent. d. 17, q. 2), in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* 1.11, and in the *secunda secundae* as part of his discussion of the subject of charity (II.II.24, Articles 4-9).[27] In each of the three passages, Aquinas begins by addressing popular understandings of increase in the infused virtues that are metaphysically inadequate.

The first metaphysically inadequate view of increase in the infused virtues was one that denied *essential* increase. Proponents of this view claimed that the infused virtues did not increase in terms of their essence, but only in terms of their rootedness

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minus calidum aut album, non est in potentia ad formam, cum iam actu formam habeat, sed est in potentia ad perfectum participationis modum)

[27] Technically, there are four such passages because we have two versions of Aquinas's commentary on I *Sent*. d. 17. In this dissertation, I privilege the *Lectura Romana* version as it was composed later and roughly around the same time that Aquinas was writing the *secunda secundae*. This history of the *Lectura Romana*, or the "*alia lectura fratris Thome*" as it is sometimes called, is fascinating. I direct the reader to Leonard Boyle "*Alia lectura fratris Thome*" *Medieval Studies* 45 (1983), 418-29, M. Michele Mulchahey's *First the Bow is Bent in Study*, 278-306, and, for a brief summary, Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Vol. 1: The Person and His Work,* trans. Robert Royal (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005) 45-7. In both the *Commentary on the Sentences* and in the *secunda secundae*, Aquinas is writing about charity exclusively, but his comments there will generalize to all the infused virtues. This generalization is supported by the consistency we find between these texts and the more general passage in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, and by more isolated comments regarding the infused virtues in the *Summa* (I.II.66.1 and II.II.5.4).

(*radicatio*) in the subject or in terms of the fervency of their exercise.[28] Aquinas has harsh words for these proponents, claiming that they "did not know what they were talking about" (II.II.24.4 ad 3).[29] He is harsh with these theologians because their views betray their ignorance of the metaphysics of infused virtue. He explains:

> a quality's being increased is nothing other than its subject's sharing to an increasing degree in that quality: indeed, a quality does not exist except insofar as it inheres in a subject. Precisely from the fact that a subject shares more in such a quality, it is more strongly active. This is because each thing acts insofar as it is actualized; that is why the more it is brought to actualization, the more completely it acts (*QDV* 1.11).[30]

In other words, for an infused virtue, essential increase just is an increase in the rootedness in the subject or in the fervency of the act. Therefore, the theologians who espoused these views were contradicting themselves. In light of this, Aquinas maintains that infused virtues are increased in terms of their essence.

Another metaphysically inadequate view held that infused virtue increased through a process of addition. As we discussed in Section 2.3.2, the most popular understanding of qualitative intensification in Aquinas's day was that qualities increase through addition. On this view, charity, for instance, increases when more forms of charity are added to the subject. The objections in Article 5 of Question 24 in the *secunda secundae* help us see why this view was so popular. As we learn in Objection 1, Aristotle

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[28] In his *Commentary on the Sentences* (I Sent. D. 17, *lectura romana*, q. 2, a. 1), Aquinas give four varieties of the view that the infused virtues do not increase essentially. In addition to those listed in the text, he includes Peter Lombard's view on which charity cannot increase because it is identical to the Holy Spirit, and another view which holds that lesser charity is simply replaced with a greater charity. Aquinas dismisses both of these views quickly.

[29] Trans: Miner (2016); *hi propriam vocem ignoraverunt*

[30] *Nihil enim est aliud qualitatem aliquam augeri, quam subiectum magis participare qualitatem; non enim est aliquod esse qualitatis nisi quod habet in subiecto. Ex hoc autem ipso quod subiectum magis participat qualitatem, vehementius operatur; quia unumquodque agit in quantum est actu; unde quod magis est reductum in actum, perfectius agit.*

had defined "increase" as "an addition to a preexisting magnitude" in his *On Generation and Corruption*.[31] Furthermore, this account seems to fit with common sense: the light in a house grows, Objection 2 points out, with the addition of more candles.

Despite its popularity, Aquinas argues that it is impossible for charity and the other infused virtues to increase through addition.[32] The very idea of addition, he points out, requires two distinct things. But there can only be distinction among forms of the same species if they belong to different subjects.[33] In other words, for there to be distinction between the forms of charity being added together, they must belong to different subjects. Aquinas sees only two ways that this could happen: either "one subject is added to another; so, for example, one white thing is added to another white thing; or in a subject that is becoming whiter, something becomes white which was not previously white" (*QDV* 1.11).[34] Neither of these options will work with charity or the other infused virtues, however. The first option could not work "because the subject of charity is nothing except the rational mind, so that such an increase of charity could not occur

[31] Trans: Miner (2016); *dicit enim philosophus, in I de Gen., quod augmentum est praeexistenti magnitudini additamentum.*

[32] Aquinas gives slightly different arguments against the addition view in all three of our texts. I follow the structure of the argument from the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, but I supplement this with quotations from the other passages.

[33] On this point, Aquinas's argument is different (in a problematic way) in the *secunda secundae* passage. Instead of specifying that he is looking at forms of the same species, he writes that forms can be distinct according to species or according to number. While this is true, he goes on make some claims that are inconsistent with his earlier teaching on the distinction of the virtues. For example, he writes that forms differ in species when they have different objects, and then gives the example of a geometer who comes to know some new geometrical truths. This is problematic because habits and virtues differ in species whenever there is a difference in *formal* object—a difference in *material* object, alone, is not sufficient. In the example that Aquinas uses, we are dealing with a distinction in *material* object only, which means that his example is not a case of forms that differ in species. While this oversight does not affect later steps in the argument, its presence led me to prioritize the argument from *QDV* 1.11.

[34] *vel quod subiectum addatur subiecto, ut puta quod unum album addatur alteri albo; aut quod aliquid in subiecto fiat album, quod prius non fuit album*

except by adding one rational mind to another, which is impossible" (II.II.24.5).[35] Regarding the second option—a new part of the subject coming to participate in the form—Aquinas points out that Aristotle disproved this possibility in the case of physical qualities, and that it would not even make sense in the case of spiritual qualities like the infused virtues (*QDV* 1.11). Therefore, Aquinas concludes that charity and the other infused virtues cannot increase through addition.

How, then, does Aquinas understand the process by which the infused virtues increase? He consistently teaches that they increase in the same way that infused habits, in general, increase; namely, through the subject participating in the form (i.e., the virtue) to a greater degree. As he puts it regarding charity, "charity is increased only by this—that its subject participates in charity more and more" (II.II.24.5).[36] And when he elaborates on this process, his description matches what we saw in the discussion of increase in infused habits:

> When something changes from having an incomplete to having a complete form, all that happens is that the subject is more fully actualized, since a form is an actualization. That is why, for the subject to participate in the form more means simply that the subject is actualized more fully in respect of that form. Just as something can be brought by another agent from being in a state of pure capacity to having the form actualized, in the

[35] Trans: Miner (2016); *Quia subiectum caritatis non est nisi mens rationalis, unde tale caritatis augmentum fieri non posset nisi per hoc quod una mens rationalis alteri adderetur, quod est impossibile.*

[36] (Trans: Miner (2016); *caritas augetur solum per hoc quod subiectum magis ac magis participat caritatem*) It is quite interesting to note that this language of "participation" does not appear in Aquinas's early *Commentary on the Sentences*, which was written in Paris in 1252-6. When Aquinas revisits the Sentences and lectures on them at Santa Sabina in Rome in 1265-6, he is quite comfortable speaking about Christians "participating" in charity. Boland, "Aquinas and Simplicius," argues that Aquinas adopted this language after reading Simplicius's *Commentary on Aristotle's Categories* in 1266. While that is true, Boland goes too far in claiming that Aquinas received, from Simplicius, the distinction between virtues considered in themselves and virtues considered according to the subject's participation (473). The language is from Simplicius, but the distinction was already present in the early *Commentary*. See I Sent. D. 17, q. 2, a.1 and III Sent. D. 29, q. 1 a. 8 qc. 2. Also, see Peter A. Kwasniewski "Introduction" in *On Love and Charity*, xv-xxx, for dates regarding these commentaries.

> same way it can be brought by another agent's activity from being less than completely to completely actualized (*QDV* 1.11).[37]

Once again, we see that a person with an infused virtue retains a potentiality for a greater degree of participation in that virtue. Increase or growth in infused virtue just is the actualization of that potentiality.

Consequently, increase in infused virtue depends upon the same two factors we encountered in Chapter Two: the agent and the subject's potentiality for the greater degree of participation in the virtue. Ultimately, increase can only happen when an agent brings that potentiality into actualization. Nevertheless, increases in the subject's potentiality will have an important impact on the overall increase of the virtue. When that potentiality increases, the agent has more to actualize—viz. the agent can bring about a more perfect participation in the virtue. As laid out above, the subject's potentiality can increase in two ways: through the removal of contrary forms and through the actualization of disposing forms. With the infused virtues, contrary forms include vices and vicious dispositions. Therefore, when these vicious dispositions are removed, the potentiality for a greater participation in the infused virtues increases.[38] Likewise, that potentiality increases with the actualization of disposing forms. Aquinas teaches that the

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[37] *Moveri autem de forma imperfecta ad perfectam, nihil est aliud quam subiectum magis reduci in actum: nam forma actus est; unde subiectum magis percipere formam, nihil aliud est quam ipsum reduci magis in actum illius formae. Et sicut ab agente reducitur aliquid de pura potentia in actum formae; ita etiam per actionem agentis reducitur de actu imperfecto in actum perfectum.*

[38] For example, Aquinas teaches that other virtues can prepare one for faith by removing obstacles: "Now that which removes an obstacle is a kind of accidental cause, according to the philosopher (Phys. viii, 4): and in this sense certain virtues may be said to precede faith accidentally, in so far as they remove obstacles to belief. Thus fortitude removes the inordinate fear that hinders faith; humility removes pride, whereby a man refuses to submit himself to the truth of faith" (II.II.4.7) (*Removere autem prohibens pertinet ad causam per accidens, ut patet per philosophum, in VIII Physic. Et secundum hoc aliquae virtutes possunt dici per accidens priores fide, inquantum removent impedimenta credendi, sicut fortitudo removet inordinatum timorem impedientem fidem; humilitas autem superbiam, per quam intellectus recusat se submittere veritati fidei*).

infused virtues can serve as their own disposing forms. In the case of charity, for example, he writes, "it is always the case that, when charity is growing, so also grows surpassingly the aptitude (*habilitas*) for a further increase" (II.II.24.7).[39] Aquinas also claims that the other virtues increase whenever charity increases. He writes:

> For charity, as I have said, is greater in itself than the other virtues; however, when it grows, the other virtues also grow in a [proportional] way in one and the same person, just as the fingers on a hand are different lengths, but they grow at a [proportional] rate (*QDV* 5.3 ad 1).[40]

In this way, increase in charity increases the believer's potentiality for a greater participation in the other infused virtues.

Having seen how the subject's potentiality for greater participation in the virtue can influence her increase in that virtue, we will now turn our attention to the agent which is responsible for actualizing that potentiality. This discussion will provide clarity on the causes of increase in infused virtue.

4.1.4 The Causes of Increase

Since increase in virtue only happens when the subject's potentiality for greater participation is actualized, the agent will be the most important factor in this process. One's potentiality could increase dramatically, but without the work of the agent there would be no increase in virtue. What (or who), then, can serve as the agent in the case of increase in infused virtue?

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[39] (Trans: Miner (2016); *semper, caritate excrescente, superexcrescit harbilitas ad ulterius augmentum*) This is one of three ways that Aquinas establishes that there is no limit to the increase of charity in this life.

[40] (*Caritas enim, ut dictum est, secundum se est maior omnibus aliis virtutibus; sed tamen, ea crescente, etiam proportionaliter crescunt omnes aliae virtutes in uno et eodem homine, sicut digiti manus secundum se sunt inaequales, tamen proportionaliter crescunt.*) I will have more to say about the idea of proportional growth in Section 3.

As we have seen, Aquinas holds that God alone can be the cause of the infused virtues. For similar reasons, he claims that only God can serve as the agent responsible for increase in infused virtue. In the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas sums up his view in the following way: infused virtues increase

> to the extent that the subject is brought to actualize them more fully, through the activity of the agent that causes them. That is why just as the acquired virtues are increased by the actions that cause them, so the infused virtues can be increased by the action of God, who is their cause (1.11).[41]

So, increase in infused virtue can only happen through the agency of God. This does not mean, however, that human beings have no causal role to play in the process. While not sufficient to cause increase in the infused virtues on their own, Aquinas maintains that our actions contribute to that increase. Before we address the human contribution, though, there are a few more things to say about God's role in the process.

In his discussion of charity, Aquinas lists God's role as agent as a reason for claiming that there is no limit to the increase of charity in this life. One of the ways in which a limit can be fixed regarding the increase of a form is "on the part of an agent, whose power does not extend to increasing any further the form in its subject" (II.II.24.7).[42] To revisit the example from Chapter Two, there is a limit governing the extent to which a small match is able to increase the form of hotness in the large pot of water. This limit is much lower than the limit associated with a stove burner on the high

[41] *in quantum subiectum reducitur magis in actum ipsarum per actionem agentis causantis eas. Unde sicut virtutes acquisitae augentur ex actibus per quos causantur, ita virtutes infusae augentur per actionem Dei, a quo causantur*

[42] Trans: Miner (2016); *ex parte agentis, cuius virtus non se extendit ad ulterius augendum formam in subiecto*

setting. In the case of charity, Aquinas concludes, there is no limit regarding the agent because "the cause that increases charity, namely God, is of infinite power" II.II.24.8).[43]

This point raises an important question: If the infinitely powerful God is the cause of the increase of charity and the other infused virtues, then why are so many of us operating with underdeveloped infused virtues?[44] With that level of power, it seems like God could (and would) fully actualize each of these virtues in us. The first thing to notice is that, as with any form, the extent to which the agent can actualize the form depends upon the subject's potentiality for a greater participation in the form. Hence, the extent to which God can actualize these infused virtues in us, depends upon our potentiality for their increase. Note what Aquinas says about Matthew 25:15, which tells the story of the wealthy man who entrusted his servants with varying numbers of talents "according to [each servant's] own virtue" (II.II.24.3 arg. 1).[45] This passage is cited as a reason for thinking that God infuses charity according to our natural capacities, but Aquinas responds: "the virtue according to which God gives his gifts to each person is a preceding disposition or preparation, or a striving of the one who receives grace" (24.3 ad 1).[46] So it looks as if human beings are responsible for increasing their potentiality for greater participation in the infused virtues, and God is responsible for actualizing that

[43] Trans: Miner (2016); *causa augens caritatem est infinitae virtutis, scilicet Deus*

[44] As the author of Hebrews pointed out, "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food," (Hebrews 5:12 ESV).

[45] Trans: Miner (2016); *dedit unicuique secundum propriam virtutem*

[46] Trans: Miner (2016); *illa virtus secundum quam sua dona Deus dat unicuique, est dispositio vel praeparatio praecedens, sive conatus gratiam accipientis*

potentiality. This provides an explanation for why so many of us have underdeveloped infused virtues; namely, we are failing to increase our potentialities.

Although this is an important part of the explanation, it cannot be the whole story. Aquinas goes on, in that same reply, to say that "the Holy Spirit comes before even this disposition or striving, moving the mind of a person either more or less according to its will" (24.3 ad 1).[47] While the extent to which God can increase the infused virtues depends upon our potentiality for that increase, this passage reveals that the Holy Spirit is at work in developing that potentiality. In this way, Aquinas can conclude that the quantity of charity depends "only on the will of the Holy Spirit distributing his gifts as it wills" (24.3).[48] Thus, Aquinas preserves some of the mysterious nature of God's activity in human lives and accounts for Paul's comments in Ephesians 4:7: "grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift" (ESV).[49] On this view, then, the full explanation for why so many Christians live with underdeveloped infused virtues must make reference both to the failure of those Christians to increase their potentialities and to the will of God.[50]

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[47] Trans: Miner (2016); *hanc etiam dispositionem vel conatum praevenit spiritus sanctus, movens mentem hominis vel plus vel minus secundum suam voluntatem*

[48] Trans: Miner (2016); *solum ex voluntate spiritus sancti distribuentis sua dona prout vult*

[49] It is natural to suppose that God—as an agent with infinite power—would fully actualize any unactualized potentiality for greater participation in the infused virtues that we might possess. To continue with our analogy, God would play a role analogous to the larger burner on the high setting, which fully actualizes any potentiality that a pot of water has for increased participation in the form of hotness. But Aquinas does not endorse this view. Instead, he writes, "charity grows due to the forcefulness of the action of God, who acts in things not to the extent that he is able, but to the extent that he wishes" (I Sent. D. 17 (*lectura romana*), q. 2, a. 3) (*caritas crescit propter vehementiam divinae operationis, qui agit in rebus non quantum potest sed quantum vult*).

[50] One might wonder why God would will that a Christian remain in a state of underdeveloped infused virtue in this life. Aquinas goes some way toward an answer when he writes that "for the sake of the beauty in the Church that arises from ordered diversity, God in his wisdom ordained to give more grace to some than to others" (I Sent. D. 17 (*lectura romana*), q. 2, a. 2 ad 3) (*ut esset pulchritudo in ecclesia ex diversitate ordinata, Deus per suam sapientiam disposuit plus quibusdam dare de gratia quam aliis*). It

This discussion brings us back to the causal role that human beings can play in the increase of infused virtue. Despite the fact that God alone can actualize our potentiality for greater participation in these virtues, Aquinas thinks that we can play a role in increasing that potentiality. As he puts it, "Our own actions, too, can be related to the increase of charity and the infused virtues as [dispositions]" (*QDV* 1.11).[51] In other words, it is not as if the virtues increase with every act that we perform; rather, our acts dispose us toward an increase in the virtue. For Aquinas, this is another way of expressing that the acts of the infused virtues serve to increase our potentiality for a greater participation in those virtues.

Recall, from Chapter Two, the two qualifications that Aquinas made in the *prima secundae* regarding the way in which acts can increase habits: (1) only those acts that meet or exceed the intensity of the habit can cause the habit to increase, and (2) not every such act will cause the increase of the habit directly; some such acts only dispose the habit to increase. In his discussions of the increase of infused virtue, he applies both of these qualifications—albeit, in a way that is unique to the infused virtues.

We must recognize, initially, that since the infused virtues are increased by God alone, our acts will only be able to dispose those virtues to increase. In other words, the second qualification applies to all acts of the infused virtues. In the case of charity, Aquinas explains that "charity in act is not increased by any particular act of charity.

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turns out, on Aquinas's view, that human actions are neither necessary nor sufficient for growth in infused virtue. They are not sufficient because only God can actualize our potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the infused virtues. They are not necessary because God can increase our potentiality without our actions—despite the fact that he typically uses our actions. This does not detract from the importance of our acts of infused virtue, since it is rare that God affects increase without them.

[51] *Actus autem nostri comparantur ad augmentum caritatis et virtutum infusarum, ut disponentes, sicut ad caritatem a principio obtinendam*

Rather, a particular act of charity disposes one toward an increase of charity" (II.II.24.6).[52]

From this discussion, it may seem that the first qualification does not apply in the case of the infused virtues, since our actions are unable to bring about increase. There is a sense, however, in which the first qualification does apply. Just as there is an intensity requirement for the acts of the acquired virtues, there is an intensity requirement in this case as well. Acts of an infused virtue must meet or exceed the intensity of the virtue to dispose that virtue toward increase. Aquinas writes:

> it need not be the case that any act of charity should merit an increase of charity; this occurs only when someone uses charity not negligently but to the extent of the ability he has received. For a habit of the mind does not automatically bring about action but only does so when one wills to use it, and therefore by one and the same habit some can act more intensely or more remissly (I *Sent*. D. 17 (*lectura romana*), q. 2, a. 3).[53]

[52] (Trans: Miner (2016); *non quolibet actu caritatis caritas actu augetur, sed quilibet actus caritatis disponit ad caritatis augmentum*) As in his discussion of habits, Aquinas explains this process through an analogy with growth and development in nature: "in a certain way, the spiritual increase of charity is like bodily increase. Now in animals and plants, bodily increase is not continual motion… Rather, for a certain time, nature works in a way that disposes a thing toward increase, without increasing the thing in act. After this time, it produces as an effect that toward which it had disposed the thing, increasing the animal or plant in act" (II.II.24.6) (*augmentum spirituale caritatis quodammodo simile est augmento corporali. Augmentum autem corporale in animalibus et plantis non est motus continuus… sed per aliquod tempus natura operatur disponens ad augmentum et nihil augens actu, et postmodum producit in effectum id ad quod disposuerat, augendo animal vel plantam in actu*). In a similar way, our actions can dispose us toward the increase of the infused virtues, but it must be God that produces the end result—increasing those virtues in act. Aquinas often describes this dispositive growth in terms of merit. For instance, he writes that "Charity and the other infused virtues, as I have argued, are increased by actions as being dispositions and as being meritorious, rather than as being active" (*QDV* 1.11 ad 14) (*caritas et aliae virtutes infusae non augentur active ex actibus, sed tantum dispositive et meritorie, ut dictum est*). By performing acts of the infused virtues, Aquinas thinks, we merit the increase of those virtues from God.

[53] *Non tamen oportet quod qualiscumque actus caritatis mereatur caritatis augmentum, sed quando aliquis utitur caritate non negligenter sed secundum posse ipsius quod iam accepit. Habitus enim mentis non est necessitate movens sed voluntate, et ideo uno et eodem habitu potest quis intensivius et remissius agere.*

It is the important role that the will plays in the exercise of our virtues (see Section 2.1.6) that makes these different degrees of intensity possible.[54] Therefore, only those acts in which we choose to exercise our infused virtues fully will dispose those virtues toward increase. In other words, acts of this sort are the only ones that will increase our potentiality for a greater participation in the infused virtues.

In this section, we have seen two main causes of increase in the infused virtues—God, who works directly to increase them, and our own actions, which can work indirectly by disposing our virtues to increase. Among the actions that can dispose us to increase, Aquinas highlights the acts associated with the virtue of humility. Humility is one of the subjective parts of the cardinal virtue of temperance, and serves to restrain the mind from tending toward great and noble things in an immoderate way.[55] It is through this virtue, Aquinas teaches, that man is properly subject to God. In explaining the importance of humility, Aquinas compares it to the foundation of a building. Humility serves as the foundation of spiritual life by removing obstacles, "inasmuch as it expels pride, which 'God resisteth,' and makes man submissive and ever open to receive the influx of divine grace" (II.II.161.5 ad 2).[56] Hence, the acts of humility are one of the primary ways in which we are disposed to increase in infused virtue. By recognizing our need for God and our dependence upon him, we become more receptive to his infusion of grace and the infused virtues. Put differently, the acts of humility increase our potentiality

[54] In the *sed contra* of II.II.24.6, this phenomenon is described in the following way: "sometimes an act of charity is just thrown out there, in a tepid or remiss way." (Trans: Miner (2016) *quandoque aliquis actus caritatis cum aliquo tepore vel remissione emittitur*.)

[55] See II.II.161 for Aquinas's discussion of humility.

[56] *inquantum scilicet expellit superbiam, cui Deus resistit, et praebet hominem subditum et semper patulum ad suscipiendum influxum divinae gratiae*

for a greater participation in the infused virtues. God is then able to actualize that potentiality, if he so wills, and bring about the increase of the infused virtues.

4.2 Stages of Infused Virtue

In the Christian tradition, the idea that the infused virtues (specifically charity) could increase brought with it the concept of stages (*gradus*) of charity. This concept first appears in the work of Augustine,[57] and Peter Lombard addresses it in his *Sentences*.[58] In this section, we will see, first, how Aquinas handles the idea of stages of charity in the *secunda secundae*. Next, I will apply the metaphysical account of the last section to these stages. This will allow us to see what occurs at the level of power and form when a believer progresses through the stages of charity. Then I will argue that these stages apply to all infused virtues—a position that, while not explicitly endorsed by Aquinas, is consistent with (and even follows from) his views.

4.2.1 Stages of Charity in the Secunda Secundae

In Question 24 of the *secunda secundae,* Aquinas concludes his treatment of charity's increase with an article addressing the stages of charity.[59] He begins the article with three stages in mind: beginning (*incipiens*) charity, progressing (*proficiens*) charity, and perfect (*perfecta*) charity. As we learn in the *sed contra*, Aquinas's source for these

[57] See *Tractatus in epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos* tr.5 on 1 John 3:9.

[58] See III Sent. D. 29, a. 8.

[59] Question 24 is structured in the following way: Article 1 addresses the seat of charity within the human soul, Articles 2 & 3 address the cause of charity, Articles 4-9 address the increase of charity (whether it increases (4), the manner of increase (5-6), limits of increase (7-8), and stages of increase (9)), and Articles 10-12 address the decrease/loss of charity.

stages is Augustine's fifth homily on the book of 1 John.[60] The objections of Article 9 present reasons to think that these stages are not appropriately distinguished: the first suggests that there should be more stages, while the second and third point out that there is progress in all three stages, and not just the second.

Aquinas begins his response by reiterating the importance of the analogy between spiritual increase and bodily increase. While the body grows in many steps and by complicated processes (a concern voiced in the first objection), Aquinas maintains that there are some distinct stages, which are distinguished according to the "fixed actions or pursuits toward which a person is led by increase" (24.9).[61] For example, the use of reason is a pursuit that distinguishes infancy from childhood. Similarly, childhood is divided from adulthood by puberty (i.e., the ability to procreate).

Likewise, Aquinas suggests that we can distinguish between different stages of charity on the basis of different "pursuits" toward which believers are led. Thus, beginning charity is that stage in which "the main pursuit… is to keep away from sin and to resist [one's] concupiscence, which [moves one] away from charity" (24.9).[62] In the words of St. Paul, beginning charity involves crucifying "the flesh with its passions and desires" (Galatians 5:24). Next, in progressing charity a person seeks principally to "tend

[60] While he also cites the same passage from Augustine, Lombard recognizes 5 stages: *incipiens, proficiens, perfecta, perfectior,* and *perfectissima*. The last three might be translated "perfect," "more perfect," and "most perfect," which is almost nonsensical in English. See page 128 for a discussion of the Latin term "*perfectio*" and its relation to the English "perfect." In his *Commentary on the Sentences,* Aquinas privileges the same three stages that we find in the *Summa*, but goes on to accommodate the 5 stages of Lombard by dividing the second and third stages into two stages each (III *Sent*. D. 29 a. 8 qc. 1).

[61] All translations from 24.9 are from Miner (2016); *determinatas actiones vel studia ad quae homo perducitur per augmentum*

[62] *studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis eius, quae in contrarium caritatis movent*

toward what progresses in the good" (24.9).[63] At this stage, the believer's focus shifts from the sin to be resisted, to the goods that are pursued in a relationship with God. Yet Aquinas reminds us, in his reply to the second objection, that one must be prepared to resist sinful desires at this stage as well. He compares those with progressing charity to the workers in Nehemiah 4 who were rebuilding the temple with one hand and holding weapons in the other (24.9 ad 2). Finally, perfect charity involves the following primary intention: "to adhere to God and to enjoy him" (24.9).[64] At this stage, believers have become the sort of people who desire God alone, and can say with Paul that they "desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ" (Philippians 1:23; qtd. in 24.9).[65]

Aquinas sums up his discussion of the three stages with another comparison to bodily change and movement. The stages of charity are just particular instances of the general progression of bodily movement: "first comes movement away from one limit, then approach to another limit, and finally rest in the limit" (24.9).[66] Thus beginning charity involves movement away from a life of sin and rebellion to God, progressing charity involves movement toward God, and perfect charity involves union with God. Of course, these stages will not be as clear as they are in cases involving bodily movement (e.g., tracking a car's movement between mile markers 67 and 68). For this reason,

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[63] *intendat ad hoc quod in bono proficiat.*

[64] *Deo inhaereat et eo fruatur*

[65] (*qui cupiunt dissolvi et esse cum Christo*) In Article 8 of Question 24, Aquinas discusses three ways in which charity can be perfect on the part of the believer. The first is not possible in this life, the second is possible in this life, but is not attained by all believers, and the third is both possible in this life and attained by all believers. The perfect charity that Aquinas discusses in Article 9 corresponds to the second type of perfection from Article 8.

[66] *primum est recessus a termino; secundum autem est appropinquatio ad alium terminum; tertium autem quies in termino.*

Aquinas directs us to focus on the believer's main care or concern (*cura*): for beginners, it will be avoiding sin; for the progressing, developing virtue; and for the perfect, adhering to God (24.9 ad 3).

4.2.2 Metaphysics of the Stages

The central task of this section will be to apply the metaphysical account of increase in infused virtue—laid out in Section 4.1—to Aquinas's three stages of charity. This discussion will help us to understand the changes that are taking place at the level of power and form when a believer progresses through the stages of charity.

The first thing to note is that charity is a moral virtue. Consequently, it will only be susceptible to increase in terms of the subject's participation in the virtue (II.II.24.5). Any increase in charity, then, must be understood in terms of an actualization of the subject's potentiality for a greater participation in charity. On this account, when a believer progresses through the stages, she is coming to participate in the virtue to a greater extent. As we saw in Section 4.1, this process will depend upon two factors: the agent and the subject's potentiality. Hence, progress in the stages will depend upon God and the believer's potentiality for greater participation in charity.

As we have seen, Aquinas describes the stages of charity in terms of the pursuits toward which believers are led in each stage. These pursuits will reveal the changes occurring in the believer's potentiality for greater participation in charity. In the first stage, the believer is primarily concerned with avoiding sin and resisting passions that are inconsistent with charity. The presence of these contrary passions and inclinations to sin reveal that the believer possesses some forms or qualities that are contrary to the form of charity. For example, she might be disposed to act selfishly or to experience envy when

her friends succeed.[67] These contrary forms hold her back from participating in charity to a greater degree. Thus, the main pursuit of the beginners is to remove any forms in the soul that are contrary to charity. By resisting the urge to act selfishly and quickly dismissing her envious thoughts, she can weaken and ultimately remove the underlying dispositions. As a result, her potentiality for a greater degree of participation in charity will increase. In actualizing this potentiality, God brings the believer through the first stage and into progressing charity.

The main pursuit of the believer in this second stage of charity involves progress in the good and growth in charity. While she has been growing in charity all along, her focus now shifts from resistance to pursuit. She is less troubled by fleshly wants and desires and more intent on loving God and others well. She can accomplish these goals by developing inclinations and desires that orient her toward God and the things of God. Thus, progressing charity primarily involves the actualization of disposing forms—forms that dispose a person toward increase in charity. For instance, a believer in this stage might seek to cultivate humility out of a desire to be properly subject to God. Additionally, the development of other moral virtues like temperance and fortitude will dispose her toward increase in charity.[68] Receiving grace through the sacraments is

[67] Since charity is a form perfecting the will, most contrary forms will be found in the will. Nevertheless, contrary forms can also exist in other parts of the soul. This is why Aquinas lists concupiscence as one of the things that "move [believers] away from charity" (II.II.24.9). Dispositions to experience envy, for example, can prevent our wills from conforming to the divine law. Nevertheless, these dispositions cannot meet the qualifications for vice because of the way in which virtue and vice are contraries (see I.II.71.1).

[68] Of course, these examples are all infused virtues, which means that they can only be actualized by God. But as Aquinas often says, believers can dispose themselves to increase through their actions. In this way, acting so as to dispose oneself to increase in the other infused virtues can indirectly increase one's potentiality for greater participation in charity.

another way that the believer develops disposing forms.[69] All these forms serve to increase the believer's potentiality for a greater participation in charity, which God can then actualize. Furthermore, the presence of fewer contrary desires and inclinations suggests that the believer has fewer contrary forms than when she began. As we pointed out, however, Aquinas does not claim that the contrary forms are gone in this stage of charity. Just as the temple-builders had to keep a hand on their weapons (Nehemiah 4), those with progressing charity must be prepared to ward off errant passions and inclinations. While the primary changes involve the actualization of disposing forms, this comparison implies that the believer will continue to undergo the removal of contrary forms at this stage.

This brings us to the third and final stage—perfect charity. Here the believer's main pursuit involves adhering to God and resting in His presence.[70] The term "perfect" should not be misunderstood—Aquinas does not mean to deny progress in this stage. As he explains in Article 7 of Question 24, there is no limit attached to the increase of charity in this life. It is not as if we reach the third stage of charity and can sit back and wait for Christ's return. Rather, Aquinas maintains that believers can continue to progress and to come to rest in God more fully. Metaphysically, this stage involves the continued actualization of disposing forms, which occurs through the same mechanisms discussed above. With perfect charity, there no longer seems to be a need for the removal of contrary forms. While Aquinas teaches that those with perfect charity will still be

[69] See Harvey, "The Nature of the Infused Moral Virtues," 196 for a discussion of the manner in which the sacraments can dispose us toward increase in the infused virtues.

[70] In Article 8, Aquinas describes this stage of charity in the following way: "when a person gives his own zeal to emptying himself for God and divine things, putting everything else aside except as far as the necessity of the present life requires" (II.II.24.8). (*ut homo studium suum deputet ad vacandum Deo et rebus divinis, praetermissis aliis nisi quantum necessitas praesentis vitae requirit*).

susceptible to venial sins, he claims that these sins "are not contrary to the habit of charity" (II.II.24.8 ad 2).[71] He elaborates on this idea in Article 10: "venial sin does not affect charity itself. For charity is about the ultimate end, whereas venial sin is a certain disorder about things that are for the sake of the end" (II.II.24.10).[72] In other words, venial sins do not issue from dispositions that are contrary to charity. Therefore, the believer with perfect charity can focus on enjoying and resting in God without having to worry about contrary dispositions.[73]

In sum, believers progress through the stages of charity by increases in their potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the virtue, which God can then actualize. In beginners, this potentiality primarily increases through the removal of forms that are contrary to charity. In those with progressing charity, it is by a combination of the actualization of disposing forms and the removal of contrary forms. Finally, in the perfect, this increase occurs through the continued actualization of disposing forms.

4.2.3 Applying the Stages to All Infused Virtues

For those writing in the Thomistic tradition, it has been quite natural to apply the stages of charity to the other infused virtues, or even to moral development in general.[74] To date, however, there has been no argument for this wider application. Moreover, there

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[71] *non contrariantur habitui caritatis*

[72] *quia [veniale peccatum] ad ipsam caritatem non attingit. Caritas enim est circa finem ultimum, veniale autem peccatum est quaedam inordinatio circa ea quae sunt ad finem*

[73] Nevertheless, Aquinas issues a word of caution at the end of Article 10: venial sins, along with inactive charity, can dispose one toward mortal sin and the corruption of charity. So while the contrary dispositions are no longer present in perfect charity, they can always return.

[74] Prominent examples include: Pinckaers *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, 359ff, Titus, "Moral Development," and Paul Wadell, *The Primacy of Love* (Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1992), 120ff.

are good textual reasons to suppose that Aquinas intentionally restricted these stages to the virtue of charity. For example, he does not mention the concept in his treatment of virtue in general (in the *prima secundae*), nor in his discussion of the rest of the individual virtues (in the *secunda secundae*). Why, then, should we think that the stages of charity apply to all the infused virtues? There are two main reasons: textual evidence within the *Summa* and the relationship between charity and the other infused virtues.[75]

The first reason to extend the stages to infused virtue in general is that Aquinas seems to do so in a few places within the *Summa*. In his discussion of the fruits of the Spirit, for example, he applies the idea of stages of perfection (*perfectionis gradus*) to Jesus's claim, in the parable of the soils, that the good soil yields a harvest of a hundredfold, sixtyfold, or thirtyfold (Matthew 13:23). He writes that these fruits "do not differ as various species of virtuous acts, but as various [stages] of perfection, even in the same virtue" (I.II.70.3 ad 2).[76] Contra an objector's suggestion, Jesus's claim does not mean that there are only three fruits; rather, there are three stages of perfection in the virtues and their acts (i.e., fruits). Instead of restricting these stages to charity, he speaks generally of all the virtues, and even gives an example featuring continence. Furthermore, in his discussion of sin, Aquinas claims that different aspects of God's law are associated with different stages of virtue (*gradus virtutis*) (I.II.72.6 ad 2). Finally, he uses the same three stages—beginning, progressing, and perfect—to describe the believer's transition from slavery in sin to freedom in Christ. In II.II.183, he says:

[75] By not restricting the stages to the infused virtues, Wadell presents an inaccurate picture of Aquinas's understanding of virtue. While discussing virtue in general, Wadell describes the stages of II.II.24.9 as "three stages to the acquisition of the virtues" (1992, 120). As we will see below, there are good reasons to restrict these stages to the infused virtues.

[76] *non diversificantur secundum diversas species virtuosorum actuum, sed secundum diversos perfectionis gradus etiam unius virtutis* (translation modified).

> the state of spiritual [slavery] and freedom is differentiated according to these things, namely, the beginning—to which pertains the state of beginners—the middle, to which pertains the state of the proficient—and the term, to which belongs the state of the perfect (183.4).[77]

Once again, the three stages are applied to believers in general and not solely with regard to their participation in charity. While these passages are brief and appear in unlikely places, they do seem to reveal that Aquinas understands the stages to apply to our spiritual lives in general, and not simply to our increase in charity.[78]

The second reason to extend the stages to infused virtue in general concerns the relationship between charity and the other infused virtues. As we pointed out in the last chapter, all of the other infused virtues are infused immediately along with charity.[79] Additionally, Aquinas uses several metaphors to describe the close connection between charity and the other infused virtues: charity serves as the form, root, mother, and end of all the other infused virtues (II.II.23.8). It is the form and end of the others insofar as it orders them to the ultimate end of *beatitudo*. Charity is said to be the mother of the other virtues since it "conceives the acts of the other virtues by commanding them" (23.8 ad 3).[80] Lastly, it is said to be the root of the rest of the infused virtues because "from it all

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[77] *In omni autem humano studio est accipere principium, medium et terminum. Et ideo consequens est quod status spiritualis servitutis et libertatis secundum tria distinguatur, scilicet secundum principium, ad quod pertinet status incipientium; et medium, ad quod pertinet status proficientium; et terminum, ad quem pertinet status perfectorum.*

[78] Notice that all three of these passages deal with the development that occurs in believers. There is no textual evidence in Aquinas's writings to suggest that he took these stages to apply to acquired virtue as well. One might make the case that there are stages in the acquisition of acquired virtues; after all, Aquinas does say that "in every human [pursuit] we can distinguish a beginning, a middle, and a term" (II.II.183.4) (*In omni autem humano studio est accipere principium, medium et terminum*.) Nevertheless, Aquinas would not want to equate the stages present in the acquisition of acquired virtue, with those discussed in II.II.24.9. More on this below.

[79] See I.II.62.4 and I.II.65.3.

[80] Trans: Miner (2016); *concipit actus aliarum virtutum, imperando ipsos*.

the other virtues are sustained and given nutrition" (23.8 ad 2).[81] Beyond these metaphors, Aquinas also teaches that the other virtues increase whenever charity increases. He writes:

> For charity, as I have said, is greater in itself than the other virtues; however, when it grows, the other virtues also grow in a [proportional] way in one and the same person, just as the fingers on a hand are different lengths, but they grow at a [proportional] rate (*QDV* 5.3 ad 1).[82]

This passage occurs in the context of an article in which Aquinas argues that all of the virtues within a single person are equal.[83] While some virtues like charity are greater *in themselves*, since they relate more closely to God, Aquinas maintains that all the virtues in a single person will be equal *in terms of their subject's degree of participation* (*QDV* 5.3).[84] He explains this surprising fact by pointing to the connection of the virtues in

[81] Trans: Miner (2016); *ex ea sustentantur et nutriuntur omnes aliae virtutes*

[82] *Caritas enim, ut dictum est, secundum se est maior omnibus aliis virtutibus; sed tamen, ea crescente, etiam proportionaliter crescunt omnes aliae virtutes in uno et eodem homine, sicut digiti manus secundum se sunt inaequales, tamen proportionaliter crescunt.*

[83] These ideas of equality and proportionality between the virtues are present throughout Aquinas's writings. For example, in Question 66 of the *prima secundae*, Aquinas makes the following claim: in terms of the "degree of participation by the subject… all the virtues in one man are equal with an equality of proportion, in so far as their growth in man is equal" (66.2) (*secundum participationem subiecti… omnes virtutes unius hominis sunt aequales quadam aequalitate proportionis, inquantum aequaliter crescunt in homine*). Once again, he makes the comparison to the proportional growth that we see in the fingers. See also the *Commentary on the Sentences* (III Sent. D.36 a. 4).

[84] One might worry that this teaching is inconsistent with experience: are there not people who exceed in a particular virtue or set of virtues, while struggling with others? This concern in raised in the 11th objection in *QDV* 5.3: the objector points out that some people are praised more for certain virtues than for others, and concludes that those virtues must be greater. In his reply, Aquinas writes that "people are praised for one virtue rather than for another because they are quicker to act in accordance with it" (ad 11) (*quod unus magis laudatur de una virtute quam de alia propter maiorem promptitudinem ad actum*). In I.II.66.2, Aquinas associates this readiness to act with the material element of the virtue, whereas the equality of the virtues is associated with their formal element. More on this in Section 4.3.2.

charity: "where charity is equal, all the virtues must be equal in terms of the formal perfection of virtue" (*QDV* 5.3).[85]

At this point, we can see why the stages must apply to the infused virtues on Aquinas's picture. He teaches that the three stages describe the increase of charity—a virtue which can only increase in terms of the subject's degree of participation. As we just learned, Aquinas also teaches that all of the virtues in a single person are equal in terms of the subject's degree of participation, and when one increases, they all increase. From these claims, it follows that the stages will apply to all the infused virtues. If a person has charity in the beginning stage, she will also have the other infused virtues (faith, hope, prudence, etc.) in the beginning stages. And since they increase at the same rate, when she becomes proficient in charity, she will become proficient in the others as well.

In sum, we have drawn from both textual evidence and the relationship between charity and the other infused virtues, in order to show that Aquinas took (or, at the very least, should have taken) these stages to apply to infused virtue in general.

4.3 Imperfection in the Infused Virtues

In the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Aquinas outlines three reasons why we need virtues: (1) "so that we might be consistent in what we do," (2) "so that we can readily do things in the proper way," and (3) "so that we might take pleasure in completing things in the proper way" (1.1).[86] While Aquinas's acquired virtues meet all

[85] *ubi est aequaliter caritas, oportet omnes virtutes esse aequales secundum formalem perfectionem virtutis*

[86] *ut sit uniformitas in sua operatione… ut operatio perfecta in promptu habeatur… ut delectabiliter perfecta operatio compleatur*

three needs, the infused virtues—strangely enough—seem not to (or at least not as well). Consider the following passages. Regarding the consistency or stability of the virtues, Aquinas writes, "mortal sin is incompatible with divinely infused virtue… But actual sin, even mortal, is compatible with humanly acquired virtue" (I.II.63.2 ad 2).[87] Unlike the acquired virtues, the infused virtues can be lost through a single act of mortal sin, which seems to render them unstable. Concerning the readiness with which acts of the virtues are performed, Aquinas teaches that "sometimes the habits of [infused] moral virtue experience difficulty in their works, by reason of certain [contrary] dispositions remaining from previous acts. This difficulty does not occur in respect of acquired moral virtue" (I.II.65.3 ad 2).[88] While the acquired virtues grant a readiness of action to their possessor, the infused virtues sometimes do not. Finally, Aquinas makes the following claim when considering the relationship between the passions and the virtues: "infused virtue… is effective to the extent that even if [passions inclining toward evil] are felt, they do not take control" (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14).[89] While the acquired virtues bring appropriate passions, the infused virtues seem to be compatible with contrary passions.[90]

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[87] *virtus divinitus infusa… non compatitur secum aliquod peccatum mortale. Sed virtus humanitus acquisita potest secum compati aliquem actum peccati, etiam mortalis*

[88] *habitus moralium virtutum infusarum patiuntur interdum difficultatem in operando, propter aliquas dispositiones contrarias ex praecedentibus actibus relictas. Quae quidem difficultas non ita accidit in virtutibus moralibus acquisitis*

[89] *virtus infusa quantum ad hoc quod facit quod huiusmodi passiones etsi sentiantur, nullo tamen modo dominentur.*

[90] Of course, Aquinas is not surprised by these imperfections associated with the infused virtues; he cites them among the reasons for our need of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. While the acquired virtues are sufficient in matters directed toward our natural end, "in matters directed to the supernatural end, to which man's reason moves him, according as it is, in a manner, and imperfectly, informed by the theological virtues, the motion of reason does not suffice, unless it receive in addition the prompting or motion of the Holy [Spirit]" (I.II.68.2) (*in ordine ad finem ultimum supernaturalem, ad quem ratio movet secundum quod est aliqualiter et imperfecte formata per virtutes theologicas; non sufficit ipsa motio rationis, nisi desuper adsit instinctus et motio spiritus sancti*). Since this supernatural end exceeds our natural capacities, Aquinas

Many commentators have taken these imperfections as evidence that the Christian also needs the acquired virtues. Consider just a few examples. Jennifer Herdt claims that Aquinas "insists… that *full* virtue requires both infused and acquired virtues" (2008, 87, emphasis in original). And Andrew Dell'Olio writes, "in addition to the infused virtues, Christians may, and should, possess all the naturally acquired virtues they need to perfect their nature" (2003, 134).[91] Other commentators claim that the Christian's virtues include some combination of the acquired and infused virtues.[92] These writers claim that the acquired component of Christian virtue remedies the imperfections of the infused virtues.[93]

In this section, I will argue that the three imperfections of infused virtue—lack of stability, lack of facility, and the presence of inordinate passions—provide no reason to think that the Christian needs the acquired virtues. Instead, these imperfections reveal the need for growth in infused virtue. While Aquinas's claims about the imperfect nature of infused virtues are often taken to apply to infused virtue in general, I suggest that his claims should be understood to apply to the early stages of infused virtue alone. Perfect

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maintains that we need even more than the divinely infused virtues—we need direct promptings from the Holy Spirit. For more on the relationship between the infused virtues and the gifts, see Section 3.3.2.

[91] For similar comments, see Sherwin, "Infused Virtue," 51, Kent, "Habits and Virtues," 125, Inglis, "Aquinas's Replication,"19-20, Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, and Sheryl Overmyer "Saint Thomas Aquinas's Pagan Virtues: Putting the Question to Jennifer Herdt's *Putting on Virtue*." *Journal of Religious Ethics* 41, no. 4 (2013), 669-87.

[92] For instance, Romanus Cessario claims that the acquired and infused virtues form an organic unity in the believer (2009, 109). Mirkes (1995 and 1997) claims that the two form a hylomorphic compound in the Christian (with acquired virtue as matter and infused virtue as form). Also, Dahm and Cleveland, "The Virtual Presence," argue that the acquired virtues are virtually present in the Christian's infused virtues.

[93] Another supposed imperfection of the infused virtues is specific to infused prudence. Commentators conclude, on the basis of II.II.47.14, that infused prudence is restricted to those matters that are necessary for salvation, while acquired prudence is necessary for other facets of human life. Since I addressed this imperfection in Section 4.2, I will not repeat that discussion here.

infused virtue, I submit, is not subject to these imperfections. Thus, there is no need to posit the continued presence of the acquired virtues in the Christian—neither on their own, nor as part of some combination with the infused virtues.[94] I walk through each of the imperfections, stating why commentators have resorted to the acquired virtues in light of it, and arguing that growth in infused virtue is a suitable remedy.

4.3.1 Stability in the Infused Virtues

Aquinas is explicit that charity and the other infused virtues are incompatible with mortal sin. Since these infused virtues must be sustained in us by the activity of God, any obstacle to that activity—like mortal sin—causes the virtues to be lost (II.II.24.12). For this reason, commentators conclude that the infused virtues (on their own) lack the stability that is necessary for full virtue. And since Aquinas teaches that the acquired virtues are able to withstand occasional instances of mortal sin (I.II.63.2 ad 2), it is natural to suppose that stability in the Christian life comes from them. For example, according to Dell'Olio:

> the [acquired] virtues may help prevent one from losing the infused virtues that do lead to eternal happiness; for, Aquinas believes, the infused virtues are lost with one mortal sin and one might be more likely to remain firm against such actions if one were in possession of the naturally acquired virtues (2003, 139).[95]

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[94] In saying this, I do not deny that the acquired virtues can play an important role in preparing a person to receive the infused virtues. See Dahm (2015, 465) and Goris (2017, 33-7). By developing those virtues before one becomes a Christian, one is increasing one's potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the infused virtues. This is because the acquired virtues can serve as disposing forms for the infused virtues and they help to remove contrary forms. Nonetheless, any development of the acquired virtues will cease when the person becomes a Christian, and any further growth will involve the infused virtues.

[95] Furthermore, in "The Nature of the Infused Moral Virtues," John Harvey suggests that one of the contributions of the acquired moral virtues to the Christian life is to render the infused moral virtues more secure (199). Andrew Pinsent (2015, 145) also makes much of this point in his argument for the importance of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

There are two things to note here. First, Aquinas maintains that there are certain mortal sins that the acquired virtues cannot help us avoid—namely, those contrary to the theological virtues (I.II.63.2 ad 2). Thus, the acquired virtues cannot provide the stability that these commentators associate with full virtue. Second, Aquinas is able to maintain the incompatibility of infused virtue with mortal sin, while still accounting for stability in the life of infused virtue. We are able to see this by looking at Aquinas's use of one of his *auctoritates*: Origen.

When Aquinas addresses the topic of mortal sin and the loss of charity, Origen often appears in the objections.[96] In his *On First Principles,* Origen writes "I do not think that any one of those who stand on the highest and best possible level can immediately be emptied and fall, but it is necessary that they slip down gradually, bit by bit" (qtd. in *QDV* 2.6 arg. 1).[97] This teaching appears to suggest that Christians do not lose the infused virtues immediately—even when they commit mortal sin—but that these virtues can only be lost gradually. Thus, Origen highlights the stability that is present in the lives of those Christians at the "highest and best possible level." In his reply, Aquinas maintains the incompatibility of charity and mortal sin, while incorporating Origen's insight. He writes:

> Origen's words should not be taken to mean that those, however completely good, who sin mortally do not immediately lose charity, but rather that it does not happen easily that those who are completely good will commit a mortal sin straight away and at once (*QDV* 2.6 ad 1).[98]

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[96] We find this in the *Summa* (II.II.24.12) and in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* (2.6 and 2.13)

[97] *on arbitror quod aliquis ex his qui in summo perfectoque perstiterunt gradu, ad subitum evacuetur ac decidat; sed per partes et paulatim eum diffluere necesse est* (*On First Principles* Book 1, Chapter 3).

[98] *verbum Origenis non sic est intelligendum, quod homo peccans mortaliter, quantumcumque perfectus, non subito caritatem amittat sed quia non contingit de facile quod homo perfectus statim a principio mortaliter peccet*

Aquinas accounts for the stability that Origen noticed by pointing out that it is difficult for these Christians to commit mortal sins. Here Aquinas seems to have in mind Christians who have reached the third stage of infused virtue. He describes them as "*perfectus,*" just as Origen identified them as being at the "highest and best possible level."[99] For Christians at this stage of infused virtue, their desires and passions are so completely oriented toward God that it becomes quite difficult for them to turn away from Him in mortal sin.[100] Consequently, the instability that is characteristic of the infused virtues at early stages can be remedied by growth in the infused virtues. There is no need to appeal to the acquired virtues here.[101]

Another reason that the issue of mortal sin has led some commentators to appeal to the continued presence of the acquired virtues in the Christian life, concerns what is left behind after mortal sin. Take a believer who has lived the life of infused temperance for twenty years before committing a mortal sin of pride, for example. On Aquinas's account, this believer immediately loses infused temperance. Does this mean that he will immediately resort to a life of intemperance? Richard Conrad thinks not: "the acquired virtues will preserve this person from the vices they have ousted, and he will continue to

[99] This is further supported by Aquinas's claim in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* that "Although everyone is obliged to be without mortal sin, not everyone is able to feel safe in this respect, but only the perfect, who have their sins entirely under control" (2.11 ad 10). (*licet quilibet teneatur esse sine peccato mortali, non tamen omnium est huiusmodi rei securitatem habere; sed perfectorum, qui peccata totaliter subiugaverunt.*)

[100] Their state is one that approximates that of the blessed in heaven, who, according to Aquinas, cannot lose charity. See *Summa* II.II.24.11 and *QDV* 2.12.

[101] One might wonder whether this accounts for Origen's notion of the *gradual* fall of the believer into sin. In the *Summa* (II.II.24.12 ad 1), Aquinas explains this gradual fall in terms of the way that venial sins can gradually dispose a person to mortal sin.

eat and drink healthily while charity is lacking" (2016, 172).[102] In other words, when a believer loses the infused virtues through mortal sin, he or she is left with the acquired versions of those virtues. This suggests that the acquired virtues must have been present all along.

Aquinas does not have much to say about the dispositions that a believer retains after mortal sin. I am willing to grant that, in some cases, a believer may end up with acquired virtues—or something very much like them. What I want to resist, however, is the idea that the acquired virtues were present all along. First, as I argued in Chapter Three, it is impossible for the two to coexist as distinct virtues in the Christian. Second, there are two passages where Aquinas suggests that something of the infused virtue is left behind, and in neither place does he mention the acquired virtues. In the *prima secundae*, while discussing the compatibility of sin and virtue, he writes that "charity being banished by one act of mortal sin, it follows that all the infused virtues are expelled *as virtues* (*quantum ad hoc quod sunt virtutes*)" (71.4, emphasis mine).[103] While this last phrase is initially opaque, Aquinas clarifies it in the next sentence: "And I say [this] on account of faith and hope, whose habits remain [unformed] after mortal sin, so that they are no longer virtues" (71.4).[104] Here Aquinas refers to a distinction that he will go on to employ extensively in the *secunda secundae*: between formed (*formata*) faith/hope and

[102] Dahm and Cleveland, "The Virtual Presence," 5, also make this point. They write: "Moreover, if Timothy, who developed acquired temperance before conversion, commits mortal sin and loses the infused virtues after a short time, he plausibly will possess acquired temperance (or a disposition very near to it). Unlike infused virtue, Aquinas thinks acquired virtue is compatible with mortal sin. If it wasn't present in the interim, it would be strange that it is recoverable."

[103] *per unum actum peccati mortalis, exclusa caritate, excluduntur per consequens omnes virtutes infusae, quantum ad hoc quod sunt virtutes*

[104] *Et hoc dico propter fidem et spem, quarum habitus remanent informes post peccatum mortale, et sic non sunt virtutes.*

unformed (*informis*) faith/hope. In the case of faith, the habit is formed when charity is present and unformed when charity is not present.[105] In Question 4 of the *secunda secundae,* Aquinas teaches that these two versions of faith are the same habit, but that only formed faith is a perfect virtue. Just as temperance is not perfect without prudence, so faith is not perfect without charity. While Aquinas never mentions unformed versions of the infused moral virtues, it is entirely possible that these are the sorts of habits that remain after mortal sin. With infused temperance, for example, the concupiscible power may retain its proper orientation toward its objects, while the disorder of the will (part of mortal sin) renders the agent unable to use the habit.

This idea is supported by the second passage as well: "However, as long as one does not in fact lose charity through ill-intention, a few traces of the perfection one previously had will remain" (*QDV* 2.13 ad 1).[106] Here Aquinas is distinguishing between two ways in which charity can be lost: directly—through committing a mortal sin out of malice toward God—and indirectly—through committing a mortal sin out of weakness of will.[107] When a believer sins mortally in the second way, Aquinas suggests that "traces of perfection" remain. This passage lends support to the idea that infused habits can endure, albeit in a diminished form, after mortal sin.[108]

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[105] Recall that charity is said to be the form of all of the infused virtues (II.II.23.8).

[106] *sed adhuc aliquae reliquiae de praecedenti perfectione remanent, dum non habet ex malitia quod caritatem amittat.*

[107] See *QDV* 2.13 ad 2 for the clearest discussion of this distinction.

[108] In fact, Medina seems to have interpreted Aquinas along these lines. See Coerver, *The Quality of Facility*, 45).

In sum, these two passages support the idea that some aspect of the infused virtues remains after mortal sin.[109] Therefore, when we point to believers who seem to retain virtuous habits of some kind after mortal sin, this need not serve as evidence that the acquired virtues were present all along. Instead, those virtuous habits might be the "traces of perfection" or the "unformed virtues" that remain after the infused virtues are lost. Furthermore, I demonstrated that the lack of stability in the infused virtues can be remedied by progress through the stages. Therefore, I conclude that the passages in which Aquinas intimates a lack of stability in the infused virtues do not provide reason to think that the believer needs to develop the acquired virtues.

4.3.2 Facility in the Acts of the Infused Virtues

At the beginning of this section, we noted that one of the reasons that we need virtues is to perform good actions with readiness. The virtuous person does not need a lengthy process of deliberation in most instances—rather, she perceives what should be done in a situation, and promptly does it. Aquinas describes the acts that issue from virtuous habits as "pleasurable, readily undertaken, and easily performed, since they have, in a sense, become connatural" (*De Veritate* 20.2).[110] Another way of describing this readiness and ease of action is in terms of facility. In general, virtues confer on their subjects a certain degree of facility in performing the acts of those virtues.

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[109] See also I.II.63.2 ad 2, where Aquinas says that "mortal sin is incompatible with divinely infused virtue, especially if this be considered in its perfect state." (*virtus divinitus infusa, maxime si in sua perfectione consideretur, non compatitur secum aliquod peccatum mortale*.) The qualification is suggestive of my interpretation.

[110] All translations from *De Veritate* are from James V. McGlynn, S.J., trans. *Questiones Disputatae de Veritate* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953). The Latin Text is from *Quaestiones Disputatae de Veritate* Leonine Edition, transcribed by Roberto Busa SJ, rev. by Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2011): *delectabiles sunt, et in promptu habentur, et faciliter exercentur, quia sunt quasi connaturales effectae*.

Nevertheless, Aquinas often describes the infused virtues as lacking this facility, which serves to distinguish them from the acquired virtues. For example, he claims that

> sometimes the habits of [infused] moral virtue experience difficulty in their works, by reason of certain [contrary] dispositions remaining from previous acts. This difficulty does not occur in respect of acquired moral virtue: because the repeated acts by which they are acquired, remove also the contrary dispositions (I.II.65.3 ad 2).[111]

Passages like this have led commentators to conclude that the acquired virtues are responsible for any facility that one may develop in acting in accord with virtue. More specifically, they distinguish between two sorts of facility—intrinsic and extrinsic—and claim that the infused virtues confer intrinsic facility, but that extrinsic facility is only found with the acquired virtues. This distinction has its roots in the following passage from Aquinas:

> the facility of performing works of virtue can come from two sources: namely, from a preceding custom—and this facility is not assigned to infused virtue immediately in its beginning—and secondly, from a strong adhesion to the object of virtue—and this is to be found in infused virtue immediately in its beginning (IV Sent. 14.2.2 ad 5).[112]

Hence, commentators describe intrinsic facility as an ability to perform acts of virtue, which comes through an inclination toward the objects of virtue.[113] In contrast, extrinsic

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[111] *habitus moralium virtutum infusarum patiuntur interdum difficultatem in operando, propter aliquas dispositiones contrarias ex praecedentibus actibus relictas. Quae quidem difficultas non ita accidit in virtutibus moralibus acquisitis, quia per exercitium actuum, quo acquiruntur, tolluntur etiam contrariae dispositiones* (translation modified).

[112] My translation. *facilitas operandi opera virtutum potest esse ex duobus; scilicet ex consuetudine praecedente; et hanc facilitatem non tribuit virtus infusa statim in sui principio: et iterum ex forti inhaesione ad objectum virtutis; et hanc est invenire in virtute infusa statim in sui principio*.

[113] In *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues*, Robert Coerver describes this type of facility as a "*posse*" of acting in accord with the virtue (31ff). This ensures that the agent has the ability to act from the virtue, but does not make such action easy or natural.

facility refers to the readiness or ease with which those acts are performed.[114] The position is summed up nicely in the words of John Harvey:

> While the infused moral virtues may be said to confer intrinsic facility, the work of the acquired moral virtues is necessary to render this facility extrinsic, and, as it were, operative. The acquired moral virtues remove impediments and overcome the resistance of the passions. Both orders of virtue are necessary. Without the practice of the acquired moral virtues, the intrinsic facility of the infused moral virtues remain imperceptible as far as practice goes (1955, 199).[115]

Thus, the lack of extrinsic facility in the infused virtues has been seen as support for the importance of the acquired virtues in the Christian life.[116]

This view is incompatible with Aquinas's teaching for two important reasons. First, the acquired virtues, as I have pointed out, cannot coexist with the infused virtues as distinct virtues on Aquinas's picture. Therefore, if it is possible for there to be extrinsic facility in the acts of the infused virtues, it must come from another source. Second, Aquinas explicitly teaches that the acts of the infused virtues do not produce another habit. When considering the formation of habits, he states that "Acts produced by an infused habit do not cause a habit, but strengthen (*confirmant*) the already existing habit"

[114] For examples, see Coerver, *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues*, Harvey "The Nature of the Infused Moral Virtues," and Mirkes, "Aquinas's Doctrine."

[115] This position has been quite popular throughout the Thomistic tradition. Robert Coerver attributes it to Molina, Vasquez, Ripalda, Billot, Merkelbach, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, Billuart, and Schiffini (1946, 51-65). It also shows up in contemporary authors like Dahm (2015, 468-9) and Dell'Olio (2003, 137).

[116] Renee Mirkes has a more complex view on which the Christian's acquired and infused virtues come together as the material and formal principles, respectively, in a hylomorphic compound. On her view, perfect moral virtue involves the unification of these two types of virtue. In this way, she maintains the importance of the acquired virtues in the life of the Christian, while avoiding the problematic conclusion that they coexist with the infused virtues as distinct virtues. I will address her view in greater detail below.

(I.II.51.4 ad 3).[117] By acting from one's infused virtues, one is not developing an acquired habit which can supply the needed extrinsic facility; rather, those actions are strengthening the infused virtues themselves.[118]

Instead of appealing to the acquired virtues to account for the extrinsic facility of action that is often present in mature believers, Aquinas would appeal to growth in infused virtue. The lack of extrinsic facility that is commonly taken to apply to infused virtue *per se*, can be restricted to the early stages. On this account, a beginner in infused virtue will lack the extrinsic facility of action that is characteristic of those with acquired virtue. When she moves through progressing virtue and reaches the stage of perfect virtue, her greater participation in the virtues will result in extrinsic facility. Moreover, this fits nicely with Aquinas's teaching on the topic of facility. In the passage from his *Commentary on the Sentences*—which commentators cite in support of the intrinsic/extrinsic facility distinction—he states that the extrinsic facility is not present in the infused virtue "*immediately in its beginning*" (*statim in sui principio*) (IV Sent. 14.2.2 ad 5). If the infused virtues *per se* could not confer extrinsic facility (as commentators suggest), then we cannot explain Aquinas's qualification. Similarly, it is significant that Aquinas uses "sometimes" (*interdum*) when he writes that "sometimes the habits of [infused] moral virtue experience difficulty in their works, by reason of certain [contrary] dispositions remaining from previous acts. This difficulty does not occur in respect of

[117] (*actus qui producuntur ex habitu infuso, non causant aliquem habitum, sed confirmant habitum praeexistentem*) Aquinas makes the same point in *QDV* 1.10 ad 19. Some commentators (e.g., Inglis 2002) have suggested that the "already existing habit" refers to the corresponding acquired habit. See Mattison (2011) and Knobel (2011) for convincing arguments against this view.

[118] Or more exactly: those actions are disposing the infused virtues toward increase. We must keep in mind that Aquinas maintains that God alone has the power to increase the infused virtues. He may be signaling this with his use of "*confirmare*" rather than "*augmentare*" or "*augere*" (words normally used when speaking about the increase of virtue) in I.II.51.4 ad 3.

acquired moral virtue" (I.II.65.3 ad 2).[119] On my reading, then, the presence of contrary dispositions in the first stage of infused virtue are responsible for the lack of extrinsic facility. When a believer progresses through the stages, these contrary dispositions are removed and disposing forms are added. This process serves to increase the believer's potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the virtues, which can be actualized by God. Metaphysically, this is how a Christian comes to develop extrinsic facility in acting from the infused virtues—not by developing the acquired virtues.[120]

Surprisingly, this interpretation has not been the dominant one within the Thomistic tradition. Nevertheless, Francisco Suarez held a view that is very similar.[121] According to Robert Coerver, Suarez adamantly denied that the extrinsic facility we find in mature believers is the result of acquired habits. Instead he distinguished between two sources:

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[119] *habitus moralium virtutum infusarum patiuntur interdum difficultatem in operando, propter aliquas dispositiones contrarias ex praecedentibus actibus relictas. Quae quidem difficultas non ita accidit in virtutibus moralibus acquisitis*

[120] With her view that the acquired and infused virtues make up one hylomorphic compound, Renee Mirkes claims that the acquired virtue component supplies the extrinsic facility and the infused virtue component supplies the intrinsic facility. As she puts it, "The acquired virtue and its facility constitute the material component of Christian moral virtue; this comprises the visible or observable facility. This facility allows from the easy performance of virtuous acts due to the moderation of passions and the destruction of contrary vices that can only come as a result of the repetition of acts of virtue over time in varying circumstances. The infused moral virtue and its facility comprise the formal component of Christian moral virtue since the infused moral virtue enables the faculty and its natural virtue to adhere firmly to the good of virtue and, through charity, to be ordered to the supernatural end" (1997, 218). In this way, her view is immune to my point that the infused and acquired virtues cannot coexist as distinct virtues in the Christian. She would point out that they are not distinct virtues on her account. The advantage that my view has over that of Mirkes, is that it has the same explanatory power and is equally consistent with the teaching of Aquinas, while also enjoying a greater degree of theoretical simplicity. Rather than positing a complicated compound virtue, one can account for the development of extrinsic facility in the acts of the infused virtues by appealing to growth in those virtues. Like many other commentators, Mirkes mistakenly thinks Aquinas teaches that a lack of extrinsic facility is a necessary feature of the infused virtues. This leads her to appeal to the acquired virtues as the source of that facility. A closer look at Aquinas's teachings has revealed that the infused virtues can provide extrinsic facility—albeit, at later stages of development.

[121] Coerver (1946, 44ff) also attributes this view to Medina, Slyvius, Mazzella, and Garrett Pierse (one of Coerver's contemporaries).

> this facility comes *per se* from the grace of God, which either physically increases the effective power of the infused habit or contributes to a greater suavity in performing the acts of virtue. *Per accidens*, this facility comes from the repetition of acts of the infused virtues whereby impediments are removed and the faculties are better disposed to acts of virtue (Coerver, 1946, 47).[122]

This position is entirely consistent with my view that increase of infused virtue is the source of extrinsic facility. In fact, my view can be seen as an explanation for that of Suarez. Since the infused virtues can only be increased by God, we can see why Suarez identifies the *per se* source of the facility as God. Nevertheless, our actions can dispose us to increase (through increasing our potentiality), which explains why repeated acts of the infused virtues are identified as a *per accidens* source of extrinsic facility. Regardless of whether Suarez shared the metaphysical account of growth in infused virtue advocated in this chapter, he came to understand the facility of the infused virtues in a way that is consistent with that account.[123]

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[122] This is Coerver's loose translation of the following passage from Suarez's *Opera Omnia*: "*Unde facilitas quae in exercendis actibus infusis invenitur, per se quidem provenire potest ex gratia Dei, vel physice augente virtutem effectivam habitus, vel moraliter dante majorem suavitatem, aut illustrationem, vel affectionem majorem in operando. Per accidens autem potest ex consuetudine provenire, quatenus per illam vel tolluntur impedimenta aliqua, vel naturales potentiae, aut organa ministrantia his actibus, usu ipso melius disponuntur*" (Vol. IX, Liber VI, Chap. XIV, 7).

[123] Coerver (1946, 42ff) lists five opinions present in the Thomistic tradition regarding the source of extrinsic facility in the acts of the infused virtue. Two of these are relevant for the present discussion. The third opinion is the view held by Suarez, which I've just discussed. The first opinion is the view that I have been defending—that facility comes with increase in the infused virtues. Evidence of this opinion is found in the work of Mazzella, who attributes it to unnamed Thomistic theologians and proceeds to criticize it. Mazzella claims that they "teach that facility in the infused virtues is a result of the interior increase and intensification of these same virtues" (Coerver, 1946, 42). It is not surprising that this would be the view of "certain Thomistic theologians," since it is the view that seems to be most consistent with Aquinas's teaching (as I have demonstrated above). Nonetheless, Coerver claims that he did not find, in his extensive (and remarkable) research, any theologians who held this position, so he is unable to identify the figures that Mazzella is opposing (42, fn. 21). Like Mazzella, Coerver quickly dismisses this first opinion. He argues, first, that infused virtues cannot confer extrinsic facility *per se* (on the basis of IV Sent. 14.2.2 ad 5), so we should not expect them to confer extrinsic facility through increase. As I've already pointed out, this argument fails because Aquinas does not teach that infused virtues lack extrinsic facility *per se*, but only *per accidens*—in their beginning. Coerver's second argument is more difficult. He appeals to Aquinas's teaching on the proportionate increase of the infused virtues to show that the first opinion is inconsistent with experience. If facility is tied to the increase of the virtues, then whenever there is an increase in facility in the acts of one virtue, there will be an increase in facility in the acts of all the other

In sum, Aquinas's comments regarding the lack of facility in the acts of the infused virtues can be restricted to the early stages of infused virtue. On this view, the imperfection of these virtues can be remedied by growing in infused virtue and progressing through the stages. This means that there is no reason to say that Christians need to continue to develop the acquired virtues. By growing in the infused virtues, they can come to experience the facility of action that Aquinas (and Aristotle) saw as a primary result of virtue.

4.3.3 The Passions and the Infused Virtues

When discussing the existence of the infused virtues, Aquinas faces an objection that appeals to the presence of contrary passions in the Christian life. The objector points out that Christians "are still troubled by the [passions]; [but] this is the experience of someone who is [continent], but not of someone who is virtuous" (*QDV* 1.10 arg. 14).[124] The idea that unruly passions are present in the Christian life was not a new one; we find it in Paul (Romans 7 and Galatians 5) and in Saint Augustine (*City of God* XIX.4). Instead of taking pleasure in her acts of virtue, the Christian is often portrayed as the

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virtues as well. Coerver concludes: "Experience teaches this to be absolutely false, for a man who places repeated acts of the infused virtue of justice does not thereby feel a greater facility of action in the virtue of temperance" (1946, 42). Nevertheless, one can grant Coerver's empirical claim without giving up the connection between facility and increase of the infused virtues. This is because Aquinas's claims about proportional growth (I.II.66.2 and *QDV* 5.3 ad 1) are tied to the formal element of the virtues, which is charity. Aquinas leaves room for diversity in the material element of the virtues. He writes, "in regard to that which is material in the moral virtues, viz. the inclination to the virtuous act, one may be readier to perform the act of one virtue, than the act of another virtue" (I.II.66.2) (*Quantum vero ad id quod est materiale in virtutibus moralibus, scilicet inclinationem ipsam ad actum virtutis; potest esse unus homo magis promptus ad actum unius virtutis quam ad actum alterius*). Hence, increase with respect to the formal element must be proportional, while increase with respect to the material element need not. In this way, a believer could experience greater facility in the acts of one infused virtue than another. Consequently, my reading (i.e., Coerver's first opinion) is immune to the criticisms that he raises. Furthermore, I can maintain that Suarez's view is consistent with mine.

[124] *patitur passionum molestias; quod non est virtuosi, sed forte continentis*

victor of an interior struggle with contrary passions. In his reply to this objection, Aquinas follows Augustine:

> The [passions] that incline us towards evil are not completely removed [for]… infused virtue… is effective to the extent that even if [passions] of this sort are felt, they do not take control. For infused virtue means that we refrain totally from obeying sinful desires (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14).[125]

Here Aquinas seems to be conceding the objector's point that the person with infused virtue is merely continent.

In light of passages like this one, many commentators have concluded that the infused virtues provide nothing more than continence.[126] For example, Jennifer Herdt claims that "the infused virtues alone thus seem to render a person continent rather than virtuous, able to perform good acts and to refrain from bad acts, but only with a struggle" (2008, 87). Similarly, Robert Sokolowski suggests that the infused virtues "seem to fall more appropriately into the categories of self-control and weakness in self-control; they seem to involve a law over and against our inclinations, a law that demands a permanent struggle for self-mastery" (1982, 75).[127] This imperfection in the infused virtues has been another reason that commentators have said that the perfection of Christian virtue requires both infused and acquired virtues. As Dell'Olio concludes, "for Aquinas, the fully virtuous person could not be without the concomitant presence of the acquired virtues that would serve to eradicate the previous vicious dispositions" (2003, 138).

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[125] *passiones ad malum inclinantes non totaliter tolluntur… praevalet virtus infusa quantum ad hoc quod facit quod huiusmodi passiones etsi sentiantur, nullo tamen modo dominentur. Virtus enim infusa facit quod nullo modo obediatur concupiscentiis peccati*

[126] Commentators also appeal to Aquinas's claims about the compatibility of the infused virtues with contrary dispositions in I.II.65.3 ad 2. This passage was extensively discussed in the last section.

[127] Andrew Dell'Olio quotes from Sokolowski approvingly on these points, in his *Foundations of Moral Selfhood,* 138. See also Dahm (2015, 466-9).

As with the preceding sections, I will first raise some problems for the predominant interpretation, before illustrating how Aquinas can accommodate this imperfection with his account of growth in infused virtue. Once again, the primary difficulty with this view is that the infused and acquired virtues cannot coexist as distinct virtues on Aquinas's view (see Section 3.4.3). Therefore, if the influence of contrary passions can recede in the Christian life, this must have something to do with the infused virtues. Second, Aquinas parts ways with Aristotle in his understanding of the relationship between the passions and the acquired virtues: Aquinas thinks that there can be contrary passions in a person with acquired virtue as well. This means that an easy appeal to the acquired virtues will not solve this imperfection of the infused virtues. In that same reply from the *Disputed Questions on Virtue*, Aquinas addresses both types of virtue. He writes, "Those [passions] that incline us towards evil are not completely removed either through acquired or through infused virtue, except, maybe, by a miracle" (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14).[128] Aquinas goes on to explain that the two types of virtue moderate these unruly passions in different ways. We have already seen that the infused virtues are effective in keeping the passions from taking control. In contrast, the acquired virtues are "effective to the extent that the struggle is felt less" (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14).[129] Thus, Aquinas reveals that Christian teachings about the fall of man and the sinful nature have led him to

[128] (*passiones ad malum inclinantes non totaliter tolluntur neque per virtutem acquisitam neque per virtutem infusam, nisi forte miraculose*) In support of this claim, Aquinas cites Paul as evidence against the Aristotelian view of virtue as immune to contrary passion: "For the struggle of the flesh against the spirit always remains, even when we possess moral virtue. St. Paul says about this in Galatians 5:17, 'The flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh'" (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14) (*quia semper remanet colluctatio carnis contra spiritum, etiam post moralem virtutem; de qua dicit apostolus, Gal., V, 17, quod caro concupiscit adversus spiritum, spiritus autem adversus carnem*).

[129] *praevalet quantum ad hoc quod talis impugnatio minus sentitur*

be more pessimistic than Aristotle about the possibility of the full transformation of the passions in this life.[130]

Despite this pessimism, Aquinas does think that the struggle between the spirit and the flesh can recede in the course of the Christian life. My main goal, in this section, is to show that this recession occurs as a result of growth in infused virtue, and not the development of the acquired virtues. On this view, the first stage of infused virtue just is continence—at least for those virtues which concern the passions.[131] The believer develops perfect virtue upon progressing into the later stages of infused virtue.

Before laying out my interpretation, I should note that it would be quite strange if Aquinas were committed to the identification of the first stage of infused virtue with continence, for two reasons. First, the two qualities do not have the same subject within the soul. Consider continence in its narrow sense: this disposition resides in the will (II.II.155.3), whereas temperance perfects the concupiscible power. How could the first stage of infused temperance be in a completely different part of the soul than infused temperance itself? Second, Aquinas, like Aristotle, is explicit that continence is not a virtue:

> continence has something of the nature of a virtue, in so far, to wit, as the reason stands firm in opposition to the passions, lest it be led astray by them: yet it does not attain to the perfect nature (*ratio*) of a moral virtue, by which even the sensitive appetite is subject to reason so that vehement

[130] For an insightful discussion of the relationship between virtue and the passions in the Middle Ages, see Kent, *Virtues of the Will*, Chapters 4 and 5.

[131] There is some ambiguity here because both Aristotle and Aquinas alternate between two different senses of "continence." In its narrow sense, "continence" refers to a disposition that deals with the same objects as temperance. In the general sense, it refers to a stage of moral development just below virtue, which produces actions in accord with reason, but involves contrary passions. Throughout this section, I typically use the term in the general sense. This will include the state of continence (in the first sense), which is associated with the virtue of temperance, and Aristotle's state of endurance (*NE* 7.7), which is associated with the virtue of fortitude. I note whenever I use the term in the narrow sense.

> passions contrary to reason do not arise in the sensitive appetite (II.II.155.1).[132]

If the first stage of infused temperance is continence, then it is hard to see how it counts as virtue at all, except perhaps in an analogous sense. Furthermore, when we apply this idea to "continence" in its general sense, it turns out that none of the infused virtues dealing with the passions—temperance and fortitude—attain the perfect *ratio* of virtue when present in their first stage.

Despite these reasons, I submit that Aquinas's views commit him to the idea that the first stage of infused virtue (at least in the case of temperance and fortitude) is continence. Recall his description of the first stage of charity: "the main pursuit that presses upon a person is to keep away from sin and to resist his concupiscence, which move him away from charity" (II.II.24.9).[133] It is clear that the person with beginning charity possesses contrary passions in her sensitive appetite. But as I pointed out in the last section, Aquinas also holds that all of the infused moral virtues are infused with charity (I.II.65.3). Hence, the person with beginning charity also possesses the infused virtues of temperance and fortitude. From this, it is clear that Aquinas is committed to the following two points regarding beginners in charity: (1) they have passions in the sensitive appetite that are contrary to divine law,[134] and (2) they possess the infused

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[132] *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 rationi sic ut in eo non insurgant vehementes passiones rationi contrariae.*

[133] *studium principale ad recedendum a peccato et resistendum concupiscentiis eius, quae in contrarium caritatis movent*

[134] Admittedly, Aquinas only claims that the concupiscence that the beginner experiences "move[s] him away from charity" (II.II.24.9). On his view, though, anything that is contrary to charity will be contrary to divine law. Furthermore, he teaches that beginners must work to "keep away from sin," which is certainly contrary to divine law.

virtues of temperance and fortitude. Consequently, he is committed to the view that infused temperance and fortitude (at one of the stages, at least) are compatible with contrary passions in the sensitive appetite. In the last section, I demonstrated that Aquinas is also committed to the idea that the stages of charity apply to all the infused virtues, and that one's progress in charity corresponds to one's progress in the other virtues. It follows from these commitments, that the first stage of infused temperance and fortitude is continence.[135]

This conclusion will have some surprising metaphysical implications for our understanding of growth in infused virtue. Take infused temperance, for example. Those with beginning temperance are primarily concerned with resisting the contrary movements of the sensitive appetite. This means that the sensitive appetite has not been perfected by a habit. In fact, since the infused virtues are compatible with contrary dispositions (I.II.65.3 ad 2), the sensitive appetite might have dispositions inclining it to relate to its objects in ways that are contrary to divine law.[136] Instead, in the first stage of infused temperance, the will is the subject of the habit, just as continence is in the will (II.II.155.3). Recall that the primary pursuit of beginners in infused virtue is one of resisting concupiscence. Notice the similarity, then, when Aquinas writes:

> Continence has for its matter the desires for pleasures of touch, not as moderating them… but its business with them is to resist them. For this reason it must be in another power, since resistance is of one thing against another (II.II.155.3 ad 1).[137]

[135] Interestingly, Aquinas does teach that continence is infused with grace and the other infused virtues (I.II.109.10).

[136] These dispositions will not have the status of habits, since Aquinas teaches that charity (and any virtue, for that matter) is incompatible with vice (I.II.71.1).

[137] *continentia habet materiam concupiscentias delectationum tactus, non sicut quas moderetur… sed est circa eas quasi eis resistens. Unde oportet quod sit in alia vi, quia resistentia est alterius ad alterum.*

In this way, when an alcoholic becomes a Christian and receives infused temperance, the initial perfection resides in the will. While she might still possess an inordinate desire for alcohol (at least for a time), her will has been perfected in such a way that she is now able to resist that desire.[138]

After a period of growth, those with proficient temperance seek primarily to move the sensitive appetite into line with God's will, so that they desire the goods of food, drink, and sex in a way that honors Him. At this point, the perfection begins to flow from the will into the sensitive appetite, and a habit begins to develop there. For the most part, the sensitive appetite is moved in ways that are consistent with the divine law, though there may be a few instances in which it is unruly and must be resisted by the will.

Finally, perfect temperance involves abiding with God and enjoying these material goods as He created us to.[139] At this stage, both the will and the sensitive appetite are perfected by habits. For the most part, then, the passions of the sensitive appetite will be consonant with divine law. We must say for the most part, because Aquinas follows Augustine in affirming that contrary desires are a permanent feature of this life (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14).[140]

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[138] As Aquinas writes, "infused virtue means that we refrain totally from obeying sinful desires, and as long as it remains in us, we do so unfailingly" (*QDV* 1.10 ad 14) (*Virtus enim infusa facit quod nullo modo obediatur concupiscentiis peccati; et facit hoc infallibiliter ipsa manente*). Cf. Sherwin, "Infused Virtue."

[139] For Aquinas, this probably involves "so far as nature allows, neglecting the needs of the body" (I.II.61.5). (*vero relinquat, inquantum natura patitur, quae corporis usus requirit*)

[140] In his *Commentary on Galatians,* Aquinas describes temperance in the following way: "Finally, those who are temperate do what they would, inasmuch as there is no lust in the tamed flesh; but because it cannot be totally tamed so as never to rise up against the spirit—just as neither can malice so abound that reason would never complain—therefore, in those instances in which they do lust, they are doing what they would not; but for the most part they do what they would" (5.4). (*Temperati vero, quod volunt quidem faciunt, inquantum in carne domata non concupiscunt, sed quia non ex toto domari potest, quin in aliquo repugnet spiritui, sicut nec malitia intantum crescere potest quin ratio remurmuret, ideo, cum aliquando concupiscunt, faciunt quod nolunt, plus tamen de eo, quod volunt.)* All translations from the

Having shown that Aquinas is committed to the view that the first stage of infused virtue is continence, I must address the two reasons I cited for the strangeness of this conclusion. First, I mentioned that continence and virtues like temperance and fortitude are not in the same subject within the soul. Thus, we end up with the odd result that beginning temperance is in the will, whereas later stages of temperance are in the sensitive appetite. While this is a strange result, it is not inconsistent with Aquinas's views. As we have seen throughout this dissertation, his understanding of human psychology is subtle enough to account for overflow and interworking between the different parts of the soul. Furthermore, this account actually fits nicely with our experience of the Christian life and the diminishing struggle between the Spirit and the flesh. Second, I pointed out that Aquinas teaches that continence is not a virtue (II.II.155.1). This suggests that the first stage of infused *virtue* is not, after all, a virtue. But notice what Aquinas says in Question 155: he says that continence "does not attain to the perfect nature (*ratio*) of a moral virtue" (155.1).[141] There is an important sense in which continence does attain the *ratio* of virtue—it simply does not do so perfectly.[142] It should not be surprising, however, that the first stage of infused virtue does not attain the

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Commentary on Galatians are from *Commentary on the Letters of Saint Paul to the Galatians and Ephesians*, trans. Fabian R. Larcher and Matthew Lamb, ed. John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcón (Lander: The Aquinas Institute, 2012). The Latin Teenrixt is from the Taurini Edition, transcribed by Roberto Busa SJ, rev. by Enrique Alarcón (Pamplona: Fundación Tomás de Aquino, 2011).

[141] *non tamen attingit ad perfectam rationem virtutis moralis*

[142] As he explains elsewhere, continence differs from virtue as imperfect from perfect (II.II.143.1 ad 1).

perfect *ratio* of virtue. Only those in the third stage of infused virtue are described as perfect.[143]

In conclusion, I have demonstrated that growth in infused virtue can remedy the perceived imperfection of contrary passions in those who possess the infused virtues. Rather than taking Aquinas's comments to apply to infused virtue in general—and concluding that these contrary passions must be moderated by the acquired virtues—one can understand them to apply only to the first stages of infused virtue. This is supported by a claim that Aquinas makes in the *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, Question 1, Article 10. In response to the 15th objection (just after the one we have been discussing in this section), he writes that "infused virtue does not always remove the experience of the [passions] straight away (*a principio*)" (*QDV* 1.10 ad 15).[144] As with the imperfection of lack of facility, Aquinas seems to associate these contrary passions with the initial stages of infused virtue. While these passions will not disappear entirely, growth in infused virtue can help us feel them less strongly.

This section began with three imperfections of infused virtues—lack of stability, lack of facility, and the presence of inordinate passions—that have led commentators to conclude that Christians should develop the acquired virtues in addition to their infused virtues. For each imperfection, I have argued that Aquinas's relevant comments should be

[143] In this way, Aquinas's view of infused virtue is very similar to that of some later medieval theologians who hold that all virtues reside in the will. As Bonnie Kent notes, Richard of Middleton and Scotus both suggest that the subject of virtue is the will, but that perfect virtue leaves a habit or impression in the sensitive appetite as well (1995, 232-42). Speaking of Scotus, she writes that "he says that continence and temperance are different grades of the same species of virtue. This would suggest that Scotus's position is the same as Richard of Middleton's: virtue in the will is compatible with disorder in the sense appetite, but perfect virtue is not (1995, 241-2). My interpretation of Aquinas's views would suggest that Aquinas had an even greater role in the transition by which virtues came to be associated with the will than Kent claims.

[144] *a principio virtus infusa non semper ita tollit sensum passionum*

restricted to the first stages of infused virtue. Then I demonstrated that his account of growth in infused virtue can remedy each of the three imperfections. This completes my case against the presence of the acquired virtues in the Christian life. In the last chapter, I showed that, on Aquinas's account, the acquired and infused virtues cannot coexist in the Christian as distinct virtues. Now I have shown that the reasons that many commentators appeal to the acquired virtues can be accommodated by Aquinas's account of growth in the stages of infused virtue.

4.4 Conclusion

I began this chapter by illustrating the importance of growth in infused virtue. In addition to being necessary for *beatitudo,* spiritual development of this sort is partly determinative for our actual experience of *beatitudo*. In the heart of the chapter, I explicated Aquinas's understanding of the metaphysical dimension of growth in infused virtue and the stages that are involved. In the last section, I addressed a common misunderstanding of Aquinas's vision of the Christian moral life. Rather than revealing a need for the acquired moral virtues, the imperfections of the infused virtues (in their initial stages) point out the need for growth in infused virtue.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusion

I began this dissertation by noting that Aquinas inherits two distinct visions of the flourishing human life. On the one hand, Aristotle portrays a soul in harmony with reason as the result of her own habituation in the virtues. Augustine, on the other hand, emphasizes a divine source of the virtues, and makes the sort of inner harmony that Aristotle had envisioned into an ideal to be pursued, but only attained in the next life. Aquinas's work is rightly recognized as bringing these two visions into harmony—though the harmony is often limited to a crude combination of Aristotle's acquired virtues aimed at one kind of happiness and Augustine's infused virtues aimed at another. This dissertation has involved a close consideration of Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue with an eye toward recognizing the important Augustinian *and* Aristotelian dimensions of that teaching, and the ways in which Aquinas is reshaping our understanding of virtue along the way.

5.1 Summary of Discussion

Recognizing that Aquinas's views on growth in infused virtue cannot be adequately understood apart from his general teachings on habit and virtue, Chapters Two and Three provided the necessary groundwork.

In Chapter Two, I laid out Aquinas's teaching on habit in Questions 49-54 of the *prima secundae* by exploring three important topics: the essence of habit, its cause, and its increase. Regarding the essence of habit, I pointed out that habits are qualities (a

particular type of accidental form) through which their subjects exist in determinate ways that make reference to the nature of those subjects. In human beings, genuine habits can only exist in the soul and most exist in the intellectual and appetitive powers. This includes, most notably, the will, which is the subject of some habits, but is involved in the exercise of all habits. I went on to explain that Aquinas identifies two main causes of the habits that are most relevant for this project—the virtues. These habits are either caused by habituation or divine infusion. The chapter concluded by identifying the two ways in which habits are susceptible to increase: in terms of the habit itself and in terms of the subject's participation in the habit. While the former is important for habits in the intellect (e.g., faith and prudence), the latter is most relevant when it comes to growth in the infused virtues. I noted that Aquinas envisions three ways that subjects can increase in their participation in a habit: (1) an agent actualizes more of their potential, (2) their potential increases through the removal of contrary forms, or (3) their potential increases through the addition of disposing forms.

The goal of Chapter Three was to elucidate Aquinas's understanding of the essence of the infused virtues in particular. To that end, I began with his teaching concerning virtue in general, highlighting its essence, subject, and distinct types. I demonstrated that the essence of virtue, while generally captured in the Aristotelian phrase "good, operative habit," is most perfectly expressed in the Augustinian definition: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us" (55.4 arg.1). On Aquinas's view, virtues can be present in the will, sensitive appetite, and intellect, and there are four main types: intellectual, acquired moral, infused moral, and theological (see Table 1). Next, I

narrowed my focus to infused virtues, in particular. I identified and explained the two types of infused virtues that Aquinas discusses—infused moral virtue and infused theological virtue. I also highlighted the fact that Aquinas harmonizes Aristotle and Augustine in teaching that these virtues, which are somewhat peculiar habits, achieve the *ratio* of virtue most perfectly. The chapter concluded by addressing two important issues concerning the infused virtues. First, I discussed Scotus's reasons for questioning the existence of the infused *moral* virtues, before defending them on the basis of their explanatory value. Second, I situated the infused virtues within Aquinas's complex psychology, which includes the elements of grace, gifts of the Holy Spirit, beatitudes, fruits, and acquired virtues.

With this groundwork in place, I turned, in Chapter Four, to the task of laying out Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue. I began by developing a metaphysical account of this phenomenon on the basis of Chapter Two's discussion of increase in habits and Aquinas's explicit teaching on the increase of infused virtues (especially in *QDV* 1.11 and *STh* II.II.24.4-9). Then I discussed the three stages of infused virtue laid out in II.II.24.9 and explicated them in terms of the preceding metaphysical account. Aquinas teaches that believers progress through the stages of infused virtue by increases in their potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the virtue, which God can then actualize. In beginners, this potentiality primarily increases through the removal of forms that are contrary to the infused virtues. In those with progressing infused virtue, it is by a combination of the actualization of disposing forms and the removal of contrary forms. Finally, in the perfect, this increase occurs through the continued actualization of disposing forms. This understanding of growth in infused virtue was then employed in

correcting some important misunderstandings surrounding the imperfections that Aquinas associates with the infused virtues—lack of stability, lack of facility, and the presence of inordinate passions. While most interpreters take these imperfections as evidence that Christians need to develop the acquired moral virtues, I argued that growth in infused virtue is an effective remedy. When the imperfections are restricted to the early stages of infused virtue, there is no need for the continued presence of the acquired virtues in the Christian—she simply needs to grow in infused virtue.

5.2 Auctoritates *in Harmony*

At the outset of the dissertation, I mentioned three areas of tension between the visions of human flourishing presented by Aristotle and Augustine. The first concerns the source of the virtues: Aristotle teaches that they are the result of the natural process of habituation, while Augustine teaches that they are given by God through the supernatural process of infusion. The second area of tension involves the place of contrary emotions and desires in the virtuous life: whereas Aristotle envisions an inner harmony between all the parts of the soul in obedience to reason, Augustine teaches that the life of virtue is one that involves a perpetual struggle (in this life) with fleshly passions and desires. Closely connected with this tension, the third area concerns the distinct understandings of temperance: for Aristotle, the temperate person not only acts in ways that are consistent with reason, but also has appetites that are thoroughly consistent with reason. Augustine, on the other hand, describes temperance as resisting the evil desires of the flesh. In other words, Augustine's temperance is Aristotle's continence.

In the introduction, I suggested that Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue shows some of the deepest evidence of the harmony between Aristotle and

Augustine that pervades his moral thinking. With that teaching laid out in the intervening pages, we can now take a closer look at the way in which Aquinas achieves harmony in these three areas of tension.

On the issue of the source of the virtues, it may seem like Aquinas sides entirely with Augustine: after all, he writes, "only the infused virtues are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply" (I.II.65.2).[1] As I pointed out in Section 3.2.2, however, Aquinas has a thoroughly Aristotelian basis for recognizing the infused virtues as virtues *simpliciter*. Aristotle's etymological definition of virtue as a perfection of a power, which serves as the starting point for Aquinas's discussion of virtue in the *Summa* (I.II.55.1), is what leads him to this conclusion. When Aquinas combines that definition with another Aristotelian point—that perfection is considered chiefly in regard to the end (I.II.55.1)—it follows that the infused virtues perfect their powers in the highest sense of "perfect." Only these virtues direct their subjects toward the ultimate end of *beatitudo*. Thus, it is for Aristotelian reasons that Augustinian infused virtue is recognized as fulfilling the *ratio* of virtue most perfectly.

Additionally, Aquinas gently corrects Augustine's harsh view of pagan virtue by recognizing the acquired virtues (even in those who do not know Christ) as genuine virtues. Harmony is achieved through Aquinas's simultaneous embrace of acquired virtue and recognition of its limitations. While these virtues are genuine perfections, they perfect human beings in relation to an imperfect end.[2]

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[1] *solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter*

[2] See Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, for a wonderful discussion of Aquinas on pagan virtue, and pages 260-2 for the idea that Aquinas subjects Augustine to fraternal correction on this issue.

Finally, there is also a harmonizing of Aristotle and Augustine in Aquinas's views on the source of our growth in infused virtue. Aquinas employs an Aristotelian account of what it means for a habit to increase—the subject coming to participate in the form to a greater extent[3]—while maintaining, in Augustinian fashion, that God alone can serve as the agent in this process. Despite the fact that only God can directly increase our infused virtues, Section 4.1.4 explained that our actions can indirectly increase those virtues by increasing our potentiality for a greater participation in the virtues. For the most part, this process works just like Aristotelian habituation: by performing acts of the virtues, we remove contrary forms and actualize disposing forms. The key difference is that, with the infused virtues, this process only increases our potentiality for a greater participation in them, whereas it is capable of actualizing the increased potentiality for a greater participation in the Aristotelian acquired virtues. Thus, Aristotle's understanding of habituation and the underlying metaphysics is harmonized with Augustinian commitments to the weakness and limitation of human nature on its own.

Regarding the issue of contrary emotions and desires in the life of the virtuous person, Aquinas's teachings on growth in infused virtue provide him with a way of incorporating insights from Aristotle and Augustine, while subtly correcting both. As we saw in Sections 4.3.2 and 4.3.3, Aquinas initially sides with Augustine in teaching that contrary emotions are a permanent feature of the virtuous life on this side of eternity. In claiming that "Those [passions] that incline us towards evil are not completely removed either through acquired or through infused virtue, except, maybe, by a miracle" (*QDV*

[3] This account is Aristotelian in the general sense that it is consistent with Aristotle's teaching on habit. While Aristotle hints at the account that we find in Question 52 of the *prima secundae*, Aquinas turns to Aristotle's Neoplatonic commentators—especially Simplicius—as resources for developing the account.

1.10 ad 14),[4] Aquinas corrects Aristotle with Paul (Galatians 5 and Romans 7). Nonetheless, Aquinas also corrects Augustine for his overly pessimistic attitude toward the place of contrary emotions in the Christian life. Aquinas teaches that the influence of these contrary emotions can recede as the Christian grows in infused virtue.[5] As a result of this growth, she can come to experience facility in acting out of her virtues and a greater sense of harmony between her will and sensitive appetite.

Similarly, the account of growth in infused virtue allows Aquinas to bring Aristotle and Augustine into harmony on a topic about which they seem nearly irreconcilable—temperance. As I argued in Section 4.3.3, Aquinas's views commit him (despite never explicitly endorsing the position) to the idea that the first stage of infused virtue is continence. In this way, his account of infused temperance is similar to Augustine's, on which temperance "bridles carnal lusts, and prevents them from winning the consent of the spirit to wicked deeds" (*City of God* XIX.4). By suggesting that later stages of infused temperance involve less opposition between spirit and flesh, however, Aquinas pushes Augustine's account in the direction of Aristotle. While infused temperance begins as a perfection in the will, this perfection flows into and transforms the sensitive appetite as the believer progresses through the stages of infused virtue. Finally, at the stage of perfect temperance, both the will and the sensitive appetite are perfected by habits. For the most part, the passions of the sensitive appetite will be

[4] *passiones ad malum inclinantes non totaliter tolluntur neque per virtutem acquisitam neque per virtutem infusam, nisi forte miraculose*

[5] This is not to suggest that Augustine denies progress within the Christian life. As Herdt points out, Augustine "certainly does think that progress can be made in the Christian life by training the concupiscent appetites to submit readily to reason," (2008, 71). Nonetheless, it is fair to say that Aquinas's understanding of perfect infused virtue is closer to Aristotle's ideal of inner harmony than what Augustine would see as attainable in this life.

consonant with divine law, achieving something close to the inner harmony that Aristotle saw as characteristic of the life of virtue. For Aquinas, then, infused temperance begins as Augustinian temperance, undergoes transformative growth (a process involving both Aristotelian and Augustinian elements), and ends up looking very similar to Aristotelian temperance.

In these ways, Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue brings Aristotle and Augustine into harmony on the very issues where their visions of human flourishing are most divergent.

5.3 Situating the Project

As I bring this dissertation to a close, it will be helpful to situate it in relation to two interpretive trends that enjoy prominent places within contemporary secondary literature on Aquinas. The first trend involves a renewed interest in Aquinas's views on "pagan virtue," and is best represented in Jennifer Herdt's *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* and David Decosimo's *Ethics as a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue*.[6] The second trend involves a new perspective on Aquinas's moral thinking, which emphasizes the gifts, fruits, and beatitudes, and understands the virtues in light of these attributes. Andrew Pinsent's *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* and Eleonore Stump's "The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions" are representative of this trend.

[6] While Aquinas never uses the phrase "pagan virtue," he does reflect on the nature of the virtue that can be attained by those that do not know Christ and have not received saving grace. These writers recognize that "pagan virtue" is not one of Aquinas's categories, and are careful to work within his categories to determine what he had to say about the phenomenon in question.

In some ways, these trends can be seen as emphasizing the Aristotelian and Augustinian aspects, respectively, of Aquinas's thought.

With regard to the first trend, both Herdt and Decosimo call attention to the fact that Aquinas takes a more positive approach to pagan virtue than Augustine. Instead of seeing the virtues of non-Christians as thinly-veiled instances of pride and disorder, Aquinas sees them as genuine human excellences. Herdt faults Aquinas, however, because his "generous account of pagan virtue relies on distinctions between acquired and infused, moral and theological virtues that prove ambiguous and that thus leave his synthesis [of Aristotle and Augustine] vulnerable to later critique" (2008, 12). In addition to these "ambiguous" distinctions, Herdt worries about Aquinas's account of the infused virtues, in particular. She describes it as "problematic" that

> Aquinas was forced to give an account of the infused virtues as in one sense perfectly infused and in another sense only potential, impotent, and requiring a form of development that looked very much like the habituation involved in the acquired virtues" (2008, 12-3).

These "difficulties" with Aquinas's account of pagan virtue, and the moral life as a whole, lead Herdt to abandon Aquinas for the "more holistic" account that she finds in the Christian humanism of Erasmus.[7]

While this dissertation has only addressed pagan virtue indirectly, it has made significant progress in vindicating Aquinas of the charges that Herdt levels. Through a close examination of Aquinas's teaching on the infused virtues, I have provided clarity on the "ambiguous" distinctions between the acquired and infused virtues, and between the moral and theological virtues. Furthermore, an accurate understanding of Aquinas's

[7] See *Putting on Virtue*, 94-7 and Chapter 4.

views on growth in infused virtue has revealed the brilliant harmony that he achieves in bringing together Aristotelian habituation and Augustinian infusion.

Decosimo, on the other hand, offers a more positive account of Aquinas on pagan virtue. He suggests that Aquinas's teaching on this topic provides a model of how Christians ought to engage with those that behave and think differently. "Prophetic Thomism," according to Decosimo, is the way modeled by Aquinas—a "particular way of doing ethics and being in the world that is at once generous and faithful, hopeful and committed, patterned after God's way with us" (2014, 9). In many ways, Decosimo's work on pagan virtue has served as an inspiration for parts of this dissertation. As he seeks to demonstrate that Aquinas is Aristotelian by being Augustinian and vice versa in his welcome and appreciation of pagan acquired virtue, I seek to demonstrate the harmony that Aquinas achieves between Aristotle and Augustine in his teaching on growth in infused virtue. Thus, I see our projects as mutually illuminating and encouraging.

Decosimo provides another way in which to understand the relationship between our projects. He suggests that an ethics for the church must accomplish three tasks. First, it must take "sin seriously and [give] grace and the grace-giving Christ priority in all things" (2014, 9). Second, it must aid the church in its "duty to be a primary locus for her people's formation into holiness and virtue" (9). Third, it must address "the church's way with what it is not" (10). In other words, this third task concerns the ways in which the church engages the cultures, organizations, and individuals that do not belong to it. Decosimo understands his explication of and engagement with Aquinas's views on pagan virtue primarily as a contribution to the third task. In contrast, this dissertation has been a

contribution to the second task. In laying out Aquinas's understanding of growth in infused virtue, I hope to help the church in teaching her people about spiritual formation and in leading them through that process. Together with Decosimo's project, this dissertation begins to work toward "a complete ethics for the church," which Decosimo claims, "must not only pursue each of these tasks (and more) but the still more difficult work of coordinating them" (2014, 10).

Decosimo also points out that Aquinas has extensive resources to contribute to the second task and claims that *Ethics as a Work of Charity* offers some suggestions along these lines. One of these suggestions is especially relevant for this dissertation: Decosimo suggests that Christians should seek to develop the acquired virtues in addition to their infused virtues. He writes, "Without acquired virtues, even those possessed of infused virtue will miss some of the joy and goodness God intends for humans; their contribution to the common good will not be as rich, as full, as it could be," (2014, 152). Decosimo goes on to develop this idea more fully in his paper, "More to Love: Ends, Ordering, and the Compatibility of Acquired and Infused Virtues." According to Decosimo: "For Thomas, Christians ought to pursue and use the acquired virtues. To fail to do so is a failure of discipleship. It is a failure of love" (2017, 47). He supports these claims in three main ways. First, he argues for the compatibility of the infused and acquired virtues in the Christian. Since, I have addressed these arguments in Section 3.4.3, I will not repeat them here. Second, Decosimo argues that infused moral virtue is no substitute for acquired virtue. "While infused virtues concerns beatitude, the all-encompassing good," Decosimo writes, "having the higher virtue does not involve having the lower. Nor does it replace the lower or enable action in accord with it" (2017, 56). On his view, while the

Christian with infused moral virtue alone will be able to avoid sin, she might not be able to act in the best possible way—i.e., the way that fulfills both the rule of new law and the rule of reason. Decosimo claims that, "there are a myriad of ways to fulfill [new law], to act according to its rule. And sometimes the best way to do so may be to undertake an act in immediate accord with right reason, an act of acquired virtue" (2017, 56-7).[8] In sum, Christians need to develop the acquired virtues in order to better engage with the world around them and to better fulfill the new law. Third, Decosimo appeals to the amount of space that Aquinas devotes to acquired virtue in the *Summa*—both in the *prima secundae* and throughout the *secunda secundae*'s discussion of the individual virtues.[9] We would not be able to make sense of the length of these discussions, Decosimo suggests, if Aquinas did not think that Christians could possess the acquired virtues.

Since I addressed Decosimo's arguments for the compatibility of acquired and infused virtues in Chapter Three, I will response to his second and third means of support here. Regarding the claim that the infused virtues are no substitute for the acquired virtues, Decosimo seems to misunderstand Aquinas's view of the relationship between the two rules associated with these virtues. Aquinas differentiates the infused and acquired virtues according to the rule which governs them: the infused virtues direct us to

[8] He brings this difference into sharp relief by contrasting two Christians at a faculty party: the Christian who possesses only infused virtue does not do anything wrong, but is pretty boring company, whereas the Christian with both acquired and infused virtue does all the right things and is more in tune with the different morally-relevant situations.

[9] Contra Angela McKay, "The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas' Moral Philosophy" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004), Andrew Pinsent, review of *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions,* by Robert Miner, *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* (2010), accessed October 9, 2017, https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/ thomas-aquinas-on-the-passions/, and Markus Christoph, "Justice as an Infused Virtue in the *Secunda Secundae* and Its Implications for Our Understanding of the Moral Life" (PhD diss., University of Fribourg, 2011), Decosimo suggests that Aquinas has both acquired and infused virtues in mind in the *secunda secundae*. While I do not have space to develop this point here, I agree with Decosimo. See "More to Love," 59 fn. 25, for Decosimo's list of passages that support this view.

the good which is defined according to the rule of divine law, while the acquired virtues direct us to the good defined according to the rule of human reason (I.II.63.2). Of these rules, Aquinas writes, "since divine law is the higher rule, it extends to more things, so that whatever is ruled by human reason, is ruled by the divine law too; but the converse does not hold," (I.II.63.2).[10] Thus, when we are well-ordered toward the good as defined by divine law (through the infused virtues), we are also well-ordered toward the good as defined by human reason.[11] In fact, we are better-ordered toward this lower good than we would be with the acquired virtues alone. This is because we are now ordered toward that good as a proximate good (further ordered to the final good) rather than as a final good. Therefore, I maintain that the Christian does not need the acquired virtues to better engage with the world around her or to better fulfill the new law.[12]

Regarding the frequent mention of acquired virtue in the *Summa*, there is a way to make sense of it on the assumption that Christians cannot possess the acquired virtues. First, the acquired virtues do not become irrelevant if Christians cannot possess them as distinct virtues; instead, they can still be valuable as preparations for receiving the infused virtues. Furthermore, Aquinas also has pedagogical reasons for devoting so much space to the acquired virtues. He is clearly building on and modifying Aristotle's account of the acquired virtues as he works through the *prima secundae*'s questions on habits and

[10] *Et quia lex divina est superior regula, ideo ad plura se extendit, ita quod quidquid regulatur ratione humana, regulatur etiam lege divina, sed non convertitur.*

[11] Of course, there may be instances when the two rules conflict, as in the case of temperance that Aquinas mentions in I.II.63.4. These instances will be the exception, however, because of the harmony between human reason, natural law, and divine law.

[12] Decosimo also goes wrong when he suggests that the new law sets a "low bar" for our actions, and that right reason seems to set a higher standard (2017, fn. 22). Nothing about Aquinas's treatment of new law in I.II.106-8 suggests that it is a "low bar."

virtues. Without devoting considerable time and effort to explicate the acquired virtues, Aquinas's readers would struggle to understand his discussions of the infused virtues. Finally, as a Dominican who is writing for his fellow members of the Order of Preachers, it is natural that Aquinas would want to prepare them to understand and interact with the virtue that might be present in those to whom they are preaching.

The second interpretive trend mentioned at the start of this section also falls within the second of Decosimo's tasks—aiding the church as she leads her people through spiritual formation. Andrew Pinsent and Eleonore Stump defend a new perspective on Aquinas's moral thought which prioritizes the gifts, fruits, and beatitudes, and seeks to explicate the virtues in light of these attributes. They argue that this new perspective will help us to better understand Aquinas's view of the moral life and guide our own moral development.

Both Pinsent and Stump are adamant in claiming that Aquinas's moral thought is "non-Aristotelian." They argue that the ways Aquinas expands the Aristotelian framework of virtue—by introducing *infused* virtues along with Christian attributes like the gifts, fruits, and beatitudes—are radical enough to require a whole new approach to understanding his work. For Pinsent, this means that we are in need of a new metaphoric understanding—a new "context within which specifications can be seen to cohere and make sense as a whole" (2012, xi). The metaphoric understanding that has long accompanied the Aristotelian approach to virtue is one of human strength, achievement, and habituation. Frequent experience and familiarity with physical strength and repetitive behavior provide us with a context within which we can understand Aristotle's teachings on the virtues and their connection to human flourishing. Pinsent argues that this

metaphoric understanding breaks down when we try to employ it to understand Aquinas's discussion of the virtues and associated attributes. In support of this claim, he points to Aquinas's use of the Augustinian definition of virtue, the many ways that the infused virtues seem to fall short of the Aristotelian notion of virtue, and the inadequacy of the acquired virtues in attaining *beatitudo*. While scholars have recognized the ways in which Aquinas goes beyond Aristotle, Pinsent thinks they have failed to replace the Aristotelian metaphoric understanding and that this has led to numerous misunderstandings.[13]

In response to this situation, Pinsent and Stump draw from contemporary work in social cognition to develop a new metaphoric understanding. They use the phenomenon of joint attention—when two people focus on some third object or person and are simultaneously aware of their shared focus—to provide a context within which to understand Aquinas's views. This new perspective emphasizes the way in which Aquinas presents a second-personal account of ethics, on which our relationships with others (and especially with God) are sources of non-propositional knowledge of those other persons.[14] This is most clearly seen in Aquinas's teaching on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which he describes as "habits perfecting man so that he is ready to follow the promptings of the Holy [Spirit]," (I.II.68.4).[15] In fact, Pinsent suggests that Aquinas's account of the gifts is the key to understanding his entire framework of virtues and associated attributes. Once we understand the gifts in terms of second-personal dispositions allowing us to

[13] He makes the same point more strongly in a recent paper titled, "Who's Afraid of the Infused Virtues? Dispositional Infusion, Human and Divine": "For infused virtues to be philosophically interesting, as opposed to skyhooks from revelation, there is a need to ground the concept of infusion on some embodied experience" (2017, 78).

[14] For more on this non-propositional knowledge that Stump refers to as "social cognition," see "The Non-Aristotelian," 37.

[15] *habitus perficientes hominem ad hoc quod prompte sequatur instinctum spiritus sancti*

share God's stance toward some object or situation, we can understand the infused virtues as first-personal dispositions that achieve the same result. On this account, the infused theological virtues are aimed at union with God, whereas the infused moral virtues are aimed at sharing God's stance toward the objects of those virtues.[16]

Pinsent and Stump would likely fault this dissertation for its failure to employ a new metaphoric understanding (or their metaphoric understanding) in explaining Aquinas's views on the infused virtues. In fact, according to these thinkers, it is with the infused virtues that the breakdown of the Aristotelian metaphoric understanding is most clearly on display.

While I do not agree with this charge, there is much that can be learned from this interpretive trend. The work of Pinsent and Stump is especially helpful in understanding the phenomenology of the virtues, gifts, and associated attributes. The contemporary work on social cognition illuminates aspects of our experience of the virtues that may not have been clear before. It also provides an everyday experience—that of joint attention—that can help us to understand Aquinas's austere talk of "habits that make us amenable to the motion of the Holy Spirit" (i.e., the gifts). Furthermore, I agree with Pinsent and Stump when they suggest that the infused virtues, or any part of Aquinas's moral framework, cannot be fully understood apart from the rest of that framework. To truly understand the way in which Aquinas thinks that God perfects human beings for *beatitudo*, one must not lose sight of grace, the virtues (intellectual, acquired, and infused), the gifts, the fruits, or the beatitudes. Each of these attributes is interconnected and vitally important.

[16] Union and shared stance are the two main elements in the phenomenon of joint attention. See *The Second-Person Perspective*, 67ff.

Nevertheless, Pinsent and Stump go too far in distancing Aquinas's thought from its Aristotelian roots. For example, Pinsent claims that the Aristotelian metaphoric understanding breaks down when Aquinas introduces the infused virtues, but this dissertation has shown that Aquinas preserves both Augustinian and Aristotelian insights in his teaching on those virtues. Similarly, Stump concludes that on Aquinas's view, the Aristotelian acquired virtues are "not real virtues at all" (2011, 34). While it is tough to know exactly what she means by this ambiguous expression, this dissertation has made it clear that the acquired virtues are virtues on Aquinas's account. Although they are virtues *secundum quid* and not virtues *simpliciter* (I.II.65.2), they are virtues, nonetheless.[17]

In their attempt to remove Aristotle's influence and the associated metaphoric understanding, Pinsent and Stump end up with some important interpretive problems. In the first place, they do violence to Aquinas's own pedagogy in the *Summa*. He is deliberate in beginning his discussion of the intrinsic principles of human actions with a largely Aristotelian account of habit (I.II.49-54). Furthermore, in the first question on virtue, Aquinas gives an Aristotelian account of the essence of virtue in the first three articles before laying out the famous Augustinian definition in the fourth. Aristotle's teachings on habit and virtue are vital, Aquinas thinks, in helping his readers to understand what he will go on to say about virtue. Of course, Pinsent and Stump are right to see the ways in which Aquinas extends and corrects Aristotle's view of virtue and human happiness. These extensions and corrections are not, however, reasons to find a whole new system or way of understanding Aquinas. Rather, it is as we follow Aquinas through the difficult task of incorporating (when he is right) and correcting (when he is

[17] See also Decosimo, *Ethics as a Work of Charity*, and Dahm, "The Acquired Virtues," on this point.

wrong) Aristotle, that we come to learn about the nature of virtue. Put differently, one can only really understand Aquinas on this topic when one understands Aristotle's moral philosophy and comes to appreciate the ways Aquinas both employs and corrects it.[18]

A second problem that arises in the context of this interpretive trend involves a tendency to misread Aquinas, which results from the desire to distance him from Aristotle. In Pinsent's work, for example, he consistently uses the term "disposition" to refer to the virtues and gifts, when Aquinas is quite clear that the virtues—even the infused virtues—and the gifts are habits. Since all habits are dispositions, on Aquinas's account, this may seem like a small point.[19] On the contrary, Pinsent's use of "disposition" leads him into serious misunderstandings. Consider the following passage:

> Once one begins to think of Aquinas's virtue ethics in terms of the metaphor of joint attention or second-person relatedness rather than habituation in the Aristotelian sense, then many of his statements coalesce in fruitful ways around this image. This change of metaphor does not mean that Aquinas does not value habituation, *or that the actions of the infused virtues, reinforced by repetition, cannot also become habits*. Nevertheless, in Aquinas' account of flourishing with God, in a triadic situation of joint attention with respect to the matters of the infused dispositions, *infused virtues can exist without habits*, and habits can exist without infused virtues. Aquinas also states that *infused virtues can exist with contrary, previously acquired (though possibly also latent) bad habits* (2017, 85, emphasis mine).

By claiming that infused virtues can "become habits" or can "exist without habits," Pinsent demonstrates that he has failed to grasp one of Aquinas's most basic points about virtue—namely, that virtues are habits. On Aquinas's picture, it is nonsensical to say that

[18] Consider the following claim from Pinsent: "Even on the most optimistic projection, much of what is described in *STh* I-II and II-II can never fit into an Aristotelian framework, and even the material that seems to fit risks being distorted by the attempt" (2017, 92-3). While the Aristotelian framework cannot contain Aquinas's discussion, I maintain that it is vital to understand that discussion as coming out of the Aristotelian framework.

[19] As we saw in Section 2.1.3, Aquinas is not entirely clear about the relationship between habit and disposition, which means that the issue is slightly more complex than I suggest in the text.

the infused virtues can be present without habits. Furthermore, Pinsent misses a crucial distinction when he claims that the infused virtues can exist alongside contrary "bad habits." While Aquinas does say that the infused virtues can coexist with contrary *dispositions* (I.II.65.3 ad 2), he is clear that they cannot coexist with contrary *habits* (I.II.71.1). Thus, Pinsent's attempt to distance Aquinas from the Aristotelian language of "habit" causes him to miss central points in Aquinas's teaching on the virtues.

In sum, Pinsent and Stump have made a valuable contribution to the contemporary discussions surrounding Aquinas's moral thought, but they are wrong to suggest that the Aristotelian metaphoric understanding must be rejected altogether. To understand Aquinas, we cannot lose sight of the Aristotelian picture of virtue that he both employs and corrects.[20]

5.4 Implications

In closing, there are two important implications of this project that I will discuss. First, our study of Aquinas's view of growth in infused virtue gives us a better picture of the trajectory of moral thought in the Scholastic period. Second, this study contributes to our understanding of the interplay between divine and human causes in our moral formation.

[20] In some ways, Pinsent's idea of the incompatibility of the Aristotelian metaphoric understanding and his own joint attention metaphoric understanding is the result of a misunderstanding of Aristotle. He concludes *The Second-Person Perspective* with a story about a man playing a simple game involving matchsticks and tumblers with a small child. Pinsent describes the wonderful ways in which the girl seemed to be learning and developing as a result of this game, which he sees as an example of joint attention. He goes on to write, "I could find no trace of any understanding of this interaction in the works of Aristotle, who wrote comparatively little about children and sometimes classified them with animals, to be guided by the reins of pleasure and pain" (2011, 109). To suggest that Aristotle did not understand an interaction like this, or that these types of interactions are not involved in Aristotle's concept of habituation, strikes me as quite strange. After all, Aristotle wrote the following: "For virtue of character is concerned with pleasures and pains: it is because of pleasure that we do bad actions, and pain that we abstain from noble ones. It is for this reason that we need to have been brought up in a particular way from our early days, as Plato says, so we might find enjoyment or pain in the right things; for the right education is just this" (*NE* 1104b).

Bonnie Kent has noted the importance of medieval conceptions of the will for understanding moral thinking from that time period in her *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*. She seeks to resist the common narrative that portrays Scotus and Ockham as revolutionary figures who relegate virtuous habits to the will alone, thereby beginning the end of virtue ethics and paving the way for the Kantian approach.[21] Kent recognizes that while Aquinas locates the virtues of temperance and fortitude in the sensitive appetite, most of those teaching and writing in the late 13th and early 14th Centuries (not just Scotus and Ockham) held that the will was the subject of all moral virtues.[22] With insightful discussions of the views of Aquinas and these later thinkers on voluntarism, incontinence, and virtues of the will, Kent highlights the complexities involved in this important transformation. One of her most important suggestions is that Aquinas might have had a bigger part to play in the transformation than is typically recognized. She asks,

> Was it only Scotus and his fellow travelers who began the transformation of classical virtue ethics that eventually produced the Kantian good will? Or was the transformation already taking place, albeit more subtly, in the works of Aquinas? (1995, 254).[23]

While Kent's reasons for this suggestion deal with Aquinas's views on the relationship between habits and the will, this dissertation has revealed another possible explanation.

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[21] One can find versions of this story in Etienne Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York: Random House, 1955) and Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy,* Vol. 2 (New York: Doubleday, 1993).

[22] She lists Bonaventure, Henry of Ghent, Peter Olivi, Richard of Middleton, Gonsalvus of Spain, Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham among others. See *Virtues of the Will*, 200 and fn. 1.

[23] One of her main reasons for making this suggestion has to do with the way that Aquinas (on Kent's reading) "quietly but drastically revised Aristotle's understanding of habit," (1995, 253). As Decosimo points out, however, this is less of a revision of Aristotle's understanding, and more of an implication. See *Ethics as a Work of Charity,* 95 fn. 46.

As I argued in Section 4.3.3, Aquinas's views on infused virtue commit him to the idea that the first stage of infused virtue is continence. Thus, infused temperance begins as a perfection in the will, but as one progresses through the stages, this perfection flows into the sensitive appetite and a habit begins to form. While Aquinas never explicitly advocates this view, some of his successors do. For example, Kent points out that Richard of Middleton (1249-1308) claims that the sensitive appetite develops habits—which he calls "impressions" of virtue—through obeying the will's command. Kent writes, "When a virtue in the will is perfect, Richard argues, it causes a habitual impression in the sense appetite. When the virtue is not perfect, it does not cause such an impression" (1995, 233). Furthermore, Kent suggests that Scotus might have shared the same view. In *Ordinatio* III, suppl. Dist. 34, Scotus claims that "continence and temperance are different grades of the same species of virtue" (Kent, 1995, 241). According to Kent, this suggests the following position:

> virtue in the will is compatible with disorder in the sense appetite, but perfect virtue is not. A person could still be virtuous, then, if some bodily condition prevented her from achieving emotional balance… Such limitations would at most mean that the agent was imperfectly virtuous, that although she had acquired continence, which is a virtue, she had not yet attained the higher grade of continence we call temperance (1995, 242).[24]

Both Scotus and Richard of Middleton are trying, like Aquinas, to find a way of reconciling Augustinian ideas about unruly passions with the Aristotelian ideal of inner

[24] Kent goes on to qualify: "Since Scotus does not defend this position *ex professo*, we must be cautious in attributing it to him. All one can say with certainty is that the position is consistent with Scotus's treatment of the location of the virtues. He does not say that the virtuous will must, or even does, generate habits in the sense appetite, but only that it *can* generate habits in the sense appetite," (1995, 242, emphasis in original).

harmony. Unlike Aquinas, however, they both teach that continence is a virtue—a position that is consistent with the Condemnation of 1277.[25]

In this way, we can understand how Aquinas's teaching on the infused virtues might have played an important role in the transition of virtues from the sensitive appetite to the will. While those teachings can be assembled, as I have in this dissertation, into a stable position—where infused virtues like temperance and fortitude begin in the will and progress to the sensitive appetite—it is easy to see how they might be used to support the view that the will is the subject of all infused virtues. In fact, Aquinas is vulnerable to this misunderstanding because of his lack of clarity regarding the imperfections of the infused virtues. By not explicitly restricting these imperfections to the early stages, he runs the risk that his readers will see them as essential features of the infused virtues. In fact, this is the very same problem that caused the misunderstandings addressed in Section 4.3. Just as these imperfections cause contemporary readers to appeal to the acquired moral virtues as a remedy, so they led medieval readers to relegate all virtues to the will.

The second important implication of this project involves our understanding of the interplay between divine and human causes in our moral formation. As we saw in Section 4.1.4, Aquinas teaches that there are two main causes of our increase in the infused virtues: God, who works directly to increase them, and our own actions, which can work indirectly by disposing our virtues to increase. Only God can increase our virtues directly because only He can serve as the agent in actualizing our potentiality for a greater degree of participation in the virtue. Our actions can increase our potentiality, but they cannot actualize that increased potentiality. Consequently, our actions are not

[25] Article 208 condemns the following proposition: "That continence is not essentially a virtue." See Kent, *Virtues of the Will*, 72.

sufficient, on their own, to bring about increase in the infused virtues. Furthermore, our actions are also not necessary to bring about increase in the infused virtues. God can increase our potentiality for a greater degree of participation without any contribution from us. As Aquinas reminds us in his discussion of the cause of habits, God can produce the effects of secondary causes without those causes.[26]

The fact that our actions are neither necessary nor sufficient to bring about growth in infused virtue does not entail that they are irrelevant. Aquinas teaches that God has chosen to include us in this process of growth and transformation. Near the end of his discussion of *beatitudo* in the *prima secundae,* Aquinas includes a fascinating article addressing whether any works of man are necessary to obtain *beatitudo* (I.II.5.7). He begins his response by noting that rectitude of will—which, as we saw in Chapter Four, is closely connected with the infused virtues—is necessary for *beatitudo.* Immediately, however, Aquinas points out that this does not entail that human works are necessary for *beatitudo*. He explains: "for God could make a will having a right tendency to the end, and at the same time attaining the end; just as sometimes He disposes matter and at the same time introduces the form" (5.7).[27] In other words, the fact that rectitude of will is necessary for *beatitudo* does not prove that human works are necessary because God could bring about rectitude of will without any contribution from the human agent. Nonetheless, Aquinas maintains that there is a sense in which human works are necessary for *beatitudo*—namely, so that the order of divine wisdom (*ordo divinae sapientiae*)

[26] See I.II.51.4 and I.105.6.

[27] *posset enim Deus simul facere voluntatem recte tendentem in finem, et finem consequentem; sicut quandoque simul materiam disponit, et inducit formam*

might be preserved (5.7).[28] It is important to note his support for this point. One would expect him to cite Augustine[29] or another Church Father to substantiate the point that God involves us in the process of our own moral formation. Instead, Aquinas turns to Aristotle. In *De Caelo*, Aristotle writes, "of those things that have a natural capacity for the perfect good, one has it without movement, some by one movement, some by several" (qtd. in 5.7).[30] Aquinas explains, God possesses the perfect good without movement and angels possess it by a single movement (I.62.5), which leaves human beings to possess it through several movements. Thus, Aristotle gives us reason to think that God would have seen a certain fittingness (*conveniens*) in designing human nature such that we attain our ultimate end through many works. And just as there is a certain fittingness in our obtaining *beatitudo* by many works, so there is a certain fittingness in our growing in infused virtue through our actions.[31] Aquinas's teaching on growth in infused virtue, then, not only achieves harmony between Augustine and Aristotle—it also solves a lingering problem from the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Aristotle writes:

> Hence the problem also arises of whether [human flourishing] is to be acquired by learning, habituation, or some other training, or whether it comes by virtue of some divine dispensation or even by chance. If there is

[28] Cf. *STh* III.1.2 where Aquinas distinguishes between two senses of necessity: "A thing is said to be necessary for a certain end in two ways. First, when the end cannot be without it; as food is necessary for the preservation of human life. Secondly, when the end is attained better and more conveniently, as a horse is necessary for a journey." (*ad finem aliquem dicitur aliquid esse necessarium dupliciter, uno modo, sine quo aliquid esse non potest, sicut cibus est necessarius ad conservationem humanae vitae; alio modo, per quod melius et convenientius pervenitur ad finem, sicut equus necessarius est ad iter*.)

[29] Aquinas could have cited Augustine's *Tract on the Gospel of John*, tr. 72 on John 14:12, as he does in I.II.55.4 arg. 6 to support the idea that God does not justify us without us.

[30] *eorum quae nata sunt habere bonum perfectum, aliquid habet ipsum sine motu, aliquid uno motu, aliquid pluribus*

[31] Once again, this position does not land Aquinas in Pelagianism. It is only by grace and God's power that our actions play a role in our obtaining *beatitudo* (See I.II.5.6). Similarly, only God brings about our increase in infused virtue directly.

> anything that the gods give to men, it is reasonable that [human flourishing] should be god-given, especially since it is so much the best thing in the human world… Even if it is not sent by the gods, however, but arises through virtue and some sort of learning or training, it is evidently one of the most divine things. For that which is the prize and end of virtue is clearly the chief good, something both divine and blessed (1099b).

Growth in infused virtue—and *beatitudo* more generally—is, for Aquinas, *both* God-given and the result of "virtue and some sort of learning or training."

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