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The Presence of Virtue Ethics in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II

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The Presence of Virtue Ethics in the Thought of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II

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The last fifty years have seen an impressive revival of interest in virtue ethics. Many prominent figures, including Catholic theologians, have contributed to the restoration of the pivotal role of virtues in Christian moral life. Unfortunately, Wojtyła/John Paul II is rarely considered one of them. The Polish philosopher and Pope is often credited with reconnecting Scriptures and philosophy with morals, but not with using virtues as a central category for moral reflection. This dissertation argues that such an interpretation is inaccurate. A careful analysis of Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings suggests that there is, in fact, virtue ethic operative in his work. One can come to the conclusion that the key elements of virtue ethics are essential to the overall coherence of his moral system.

The study offers a comparison of the traditional account of virtue theory, as developed by Aristotle and Aquinas, with the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II. It identifies the basic ideas and concepts which are considered essential for the building of comprehensive virtue ethics, and then determines their presence in the writings of the Polish philosopher and Pope.

The results of the investigation point to Wojtyła/John Paul II's deep appreciation for the virtue-centered approach to morality. Although often scattered and disorganized, the references to virtues and other virtue-related concepts are frequent and intentional. The virtues, according to Wojtyła/John Paul II, are essential for developing the good moral character and are indispensable for effectively pursuing authentic moral good.

Even though the moral theology of the Polish philosopher and Pope resists being unequivocally virtue-centered, much of its character coheres with the traditional model of morality inspired by virtues. By locating the key elements of virtue ethics in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II, the study ultimately shows that the contribution of the Polish philosopher and Pope to the broader renewal of moral theology is greater than previously thought.

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Table of Contents

General Introduction	1
Chapter One: The Influence of Thomism	13
Introduction	13
1. The Thomism of Karol Wojtyła	14
1.1. Seminary Years (1942-1946)	14
1.2. Studies in Rome (1946-1948).....	15
1.3. Parish Priest (1948-1951)	17
1.4. Habilitation Thesis (1951-1954)	18
1.5. Professor at Lublin (1954-1960).....	20
1.6. Love and Responsibility (1960)	25
1.7. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1968)	27
1.8. Osoba i Czyn (1969)	29
1.9. After Osoba i czyn (1970-1978)	32
2. The Thomism of John Paul II	33
2.1. Theology of the Body (1979-84)	34
2.2. Speech at the Angelicum (1979).....	37
2.3. Address to the Eighth International Thomistic Congress (1980)	38
2.4. Laborem Exercens (1981)	40
2.5. Veritatis Splendor (1993).....	41
2.6. Crossing of the Threshold of Hope (1994)	44
2.7. Fides et Ratio (1998)	45
2.8. Inter Munera Academicarum (1999)	47
2.9. Christian Humanism in the Third Millennium (2003)	47
2.10. Memory and Identity (2005)	48
Conclusion.....	49
Chapter Two: The Key Elements in Aristotelian-Thomistic Virtue Theory	51
Introduction	51
1. Eudaimonia	52
1.1. Nature in Search for Happiness	53
1.2. Human Action in the Pursuit of Happiness.....	57
1.3. Happiness in the General Sense	58
1.4. Happiness in the Specific Sense	62
2. Habit	66
2.1. The Nature of Habit	67
2.2. Good Operative Habit.....	72
2.3. The Mean of Virtue.....	74
3. Prudence	77
3.1. Practical Reasoning and Human Action	77
3.2. Prudence and Skills: Virtues in Need of Prudence.....	82
3.3. Cleverness vs. Prudence: Prudence in Need of Moral Virtues	85
3.4. The Unity of Virtues: Virtues in Need of One Another	89
4. Virtues and Emotions.....	103
4.1. The Positive Attitude toward Emotions	104
4.2. The Relationship between the Virtues and Emotions	109

5. Virtues and Grace	111
5.1. Theological Virtues	111
5.2. Acquired vs. Infused Virtues	113
Conclusion.....	117
Chapter Three: The Key Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work.....	119
Introduction	119
1. Happiness.....	120
1.1. Happiness and Human Nature.....	121
1.2. Happiness in the General Sense.....	128
1.3. Happiness in the Specific Sense	129
1.3.1. Communion with God: Man's Ultimate Happiness	136
1.4. Happiness and Virtues.....	140
2. Habit	142
2.1. Good Moral Habit.....	142
2.2. The Nature of Virtue	148
2.2.1. The Mean of Virtue and Inner Equilibrium	148
2.2.2. The Personalistic Character of the Virtues	153
2.2.2.1. Chastity	153
2.2.2.2. Industriousness.....	156
2.2.2.3. Solidarity.....	158
3. Prudence.....	163
3.1. Reason and Moral Action.....	163
3.1.1. Practical Reasoning.....	165
3.2. Conscience.....	167
3.3. Prudence as Virtue	169
3.3.1. Prudence and the Moral Virtues.....	170
3.3.2. Cleverness and Prudence.....	176
3.4. The Unity of Virtues.....	178
3.5. Prudence and Wisdom.....	182
4. Virtues and Emotions.....	185
4.1. The Dynamics of Human Emotions.....	186
4.2. The Positive Attitude to Emotions.....	188
4.3. Virtue and Integration	190
4.3.1. Using vs. Suppressing Emotions	192
5. Grace and Virtues	194
5.1. Theological Virtues	195
5.2. Infused and Acquired Virtues.....	200
Conclusion.....	204
Chapter Four: The Relevance of Identifying the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work.....	207
Introduction	207
1. The Relevance of the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Own Work....	208
1.1. Phenomenology	209
1.2. Personalism.....	214
1.2.1. Contraception	216
1.2.2. Abortion	220

1.2.3. Suffering	225
1.3. Legalism.....	232
1.3.1. The Use of Scriptures.....	233
1.3.2. Conscience	236
2. The Relevance of the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work for the Broader Field of Virtue Ethics.....	240
2.1. Introducing New Virtues	243
2.1.1. Solidarity	243
2.1.2. Industriousness.....	249
2.2. Expanding the Meaning of Already Existing Virtues.....	253
2.2.1. Chastity	253
2.2.2. Penance.....	256
2.3. Creating a Point of Contact between Virtue Ethics and Other Philosophical Systems	258
2.3.1. Virtue Ethics as Non-Action Guiding	259
2.3.2. Virtue Ethics as Self-Centered	261
3. The Relevance of the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work for the Renewal of Moral Theology.....	264
3.1. The Return to Virtue.....	265
3.2. The Forgotten Contribution of Wojtyła/John Paul II.....	267
Conclusion.....	269
General Conclusion	271
Bibliography	279
Primary Sources	279
Secondary Sources	281

General Introduction

The gentleman, or the man beautiful and good, is he who is completely virtuous.

Aristotle, *The Great Ethics* (1207b18)

It will not be an exaggeration to say that virtue ethics is now one of the most dynamically developing areas of moral philosophy, theology, and religious ethics. This claim is not justified solely by the amount of recent publications devoted to the subject, but an increasing familiarity with virtue-centered approach to morality in general. In fact, today, it is more accurate to speak of a variety of different virtue ethics rather than one virtue ethic being dominant among the contemporary scholars.¹

The history of the revival of interest in virtue has been well documented.² Although many names could be mentioned as being essential for inspiring the renewal, the majority of authors agree on the three key figures whose work in a special way contributed to the restoration of a prominent place of virtue in the modern moral discourse.

The first key figure was the British analytic philosopher, Elizabeth Anscombe, who in a famous paper entitled "Modern Moral Philosophy" argued that both deontological and utilitarian approaches to ethics are no longer compelling due to their excessive focus on rule-following. Both traditions, she claimed, sought a foundation for morality in legalistic concepts such as obligations or rules. However, these make no sense when lawgiver is not assumed. Thus, if one rejected belief in God, the only alternative left, according to Anscombe, was virtue ethics. In this way, Anscombe

¹ Cf. Julia Annas, "Which Variety of Virtue Ethics?," in *Varieties of Virtue Ethics*, ed. David Carr, James Arthur and Kristján Kristjánsson (London, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 35-52, and Christine Swanton, *Virtue Ethics: A Pluralistic View* (Oxford; New York : Oxford University Press, 2005).

² Cf. David Cloutier and William C. Mattison III, "The Resurgence of Virtue In Recent Moral Theology" *Journal of Moral Theology*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014); Heather Battaly and Michael Slote, "Virtue Epistemology and Virtue Ethics" in *The Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics*, ed. Lorraine Besser-Jones and Michael Slote (New York : Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2015), 253-269, and Shannon Vallor, *Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2016), 20-23.

proposed to return to the emphasis on the moral character of an agent and conscientious attainment of virtues, inspiring many others to follow in her footsteps.³

The second influential figure was, of course, Alasdair MacIntyre, whose *After Virtue* is widely credited with being a groundbreaking work in the renewal of virtue ethics.⁴ MacIntyre criticized modern ethical theories for being incommensurable, that is, for being rival forms of moral assertion between which no rational preference could be reached. The incommensurability, he explained, results from the fact that each theory begins with certain first principles that have no further justification. The choice between them is arbitrary, and consequently, ethical theories of modern times function more as systems of rationalization used to justify pre-conceived preferences or positions rather than normative systems of cognitive principles. For MacIntyre, the only way to amend the unfortunate state of modern moral discourse was to reconnect rationality with a living tradition – the historical narrative that alone gives meaning and context to the fundamental questions of morality. For the author, this could be accomplished best by returning to ancient virtue theories, most notably the tradition of Aristotle, which “can be restated in a way that restores intelligibility and rationality to our moral and social attitudes and commitments.”⁵

The last figure to be mentioned was Stanley Hauerwas, who is deemed by some as the single and most important figure in the revival of virtue ethics among Christian ethicists, non-Catholic and Catholic alike.⁶ Being deeply influenced by MacIntyre, Hauerwas too, suggested moving away from an ethics of rules and a consideration instead of the social narrative of the Christian community. According to him, the fundamental question of today’s disciples was to figure out “what kind of

³ Cf. Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33 (1958): 1-19.

⁴ Cf. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 259.

⁶ Jean Porter, "Ethics and Its Significance for Spirituality: A Survey and Assessment of Recent Work" *The Way Supplement* 88 (1997), 29. Text available online at <http://www.theway.org.uk/Back/s088Porter.pdf> [accessed January 20, 2017].

community the Church must be to be faithful to the narratives central to Christian convictions.”⁷

Since no Christian community can stand without preserving its distinctive character, Hauerwas advocated for an “ethics of character,” which focuses on the virtues enabling one to live a distinctively Christian life.⁸ This meant that Christian morality is primarily agent-oriented rather than rule-oriented. Modern theology, according to Hauerwas, must abandon its dominant approach to treat moral issues from the third-person perspective and return its emphasis to the agent and his character.

Interestingly, the renewal of interest in virtue coincided (although certainly chronologically preceded) the renewal of moral theology as called for by the Second Vatican Council. In a famous passage from the *Decree on Priestly Formation* from 1965, the Bishops expressed the Church’s need to rejuvenate the discipline of moral theology when they said that “special care must be given to the perfection of moral theology.”⁹ The call to reinvigorate moral reflection was not surprising. Many theologians addressed the need to break out of the Enlightenment model of morality and the manualist tradition already before the Council.¹⁰ Some authors advocated for their own kind of situationist ethics,¹¹ while others expressed the need to return to the tradition of St. Thomas

⁷ Stanley Hauerwas, *A Community of Character: Toward a Constructive Christian Ethic* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 12-3.

⁸ For an excellent review essay which traces the evolution of Hauerwas's reflections on virtue and the virtues over the course of his career, see Jennifer A Herdt, “Hauerwas Among The Virtues” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 40, no. 2 (2012): 202-227.

⁹ Second Vatican Council, Decree on the Training of Priests, *Optatam Totius*, no. 16: *AAS* 58 (1966). English translation available at: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_optatam-totius_en.html

¹⁰ One of the most essential figures in the recent renewal of moral theology was Servais Pinckaers. For an assessment of his role in the renewal, see: Craig Steven Titus, “Servais Pinckaers and the Renewal of Catholic Moral Theology,” *Journal of Moral Theology* 1 (2012): 43-68. Other influential works include: E. Mersch, S.J., *Morality and the Mystical Body* (New York: P. J. Kenedy, 1939); Odon Lottin, *Morale fondamentale* (Paris and Tournai, 1954); Gérard Gilleman, S.J., *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology* (London: Burns and Oates, 1959); Bernard Häring, *The Law of Christ*, 3 vols., trans. E. Kaiser (Westminster, Md. Newman Press, 1961-66). For a helpful survey of recent history of moral theology, see: James F. Keenan, *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (London, NY: Continuum, 2010).

¹¹ Cf. John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology: A Study of the Roman Catholic Tradition* (Oxford, OX: Clarendon Press, 1987), 202-210.

Aquinas, and the positive emphasis on virtue and grace.¹² According to Westberg, “even the most conservative ethicists loyal to the magisterium saw the need to articulate a moral theology that is more biblical, Christocentric, and conducive to Christian discipleship.”¹³ The Church’s call to renew moral theology was thus an expression of the growing dissatisfaction with the post-Tridentine model of morality on the one hand, and the revival of interest in the work of St. Thomas, on the other. It was up to the future generations to respond to the challenge and work out the best ways to fulfill the Council’s call for renewal.

One of the key figures who seriously took that responsibility to heart and ministry was Karol Wojtyła, who later became the Pope John Paul II. As a young Cardinal, Wojtyła sought to implement the teachings of the Council in his own archdiocese already in 1972 through the publication of his *Sources of Renewal*. In it, he reaffirmed the need “to give a new impulse to moral theology and Christian pedagogy,” which, as he said, constitutes “the practical life of Christians.”¹⁴ According to Wojtyła, the key problem of modern moral theology was its disconnect from the faith tradition. He suggested that the process of the enrichment of moral discipline was “a matter of Christian morality manifesting itself *not only* in the field of behavior and its governing norms, but *still more* in the field of motivation and the influence of *logos* on *ethos*.”¹⁵

In the following years, after his elevation to the papacy, John Paul II continued to speak of the importance of renewal of theological discourse in general, and moral theology in specific. The most notable instances include his major moral encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*, which was written with an intention to clarify the essential teachings of the Church in the area of moral theology in light of

¹² See, for example, the aforementioned Gérard Gilman, S.J., *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology* (London: Burns and Oates, 1959) or Servais Pinckaers, *Le renouveau de la morale: études pour une morale fidèle à ses sources et sa missions présente* (Tournai: Casterman, 1964).

¹³ Daniel Westberg, *Renewing Moral Theology: Christian Ethics As Action, Character and Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), 19.

¹⁴ Karol Wojtyła, *Sources of Renewal: The Implementation of the Second Vatican Council*, trans. P. S. Falla (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1980), 99.

¹⁵ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

the Council's call for renewal,¹⁶ and *Fides et Ratio*, in which the Holy Father specified the direction that modern ethics must pursue, if it aims to fulfill its mission.¹⁷ Commentators also list *Evangelium Vitae* as an example of John Paul II "undoubtedly attempting to fulfill the Council's call for renewal."¹⁸

Ironically, although many scholars argue that the recent attempts to recover virtue constitute also a significant part of the renewal of moral theology in the Church, rarely if ever, does the name of Wojtyła/John Paul II appear in conjunction with virtue ethics.¹⁹ The majority of authors who study the thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II either simply do not discuss virtue as a part of the methodology of the Polish philosopher and Pope, or, dismiss it as irrelevant to his overall system of ethics.

For example, in *Destined for Liberty*, Kupczak does not mention virtues at all in the chapter on Wojtyła's methodology, and only rudimentarily in the section devoted to the Archbishop's treatment of the process of integration.²⁰ Similar silence characterizes Curran's *Moral Theology of John Paul II*, or, Bransfield's *The Human Person according to John Paul II*, in which particular virtues occasionally appear,

¹⁶ Cf. John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 7. Official Latin text: *AAS* 85 (1993), 1133-1228. English translation available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_06081993_veritatis-splendor.html [accessed July 15, 2016]. Hereafter, *VS*.

¹⁷ Cf. John Paul II, *Fides et ratio*, no. 98. Official Latin text: *AAS* 91 (1999), 5-88. English translation available: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091998_fides-et-ratio.html [accessed July 21, 2016]. Hereafter, *FR*.

¹⁸ Richard A. Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II: The Great Pope's Moral Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2007), 7.

¹⁹ Salzman and Lawler express this point well when they say that "though the Second Vatican Council did not issue a specific call for a shift to virtue ethics from the legalistic and reductionist approach of the manuals, contemporary Catholic ethicists have been investigating and developing such a shift in the method and the application of virtue ethics." Todd A. Salzman and Michael G. Lawler, *Catholic Theological Ethics: Ancient Questions, Contemporary Responses* (Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America, 2015), 9. The list of proponents of the renewal of the Catholic moral theology by means of recovering virtue tradition include: Servais Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995); Livio Melina, *Sharing in Christ's Virtues: For a Renewal of Moral Theology in Light of Veritatis Splendor* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001); Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009); Daniel Westberg, *Renewing Moral Theology: Christian Ethics As Action, Character and Grace* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Academic, 2015); Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Martin Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), and many others.

²⁰ Cf. Jaroslaw Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), esp. chapter 3.

but without any systematic description of their role in Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral methodology.²¹ Peters' elaborate work, *Ecce Educatrix Tua*, which focuses on the "pedagogy of holiness" in the thought of John Paul II and Fr. Joseph Kentenich also does not feature any systematic treatment of the Pope's use of virtues.²² Despite its rather lengthy examination of the methodology of the Polish philosopher and Pope, Peters does not consider virtue as an essential moral category for Wojtyła/John Paul II's thought, which is unexpected in light of the overall goal of the book, which is to explore the papal concept of a "pedagogy of holiness."²³

In addition to those preferring silence, there are also commentators who were rather vocal and explicitly rejected the idea of Wojtyła/John Paul II developing any account of virtue ethics in his moral writings. For example, in a detailed study of Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral thought, Richard Spinello claimed that "John Paul II does not subscribe to virtue ethic."²⁴ Like many other commentators, Spinello, in his work, discussed some of Wojtyła/John Paul II's treatment of particular virtues, for instance, the virtue of solidarity and chastity, but denied any further connection between virtue ethics and the ethics of Wojtyła/John Paul II. In the same vein, in one of his articles, David Albert Jones denied that Wojtyła/John Paul II used "virtue as a core category in his moral philosophy."²⁵ The author praised the Pope for other contributions to the renewal of

²¹ Cf. Charles E. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005) & Brian J. Bransfield, *The Human Person: According to John Paul II* (Boston, Mass: Pauline Books & Media, 2010). With no intention of devaluing Bransfield's work, I must admit that I was somewhat disappointed to learn that the last chapter entitled "The Gifts of the Holy Spirit, the Beatitudes, and the Virtues" contained a minimal amount of references to the work of Wojtyła/John Paul II. Hoping to encounter the first systematic treatment of virtues in Wojtyła/John Paul II's thought, I was referred back to articles from the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, and the work of contemporary thinkers, such as Pinckaers or Tugwell.

²² Danielle M. Peters, *Ecce Educatrix Tua: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a Pedagogy of Holiness in the Thought of John Paul II and Father Joseph Kentenich* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010).

²³ To her credit, Peters mentions at one point that "John Paul II's references to holiness in his encyclicals emphasize the following: Holiness and Mission, Holiness and the Practice of Virtues, Holiness in Seeking Perfection, Holiness and Witness and Yearning for Holiness." Cf. Peters, 105.

²⁴ Richard A. Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II: The Great Pope's Moral Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2007), 105.

²⁵ David Albert Jones, "John Paul II and moral theology" in *The Legacy of John Paul II*, ed. Hayes, Michael A., and Gerald O'Collins (London: Burns & Oates, 2008), 103.

moral theology, most notably the use of Scriptures, which according to Jones, “is without parallel,” but not for bringing virtue to the foreground of contemporary moral discourse.

Some of the above comments could have been influenced by the way Wojtyła/John Paul II’s moral theology was presented for the past two decades. Many of the works focused on particular questions from the three areas of moral theology that are usually associated with Wojtyła/John Paul II’s writings, namely, social ethics, bioethics, and sexual ethics.²⁶ It is plausible that as the scholars were tackling different problems from these three areas, the subject of virtue ethics slipped the attention of the authors. It could also be that many assumed that there is no virtue ethics operative in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s ethical system because of his unsystematic treatment of virtues. Often scattered and disorganized references spread throughout hundreds of different articles, manuscripts, books, and papal statements, could effectively discourage the idea of the virtues constituting a coherent ethical category for the Polish philosopher and Pope. This, in turn, could have led to the present neglect and/or refusal concerning the presence of the elements of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s ethical system.

Yet, the idea of Wojtyła/John Paul II being actively engaged in promoting and pursuing the renewal of moral theology as called by Vatican II, and at the same time being simply ignorant of the ongoing effort of the modern ethicists to renew moral philosophy by means of returning to virtue tradition, seems rather improbable. It is unlikely that a thinker of Wojtyła/John Paul II’s stature would neglect the developments in modern moral philosophy, especially if the suggested means of rejuvenating the moral discipline are fully compatible with the Church’s tradition.

²⁶ See, for instance: Meghan J. Clark, *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014); Chester Gillis, *The Political Papacy: John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Their Influence* (Boulder: Paradigm Publishers, 2006); Christopher Tollefsen, *John Paul II’s Contributions to Catholic Bioethics* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2004); Jeffrey Tranzillo, *John Paul II on the Vulnerable* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013); Christopher West and George Weigel, *Theology of the Body Explained: A Commentary on John Paul II’s “Gospel of the Body”* (Leominster, Herefordshire: Gracewing, 2003); Thomas Petri, *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II’s Anthropology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016).

One should not forget also that Wojtyła/John Paul II received a solid philosophical and theological training in the thought of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas, both for whom the virtues constituted a substantial part of the moral theory. If the Polish philosopher and Pope did not abandon his commitment to the traditional philosophy and theology, then it is also highly plausible that he never completely abandoned virtue-centered approach to morality, and adopted traditional virtue theory in his own writings.

Finally, even a basic familiarity with Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings reveals his passion for virtues and a fundamentally favorable attitude towards virtue-informed perspective on morality. The Polish philosopher and Pope speaks of virtues on multiple occasions and in various contexts. At one point, he even explicitly states his desire for a return to the metaphysically teleological approach to morality and the system of ethics, which necessarily involves the attainment of natural and supernatural virtues.²⁷

In light of the above observations, this dissertation project will attempt to show that even though Wojtyła/John Paul II's work is rarely associated with virtue ethics and the contemporary movement to renew moral theology by the means of restoration of virtue tradition, the work of the Polish philosopher and Pope contains basic elements of virtue ethics, and therefore, should be considered a part of the renewal process. It will argue that one can accurately speak of virtue ethics being present and operative in the thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II, even if some of its elements remain underdeveloped, and are not treated systematically. This study will furthermore systematize and organize Wojtyła/John Paul II's own treatment of virtues, making it more accessible to the scholars and students interested in his thought. It will also show the significance of associating the person of Wojtyła/John Paul II with contemporary virtue ethics.

²⁷ Cf. *Veritatis Splendor*, no. 71-76 and *Fides et Ratio*, no. 98.

While specific caveats and methodological challenges will be mentioned at the beginning of each chapter, the four following observations seem to be in order of the general introduction.

First, there is an inherent challenge in studying the thought of someone who was both a private Catholic philosopher and the Church's universal pastor. Wojtyła's earlier philosophical writings often differ in tone and audience in comparison to the later encyclicals and papal writings of John Paul II. The danger on the one hand is to completely separate the thought of Wojtyła from that of John Paul II. On the other, it would be a mistake to ignore the distinct nature of Wojtyła's pre-papal writings and the writings from after his elevation to papacy. To avoid either of the extremes, this dissertation will use the name "Wojtyła/John Paul II" in reference to the entirety of his teaching; "Wojtyła" to indicate his pre-papal teachings, and "John Paul II" to denote his papal teachings, while still acknowledging that "Wojtyła" and "John Paul II" is one and the same person.

Second, there is clearly a different "weight" or importance to Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings. Within the ecclesial circles this difference amounts to varying degrees or levels of magisterial teaching so that, for instance, the writings of a private theologian are of lesser doctrinal weight compared to the writings of the Pope.²⁸ However, in this study, Wojtyła's pre-papal writings will be often as valuable and as important as his later writings. The purpose of this study is not to assess the doctrinal weight behind Wojtyła/John Paul II's comments on particular elements of virtue theory. Rarely, particular texts or works will be considered as more important than others, and if they will, the criterion used to determine the importance will pertain to the substance of the relevant passage, rather than its placement in the work of magisterial significance.

²⁸ Cf. John Paul II, *Lumen Gentium*, no. 25. Official Latin text: *AAS* 57 (1965) 5-75. English translation available: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html [accessed July 25, 2016]. Hereafter, *LG*. See also Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, "Commentary on the Concluding Formula of the *Professio Fidei*" Vatican Translation, (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998), no. 11, *AAS* 90 (1998), 542-551.

Third, while no such problem exists in reference to Wojtyła's work, John Paul II's writings might not always be exclusively his own. Many of the papal statements and addresses were written by Vatican officials and only later approved by the Holy Father. It is thus not always clear who is ultimately responsible for the creation of a document. This does not mean that much of the literature consulted in this project is illegitimately used. The documents are still considered to be authored by the Pope. Besides, it is argued that John Paul II wrote much of the material on his own.²⁹ Accordingly, this study will assume the authorship of the Polish Pope behind his statements on virtue, unless otherwise noted.

Lastly, the present project will review a considerable number of primary and secondary sources. However, there is an obvious challenge in systematically treating *all* of Wojtyła/John Paul II's work as well as that of other theologians and philosophers whose work is of much importance to the overall argument of this study. The section devoted to the identification of the basic elements of virtue ethics will combine the works of both the ancient authors (mostly Aristotle and Aquinas) and contemporary authors who are known to express their interest in the traditional virtue theory (e.g., Julia Annas, Jean Porter, Daniel Westberg, Daniel C. Russell, Angela MacKay, Romanus Cessario, and others). The secondary sources will be of particular importance to this section of the study, as they will highlight what are the essential components of the modern versions of virtue ethics developed along the lines of Aristotle's and Aquinas's virtue theory. The section devoted to Wojtyła/John Paul II, on the other hand, will rely heavily on primary sources, including some of the untranslated works of Wojtyła from his time at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). Particular attention in this regard will be given to *Elementarz Etyczny* ("Introduction to Ethics"), a series of articles, in which Wojtyła explicitly discussed many of the themes pertinent to virtue ethics. The

²⁹ Cf. John Grabowski, "The Luminous Excess of the Acting Person: Assessing the Impact of Pope John Paul II on American Catholic Moral Theology" *Journal of Moral Theology* 1, no. 1 (2012): 123.

papal references will be taken from numerous and varying documents with no particular emphasis for an individual work.

As far as the structure of the study is concerned, there will be four main chapters, excluding the introduction and conclusion. The following summary shows the basic layout of the study.

The first chapter will focus on presenting Wojtyła/John Paul II's commitment to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. This means looking primarily at the attitude of the Polish philosopher and Pope towards Thomism and highlighting some of his concepts or ideas, which can be traced back to the thought of St. Thomas. Establishing whether Wojtyła/John Paul II remained favorable toward traditional philosophy and theology would be essential for claiming that he also remained fundamentally inclined to accept virtue as a significant moral category in his system of ethics. The argument of the chapter will rest on the chronological survey of Wojtyła/John Paul II's statements in which he explicitly expressed his position toward Thomism. The secondary literature on the topic will be mentioned, although marginally.

The main objective of the second chapter will be to identify the basic elements of virtue ethics. This section of the study will rely on multiple sources and authors associated with modern versions of the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue ethics. The following five concepts will be considered: happiness, habit, prudence, emotions, and grace. Each of these elements will be analyzed and explained in order to show their fundamental importance to the overall coherence of the modern virtue-centered approach to ethics. The second chapter is essential to the study in that it will provide the means to measure Wojtyła/John Paul II's commitment to and engagement of virtue ethics.

The third chapter will determine whether the aforementioned elements of virtue ethics are present and operative in the writings of the Polish philosopher and Pope. This will require a thorough examination of Wojtyła/John Paul II's works, often times including his less known

publications. The emphasis will be on presenting Wojtyła/John Paul II's own understanding of each of the elements of virtue ethics. I will refrain from reading Aristotle or Thomas into Wojtyła/John Paul II's text, although some occasional references will be noted.

Finally, the fourth and the last chapter of the dissertation will summarize the findings of the previous sections and highlight the significance of insisting on the presence of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings. The three main points will be explored. First, I will evaluate the role and relevance of virtue ethics elements for Wojtyła/John Paul II's own system of ethics; second, I will assess to what extent Wojtyła/John Paul II's own understanding of virtue might contribute to the broader field of virtue ethics; and third, I will determine whether Wojtyła/John Paul II's favorable attitude toward virtue ethics in his own writings should be acknowledged as one of his major contributions to the renewal of moral theology as called for by Vatican II.

Chapter One: The Influence of Thomism

Introduction

When Cardinal Wojtyła visited his friend, Fr. Józef Świądr, at one of the parishes in the small village of Kęty, Poland, he humorously threatened the pastor with purgatory for being overly nitpicking in pastoral work. Fr. Świądr, apparently being no less of a joker, responded that if he ever went to purgatory, he would have certainly be handed Wojtyła's copy of *Osoba i czyn* (*Person and act*) to read.¹ The point of the joke was well taken: one could not be any more nitpicking than Wojtyła was in his recent book. Known for his dense and technical language, the Cardinal from Kraków puzzled many of his readers, including even those professionally trained in philosophy or theology. The same is often said about his later papal works, most notably the monumental *Theology of the Body*, which needed to be "translated" into more accessible literary forms, such as Christopher West's *Theology of the Body for Beginners*.²

However, the challenging language is only the tip of an iceberg when it comes to examining Wojtyła/John Paul's methodological commitments. According to Kupczak, Wojtyła was not only a skillful conversant with the European history of philosophy but a brilliant and original thinker of his own. Borrowing from the twentieth-century psychology of the will (most notably the empirical approach of Narziss Ach), traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic ontology, Kant's formal ethics, and Scheler's phenomenology, the young philosopher from Kraków wanted to build his own anthropology of the human person.³

Thankfully, this dissertation does not require a fully systematized exposition of Wojtyła/John Paul II's methodology. This work has been done by others and is easily accessible

¹ *Kwiatki Jana Pawła II*, ed. Janusz Poniewierski (Kraków, 2005): 111-112. Translation mine.

² Christopher West, *Theology of the Body for Beginners* (West Chester, PA: Ascension Press, 2004).

³ Jarosław Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000), 48.

elsewhere.⁴ What it does require, however, is a solid proof that despite many philosophical influences, Wojtyła/John Paul II never abandoned Thomism. This premise is essential to the question about the presence of virtue ethics in his work; it would be unpromising, to say the least, to search for the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic concept of virtue without the author's explicit affirmation of Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy in the first place. Accordingly, the purpose of this chapter is to trace chronologically Wojtyła/John Paul II's attitude towards Thomism. I will focus primarily on Wojtyła/John Paul II's explicit comments regarding the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas, and when such are unavailable, I will highlight Wojtyła/John Paul II's concepts or ideas which cohere and can be traced back to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas.

1. The Thomism of Karol Wojtyła

1.1. Seminary Years (1942-1946)

Karol Wojtyła's interest in the thought of St. Thomas began in his early twenties when he was accepted by the archdiocese of Kraków as a clandestine seminarian. Dividing his time between the manual labor at Borek Fałęcki and Kotlarczyk's Rhapsodic Theater to which Wojtyła devoted an entire year between the fall 1941 and 1942, the young seminarian spent many sleepless nights studying the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor. The studies were not easy. In fact, later on in his life, John Paul II confessed in one of his interviews to a friend Fr. Mieczysław Maliński that he wept as he tried to understand the basic textbook of Thomistic metaphysics, Wais' *Ontologia czyli metafizyka*.⁵

⁴ Kupczak, chapters 2-3; Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II*, trans. Paolo Guetti and Francesca Murphy (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1997); Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993); Danielle M Peters, *Ecce Educatrix Tua: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a Pedagogy of Holiness in the Thought of John Paul II and Father Joseph Kentenich* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 13-100.

⁵ Cf. Kazimierz Wais, *Ontologia czyli metafizyka ogólna* (Lwów: Biblioteka Religijna, 1926). English translation: *Ontology, that is, metaphysics*.

...it was no easy matter. It was Fr. Kłosak who first gave me Weis' *Ontology* to study him for an exam. For a long time, I could not cope with the book, and I actually wept over it. It was not until two months later, in December and January that I began to make something of it.⁶

Despite the difficult beginnings, young Wojtyła quickly came to have a great appreciation of Thomistic philosophy:

...after two months of hacking through this vegetation, I came to a clearing, to the discovery of the deep reasons for what until then I had only lived and felt. When I passed the examination, I told the examiner that in my view the new vision of the world which I had acquired in my struggle with that metaphysical manual was more valuable than the mark which I had obtained. I was not exaggerating.⁷

It was also during his underground seminary years that Wojtyła encountered Thomistic virtue theory for the first time. As Jarosław Kupczak insightfully pointed out, most of the philosophical and theological courses taught in the seminary at the time followed the thought of Aquinas, which would necessarily include his treatise on virtues.⁸ Indeed, the exam records show that Wojtyła not only studied virtue theory but earned the highest possible grade for the class.⁹ It is also worth noting that in a rather short intellectual formation (Wojtyła was only in the seminary for four years), two whole years were devoted to the Thomistic account of habits and virtues.¹⁰

1.2. *Studies in Rome (1946-1948)*

Cardinal Sapieha ordained Karol Wojtyła a priest on the solemnity of All Saints, November 1, 1946. Roughly two weeks later, he was sent for further studies to Rome. His intellectual journey with Thomism continued at the Angelicum, which enjoyed the reputation of being one of the three

⁶ Mieczysław Malinowski, *Pope John Paul II, the Life of Karol Wojtyła* (New York: Seabury Press, 1979), 159.

⁷ Andre Frossard, *"Be Not Afraid!": John Paul II Speaks Out on His Life, His Beliefs, and His Inspiring Vision for Humanity* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 17.

⁸ Kupczak, 49.

⁹ Adam Boniecki, *The making of the Pope of the millennium: kalendarium of life of Karol Wojtyła* (Stockbridge, Mass: Marian Press, 2000), 80.

¹⁰ "In this year, we have worked on a chapter of St. Thomas's *Summa Theologiae*, *De habitibus*- on habits - virtues in a further sense. This chapter is an introduction to the next, *De virtutibus*- on virtues, which was taught in the seminary in the following year. It was then, when the professor accentuated that the virtues define the value of a man, because they actualize him as a person." Adam Boniecki, *Kalendarium życia Karola Wojtyły* (Kraków: Znak, 1983), 122. Translation mine. The quote is a recollection of a student contemporary to Wojtyła.

most prominent centers for Thomistic Studies in Europe, after Freiburg and Louvain.¹¹ It was here that Wojtyła began his doctoral work on the virtue of faith in writings of St. John of the Cross under the direction of a Dominican father and a renowned Thomist, Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange. Contrasting the classic Scholastic view of faith as a virtue residing in the intellect with more experiential and emotional understanding of faith proposed by St. John of the Cross, Wojtyła attempted to show in his dissertation that mystical faith and intellectual faith need not be mutually exclusive but represent two aspects of the one and same virtue.¹²

Even though the young priest did not publish anything else while working on his dissertation, he continued to be inspired by the thought of St. Thomas. In one of his letters from Rome, he wrote:

I think that much can be said about my Thomistic studies [...]. His entire system is not only something incredibly coherent but also marvelously beautiful, captivating one's thought. At the same time, it is so simple. As it turns out, thought and depth does not necessitate profusion of words. Perhaps the fewer the words, the deeper the meaning.¹³

During his stay in Rome, Wojtyła also learned about different interpretations of Thomism. Although his personal preference for any of them at the time remains unknown, scholars generally agree that he was influenced by at least three very different approaches to Thomism: traditional, transcendental, and existential.¹⁴ The first, perhaps the closest to what Wojtyła held on to during his doctoral studies, was represented by his dissertation director Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange. This version of Thomism followed the tradition of the commentaries of Cajetan and John of St. Thomas. The second trend, also known as "dynamic Thomism" or "transcendental Thomism," was connected to Louvain. Represented by Desire Cardinal Mercier and Joseph Marechal, it sought to reconcile

¹¹ J. Szczypka, *Jan Paweł II. Rodowód* (Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1989): 118.

¹² Karol Wojtyła, *Faith according to St. John of the Cross*, trans. Jordan Aumann (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1981): 253-272. Originally published in Italian: Karol Wojtyła, *Doctrina de fide apud S. Joannem a Cruce* (S.T.D. Diss., Pontifical University of St. Thomas Aquinas, 1948).

¹³ J.W. Galkowski, "Pozycja filozoficzna kard. Karola Wojtyły. Referat na międzynarodowy kongres filozoficzny, Rzym. Wrzesień 198," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 29, no. 2 (1981): 75. Translation mine.

¹⁴ George H. Williams, *The Mind of John Paul II: Origins of His Thought and Action* (New York: Seabury Press, 1981): 94-103. See also Kupczak, 51.

Thomism with modern philosophy, particularly a Kantian approach to epistemology. Finally, the existential Thomism, which would later become very attractive for Wojtyła,¹⁵ was associated with Etienne Gilson, who emphasized the centrality and originality of Aquinas's doctrine of being and existence. Undoubtedly, Wojtyła's time spent in Rome was essential to his intellectual formation, which bearing the influence of Carmelite spirituality, continued to be Thomistic in its core.¹⁶

1.3. Parish Priest (1948-1951)

Father Karol Wojtyła returned to Poland on June 15, 1948. Immediately, Cardinal Sapieha threw the young priest into pastoral ministry. Wojtyła's first pastoral assignment was as an associate pastor at the church of the Assumption of our Lady in Niegowic, a small village located about fifteen miles east of Kraków. Besides celebrating sacraments, Father Karol's primary responsibility was providing religious education to five nearby village schools. The time spent at the parish and among students, however, did not deter the young priest from continuing his intellectual journey. The parishioners of Fr. Karol remember the young vicar reading books while riding on the back of a cart on his way to schools.¹⁷

Only eight months later, Wojtyła was transferred to a vibrant, urban parish of St. Florian in Kraków. During his two-year stay there, he served as a chaplain to university students and health workers. Being very successful in his ministry, he initiated a series of intellectual, liturgical, cultural, and pastoral innovations, which earned him the nickname "wujek," that is "uncle," among his students. On every Thursday evening, Wojtyła held a conference on one of the two philosophical subjects: the existence of God or the spiritual character of the human person. In addition to his own

¹⁵ Gilson's existential Thomism was held in high esteem by the philosophers from the Catholic University of Lublin, which subsequently led to the birth of what is called, "Lublin Thomism," of which Wojtyła was an important member.

¹⁶ Kupczak notes that the library archives at Belgian College where Wojtyła lived show that the most frequently checked out books by the young scholar concerned the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. Cf. Kupczak, 50, footnote 4.

¹⁷ George Weigel, *Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II* (New York: Cliff Street Books, 1999), 92.

lectures, he formed a group of students from the Jagiellonian University to read the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas in original Latin.¹⁸ When the science students expressed their willingness to meet with Father Wojtyła regularly, he assigned them to read Thomas Aquinas and study his concept of nature as their first project.¹⁹

1.4. Habilitation Thesis (1951-1954)

After the death of Cardinal Sapieha, his successor Archbishop Baziak assigned Wojtyła to pursue his habilitation in 1951, which would enable him to teach at the university level. Under the influence of father Różycki, his former mentor, Karol Wojtyła decided to write a dissertation on the philosophy of German thinker Max Scheler. The question Wojtyła posed in his thesis was whether the phenomenological method as developed by Max Scheler could be used to interpret Christian ethics adequately.²⁰ To provide an answer, Wojtyła carefully analyzed the thought of the German philosopher.²¹

His first observations focused on an excessive emotionalism present in Scheler's system; ethical values, according to Scheler, could be experienced only within the sphere of human emotions. For Wojtyła, this claim seemed immediately suspect; for neither an intellectual comprehension of the value nor an intentional feeling could provide a meaningful direction within the act of will.²² Moreover, if Scheler were right, then one would have to admit that the human will is passive and that, as a result, the human person cannot be the cause of his own actions. Wojtyła pointed out that "Scheler reduces the essence of the person's life to emotions and his moral life to

¹⁸ Weigel, 95; Boniecki, 123.

¹⁹ Weigel, 100.

²⁰ Cf. Karol Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach systemu Maksa Schelera* (Lublin: Tow. Naukowe Katolickiego Uniwersytetu Lubelskiego, 1959).

²¹ For a more detailed analysis of Wojtyła's dissertation on Scheler, see Kupczak 10-24 and Petri, 118-124.

²² Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, 69-70.

an emotional experience of values while completely eliminating the person's causal efficacy."²³ The young philosopher from Kraków was also very critical of Scheler's understanding of conscience, which, according to the German philosopher, is excluded from an ethical evaluation of a person's deeds. Such an approach to the question of conscience, according to Wojtyła, undermines the notion of human causality. The conscience's judgment about the moral value of one's action obliges the subject to perform or avoid such an action. In this light, contrary to the Scheler's understanding, conscience constitutes an essential element of the person's causality.²⁴

Towards the end of his dissertation, Wojtyła focused his attention on Christian love as the ultimate test case for Scheler's system. His conclusions were continuous with the earlier criticisms: Scheler's description of love as an emotion is inadequate to *fully* grasp the essence of Christian love as portrayed in the New Testament. In Scheler's system, love originates spontaneously in an encounter with a value creating an appropriate emotional reaction. From the Christian perspective, love, too, is experienced emotionally, but it also remains the object of a commandment, e.g. "Love one another, as I have loved you." (Jn 13:34). For Wojtyła, the two categories of an experience of value and an experience of obligation are not mutually exclusive but supplementary:

In love, these two elements of ethical experience do not eliminate but supplement each other. A deep experience of a value transforms an obligation into a firm and efficient act. On the other hand, a firm and efficient experience of obligation helps to create a profound realization of values in the human experience.²⁵

This synthetic vision of an ethical act stayed with Wojtyła for the rest of his intellectual career. Though he ultimately argued that Scheler's system be inadequate to account for Christian ethics, the phenomenological method of the German philosopher can nonetheless be very useful to a Christian thinker. For many scholars, Wojtyła's habilitation thesis constituted the first systematic attempt of the young philosopher to "link the realist objectivity embedded in the philosophy he had

²³ Ibid., 81. Translation mine.

²⁴ Kupczak, 14-15.

²⁵ Wojtyła, *Ocena możliwości*, 97. Translation mine.

learned in the seminary and at the Angelicum to modern philosophy's emphasis on human experience and human subjectivity."²⁶ Although direct references to the works of St. Thomas Aquinas are virtually absent from the dissertation, the classical Thomistic outlook underlays the entire project:

When the philosopher from Krakow was getting ready to analyze Scheler's system, he already knew the philosophical system of St. Thomas Aquinas perfectly. It is impossible not to think that this did not have a direct consequence on the way he read *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die Material Werthetik*. It is believed that it was the main reason for making *Ocena możliwości zbudowania etyki chrześcijańskiej przy założeniach system Maxa Schelera* and symbolic memorial and criticism of Scheler's ethics.²⁷

1.5. Professor at Lublin (1954-1960)

On November 30, 1953, the faculty of the theology department at Jagiellonian University approved Wojtyła's habilitation thesis. The work was accepted unanimously by Father Aleksander Usowicz, Władysław Wicher, and by Stefan Świeżawski, a future colleague of Wojtyła at the Catholic University of Lublin (KUL). The degree, however, was not granted until 1957 due to the oppressive, anti-Catholic communist regime of Poland. The refusal to officially bestow the title of a "docent" did not prevent Wojtyła from teaching as a professor at the University of Lublin.²⁸

At the time Wojtyła joined the faculty of KUL, the new philosophical school was already developing at the University.²⁹ Comprised of the dean of the philosophy department, Jerzy Kalinowski, young metaphysician Mieczysław Krapiec, a renowned historian of philosophy Stefan Świeżawski, and the freshly appointed ethicist Wojtyła, the group of scholars became the "pillars of Lublin's Thomism," a refined version of traditional Thomism.³⁰ Wojtyła officially began classes with

²⁶ Kupczak, 23 and Petri, 124.

²⁷ Tadeusz Styczeń SDS, "Doświadczenie człowieka i świadczenie człowiekowi. Kardynał Karol Wojtyła: filozof-moralista" *Znak* 3 (1980): 263-274. Translation mine.

²⁸ For a more elaborate description of the controversial refusals to grant academic degrees to the Polish clergy, see Weigel, 129-131.

²⁹ Kupczak, 27.

³⁰ Kupczak concisely summarizes the main postulates of the Lublin Thomism: "The four Lublin philosophers [...] were convinced that metaphysics had primacy of place in the realm of philosophy. Second, they emphasized the

his students in October of 1954. What came to be known as "The Lublin Lectures" were, in reality, the three full-time courses, which the young professor from Kraków conducted within the three years of his active stay at the university. These courses were: "Ethical Act and Experience" (1954/55), "Good and Value" (1955/56), and "Norm and Happiness" (1956/57).³¹ At the time, Wojtyła also published extensively in two academic journals: *Tygodnik Powszechny* and *Znak*.³² It was during his years in Lublin, when Wojtyła actively engaged the thought of St. Thomas in conversation with other modern philosophers. These conversations resulted in the gradual qualification of the traditional Thomism he learned from his mentor from Rome, Garrigou-Lagrange.

In his first series of lectures, "Ethical Act and Experience," Wojtyła examined the concept of human experience in the philosophy of Max Scheler, Immanuel Kant, and St. Thomas Aquinas.³³ He argued that the action of the will that belongs to the very essence of a moral act and reveals the moral good present within the subject himself. Ethical values do not exist in the person solely as an expression of some intentional and emotional experiences, but they are the real values of the person himself:

For the scientific presentation of the problem no experimental psychology, nor any philosophical system, which similarly to the particular sciences, deals with an only essential side of reality, is satisfactory. This is exactly why Scheler's phenomenology and Kantian critical philosophy failed to reflect the meaning of an ethical act in its entirety... Ethical values are not primarily the content of intellectual or emotional experience but above all of the very becoming of a person and her will.³⁴

importance of anthropological reflection. Third, they strongly opposed the irrational trends in the contemporary philosophy. And fourth, they all felt the need for historical analysis of philosophical problems." Kupczak, 28.

³¹ Wojtyła's last course before becoming a bishop, entitled "Miłość i Odpowiedzialność" (Love and Responsibility) was offered in the winter semester of 1957. Since *Love and Responsibility* was later published in 1960 as an individual work, it is commonly excluded from *The Lublin Lectures*, even though it was technically a part of the series.

³² Wojtyła's articles published in the two journals were collected and translated into English in *Person and Community: selected essays* (New York: P. Lang, 1993). It is important to note that the essays included in the volume span Wojtyła's entire intellectual career, from early 1950s to the time of his election to the papacy in 1978. Consequently, articles published during his stay at the university in Lublin can be found on pages 3-101.

³³ Karol Wojtyła, *Wykłady Lubelskie* (Lublin: Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1986): 19-73.

³⁴ Ibid., 69. Translation of this and other passages from Wojtyła's lectures at Lublin are mine.

Subsequently, Wojtyła argued that it was St. Thomas Aquinas who provides a "solution to the problem."³⁵ The solution consists of identifying the essential element of the ethical experience within the will. Concluding his philosophical investigations, Wojtyła offered final remarks, which were very similar to those reached in his habilitation thesis:

As a result of the above investigations, it must be said that only the method utilized by the philosophy of being is in this case capable of scientific objectivization proper to the content and complete structure of this [ethical] experience. At the same time, without degrading the capabilities of experimental sciences, we come to a conclusion that it is impossible to properly account for all the facts of ethical life in separation from the philosophy of being.³⁶

In his second course, "Good and Value," Wojtyła aimed to analyze multiple concepts of the good by looking at the philosophies of Plato, Aristotle, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, Immanuel Kant and Max Scheler. In his own brief introduction, Wojtyła expressed that his investigations were not meant to be solely historical but systematic, and should ultimately reveal how different understandings of the good directly impacts the way these great philosophers structured their ethical systems.³⁷ The longest section was, perhaps unsurprisingly, devoted to St. Thomas, who according to Wojtyła, "... in some beautifully mature way was able to harmonize and balance that what constituted the legacy of his great predecessors in reference to the philosophy of good."³⁸

What appeared to be the most definitive and important facet of Thomistic understanding of the good for Wojtyła was its existential emphasis. For Aquinas first and foremost good lies in existence; being is good because it exists, not because it has consciousness. Precisely this category of existence allowed Wojtyła to clearly distinguish the "philosophy of an object" (Aristotle and Aquinas) from more modern "philosophy of a subject" (Kant and Scheler) and state his preference

³⁵ Ibid., 69.

³⁶ Ibid., 73.

³⁷ Ibid., 77.

³⁸ Ibid., 142.

for the former.³⁹ Once again, Wojtyła reached the conclusion that the modern philosophical systems ultimately fail because of their inadequate foundation of the concept of good:

At the end of above reflection the following conclusion arises; that ethics, which is detached from objective and realistic premises of the philosophy of good, and transplanted to the apriori grounds of the philosophy of consciousness, must significantly change, or even completely lose its own essence.⁴⁰

The third series of lectures, "Norm and Happiness," was a continuation of the previous investigations on the question of good and value.⁴¹ Wojtyła's analysis there was even more elaborate and polemical; the first section dealt with the views of Aristotle and Thomas, the second was devoted to Hume and Bentham, and the third to Kant and Scheler. The final part of the study served as an attempt to systematize the question of the relationship between the moral norm and happiness.

Commenting on the notion of happiness in Aristotle and Aquinas, Wojtyła clearly sided with St. Thomas who opposed the reduction of human happiness to moral virtues:

As much as St. Thomas is eager to accept the Aristotelian notion of happiness rooted in moral virtues, we nonetheless find in him more statements that contradict this view. The virtues only prepare men for happiness, from among which prudence, understood as *recta ratio agibilium*, plays a crucial role. But to prepare for happiness is not the same as to constitute happiness.⁴²

Wojtyła's point is important because whenever human reason is set on pursuing only instrumental goods (*bona utilia*), it quickly slips into mere pursuit of pleasure and satisfaction. Although these are not necessarily opposed to the very effort of becoming happy, they can make true happiness (*bonum honestum*) impossible to achieve.⁴³

Naturally, this is not an issue for the utilitarians, such as Mill and Bentham. For them, happiness consists in an accumulation of pleasures, argued Wojtyła. Consequently, the moral norm

³⁹ Ibid., 172.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 178.

⁴¹ Ibid., 181.

⁴² Ibid., 209-210.

⁴³ Ibid., 211.

becomes highly subjective and focused on the optimization of sensations, and therefore, ceases to exist. Wojtyła clearly rejected utilitarianism for its "mistaken, incomplete, and disintegrated perception of reality, especially this reality which is at stake in ethics, the reality of man."⁴⁴

For Kant, on the other hand, the moral norm and happiness are mutually exclusive. Since the norm is an expression of the categorical imperative and properly belongs to practical reason, it cannot be compatible with happiness, which for Kant is an emotional and physical state of human well-being. Such an antinomy is a result of treating the intellectual and spiritual sphere of a man as the two independent and autonomous entities.⁴⁵ Scheler, who was reacting to Kant's emphasis on duty and the categorical imperative, stressed the significance of values and affective reality within man. Not a duty, but solely a value should govern the moral life of a man; for only a value is capable of bringing about the proper experience of an ethical act, while 'blind' obligation blocks and weakens such experience.⁴⁶ But the solution offered by Scheler remained unsatisfactory for Wojtyła, who reiterated his previous conclusion that "[t]hough Scheler did his best to extract from the emotional sphere of a man the maximum of his cognitive capabilities, when it comes to values, he was unable to build a fully functional normative system."⁴⁷

Concluding the third series of lectures, Wojtyła argued that the norm, being the essential element of ethics, cannot find its *raison d'être* within the realm of any of idealistic philosophies.⁴⁸ Once more the young professor from Kraków saluted the solution offered by St. Thomas Aquinas:

According to St. Thomas, the following difference exists between the pursuit of happiness and the creation of moral norms: the pursuit of happiness is a tendency of the rational nature itself, and the creation of norms is an act of reason. Since, however, such an act [...]

⁴⁴ Ibid., 286.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 256-259.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 261.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 270.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 277. This is a similar conclusion to that which Wojtyła draws in his article from 1959: "...I am led to conclude that the concept of a norm is justified in a system of moral philosophy that proceeds from an existential view of the good and is not really justified in a system of the philosophy of values." Karol Wojtyła, "On the Metaphysical and Phenomenological Basis of the Moral Norm in the Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and Max Scheler," in *Person and Community*, 73-93.

must be in accordance with good inclinations of the human nature (the pursuit of happiness is the basic inclination), convergence, not divergence occurs between the two.⁴⁹

1.6. *Love and Responsibility* (1960)

In 1960, Bishop Wojtyła published his first *opus majus*, a 246-pages long monographic study *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność* (*Love and Responsibility*).⁵⁰ The decision to pursue the philosophical topic of love came as a surprise to Wojtyła's colleagues at KUL.⁵¹ For Wojtyła, however, for whom ethics was of utmost importance to the Church's doctrine, it was the next step to ground Catholic morality, in this case, sexual morality, on the firm basis of philosophical truth.⁵²

Love and Responsibility was unique in many different ways. Many scholars suggested its wider significance for the Church's teaching on sexuality. However, no systematic examination of its impact on the official teaching of the Catholic Church in the area of sexual ethics has been undertaken, even though it is commonly agreed that Pope Paul VI was highly influenced by the lecture of *Love and Responsibility* while working on his famous encyclical letter *Humanae Vitae*.⁵³ However, the book was also unique in a different respect; for the first time, Wojtyła's endorsement of St. Thomas seemed less substantial compared to the previous years.⁵⁴

In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła's focus was clearly on experience. He wished to analyze the phenomenon of love in its entirety, that is, in its deepest theoretical and practical reality. Using the

⁴⁹ Wojtyła, *Wykłady Lubelskie*, 284.

⁵⁰ Karol Wojtyła, *Miłość i Odpowiedzialność* (Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, 1960). English edition: Karol Wojtyła, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993). Hereafter cited as *LR*.

⁵¹ "After the three series of lectures, the young docent surprised us with his decision regarding the new monographic course, which he offered in the winter semester of 1957. It was entitled, 'Love and Responsibility.'" Styczeń, Introduction to *Wykłady Lubelskie*, 16.

⁵² In his own introduction to the book, Wojtyła wrote: "the present book was born principally of the need to put the norms of Catholic sexual morality on the firm basis, and bases as definitive as possible, relying on the most elementary and incontrovertible moral truths and the most fundamental values or goods." *LR*, 16.

⁵³ Kupczak, 44; Janet E. Smith, *Humanae Vitae, a Generation Later* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1991), 12; Paul Johnson, *Pope John Paul II and the Catholic Restoration* (New York, N.Y.: St. Martin's, 1981), 32-33.

⁵⁴ According to Zięba, Wojtyła "[i]n his work, he recalls the classical Aristotelian-Thomistic approach to philosophy, but it is carefully toned down." Maciej Zięba, *Jestem z wami: kompendium twórczości i nauczania Karola Wojtyły - Jana Pawła II* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 2010), 39.

phenomenological method, Wojtyła quickly arrived at the conclusion that unlike anything else in the world, the human person is both a subject and an object, and therefore possesses an inherent dignity, unique only to him. This claim constituted the basis for what Wojtyła later called "the personalistic norm," which became the cornerstone of the whole book.⁵⁵

Though Wojtyła used phenomenological analysis rather extensively in *Love and Responsibility*, he did not use it unqualifiedly. Wojtyła was a very systematic thinker; he did not simply forget about all the caveats he had raised when analyzing Scheler's method in the past. His reservations, though not always explicitly stated, permeated the text of *Love and Responsibility*. Thus, many scholars agree that *Love and Responsibility* was in fact "Wojtyła's first positive attempt to build an ethic which would create an organic synthesis of ontology and phenomenology."⁵⁶ So how Thomistic was Wojtyła's first *opus majus*?

Love and Responsibility was firmly rooted in Thomistic metaphysics. Wojtyła never abandoned his conviction that every ethic, including sexual ethics, must be firmly grounded in the philosophy of being. For instance, in the chapter devoted to the phenomenon of sexual shame, Wojtyła wrote:

...a proper understanding of sexual shame gives certain guidelines for sexual morality generally. The mere description of the phenomenon, even if it is as perceptive as that of the phenomenologists, is not sufficient here – and metaphysical interpretation of it is also necessary... We see clearly here how the moral order is bound up with the existential order, the order of nature. Sexual morality is deeply rooted in the laws of nature.⁵⁷

At the same time, Wojtyła slowly started to feel uncomfortable with the overly objectivistic approach taken by Aquinas, which lacked proper analysis of the subjective reality of a man.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ The Personalistic norm, that is, a norm that safeguards the loving attitude towards the other person can be summarized in the following quotation: "A person must not be merely the means to an end for another person. It is precluded by the very nature of personhood, by what any person is." LR, 26.

⁵⁶ Buttiglione, 83. See also Petri, 134-135, Kupczak 46.

⁵⁷ LR, 178-179.

⁵⁸ A year later, in one of his articles, Wojtyła reinforced his dissatisfaction with Aquinas's overly objectivistic philosophy of the human person: "For St. Thomas, the person is, of course a subject... Because the person has subsistence in the rational nature, and this is what makes the person capable of consciousness and self-consciousness. St. Thomas, however, mainly presents this disposition of the human person to consciousness and self-consciousness. On the other hand, when it comes to analyzing consciousness and self-consciousness... There seems to be no place for it in

Therefore, Wojtyła ventured to expand on the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic concept of a human person, which is precisely what is new about Wojtyła's Thomism at this point in his career. The perfect example of this was Wojtyła's treatment of the virtue of chastity. Revealing his expertise in Thomistic virtue theory, the young Bishop started off with affirming the traditional definition of chastity understood as the daughter virtue of temperance responsible for successful moderation of one's sexual desires. His reflections, however, ended up with the notion of chastity that was highly influenced by his personalistic norm, writing that "[t]he essence of chastity consists in quickness to affirm the value of the person in every situation, and in raising to the personal level all reactions to the value of the body and sex."⁵⁹

Love and Responsibility, therefore, marked an important step in Wojtyła's appropriation of Thomism. From a rather unqualified endorsement of St. Thomas during his studies in Rome and lectures at Lublin, the young bishop moved to qualify, not abandon, his Thomistic convictions, which allowed him to create his own, unique methodology.

1.7. *The Second Vatican Council (1962-1968)*

A few years later, the young bishop from Kraków went back to Rome – this time not in a capacity of a student, but as a teacher of the faith. Wojtyła actively participated this in all four sessions of Vatican II. He intervened at least twenty-three times, of which eight interventions were oral addresses to the aula and the rest were written statements submitted to the commissions.⁶⁰

According to Weigel, "Vatican II was a profound intellectual experience for Wojtyła and a stimulus

St. Thomas's objective is the view of reality... Thus St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person, but it would be difficult to speak in his view of the lived experiences of the person." Wojtyła, "Thomistic Personalism," in *Person and Community*, 170-171.

⁵⁹ LR, 171.

⁶⁰ Peters, 20.

to his work as a philosopher."⁶¹ The young bishop from Kraków believed strongly that Christian personalism should be the organizing framework for the Council's deliberations, which only confirms the continuity in Wojtyła's philosophical outlook from previous years.⁶² It is worth mentioning that in one of his earlier interventions, Wojtyła alluded to classical Thomistic virtue theory. In her excellent study on John Paul II's concept of pedagogy, Peters relates:

Furthermore, the Polish bishop went on to say that "charity as the prime virtue" should inspire all works of sanctification. For him, it was self-understood that the dignity and perfection of the human person created in the likeness of him who is love, "consists in the perfection of the theological and moral virtues," which is made possible, "through God's sanctifying grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit." Referring to St. Thomas ... Wojtyła clarified that "sanctity ...applied to God's directing all virtuous acting to the Divine Good."⁶³

In the meantime, Wojtyła continued to publish in *Znak*, *Roczniki Filozoficzne*, and other academic journals.⁶⁴ According to Petri, following the publication of *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła's articles bore a different tone concerning the metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas: "While maintaining a reverence for the Angelic Doctor, Wojtyła was more likely to point to Aquinas's deficiencies in confronting the modern world."⁶⁵ For instance, in his article from 1965, entitled "Zagadnienie katolickiej etyki seksualnej: Refleksje i Postulaty" ("The Problem of Catholic Sexual Ethics: Reflections and Postulates"), Wojtyła, while praising Aquinas for masterfully transposing ethical concerns into the sphere of ontology and Revelation, also suggested that people continue to abandon classical teleological view due to its insufficient attention given to moral experience:

St. Thomas's transposition of ethical speculation into the realm of revelation and the realm of the intellect illumined by faith, was certainly the most complete transposition of its kind for the state of philosophical thought at the time. To this day, the teleological view has not lost any of its metaphysical value... It would be impossible, however not to detect a certain withdrawal from it on the part of contemporary thought. This withdrawal is caused, on the

⁶¹ Weigel, 158.

⁶² Weigel, 159. The author also notes that Wojtyła "thought that the Council's vision of the human person would be even more compelling if it were given a deeper philosophical foundation. Out of that concern would come Wojtyła's major philosophical work *Person and Act*." (Ibid., 158)

⁶³ Peters, 21. The author is quoting from *Synodalia* II-4, relevant points being 341, 341a, 341b and 342. (Peters' own translation from Latin).

⁶⁴ These can also be found in *Person and Community*.

⁶⁵ Petri, 140.

one hand, by a new, more critical attitude towards metaphysics, and, on the other – and this, in my opinion, is the more important cause--by a more basic grasp of moral facts themselves, by a reestablished contact with moral experience.⁶⁶

By emphasizing the value of human experience, Wojtyła did not intend to reject the teleological character of moral theology, but only to "supplement the old with the new," that is, to enrich traditional ethics with a description of the experience.⁶⁷ This is the same conclusion Wojtyła reached in an article from 1967.⁶⁸

1.8. *Osoba i Czyn* (1969)

Two years later in 1969, Cardinal Wojtyła published his second major work, *Osoba i czyn* (Act and Person).⁶⁹ According to many contemporary authors, *Osoba i czyn* was Wojtyła's most elaborate and significant work, the true *summa philosophica*, which represented his most mature views.⁷⁰

Although *Osoba i czyn* could be read in many different ways, John Paul II later in his life admitted that his intention for the book was to work out in detail the philosophical issues involved in putting the older Aristotelian-Thomistic "philosophy of being" together with the "philosophy of consciousness" he had analyzed in the dissertation on Scheler.⁷¹ Some authors contemporary to Wojtyła doubted whether he succeeded in this ambitious undertaking, but certainly unlike anything else before, *Osoba i czyn* remained the most synthetic philosophical project Wojtyła ever created.⁷²

⁶⁶ Wojtyła, "Catholic Sexual Ethics," in *Person and Community*, 280.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "Another demand that should be put forth in the light of all that has been said here is the need to supplement 'the theology of ultimate realities', which corresponds more to the teleological treatment of moral theology, with the moral aspect of a 'theology of earthly realities,' which corresponds more to the normative treatment of moral theology. Both of these demands are basically one: the demand for a more integral 'theologization' of moral theology." Wojtyła, "Etyka a teologia moralna" ("Ethics and Moral Theology"), in *Person and Community*, 106.

⁶⁹ The English edition was published in 1979 with an unfortunate title *The Acting Person*. The more accurate translation is *Person and Act*. The English translation was found with many more errors, which led me to consult the original text of the first Polish edition of the book from 1969. For this reason, I will refer to it throughout the study by its original title, *Osoba i Czyn*. For more information regarding the English translation see Weigel, 175, footnote 81, and Kupczak 67, esp. footnote 55.

⁷⁰ Kupczak, 67, Petri, 141, Zięba, 41.

⁷¹ Weigel, 173.

⁷² Cf. Kupczak, 76-81.

The synthesis itself, however, was not the goal of the book; *Osoba i czyn* was not simply *l'art pour l'art*, a "training ground" to test out the new methodology. The underlying reason for the book was to provide the most accurate answer to the most complicated question concerning the meaning of human experience. It was precisely this interest in human experience that led Wojtyła to an attempt to synthesize traditional metaphysics with modern phenomenology, not the other way around. In the preface to the first Polish edition of *Osoba i czyn*, Wojtyła wrote:

The need to embark on the following study originates from the need to objectivize this great cognitive process, which can be defined as the experience of man. It is the richest among the experiences accessible to men, and also simultaneously the most complex one. The experience of each thing, which remains outside of a man, is always connected to some kind of experience of the man himself. The man never experiences anything outside of himself without also experiencing somehow himself in this experience.⁷³

Wojtyła located the solution to the modern opposition between subjectivism and objectivism within the man himself. This is because a human person is not an abstract and isolated consciousness, but a being deeply rooted in the real world that simultaneously experiences himself as a subject and as an object of his own actions.

According to Petri, what was novel about *Osoba i czyn* was that Wojtyła was able to synthesize the two approaches, metaphysical and phenomenological, in a way that was unlike his previous work, where he "seemed to set phenomenology and ontology more in contradiction."⁷⁴

Indeed, Wojtyła's past criticisms were largely absent from the book, and the focus shifted to the

⁷³ Cf. Karol Wojtyła, *Osoba i czyn. Wydanie Drugie Uzupełnione i Poprawione*. [Person and act. Second edition, revised and updated.] (Kraków, Polskie Towarzystwo Teologiczne, 1984), 5. Hereafter, *OiC*. Translation mine, unless otherwise noted.

Many authors came to criticize the English translation of *Osoba i czyn* for its inaccurate translation of the original work. According to Schmitz, the English text has been "revised with rather heavy hand of a collaborator-editor." Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 59. Among other things, Schmitz points out the confusing layout of the English work (two seventh chapters and the appendix) and its unfortunate obscuring of the continuity of Wojtyła's thought with older philosophical traditions, most notably with the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. Cf. Schmitz, 58-61. Others have listed numerous and serious divergences of the English translation. Cf. J.Y. Lacoste, "Verite et liberte: Sur la philosophie de la personne chez Karol Wojtyła," *Revue Thomiste* 81, no. 3 (1981): 586-614; G. Kalinowski, "Autour de The Acting Person" *Revue Thomiste* 82, no. 4 (1982): 626-33. For an excellent review essay on the history of the English translation of *Osoba i czyn*, see: Jameson Taylor, "The Acting Person in Purgatory: A Note for Readers of the English Text" *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture*. 13, no. 3 (2010): 77-104.

⁷⁴ Petri, 142.

positive application of the two methods. For instance, in his treatment of the Thomistic concept of human acts (*actus humanus*), Wojtyła seamlessly linked the metaphysical analysis with a phenomenological description:

The concept of *actus humanus* was, as mentioned before, not only realistic and objective but also metaphysical. It dealt with human consciousness as something built into the existence and activity of a man. The human being exists for it and acts consciously, however, he does not exist and does not act thanks to consciousness. We said already that the point - in the following case - is not to absolutize consciousness. Rather, it is about an opening of a certain aspect of it, which in the traditional concept was closed, which remained [accessible] only [through] an implication.⁷⁵

Wojtyła was also eager to utilize Aquinas's insights to provide himself with a basic theoretical framework serving as a springboard for his philosophical analysis. In this way, for example, Wojtyła constructed his concept of intentionality.⁷⁶ He also explicitly invoked St. Thomas at multiple occasions in reference to the dynamic structure of a man,⁷⁷ human efficacy,⁷⁸ the operation of the will and intellect,⁷⁹ the relationship between cognition and truth,⁸⁰ the unity of the body and soul,⁸¹ emotions and desires,⁸² and the role of virtues.⁸³ At one point, Wojtyła stated that whenever he turns to the traditional understanding of a man, he refers specifically to the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas:

Throughout the investigations in the present study, we refer multiple times to the traditional conception of a man. We have before our eyes primarily this thorough conception which St. Thomas Aquinas built on the fundament of a philosophy of being.⁸⁴

⁷⁵ *OiC*, 37.

⁷⁶ Cf. *OiC*, 133-134.

⁷⁷ Cf. *Ibid.*, 32; 75-79.

⁷⁸ Cf. *Ibid.*, 103.

⁷⁹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 144.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*, 167.

⁸¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 218.

⁸² Cf. *Ibid.*, 256-257.

⁸³ Cf. *Ibid.*, 275.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 254.

Finally, in the preface to the English edition of the book, Wojtyła explicitly called himself the "present student of St. Thomas," which only further confirmed Wojtyła's positive attitude towards traditional philosophy at this stage of his intellectual career.⁸⁵

In sum, Wojtyła's multiple references to Aquinas in *Osoba i czyn* (though many of them unnoted) revealed his continuous commitment to the thought of the Angelic Doctor. Despite its dense language and phenomenological tone, the second *opus majus* of the Cardinal from Kraków gave an ample witness to the fact that Wojtyła, in his mature philosophy, never abandoned Thomistic convictions.

1.9. After *Osoba i czyn* (1970-1978)

On December 16-17, 1970 the faculty of the Department of Philosophy at the Catholic University of Lublin invited Wojtyła to speak about his recent book. Most scholars report that the reception of *Osoba i czyn* by Wojtyła's own colleagues from the University was not a favorable one.⁸⁶ Many criticisms were raised, none, however, effectively discouraged the cardinal to retreat from the path set out in *Osoba i czyn*.

Thus, Wojtyła continued to publish, and within his publications, his synthetic method was clearly at work; metaphysical reality, supplemented with phenomenological description was used to describe the experience of man in his totality. However, this also meant that Wojtyła's attitude towards Thomism remained positive during these years. For instance, in a short article published in 1970, entitled "Osoba ludzka a prawo naturalne" ("The Human Person and Natural Law"), Cardinal Wojtyła investigated the two different meanings of nature; the one set by the philosophy of St.

⁸⁵ "The first question which was born in mind of the present student of St. Thomas (certainly a very poor student) was the question: What is the relationship between action as interpreted by the traditional ethic *actus humanus*, and the action as an experience. This and other similar questions led me gradually to a more synthetic formulation in the present study *The Acting Person*." Karol Wojtyła, *The acting person*, trans. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Pub. Co, 1979), xiii-xiv.

⁸⁶ Cf. Weigel, 213; Petri, 149; Williams, 196.

Thomas Aquinas, and the other associated with modern thinkers, especially phenomenologists.

Without getting into the debate itself, it is worth indicating that Wojtyła once again identified himself with the thought of St. Thomas:

We in the Thomistic school, the school of "perennial philosophy," are accustomed to primarily or exclusively one meaning - nature in the metaphysical sense, which is more or less equivalent to the essence of the thing taken as the basis of all the actualization of the thing.⁸⁷

Similarly, four years later, in a paper presented at the International Conference on St. Thomas Aquinas in Rome-Naples, Wojtyła insisted that though descriptive approach offered by phenomenology helps to illumine the way people act, the ultimate explanation for an act of willing can only be accessed through metaphysical analysis:

By virtue of self-determination, I experience in the relatively most immediate way that I am the person. Of course, the path from this experience to an understanding that would qualify as a complete theory of the person must lead to true metaphysical analysis. Still, the experience is the indispensable beginning of this path, and the lived experience of self-determination seems to be the nucleus of this beginning.⁸⁸

Furthermore, making a direct reference to the lecture from December 1970, Wojtyła argued that his phenomenology remains intimately linked to the traditional metaphysics and that Aquinas would have no problems with accepting his view that a man is both a subject and an object in the sphere of his own activity.⁸⁹

2. The Thomism of John Paul II

On October 16, 1978, to the great surprise of many, the Cardinal from Kraków was elected Pope and took the name John Paul II. While the Poles generally rejoiced at the news of their countryman being entrusted with the papal office, many scholars realized that they "lost" one of the greatest intellectual minds in the history of their country. Jerzy Turowicz, the chief editor of the

⁸⁷ Wojtyła, "The Human Person and Natural Law," in *Person and Community*, 182.

⁸⁸ Wojtyła, "The Personal Structure of Self-Determination," in *Person and Community*, 193.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 191.

Catholic weekly *Tygodnik Powszechny*, in which Wojtyła used to publish so prolifically, wrote that papacy always entails "a clear cut off from one's previous life, with no possible return."⁹⁰ However, as history showed, the concern of Polish scholars was, at best, unwarranted: the intellectual genius of the Polish Cardinal was not squashed by the papacy but blossomed during the many years of service at the chair of Peter.

It is certainly true that the new Pope often referred to his previous writings and ideas. If the scholars such as Kupczak, are correct in that Wojtyła/John Paul II was a "remarkably consistent thinker,"⁹¹ then Wojtyła's passion for the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas must have continued into his papal years. In order to establish whether this claim is accurate, I will now proceed to examine the Thomistic influences in the writings of John Paul II. I will do so in the chronological order, beginning with the most original intellectual achievement of the young Pope, the *Theology of the Body*.⁹²

2.1. *Theology of the Body* (1979-84)

The series of 129 catecheses were delivered by John Paul II on Wednesdays, starting on Sept. 5, 1979, and extending until Nov. 28, 1984.⁹³ At first, it seems that John Paul II was much more reserved in the use of the Thomistic categories during his weekly reflections. The 2006 edition of the *Theology of the Body* mentions only eight direct references to St. Thomas, most of them dealing with particular topics, such as the virtue of chastity.⁹⁴ However, recent research showed that many more of the themes mentioned in *Theology of the Body* were compatible with those found in the

⁹⁰ Jerzy Turowicz, "Habemus Papam," in the *Shepherd for all People*, ed. Bolesław Wierzbiański. Quoted in Weigel, 254.

⁹¹ Cf. Kupczak, 10.

⁹² John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, ed. Michael Waldstein (Boston, MA: Pauline Books & Media, 2006). Hereafter, *TOB*.

⁹³ Waldstein notes that the Pope had written 135 catecheses of which 6 were not delivered for various reasons. Cf. John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them*, 732.

⁹⁴ *TOB*, 51:6; 54:2; 66:6; 93:5; 98:7; 130:1.

Summa.⁹⁵ This is not to say that John Paul II simply restated what St. Thomas said about marriage and human sexuality in the past, but to indicate that the Pope's mature thought on those issues cohered with the key elements of traditional Thomistic doctrine.

For example, according to Cole, Aquinas's treatment of virginity significantly impacted John Paul II's discussion of celibacy for the sake of God's kingdom.⁹⁶ Considering the question whether a celibate life is superior to a married life, the Pope denied that moral perfection was dependent on a mere choice to pursue religious lifestyle.⁹⁷ For the author, John Paul II essentially agreed with St. Thomas in that the perfection of the Christian life is measured primarily by the measure of love and virtue, not one's decision to enter a particular state of life. As Aquinas wrote in his *Summa*, "a married person can be better than a virgin [...] because one who is not a virgin may have more excellent virtue."⁹⁸ Cole also suggests that the Pope's second major Thomistic influence in *Theology of the Body* pertains to his description of human emotions. The Pope, claims Cole, follows the Thomistic understanding of "passions," for example, in that emotions are essentially neither good nor bad, and in that they are capable of being shaped by corresponding virtues.⁹⁹

One could also point to a technical discussion of John Paul II's treatment of *imago Dei*, in which the Holy Father affirmed that man and woman become the image of God through their communion of persons.¹⁰⁰ At first, the Pope's statement appears to be at odds with some of the comments made by Augustine and St. Thomas, who rejected the idea of male – female unity and

⁹⁵ Cf. Thomas Petri, *Aquinas and the Theology of the Body: The Thomistic Foundations of John Paul II's Anthropology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2016); Michael Waldstein, *Pope John Paul II's Personalist Teaching and St. Thomas Aquinas: Disagreement or Development of Doctrine?* (Santa Paula, CA: Thomas Aquinas College, 2001); Basil B. Cole, "Mary's virginity, Theology of the Body, and St. Thomas Aquinas," in *The Virgin Mary and Theology of the Body*, ed. Donald H. Calloway (Stockbridge, MA: Marian Press, 2005): 65-91; Perry J. Cahall, *The Mystery of Marriage: A Theology of the Body and the Sacrament* (Chicago, IL: Hillenbrand Books, 2016), esp. 301-331; Emily Stimpson, *These Beautiful Bones: An Everyday Theology of the Body* (Steubenville, OH: Emmaus Road Pub., 2013), esp. 22-24.

⁹⁶ Cf. Cole, 66-67; TOB, 78:1-5.

⁹⁷ TOB, 78:3;

⁹⁸ ST III, 152.4.

⁹⁹ Cf. Cole, 75.

¹⁰⁰ TOB, 9:3.

fruitfulness as imaging the Trinity.¹⁰¹ However, as Waldenstein argued in one of his presentations, a careful reading of the papal text reveals that the two accounts are not completely irreconcilable:

...according to both St. Augustine and St. Thomas one can speak, and speak properly, of a union of love between the divine persons in terms that are drawn from the interpersonal love between human beings. This conclusion shows that the teaching of John Paul II about the image of God is implicitly contained in St. Augustine and St. Thomas, even though they do not state it explicitly.¹⁰²

Finally, in an excellent comparative study of the Thomistic elements in John Paul II's series of Wednesday catecheses, Petri identified not one, but five major themes that appear in the text of *Theology of the Body* and those can be reconciled with the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas:

First, like Wojtyła, Aquinas holds for a strict unity between body and soul. The human person is not constituted by either principle alone but by both. Second, Aquinas agrees that all created being is inherently driven out of itself in search of complete perfection. Third, this movement, called love, must be properly ordered, and this ordering is the chief characteristic of virtue. Without virtue, in St. Thomas's moral theory, man dissipates into a creature pursuing disparate ends with no guidance from reason. Fourth, marriage, as the highest form of friendship entails a free exchange of consent, which includes the voluntary offering of one's body to the other. Finally, because of the hyломorphic unity of the human person, the conjugal act involves not only a biological aspect (procreation) but also a personalist aspect (paying the marital debt, fidelity, and education of offspring).¹⁰³

It is perhaps worth emphasizing that while Petri identified five common themes of John Paul and Aquinas's understanding of marriage and sexuality, he also observed that "there are weaknesses in both Aquinas's presentation and *The Theology of the Body*."¹⁰⁴ For instance, according to Petri, Aquinas failed to account for human consciousness properly and did not offer a detailed view of the conjugal act as an expression of love between two spouses. John Paul II, on the other hand, insisted that the spousal meaning of the body be experienced differently by man and woman, but never explained how the spousal meaning of the body actually differ for man and woman. The above deficiencies,

¹⁰¹ Cf. Augustine, *On the Trinity*, book 12, chapter 5; *ST I* 93.6.

¹⁰² Michael Waldstein, "Pope John Paul II's Personalist Teaching and St. Thomas Aquinas: Disagreement or Development of Doctrine?" (Lecture presented at Thomas Aquinas College, January 12, 2001).

¹⁰³ Petri, 415.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

according to the author, can be overcome, once the two theologians are read in a complementary fashion.¹⁰⁵

The relevant point to the present study is not to conduct another comparative analysis of the two works. Rather, it is to assert a firm link between *The Theology of the Body* and the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. In this sense, the work of authors such as Cole, Waldenstein, or Petri speaks for the ongoing commitment of John Paul II to the thought of the Angelic Doctor.

2.2. *Speech at the Angelicum (1979)*

In November 1979, he returned to his *alma mater*, the Angelicum, and gave a lecture entitled "Perennial Philosophy of St. Thomas for the Youth of Our Times" on the occasion of a hundredth anniversary of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Aeterni Patris*, in which the Italian Pope recommended a return to the philosophy of St. Thomas. John Paul II's own endorsement of Aquinas was strong and reflected many of the positive comments from the period before his election to the papacy. The Pope praised St. Thomas's system for its universalism and openness, but above all for its ability to accurately account for and affirm the reality of man:

From this proclamation of being, the philosophy of St. Thomas draws its ability to grasp and to "affirm" all that presents itself to the human understanding (the data of experience in the broadest sense) as a specific being in all the inexhaustible richness of its content; it derives its ability, in particular, to accept and to "affirm" that "being" which is able to know itself, marvel at itself and especially to decide about itself, and to forge its own unique history. Of this "being" and its dignity, St. Thomas thinks when he speaks of man as something that which is "*perfectissimum in tota natura*" (the most perfect thing in the whole of nature), a person, for whom particular and exceptional attention must be given.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Petri, 416-417.

¹⁰⁶ The original text of the speech was not officially published in English. The following quote and other references are my translations from Spanish. The document can be found at the Vatican website: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1979/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19791117_angelicum.html [accessed June 24, 2016].

De esta proclamación del ser la filosofía de Santo Tomás saca su capacidad de acoger y de "afirmar" todo lo que aparece ante el entendimiento humano (el dato de experiencia en el sentido más amplio) como existente determinado en toda la riqueza inagotable de su contenido; deduce, en particular, la capacidad de acoger y de "afirmar" ese "ser" que está en disposición de conocerse a sí mismo, de maravillarse en sí y sobre todo de decidir de sí, y de forjar la propia historia irrepetible. En este "ser", en su dignidad piensa Santo Tomás

At the same time, the Pope never denied the importance of other philosophical trends. Favoring the philosophy of St. Thomas should not be feared in the multicultural world; in fact, John Paul II claimed that such a fear would be vain as whatever is real must have its source in the act of existing.

¹⁰⁷ Consequently, any philosophical trends that accept this view of reality "should be treated as partners worthy of attention and respect in the dialogue."¹⁰⁸

For John Paul II, then, as it was for Wojtyła, the philosophy of St. Thomas remained the firm foundation for any philosophical analysis of reality, particularly the reality of man. Even though the Pope thought it necessary sometimes to utilize the insights from other philosophical schools, it was clear that these were supplemental to the metaphysical view of reality as endorsed by St. Thomas Aquinas.

2.3. Address to the Eighth International Thomistic Congress (1980)

On the 13th of September, 1980, John Paul II received in audience the participants of the Eighth International Thomistic Congress. The Pope not only welcomed the scholars and encouraged their ongoing research, but expressed his deep appreciation for the thought of the Common Doctor. The Pope was very verbal about his continuous commitment to the philosophy and theology of St. Thomas since the beginning of his pontificate; to use his own words, he "ha[s] not let pass a propitious occasion without recalling the sublime figure of St Thomas at multiple occasions."¹⁰⁹

cuando habla del hombre como de algo que es "perfectissimum in tota natura" (S. Th. I, q. 29, a. 3), una "persona", para la que él pide una atención específica y excepcional. Discurso, n.6.

¹⁰⁷ ¿Acaso se deberá temer que la adopción de la filosofía de Santo Tomás haya de comprometer la justa pluralidad de las culturas y el progreso del pensamiento humano? Semejante temor sería manifiestamente vano... Ibid, 7.

¹⁰⁸ Las otras corrientes filosóficas, por tanto, si se las mira desde este punto de vista, pueden, es más, deben ser consideradas como aliadas naturales de la filosofía de Santo Tomás, y como partners dignos de atención y de respeto en el diálogo que se desarrolla en presencia de la realidad y en nombre de una verdad no incompleta sobre ella. Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ The complete text of the address can be found at the Vatican website: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/es/speeches/1980/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19800913_congresso-tomistico.html

Regarding the value of the Thomistic system itself, the Holy Father again evoked the wisdom of his predecessor, Leo XIII, who claimed the philosophy and theology of Aquinas as the model for the Church to follow:

In this lies the reason for the Church's has a preference to the method and doctrine of the Angelic Doctor. It is not an exclusive preference; on the contrary, it is about an exemplary preference which permitted Leo XIII to declare him to be *inter Scholasticos Doctores, omnium princeps et magister* (*Aeterni Patris*, n.13). And truly such is St. Thomas Aquinas, not only for the competence, balance, depth and clarity of style, but still more for his keen sense of fidelity to the truth which can also be called realism.¹¹⁰

John Paul II further praised Aquinas for his ability to carefully listen and study the wisdom of other authors, even if sometimes he could not completely agree with them.¹¹¹ This critical and yet at the same time open mind of the medieval philosopher and theologian expressed the concept of truth itself.¹¹² Pushing the point even further, the Holy Father argued that precisely because of that unique mindset, Aquinas deserves another title, namely, *Doctor Humanitatis*:

This realistic and historic method, fundamentally optimistic and open, makes St Thomas not only the "*Doctor Communis Ecclesiae*," as Paul VI calls him in his beautiful letter *Lumen Ecclesiae*, but the "Doctor Humanitatis," because he is always willing and available to receive the human values of all cultures.¹¹³

Desde el comienzo de mi pontificado no he dejado pasar ocasión propicia sin evocar la excelsa figura de Santo Tomás, como, por ejemplo, en mi visita a la Pontificia Universidad "Angelicum" y al Instituto Católico de París, en la alocución a la UNESCO y, de manera explícita o implícita, en mis encuentros con los superiores, profesores y alumnos de las Pontificias Universidades Gregoriana y Lateranense. Discurso del Santo Padre Juan Pablo II a los Participantes en el VII Congreso Tomista Internacional, 1. Translation mine.

¹¹⁰ En esto radica la motivación de la preferencia que da la Iglesia al método y a la doctrina del Doctor Angélico. Nó es una preferencia exclusiva; al contrario, se trata de una preferencia ejemplar, que permitió a León XIII declararlo: "*inter Scholasticos Doctores, omnium princeps et magister*" (*Aeterni Patris*, 13). Y esto es verdaderamente Santo Tomás de Aquino, no sólo por la competencia, el equilibrio, la profundidad, la limpidez del estilo, sino aún más por el vivísimo sentido de fidelidad a la verdad, que también puede llamarse realismo. Fidelidad a la voz de las cosas creadas, para construir el edificio de la filosofía; fidelidad a la voz de la Iglesia, para construir el edificio de la teología. Discurso, 2.

¹¹¹ En esta visual, Santo Tomás ha prestado siempre respetuosa escucha a todos los autores, aun cuando no podía compartir del todo sus opiniones; aun cuando se trataba de, autores precristianos o no cristianos, como, por ejemplo, los árabes comentadores de los filósofos griegos. Discurso, 3.

¹¹² Por lo demás, la base de su actitud, comprensiva para con todos, sin dejar de ser genuinamente crítica, cada vez que sentía el deber de hacerlo, y lo hizo valientemente en muchos casos, está en la concepción misma de la verdad. Ibid.

¹¹³ Este método realista e histórico, fundamentalmente optimista y abierto, hace de Santo Tomás no sólo el "*Doctor communis Ecclesiae*," como lo llama Pablo VI en su hermosa Carta *Lumen Ecclesiae*, sino el "*Doctor Humanitatis*", porque está siempre dispuesto y disponible a recibir los valores humanos de todas las culturas. Ibid.

Unsurprisingly, at the conclusion of the speech, John Paul II urged the participants of the congress to seriously and with great commitment devote their efforts to the study of the wisdom of St. Thomas Aquinas to put his teaching into a "continuous contact and honest dialogue" with the complex contemporary culture.¹¹⁴

2.4. *Laborem Exercens* (1981)

In the following year, the Pope issued the third of his encyclicals, *Laborem Exercens*. The document, commemorating the 90th anniversary of the publication of famous *Rerum Novarum*, addressed the question of work in the modern world. The encyclical was both philosophical and theological in tone. Many of its themes echoed the Pope's previous research as a professor at KUL, and so by extension, the work of St. Thomas Aquinas. For instance, one of the main arguments in *Laborem Exercens*, that human work should always serve the realization of personhood, read like "an anthropological thesis of *Osoba i czyn* phrased differently."¹¹⁵ The work, argued John Paul II, is a "good thing for man" because through work, man not only transforms nature but "achieves fulfillment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being.'"¹¹⁶ Essential to this growth is the practice of virtue which the Pope, following Aquinas, defined as "a moral habit, something whereby man becomes good as man."¹¹⁷

John Paul II also referred to St. Thomas when he discussed the concept of private ownership of the means of production. Arguing for the priority of labor over capital, the Pope

¹¹⁴ *Mientras os manifesto mi más viva complacencia por el Congreso Tomista Internacional, que, en estos días, ha dado verdaderamente una notable aportación científica, tanto por la calidad de los participantes y relatores, como por la cuidadosa actualización de los varios problemas históricos y filosóficos, os exhorto a continuar realizando, con gran interés y seriedad, las finalidades de vuestra Academia; que sea un centro vivo, vibrante, moderno, en el cual el método y la doctrina del Aquinate se pongan en contacto continuo y en diálogo sereno con los complejos fermentos de la cultura contemporánea, en la que vivimos y estamos, inmersos.* (Ibid., 7).

¹¹⁵ Zięba, 75.

¹¹⁶ John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, no. 9. Official Latin text: *AAS* 73 (1981), 577-647. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html [accessed Sept 10, 2016]. Hereafter, *LE*.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

emphasized that every person must derive meaning from his own work without being treated as "a cog in a huge machine moved from above."¹¹⁸ Man's work concerns not only the economy but also, and especially, personal values. Understood in this light, private ownership of the means of production ensures the priority of personal values over economic gain.

2.5. *Veritatis Splendor* (1993)

Twelve years after *Laborem Exercens*, the Pope issued another encyclical, this time devoted solely to the matters of moral theology.¹¹⁹ The purpose of the letter was to treat "more fully and more deeply the issues regarding the very foundations of moral theology, foundations which are being undermined by certain present-day tendencies."¹²⁰ As the first papal document to address the foundational issues of Christian morality, *Veritatis Splendor* quickly received much attention from the ethicists of both Catholic and non-Catholic affiliation. The responses were diverse and many, but to analyze them in depth, would be to embark on another, quite different, and probably very long, study.¹²¹ The relevant question for the present moment is this: how much of St. Thomas could be found in *Veritatis Splendor*?

Certainly, it would be a stretch to claim that the entire document was merely a reiteration of the traditional Thomistic doctrine of morality. Nonetheless, John Paul II clearly referred to the

¹¹⁸ *LE*, 15.

¹¹⁹ It is not uncommon for multiple authors to contribute to the drafting of the papal documents. In the case of *Veritatis Splendor*, however, I follow the intuition of Alasdair MacIntyre: "...any reader of Karol Wojtyła's major philosophical writings, from his doctoral dissertation onwards, will recognize, both in the style of arguments and in the nuances with which particular arguments are developed, a single nameable authorial presence in this text." Alasdair MacIntyre, "How can we learn what *Veritatis Splendor* has to teach?" *The Thomist*, vol. 58 (1994): 171-195 (171).

¹²⁰ *VS*, 10.

¹²¹ Literature abounds in books, articles, and blog entries discussing the history, content, and reception of *Veritatis Splendor*. The following studies can be helpful for the study of the papal document: J. A. DiNoia and Romanus Cessario, *Veritatis Splendor and the Renewal of Moral Theology* (Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers, 1999); Livio Melina, *Sharing in Christ's Virtues: For a Renewal of Moral Theology in Light of Veritatis Splendor* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2001); Michael E. Allsopp and John J. O'Keefe (*Veritatis Splendor: American Responses*. Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995); J. Ratzinger, "The Renewal of Moral Theology: Perspectives of Vatican II and *Veritatis Splendor*" *Communio* 32, no. 2 (2005): 357-368; W.M. Maina, "The Shaping of Moral Theology: *Veritatis Splendor* and the Debate on the Nature of Roman Catholic Moral Theology" *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 12, no. 35 (2013): 178-221.

wisdom of the Common Doctor on multiple occasions. For example, in his treatment of freedom and law, the Pope, following Aquinas, emphasized the significance of human reason in discovering and applying the moral law, while at the same time insisting that reason derives its authority from the eternal law:

The moral law has its origin in God and always finds its source in him: at the same time, by virtue of natural reason, which derives from divine wisdom, it is a properly human law. Indeed, as we have seen, the natural law 'is nothing other than the light of understanding infused in us by God, whereby we understand what must be done and what must be avoided. God gave this light and this law to man at creation.'¹²²

Consequently, John Paul II argued that the autonomy of reason cannot mean that reason itself creates values and moral norms. Such an interpretation of human autonomy and freedom would contradict the fundamental truth about man and, in fact, lead to "the death of true freedom."¹²³ Once more, directly quoting from the *Summa*, the Pope argued that God calls man to participate in his own providence, and precisely because of that "God's plan poses no threat to man's genuine freedom; on the contrary, the acceptance of God's plan is the only way to affirm that freedom."¹²⁴ As a result, neither those who wish to set an ethical standard by looking at the statistics, nor those who somehow intend to set human freedom in opposition to the body, nor those who attempt to reduce the nature to the raw material of human activity, would be ever able to do justice to the true meaning and value of human nature and freedom.¹²⁵

John Paul II further endorsed St. Thomas's teaching when he discussed the role of conscience in forming moral judgments.¹²⁶ The Pope warned against the confusion of subjective

¹²² *VJ*, 40. John Paul II directly quotes St. Thomas *In Duo Praecepta Caritatis et in Decem Legis Praecepta. Prologus: Opuscula Theologica*, II, No. 1129, ed. Taurinen. (1954), 245.

¹²³ *VJ*, 40.

¹²⁴ *VJ*, 43-45. Relevant quote from St. Thomas: "Among all others, the rational creature is subject to divine providence in the most excellent way, insofar as it partakes of a share of providence, being provident both for itself and for others. Thus it has a share of the Eternal Reason, whereby it has a natural inclination to its proper act and end. This participation of the eternal law in the rational creature is called natural law." *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 93, a. 1.

¹²⁵ *VJ*, 46.

¹²⁶ The treatment of conscience in *Veritatis Splendor* has been discussed in detail by Jayne Hoose, "Conscience in *Veritatis Splendor* and Catechism" in Charles E Curran, *Conscience* (New York: Paulist Press, 2004): 89-95.

truth resulting from the action of erroneous conscience with the objective truth as perceived by correct conscience.¹²⁷ A person acting with an invincible or non-culpable erroneous conscience should not be imputed with moral blame for his actions, but even in this case an error of judgment, the Pope argued, "does not cease to be an evil, a disorder in relation to the truth about the good."¹²⁸ Thus, reaffirming the Thomistic claim of connaturality of man and the true good, John Paul II called the faithful to form their conscience always in connection to the objective truth, that is, the universal and objective norm of morality indicated by the divine law. Freedom of conscience is never freedom "from" the truth but always and only freedom "in" the truth.¹²⁹

Finally, the Thomistic tone can be noted in the Pope's statements concerning the moral evaluation of human acts. The Pope argued that only the act in conformity with the good can be a path that leads to life.¹³⁰ That is, only those actions which are voluntary, rational, and oriented towards the *true* human good can be deemed moral. For this reason, the Pope insisted, "human activity cannot be judged as morally good merely because it is a means for attaining one or another of its goals, or simply because the subject's intention is good."¹³¹ The morality of the human act, argued John Paul II, "depends primarily and fundamentally on the 'object' rationally chosen by the deliberate will, as is borne out by the insightful analysis, still valid today, made by Saint Thomas."¹³² The action must be first and foremost capable of being ordered to God; the Pope again quoted Aquinas with intention to show how an action can be morally evil due to the lack of "the

¹²⁷ *VS*, 63. The Pope explicitly references Aquinas's *De Veritate*, q. 17, a. 4, at this point.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, The document points to *Summa Theologiae*, II-11, q. 45, a. 2.

¹³⁰ *VS*, 72.

¹³¹ *Ibid.* John Paul II closely followed St. Thomas on this point, and provided a direct reference to Aquinas's moral evaluation of the sin of gluttony from *Summa Theologiae*, II-11, q. 148, a. 3. The relevant passage reads: "The gravity of a sin may be measured in three ways. First and foremost it depends on the matter in which the sin is committed: and in this way sins committed in connection with Divine things are the greatest. From this point of view gluttony is not the greatest sin, for it is about matters connected with the nourishment of the body. Secondly, the gravity of a sin depends on the person who sins, and from this point of view the sin of gluttony is diminished rather than aggravated, both on account of the necessity of taking food, and on account of the difficulty of proper discretion and moderation in such matters. Thirdly, from the point of view of the result that follows, and in this way gluttony has a certain gravity, inasmuch as certain sins are occasioned thereby."

¹³² *VS*, 78. Another direct reference to Aquinas is made to the *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 18, a. 6.

uprightness of the will" in the case of a robber who steals to feed the hungry.¹³³ Consequently, the Pope concluded his lengthy analysis by saying that neither in the modern moral theories that locate the morality of an action in person's subjective conviction, such as subjectivism and relativism, nor in potential good consequences, such as proportionalism and consequentialism, are adequate for Christian ethics.¹³⁴

2.6. *Crossing of the Threshold of Hope* (1994)

The following year, on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of his pontificate, the Pope agreed to give the first televised interview in the history of the papacy. Although the interview ultimately did not take place, John Paul II answered all of Vittorio Messori's questions in written form, leading to the publication of *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*.¹³⁵

The book is worth mentioning for the purposes of this chapter as it contained an explicit affirmation of the Pope's ongoing commitment to the philosophy of St. Thomas during the middle years of his pontificate. Towards the end of his answer to the question "Does God really exist?" John Paul II encouraged the study of Thomistic philosophy:

Questioning God's existence is intimately united with the purpose of human existence ... St. Thomas celebrates all the richness and complexity of each created being, and especially of the human being. It is not good that his thought has been put aside in the post-conciliar period; he continues, in fact, to be the master of philosophical and theological universalism.¹³⁶

¹³³ *VS*, 78. Cf. *In Duo Praecepta Caritatis et in Decem Legis Praecepta. De Dilectione Dei: Opuscula Theologica*, II, no. 1168, ed. Taurinen (1954), 250.

¹³⁴ Of course, many authors criticized the Pope for his overly simplistic treatment of the following ethical systems. For example, in his in one of the articles, Richard McCormick argues that "the encyclical repeatedly and inaccurately states of proportionalism that it attempts to justify morally wrong actions by a good intention. This [...] is a misrepresentation, what I [the author] earlier called a caricature." Richard McCormick, "Some Early Reactions to *Veritatis Splendor*" *Theological Studies* 22 (1994): 491. See also James Gaffney, "The Pope on Proportionalism" in *Veritatis Splendor: American Responses*, 60-72 and William F. Murphy, "A Reading of Aquinas in Support of *Veritatis Splendor* on the Moral Object." *Logos: A Journal of Catholic Thought and Culture* 11, no. 1 (2008): 100-126.

¹³⁵ For more details about the history of the publication see John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, ed. Vittorio Messori (New York: Knopf, 1994), vi-vii.

¹³⁶ John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, 31.

Elsewhere in the text, John Paul II once again endorsed Aquinas' understanding of the role of conscience. Elaborating on the point that man cannot be forced to accept the truth about God, as emphasized by *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Pope suggested that "[i]f a man is admonished by his conscience – even if an erroneous conscience, but one whose voice appears to him as unquestionably true – he must always listen to it."¹³⁷ According to John Paul II, Aquinas' position on this matter is not only consistent but represents the long-lasting conviction of the Church.

2.7. *Fides et Ratio* (1998)

In 1998, another encyclical came from the hand of John Paul II. *Fides et Ratio* dealt with the question of the relationship between faith and reason and it was a first major papal statement on the issue in almost 120 years.¹³⁸ The Pope sought to reconcile the two ways of knowing by arguing that faith and reason not need to contradict each other but "are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth."¹³⁹ It should not come as a surprise, then, that John Paul II often chose to refer to St. Thomas Aquinas, who masterfully synthesized the doctrine of the Church with the philosophy of Greeks.¹⁴⁰

In no other encyclical did the Pope endorse the thought of St. Thomas as strongly as he did in *Fides et Ratio*. Chronologically tracing the key moments in the encounter of faith and reason, John Paul II decided to include a separate two-paragraph long section devoted to the enduring originality of the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas.¹⁴¹ According to the Pope, Aquinas deserves a special place in the history of the development of the relationship between faith and reason because he

¹³⁷ Ibid. 190-191.

¹³⁸ Weigel, 841.

¹³⁹ FR, 1.

¹⁴⁰ Similarly, before John Paul II, in his 1879's encyclical letter *Aeterni Patris*, Leo XIII suggested that the Church's effort to synthesize philosophy and theology should follow the lead of St. Thomas Aquinas. Cf. *Aeterni Patris*, 31.

¹⁴¹ FR, 43-44.

firmsly believes that both the light of faith and the light of reason come from God and there can be no contradiction between the two:

Thomas recognized that nature, philosophy's proper concern, could contribute to the understanding of divine Revelation. Faith, therefore, has no fear of reason, but seeks it out and has trust in it. Just as grace builds on nature and brings it to fulfillment, so faith builds upon and perfects reason... [at the same time] the Angelic Doctor did not overlook the importance of its [faith's] reasonableness; indeed he was able to plumb the depths and explain the meaning of this reasonableness. Faith is in a sense an "exercise of thought"; and human reason is neither annulled nor debased in assenting to the contents of faith.¹⁴²

For exactly this reason, the Pope explained, the Church insisted over the years to propose Saint Thomas as "a master of thought and a model of the right way to do theology."¹⁴³ In addition to the merits of Aquinas' synthetic method, John Paul II reinforced his previous position regarding the Thomistic philosophy of being. The Pope granted that "the realism of Thomas could recognize the objectivity of truth and produce not merely a philosophy of 'what seems to be' but a philosophy of 'what is.'"¹⁴⁴ Although almost forty years elapsed since his habilitation, John Paul II held steadfast onto the claim that the phenomenological description is valuable but only if it is firmly rooted in the philosophy of being:

We cannot stop short at experience alone; even if the experience does reveal the human being's interiority and spirituality, speculative thinking must penetrate to the spiritual core and the ground from which it rises. Therefore, a philosophy which shuns metaphysics would be radically unsuited to the task of mediation in the understanding of Revelation.¹⁴⁵

Also, moral theology needs to turn to philosophy, which presupposes the metaphysics of the good. Such an approach, argued the Pope, must be necessarily linked to "Christian holiness and the practice of the human and supernatural virtues,"¹⁴⁶ so as to be able to tackle the variety of modern moral problems effectively. Even though John Paul II abstained from directly pointing his finger at

¹⁴² FR 43.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 44.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 83.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 98.

St. Thomas again, to any student of ethics, the following description clearly bears the marks of the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic line of thought.¹⁴⁷

2.8. *Inter Munera Academicarum* (1999)

A year later in 1999, the Pope issued a brief apostolic letter entitled *Inter Munera Academicarum* in which he further affirmed his appreciation for the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas. Noting the substantial changes in modern anthropology and a growing separation between faith and reason, John Paul II wished to "give a new impetus to the Pontifical Academies" by emphasizing the essential value of Thomistic doctrine –the metaphysical realism of the *actus essendi*:

In the cultural circumstances of the present day described above, it seems appropriate, indeed necessary, for this Academy to serve as a central and international *forum* for studying St Thomas' teaching better and more carefully, so that the metaphysical realism of the *actus essendi* which pervades all the Angelic Doctor's philosophy and theology can enter into dialogue with the many directions in today's research and doctrine.¹⁴⁸

Referring to his address to the VIII International Thomistic Congress from nineteen years earlier, the Pope also restated the need to further develop the Thomistic doctrine which deals with humanity, as Aquinas's assertions on the dignity of the human person and the use of his reason, in perfect harmony with the faith, "make St Thomas a teacher for our time."¹⁴⁹

2.9. *Christian Humanism in the Third Millennium* (2003)

Addressing the participants of the Tenth International Thomistic Congress, this time gathered in Rome, John Paul II expressed his profound appreciation for the humanism of St. Thomas Aquinas. Commenting on the theme of the Congress – Christian humanism in the third

¹⁴⁷ Cf. *FR*, 98. The three elements: metaphysics of good, pursuit of holiness/happiness, and the virtues, constitute the backbone of the Thomistic system of ethics. See *ST* I 5; *ST* II 1-5; and *ST* I-II, 49-70, respectively.

¹⁴⁸ John Paul II, *Inter Munera Academicarum*, no. 4. Original emphasis. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19990128_inter-munera-academicarum.html [accessed June 25, 2016].

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

millennium – the Pope taught his audience of the invaluable contribution of the philosophy of St. Thomas to the understanding and fulfillment of Christian humanism at the beginning of the new millennium:

If it is true that the whole of the first part of his great work, the *Summa Theologiae*, focuses entirely on God, it is nonetheless also true that the second part, more innovative and longer, is directly concerned with man's long journey towards God. In it, the human person is considered the protagonist of a precise divine plan for whose implementation not only natural but also supernatural resources have been provided... In the third part, St Thomas recalls that the incarnate Word, precisely because he is a true man, reveals in himself the dignity of every human creature and constitutes for the whole cosmos the way back to its origin: God. Christ, therefore, is the true way of man.¹⁵⁰

Subsequently, following Aquinas in saying that nature is never destroyed by grace, but finds its total fulfillment through it, John Paul II presented the thought of St. Thomas as an effective response to the crisis of the humanism in the third millennium.¹⁵¹ The Pope encouraged the participants of the Congress to continue to reflect on the legacy of St. Thomas, as his philosophy remains a source of perennial truths about the man:

Although St Thomas was firmly rooted in his own day and in medieval culture, he developed a teaching that goes beyond the conditioning of the time in which he lived and can still offer today fundamental guidelines for contemporary reflection. His doctrine and example are a provident reminder of those unchanging, perennial truths that are indispensable if we are to foster an existence that is truly worthy of man.¹⁵²

2.10. *Memory and Identity* (2005)

Finally, in the last book written towards the end of his pontificate in 2005, John Paul II once more endorsed the philosophy of the Angelic Doctor. Echoing the same conclusion he reached in

¹⁵⁰ John Paul II, "Message to the Participants in The International Thomistic Congress on 'Christian Humanism in The Third Millennium,'" no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2003/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20030929_congresso-tomista.html [accessed June 25, 2016]. The following quotation clearly echoes John Paul II's main theme of his first encyclical *Redemptoris Hominis* as well as section 22 of *Gaudium et Spes*, which Wojtyła helped to write. This leads me to think that Wojtyła's/John Paul II's central anthropological conviction that "Christ reveals man to himself" was directly influenced by the humanism of St. Thomas Aquinas. Cf. *RH*, 10. *GS*, 22.

¹⁵¹ To respond to this very serious challenge that affects the future prospects of humanism itself, I showed how the thought of St Thomas, with his strong faith in reason and clear explanation of the functions of nature and grace, can offer the rudiments of an effective response." *Ibid.*, 6.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 7.

his habilitation thesis on Max Scheler, he praised St. Thomas for his philosophy of being, arguing that even though the phenomenological method can be valuable in describing the internal reality of a man, it nonetheless needs to remain firmly grounded in Thomistic metaphysics:

...if we wish to speak rationally about good and evil, we have to return St. Thomas Aquinas, that is, to the philosophy of being. With the phenomenological method, for example, we can study experiences of morality, religion or simply what it is to be human, and draw from that a significant enrichment of our knowledge. Yet we must not forget that all these analyses implicitly presuppose the reality of the absolute being and also the reality of being human, that is, of being a creature. If we do not set out from such 'realist' presuppositions, we end up in a vacuum.¹⁵³

Conclusion

The chronological survey of this chapter provided enough evidence to claim that Wojtyła/John Paul II never abandoned his commitment to the Thomistic philosophy. As a young priest, Wojtyła received a solid training in the thought of St. Thomas. Though with years, especially those spent as a professor at the Catholic University of Lublin, his qualification of the Thomistic system grew stronger, Wojtyła never dismissed the value of traditional philosophy; in fact, the philosophy of being remained essential in his encounter with more modern approaches. A number of papal documents investigated in this chapter also revealed that Wojtyła's election to papacy did not change his mind about St. Thomas. John Paul II endorsed Aquinas on multiple occasions and frequently utilized the insights of the Angelic Doctor throughout his pontificate.

These conclusions, however, remain insufficient for answering whether or not one could find a full-blown Thomistic theory of virtue in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work. Although this chapter demonstrates the ongoing commitment of Wojtyła/John Paul II to Thomism at the general level, inquiring about the presence of virtue ethics in his writings remains a much more specific task.

Whether Wojtyła/John Paul II adopted the traditional understanding of virtue along with his

¹⁵³ John Paul II, *Memory and Identity: Conversations at the Dawn of a Millennium* (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2005), 12.

broader acceptance of the Thomistic principles, and whether this adaptation was complete or partial, is a question requiring a more systematic and focused investigation. This investigation will be the goal of the next two chapters.

Chapter Two: The Key Elements in Aristotelian-Thomistic Virtue Theory

Introduction

In the final scene of Spielberg's classic, "Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade," Indy and his companions find their way to the Grail's chamber. They stumble upon the guardian of the Holy Grail, a 700-year-old Templar Knight, who warns them to "choose wisely" from the plenitude of fake chalices: a wrong choice might cost a life. After a few people turned into dust, Indiana Jones, with an expert knowledge worthy of an adventurer of his stature, picks up the right chalice: a plain cup of a carpenter, in place of gold, richly adorned, grail. The point of the story (besides that it is a good idea to listen to those who lived through seven centuries) is that if one wishes to find something it is better to know what that thing is in the first place, or, at least have some sense of its defining characteristics. My task in this chapter is exactly that: to identify the key elements of virtue ethics in order to know what to look for in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II. While the first chapter confirmed that the Polish philosopher and Pope remained committed to the thought of St. Thomas throughout his lifetime, the second chapter will examine some of the essential elements of virtue-centered approach to ethics developed along Aristotle's and Aquinas's thought. The findings of this chapter will be instrumental in determining the extent to which Wojtyła/John Paul II appropriated the traditional understanding of virtue.

Before proceeding, two caveats must be mentioned. First, the analysis of the present chapter will rest primarily on the secondary sources. Rather than spending too much time on trying to untangle what Aristotle or Aquinas meant by a given concept, I will refer to the writings of the contemporary scholars who offer both a critical and concise account of Aristotle's and Aquinas's thought. Of course, this does not mean that the primary references will not be consulted. In fact, much attention will be given to the relevant passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* and

Thomas's *Summa Theologica*, which deal explicitly with the theme of virtues. However, these references will not be as present as one would expect in a full-blown analysis of the exegetical reading of Aristotle's and Aquinas's work. Second, I am acutely aware of how ambitious it is to attempt to list the key elements of the traditional virtue ethics; this could easily be a topic for another dissertation. Therefore, it would be a mistake to treat the list of the essential elements of the traditional virtue ethics identified in this chapter as exhaustive.¹ I do not claim to do so, and it is not my intention. Rather, the present chapter is meant to serve as a tool, albeit perhaps imperfect, for the future work that awaits in chapter three.

1. Eudaimonia

One of the defining marks of the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue theory is its eudemonistic character. The Greek word εὐδαιμονία means simply "happiness," or as some translators suggest as a more accurate translation, "human flourishing." Both Aristotle and Aquinas thought of morality, not as a set of rules and obligations, but as a way towards happiness, man's final goal, to which all of the human activity needs to be oriented.² Throughout the centuries, pagans and Christians alike identified morality with the pursuit of happiness.³ According to Julia Annas, the question of happiness was the most fundamental one in the ethics of *all* of the ancient schools of

¹ Although I do believe that an absence of any of the elements mentioned in this chapter would pose serious difficulties to the overall coherence of the theory (except for the last element of grace in case of a strictly Aristotelian virtue theory).

² This does not mean that rules and duties do not matter in the Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue theory. Pinckaers comments on this point when he says that "...in treating the virtues St. Thomas does deal with laws and their precepts. But for him law is, by its very nature, closer to the mind than to the will. In determining the morality of actions, law does not play the same role as it does for modern moralists." Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 18.

³ With the dawn of modernism, most notably Kantian ethics, morality shifted its focus towards obligation, which, according to Pinckaers "does away completely with the question of happiness, perhaps 'inadvertently'." Although according to the Dominican priest, the actual source of morality of obligation is to be found in the resurgence of nominalism in the 14th century. Cf. Pinckaers, *Sources*, 18.

philosophy.⁴ St. Augustine, in his work *On the Morals of Catholic Church*, wrote that "everyone desires to be happy"⁵ and elsewhere that "a person engages in philosophy only in order to be happy."⁶ Today too, many people seek happiness, and whether consciously or not, they choose to act in a certain way as to ultimately achieve some state of happiness. In the opening chapter of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle wrote that "every action and pursuit, is thought to aim at some good," and not only at some good, but at the "highest of all goods achievable by actions," which people call happiness.⁷

But why is it that everyone naturally desires happiness? Is it because people are educated or brought up to pursue it? Alternatively, is it something *within* them that impels them to seek it? Anyone who wishes to say something meaningful about virtue needs to understand why one needs it in the first place, and that cannot be answered unless one attends to the question of nature.⁸

1.1. Nature in Search for Happiness

In his earlier work, *Physics*, Aristotle claimed that things existing by nature contain within themselves a certain intrinsic principle which causes them to be, or to become what they are.⁹ And so for instance, an acorn becomes an oak, an embryo a fully developed human being, not because

⁴ "In the period concerning us, there are many philosophical schools offering competing philosophies of ethics: the question is answered by Aristotle and by later peripatetic followers, by Epicurus by the Stoics and by the skeptics, and their answers are very different. But there is no serious disagreement as to this being the right question to ask, and as to its being philosophy which provides the answer." Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 27.

⁵ Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae*, 3.4. <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf104.toc.html> [accessed June 25, 2016].

⁶ Augustine, *City of God*, 19.1, trans. Henry Bettenson (London: Penguin Books, 2003).

⁷ Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1094a and 1095a15, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. 2, ed. Jonathan Barnes, translated by R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gay, 1729-867 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014). Hereafter, *NE*.

⁸ Cf. Romanus Cessario, *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics: Second Edition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 22-28. The following section on nature largely follows Angela Knobel's analysis of the Thomist account of human nature from her dissertation work: Angela Knobel, "The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas' Moral Philosophy" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004), 9-14.

⁹ Aristotle, *Physics* II, 192b9-37, in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gay (Princeton, N: Princeton University Press 1984), 329.

someone or something intervened to make it happen, but because of the internal principle inscribed in the very nature of the thing itself. In that sense, Aristotle argued that "nature" is synonymous with *telos*: "...nature is the end or 'that for the sake of which.' For if a thing undergoes a continuous change and there is a stage which is last, this stage is the end or 'that for the sake of which.'" ¹⁰

However, "nature" for Aristotle was more than simply an end to which a thing directs itself; it was also a thing's internal ability to do so. Thus, for example, the nature of a human being is already present in an embryo, though not fully actualized in terms of its physical and spiritual abilities. "Nature," then, represents both a thing's end and the internal principle of movement towards that end.

Now if one intended to apply this understanding of nature to human beings and their pursuit of the highest good, it would become clear that men desire happiness, not because of any external cause, such as duty or obligation, but because of their very nature of being human. In other words, happiness is both a pursuit and realization of what it means to be truly human. Man's desire to be happy is inscribed in his nature.

However, human nature is much more complex than the nature of a seed which grows to become a tree. Men, argued Aristotle, besides having a nutritive and sensitive soul (common to all animals) are endowed with a rational soul, which makes them different from everything else in the world. ¹¹ It is not enough, therefore, for humans to eat and drink, seek pleasure and avoid pain to actualize themselves as human beings fully; they need to above all live according to their rational soul, that is, to live a virtuous life:

Now if the function of man is an activity of soul which follows or implies reason... and if any action is well performed when it is performed in accordance with the appropriate virtue: [if

¹⁰ Aristotle, *Physics* II, 194a29-31.

¹¹ Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima* II, 413a23 in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, vol. 1, ed. Jonathan Barnes, trans. R. P. Hardie and R. K. Gay (Princeton, N: Princeton University Press 1984), 657.

this is the case], *human good turns out to be activity of soul exhibiting virtue*, and if there are more than one virtue, in accordance with the best and most complete.¹²

Men need virtue because "nature gives us only the starting points and seeds for right development, which must be completed by habituation and eventually by rational understanding."¹³ Human bodies naturally seek what sustains them, and similarly, human reason naturally seeks what completes the rational nature, but just because people are inclined towards certain goods by nature does not yet guarantee that they will pursue them in an orderly and timely fashion. For example, some men are naturally inclined to be brave. However, their bravery can be used to oppress weaker members of society.¹⁴ Accordingly, virtue stands as if in between the inclinations of our nature and their fulfillment: indeed, virtue arises "neither by nature, nor contrary to nature."¹⁵

Aquinas accepted Aristotle's notion of nature, although not without qualifications. For both authors, things become what they are by doing well what belongs to them by nature. Human beings become fully human when they do well what pertains to their nature, that is, for instance, when they live in accord with the right reason. Indeed, for Aquinas, "to be is to desire perfection."¹⁶ However, in the Thomistic system, human nature signifies something much more profound; it is above all *natura creata*, made in the image and likeness of its Creator. St. Thomas qualifies the Aristotelian concept of nature in at least two ways. First, our natural inclination towards good is not only insufficient in terms of being merely a "starting point" for becoming ourselves fully, but it is also seriously distorted due to the consequences of Original Sin: human nature is a fallen nature (*natura lapsa*). What Aristotle attempted to explain by the concept of the weakness of the will (*ακρασία*), Aquinas clarified in the treatment of Original Sin and the loss of original justice:

¹² NE 1098a5-15. Italics mine.

¹³ Annas, *The Morality*, 148.

¹⁴ This is an example of a "natural virtue," which is not a virtue in the proper sense. Cf. NE 1144a.

¹⁵ NE 1103a.

¹⁶ ST I 5.1. The following reference and all other references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from: Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas Aquinas. Second and Revised Edition, 1920*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New Advent, 2016). Available online at www.newadvent.org/summa/ [accessed Jan 2, 2016].

In this sense... original sin is an inordinate disposition, arising from the destruction of the harmony which was essential to original justice, even as bodily sickness is an inordinate disposition of the body, by reason of the destruction of that equilibrium which is essential to health. Hence it is that original sin is called the "languor of nature." [...] Through the bond of original justice being broken, which held together all the powers of the soul in a certain order, each power of the soul tends to its own proper movement, and the more impetuously, as it is stronger.¹⁷

Second, following Knobel's lead, Aquinas does not think that human nature can be *fully* realized apart from grace. Since God created us for Himself, integral to our nature is a desire for the supernatural; something which lies beyond our abilities to achieve on our own:

This is not to say that man's nature is in conflict with his end, but merely that man has to be habituated to his end in a more extreme way than he does in the Aristotelian schema. Whereas for Aristotle, man had to be habituated to act in accord with his nature, for Aquinas, man's very nature has to be habituated. Only the man whose nature has been habituated by grace is capable of acting in accord with his true end, and hence it is only after such a transformation has occurred that the moral life truly begins.¹⁸

Accordingly, virtue has fundamentally the same purpose for both Aristotle and Aquinas: to perfect human nature. However, since human nature in Thomistic anthropology is considered more profoundly, as to include its supernatural origin and a desire for God, the perfection of the human nature is attained through the means of virtues assisted by grace.

The above discussion of nature supplied a general answer to the question as to why people are naturally inclined to seek happiness in their lives: the desire for happiness is nothing else but an internal principle inscribed in human nature, which seeks its own perfection. Very tentatively, I have also indicated the role of virtues in that process. Indeed, as many authors noted before, virtues and nature are inextricably intertwined.¹⁹ However, it is one thing to claim that men pursue happiness in their lives by nature, and quite another to specify how exactly it happens and what is the nature of true happiness.

¹⁷ *ST I-II* 82.1 & 4.

¹⁸ Knobel, 16.

¹⁹ Knobel, 13. See also Ryosuke Bernard Inagaki, "Habitus and Natura in Aquinas," in *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John Wippel (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 1987), 159-75.

1.2. Human Action in the Pursuit of Happiness

The human pursuit of happiness is expressed through human actions, which are always oriented towards some end. According to Aristotle, "every action and choice is thought to aim at some good."²⁰ This does not mean that *any* action undertaken by man aims at some good, but only those which involve choice and therefore require deliberation. Annas explains:

We may do some things which are pointless or spontaneous, but these are not clear examples of actions or choices. Aristotle himself tends to treat choice as necessary for the proper action, and choice as requiring deliberation, so here he clearly means that everything that we do that is brought about by deliberated choice is end-directed.²¹

Aquinas elaborates on the same point in the *Summa*, where he draws a distinction between *actus humanus* (human acts) and *actus hominis* (acts of human).²² Human action for Thomas is always purposeful; it is always directed toward a certain end. If it is not so directed, it does not count as a genuine human action, but only as an act performed on a human. *Actus hominis* do not involve the kind of thought and desire involved in the human action, properly speaking, which is the result of what Aquinas calls a deliberate will.²³ DeYoung further explains:

The action is deliberate—namely, something directly intended by the agent—in so far as the agent deliberates over various courses of action and settles upon one of them, the one she wants to do. The deliberation is made possible in virtue of having an intellect, while the desiring—the willing, the inclining—is made possible in virtue of having a will. Thus, action is the result of a deliberate will.²⁴

Both for Aristotle and Aquinas, then, an authentically human action has an end-directed structure. Must it always, however, be directed at the *good*? What about a smoker who reaches out for a cigarette; is his action directed at something good?

²⁰ NE 1094a.

²¹ Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 30.

²² Cf. *ST* I-II 1-3.

²³ Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, Colleen McCluskey, and Christina van Dyke, *Aquinas's Ethics: Metaphysical Foundations, Moral Theory, and Theological Context* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), 71; *ST* I-II 1.1.

²⁴ DeYoung, 71.

A smoker chooses what *he* thinks is good for him, and not what is good in reality. Aristotle and Aquinas were keenly aware that people make poor choices. However, this does not change the fact that at the moment when the smoker decides to light another cigarette, he aims at the certain end, which he perceives to be good, such as the pleasure obtained from smoking. If a smoker saw *nothing* good in smoking, he would have never reached for a cigarette as no one desires evil for himself. In its internal structure, then, every human action aims at a particular good, even if it is mistaken or misconceived. At the same time, this does not mean that our will pursues only that, which is perfectly good. After all, a cigarette is not good for one's health but brings pleasure to the smoker. Human action can be done for the sake of even *partial* good. All that is needed for a will to pursue a certain end, argues DeYoung, is that there is "*something* good about a particular object."²⁵

1.3. *Happiness in the General Sense*

The idea of finality and good contained within every human act necessarily impacts one's vision of moral life. According to Pinckaers, "it will regulate all of the person's actions and give rise to a hierarchy of interrelated ends dominated by one ultimate end."²⁶ Although it might seem that people often pursue multiple and unrelated ends in their lives, for both Aristotle and Aquinas, everything is done for the sake of one final end (*telos*). Perhaps not surprisingly, many scholars found this conclusion problematic.²⁷ According to Annas, it has been interpreted "as a simple fallacy, or an

²⁵ DeYoung, 72. Emphasis mine. A particular case that has caused many Thomistic scholars a real headache is the concept of malice, on account of which, Aquinas says that a man "chooses evil of his own accord." (*ST* I-II 78.4.3.) This suggests that one can willingly and deliberately pursue evil without *any* good in mind, which, of course, goes against Thomas's general principle of human action. Cf. John Langan. "Sins of Malice in the Moral Psychology of Thomas Aquinas," in *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (Society of Christian Ethics, 1987), 179-198.

²⁶ Pinckaers, *Sources*, 414.

²⁷ Anthony Kenny, "Happiness" in *Moral Concepts*, ed. by Joel Feinberg (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 43-52; Bernard Williams, "Aristotle on the good" *Philosophical Quarterly* 12 (1962): 289-96; Christopher Kirwan, "Logic and the Good in Aristotle" *Philosophical Quarterly* 17 (1967): 97-114; Scott MacDonald, "Ultimate Ends in Practical Reasoning: Aquinas's Aristotelian Moral Psychology and Anscombe's Fallacy" *Philosophical Review* 100 (1991): 31-66.

argument with extreme but hidden complexity."²⁸ My intention here is not to settle the debate, but to interpret Aristotle's and Aquinas's point on their own terms.

A good place to start would be Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. After establishing that every human action aims at some good, the ancient philosopher argues that there must be a final end, as to claim otherwise would be to render our desires empty:

If, then, there is some end of the things we do, which we desire for its own sake (everything else being desired for the sake of this), and if we do not choose everything for the sake of something else (for at that rate the process would go on to infinity, so that our desire would be empty and vain), clearly this must be the good and the chief good.²⁹

The strength of Aristotle's argument lies in its intuitiveness. If one kept asking the “why” questions, one would eventually get at the final end for the sake of which all his previous actions were done. For example, why does one exercise? To stay fit. Why does one want to stay fit? To be healthy. Or, why does one pursue a doctorate? To deepen his knowledge. Why does one want to deepen his knowledge? To become a better human being. And why does one want to become a better human being? To be happy. In other words, one's goals in life are “nested,” and each smaller goal turns out to be done for the sake of a broader one.³⁰

One immediate difficulty concerns the singularity of the final end. Even if one granted that his actions are done for the sake of some broader end, does it follow that there is only *one* final end? Do not the people pursue several broader ends simultaneously, such as health, wealth, family, etc.? Aristotle does not address our difficulty explicitly.³¹ However, Julia Annas observes that the argument could be completed by inserting a premise that it would never be rational for an agent to hold on to the multiple broader ends:

²⁸ Annas, *The Morality*, 31.

²⁹ 1094a20-25.

³⁰ Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 122.

³¹ Aristotle resists presenting happiness as a composite of various basic goods. There is enough textual evidence to claim that happiness, according to the Stagirite, consists in not in many but one good, namely virtuous activity. For a detailed investigation on that point see Richard Kraut, “Aristotle on the Human Good: An Overview,” in *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays*, ed. Nancy Sherman (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 79-105. (see esp. 82-86).

For, within the boundaries of one life, two ends, like that of physical fitness and career ambition, are going to be competing for time and energy: there are bound to be occasions when one has to subordinate and action promoting one of them to an action promoting the other. When this happens, how will the agent decide? If he just has these aims, both of which are sought for their own sake, and no established way of giving one of them priority, he will have no rational way of choosing between them when he has to do so: he will be reduced to following when, or tossing a coin, and this is unsatisfactory when what is at stake is to aims both of which have importance in one's life.³²

In her more recent book, Annas has further argued that everyone has an integrated and unifying way of achieving particular goals in life because everyone has only one life. She calls it "a global way of thinking about life."³³ No matter the perception of one's final end, everyone engages in a practical thinking in which people look at their life as a whole in a structured way, trying to make sense of it and its ultimate meaning. At the same time, Annas is right to say that it would be "a fundamental mistake to think of the overall aim as something already given in a determinate way."³⁴ Instead, the final end serves more as "an indeterminate notion of what I am aiming at in my life as a whole."³⁵

While it is true that the concept of the final end does not carry much content of itself, it does possess certain formal characteristics which shed additional light on its nature. For instance, Aristotle specifies that the final good appears to be something complete (*teleia*) and self-sufficient (*autarkeia*).³⁶ The former implies that man's final end is complete if it is chosen only for its own sake, while other things are chosen for the sake of it.³⁷ The latter suggests that one's life, which consists in the pursuit of the final end, lacks nothing.³⁸ According to Annas, self-sufficiency of man's final end does not imply "the absurdity that [life] contains everything. Rather, it must contain everything that

³² Annas, *The Morality*, 32. The same view has been endorsed by Cooper in *Reason and Human Good in Aristotle*, Cambridge, MA: 1975. See especially chapter two of the book.

³³ Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 123.

³⁴ Ibid., See also Richard Kraut, "Comments on 'Disunity in the Aristotelian Virtues' by T. H. Irwin" in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy: Supplementary Volume*, 1988: 82.

³⁵ Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 124.

³⁶ NE 1097a25-b16.

³⁷ Annas notes that "completeness appears in all schools as the most important formal constraint on our final end... In general the crucial definition of the final and is one which brings in completeness, where this is understood as involving both finality and comprehensiveness." Annas, *The Morality*, 42.

³⁸ Julia Annas, "Aristotle on Virtue and Happiness," in *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays*, ed. Nancy Sherman (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield), 40.

is required by the deliberative projects that that life contains."³⁹ Accordingly, one's life may be complete and self-sufficient even if it contains a dependency on other people, such as parents or doctors.

Finally, every ancient school of philosophy considers man's pursuit of the final end to be something (1) active rather than passive and (2) stable and objective rather than fleeting and subjective.⁴⁰ According to Arius, who commented on Aristotle's ethics, "happiness is life, and life is the fulfillment of action."⁴¹ Thus, man's final end is not so much a thing, but an *activity* of an agent, something that is up to an agent to pursue. At the same time, it is also something stable and difficult to change.⁴² Contrary to our common perception of happiness as something subjective, happiness for the ancients refers to the entirety of one's life and so does not depend on the occasional emotional states of an agent.⁴³

Aquinas largely follows Aristotle in his discussion of general happiness. For St. Thomas, to be happy means first to actualize one's rational nature:

By the name of happiness is understood the ultimate perfection of the rational or intellectual nature; and hence it is something that is naturally desired, since everything naturally desires its own ultimate perfection.⁴⁴

Man actualizes his nature by pursuing what is good, that is, by acting in accordance with practical reason, which is perfected by virtues.⁴⁵ The essence of happiness, therefore, lies not in the good

³⁹ Annas, *The Morality*, 41.

⁴⁰ Annas, *The Morality*, 45-46.

⁴¹ Arius, 130.18-21.

⁴² NE 1100b2-3.

⁴³ Annas, *The Morality*, 45. Although Aristotle acknowledges at multiple occasions that man is vulnerable to ill fortune and external hazards beyond his control, happiness essentially depends on virtues. For a detailed discussion on that point, see T.H. Irwin, "Permanent Happiness: Aristotle and Solon" in *Aristotle's Ethics: Critical Essays*, ed. Nancy Sherman (Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 1-35.

⁴⁴ ST I 62.1

⁴⁵ ST I-II 3.5.3.

itself, but its acquisition and enjoyment.⁴⁶ To be happy is to act in a way that corresponds to one's rational nature.

Thomas also agrees with Aristotle in that everyone pursues a single and ultimate end in life, and that every human action is therefore subordinated to that end.⁴⁷ Happiness is not a conglomerate of various basic goods, but the ultimate satisfaction of one's desires. A man chooses either what he directly perceives will satisfy his desires completely, or he chooses what he thinks will help him to obtain the complete satisfaction of all his desires. On this view, argues DeYoung, "everything we do is for the sake of the ultimate end, either directly or indirectly."⁴⁸ In fact, if it was not for the ultimate end, Aquinas claims, men would never do anything. Once man's desires are satisfied there is nothing else for him to want or to desire, which suggests that the Thomistic account of final good shares the formal characteristics of an Aristotelian *telos* by being something complete and self-sufficient.⁴⁹

1.4. Happiness in the Specific Sense

Up to this point, the deliberations were concerned with the *general* view of happiness, namely, that each human being by nature pursues a single final end, and that this end consists of some sort of "living well" or "doing well."⁵⁰ Naturally, no one is satisfied with having only a general

⁴⁶ ST I-II 3.1.

⁴⁷ ST I-II 1.5.

⁴⁸ DeYoung, 74.

⁴⁹ Jörn Müller argues that the Thomistic notion of general happiness reflects closely the formal characteristics of happiness, as specified by Aristotle. For an extensive discussion on the similarities between the two accounts see Jörn Müller, "Duplex Beatitudo: Aristotle's legacy in Aquinas's conception of human happiness," in *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Tobias Hoffmann (Cambridge University Press, 2013): 52-72.

⁵⁰ NE 1095a20.

view of happiness. In fact, everyone in life pursues some *specific* or concrete happiness.⁵¹ What would such a happiness entail?

First, Aristotle dismisses popular views that identify happiness with mere pleasure or external goods.⁵² For the Stagirite, happiness consists primarily in the life of virtue, although not deprived of pleasure and external goods. In fact, Aristotle noted many times that a virtuous life is a pleasant life since every virtuous action is pleasant in itself.⁵³ However, the more problematic aspect of Aristotle's view of happiness is its intrinsic connection to external goods, as it seems that one cannot be achieved without the other:

Why then should we not say that he is happy who is acting in accordance with complete virtue and is sufficiently equipped with external goods, not for some chance period but throughout a complete life?⁵⁴

The difficulty comes in when one recalls Aristotle's previous point about happiness being complete and self-sufficient: why would someone who is fully virtuous, and therefore happy, need external goods? Is not the life of virtue sufficient and complete of itself? On the one hand, the philosopher claims that goods such as health, wealth, and honor are essential for men to be happy, as the loss of them "cramps and spoils" happiness.⁵⁵ On the other, external goods seems only instrumental to the life that is already happy due to virtuous activity.⁵⁶ Second, even if one granted that Aristotle does not succumb to the Stoic view that virtue alone is sufficient for happiness, what kind of contribution do external goods make to happiness?

⁵¹ The categories of general and specific happiness are mine. They reflect Aristotle's comments about universal agreement in regards to men's pursuit of happiness and common disagreement in regards to what that happiness actually is. See *NE* 1095a17-26.

⁵² *NE* 1098b-1099b10.

⁵³ *NE* 1099a20.

⁵⁴ *NE* 1101a14-16.

⁵⁵ *NE* 1100b22-30

⁵⁶ *NE* 1099b1-3.

In one of her articles, Julia Annas points to two different interpretations of Aristotle on this point.⁵⁷ The first, defended by John Cooper, holds that external goods in themselves do not possess intrinsic value or add anything to the good life, but are chosen in the course of virtuous life. The second, put forward by Terence Irwin, argues that the external goods do not increase the happiness that results from virtuous activity, but increase the extent to which one possesses happiness, by increasing the scope and variety of one's activities, and rendering a desire to pursue external goods reasonable. Annas herself does not commit to either of the two positions, claiming that the inherent tension between happiness and external goods remains unresolved in Aristotle's work.⁵⁸

Now, as much as Aquinas agreed with the Stagirite on some of the general characteristics of happiness, he significantly qualifies the Aristotelian account when it comes to specifying the nature of happiness. Echoing the philosopher's remark that happiness means different things to different people, St. Thomas dismisses things like wealth, fame, health or pleasure as constitutive of true human happiness.⁵⁹ Unlike Aristotle, however, Aquinas does not identify a happy life with virtuous activity along with external goods.⁶⁰ For him, neither external goods nor the perfection of one's powers is capable of fully satisfying man's desires; only God can do so because only he is perfect in every respect.⁶¹ Accordingly, the man attains happiness through communion with God, more specifically through an act of contemplation of the Divine Good, which remains essentially an act of intellect:

Because man's happiness is an operation, it must need be man's highest operation. Now man's highest operation is that of his highest power in respect of its highest object: and his

⁵⁷ Annas, "Aristotle on Virtue and Happiness," 43-46.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁹ *ST I-II* 2.1-8. See also *SCG III* 26-36. Although similarly to Aristotle, Aquinas never claims that these are unimportant to the acquisition of happiness. External goods contribute to a happier life on earth, and create better opportunities for contemplation. Cf. *ST I-II* 4.7.

⁶⁰ "For imperfect happiness, such as can be had in this life, external goods are necessary, not as belonging to the essence of happiness, but by serving as instruments to happiness, which consists in an operation of virtue ... On the other hand, such goods as these are nowise necessary for perfect Happiness, which consists in seeing God." (*ST I-II* 4.7.)

⁶¹ *ST I-II* 10.2.

highest power is the intellect, whose highest object is the Divine Good, which is the object, not of the practical but the speculative intellect. Consequently, happiness consists principally in such an operation, viz. in the contemplation of Divine things. [...] Therefore the last and perfect happiness, which we await in the life to come, consists entirely in contemplation.⁶²

At the same time, Aquinas does not consider happiness as something passive and exclusively intellectual. Already the above reference to happiness as involving man's highest operation suggests its *active* component. Contemplation also remains dependent on the movement of the will:

...the will is necessary for the attainment of the beatific vision, even if it is not primary. Human beings cannot arrive at this ultimate end unless they are properly ordered to it. Thus, rectitude of the will is a necessary precondition for attaining the beatific vision, which is happiness. Furthermore, Aquinas thinks that a certain joy or delight necessarily accompanies the vision of the divine, which human beings would not feel unless they had wills. Hence, happiness consists in knowing and loving God, which comes about only when the intellect and the upright will are fully engaged.⁶³

All of this leads to the final and most important qualification which Thomas introduces to an Aristotelian notion of happiness: man is not able to acquire complete happiness through his own powers.⁶⁴ While for Aristotle happiness refers to something *internal* to man, that is, the perfection of his nature through virtuous activity, for Aquinas, happiness involves something *external* to the man, though never disconnected from his nature, namely, God himself.⁶⁵ Consequently, to attain complete happiness human beings necessarily need grace, which reveals to them the object of their desires and sustains them in their pursuit of it.

At the same time, though the complete happiness remains unattainable in this life, men are capable of becoming at least relatively happy by living the life of virtue supplied by various goods.⁶⁶

At multiple occasions, Aquinas insists that true, although imperfect happiness is possible for men to

⁶² ST I-II 3.5.

⁶³ DeYoung, 76.

⁶⁴ ST I-II 5.5.

⁶⁵ External to man in the sense of the object. United with God, man's entire being actively engages in the act of contemplation. "Consequently we must say that happiness is something belonging to the soul; but that which constitutes happiness is something outside the soul." (ST I-II 2.7.)

⁶⁶ ST I-II 4.7.

attain through his natural powers, unaided by divine grace.⁶⁷ The distinction between perfect and imperfect happiness, however, should not be interpreted as referring to two disparate and disconnected ends.⁶⁸ Aquinas is clear that there is only one final end, which all men pursue, even if unconsciously at times.⁶⁹ The same end, however, may be realized in two different ways:

Thomas does not argue that man has two ends, the one natural and the other supernatural. Rather, he speaks of a single end which is twofold, which is realized at both a natural and a supernatural level, and which he describes in the *Summa Theologiae* as imperfect and perfect beatitude respectively.⁷⁰

According to Jörn Müller there is a unique continuity between imperfect and perfect happiness in Aquinas's thought, as for Thomas "the contemplative happiness possible in this life is a kind of participation in perfect happiness, for its shares, albeit imperfectly, the object of the *visio Dei*."⁷¹ Once again, nature is not destroyed, but perfected by grace. Man's natural striving for perfect happiness turns out, in the end, to be an implicit desire to see God.⁷²

2. Habit

Whether oriented towards an earthly or a supernatural end, men need something that will reliably lead them in the achievement of it. Both Aristotle and Aquinas believe that virtue can properly realize this role. Although neither of them subscribes to the view that virtue alone is sufficient for complete happiness, they nonetheless consider virtue to be an essential component in man's pursuit of happiness. A solid understanding of the nature of virtue constitutes the second defining mark of the Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue theory.

⁶⁷ *ST* I-II 5.5., 7.; 62.1.; 63.3. Jean Porter rightly notes that Aquinas's account of happiness is much more complex than as reflected by two categories of imperfect and perfect happiness. Cf. Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 157.

⁶⁸ In this, I agree with Shanley that any account of two-tiered Thomism is erroneous. Cf. Brian J. Shanley, O.P. "Aquinas on Pagan Virtue" *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 555.

⁶⁹ See *ST* I-II 1.4. and *ST* I-II.1.6.3.

⁷⁰ Kevin M. Staley, "Happiness: The Natural End of Man?" *The Thomist* 53 (1989): 227.

⁷¹ Müller, 67. Cf. *ST* II-II 180.4.

⁷² Denis J. M. Bradley, *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997): 459.

2.1. *The Nature of Habit*

Aristotle's investigation of the nature of virtue begins with an assertion that virtue is something found in man's soul: virtue is either a sort of feeling (*pathe*), a capacity (*dunamis*) or a state (*hexis*).⁷³ First, virtues cannot be feelings as no one is ever praised or blamed for having passions. Feelings, according to the Stagirite, are different from virtues in that it is commonly accepted that the latter, not the former, are considered praiseworthy. This is because feelings arise in man without choice.⁷⁴ Virtues, on the other hand, always involve deliberation: facing a threat, I *choose* to stay and fight or give up and run away. As Annas puts it, "a virtue, or a vice, is the way I have *made myself* and chosen to be."⁷⁵

Secondly, Aristotle refuses to identify virtue with capacity. In a way similar to feelings, men are not praised or blamed for having certain capacities. According to Aristotle, capacities are in men by nature and "we are not made good or bad by nature."⁷⁶ The same way one would not hold it against someone that he was born with blue rather than brown eyes, it is impossible to consider it praiseworthy or blameworthy for someone being quick-tempered since birth. Someone might be impatient by nature, and that remains something fixed in him. However, it is the person's subsequent responsibility in life to learn to control his anger properly. In short, natural capacity is not a virtue, but requires virtue.

By process of elimination, Aristotle concludes that virtue must be a state of soul, *hexis*. The Greek word *hexis* does not translate easily into English. According to Annas, "*hexis* answers better to our word 'disposition' than to 'state': a virtue like courage is a disposition because it is a condition because of which I am so disposed as to act in brave ways, and this is what a *hexis* is."⁷⁷ Some also

⁷³ NE 1105b20-25.

⁷⁴ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

⁷⁵ On this point, see Annas, *The Morality*, 49.

⁷⁶ NE 1106a10.

⁷⁷ Annas, *The Morality*, 50.

confuse *hexis* with "habit," which seems especially problematic given the modern connotation of the second term.⁷⁸ It seems, therefore, that the closest and most accurate English translation is that of "disposition," although, for the sake of clarity, I will hold on to the original Greek.

In the most general sense, *hexis* is an excellence of a particular power within the man (good or bad), whereby something is brought to its perfection, as specified by the nature of that thing:

We may remark, then, that every virtue or excellence both brings into good condition the thing of which it is the excellence and makes the work of that thing be done well; e.g. the excellence of the eye makes both the eye and its work good; for it is by the excellence of the eye that we see well... Therefore, if this is true in every case, the virtue of man also will be the state of character [*hexis*] which makes a man good and which makes him do his own work well.⁷⁹

Just as an eye needs to remain healthy and responsive to light in order that one may see well (the excellence of the eye), so does every power within man must obtain its perfection to enable him to become good as a man. In this sense, *hexis* is nothing but a disposition leading to the perfection of the thing ordained by nature, if, of course, it is properly formed. To say nothing more, however, would be at least disrespectful to Aristotle's thought. One needs to recall the three essential features of the Greek *hexis*.

First, Annas notes that *hexis* is something more stable than other Greek terms for "disposition" such as *diathesis* mentioned in *Categories* 8 b 26-9.⁸⁰ It enables a person to act in a consistent and reliable manner, and as such, it is difficult to change or unlearn.⁸¹ A brave soldier does not cease to be brave when he sleeps or eats, nor does his bravery depend on whether his

⁷⁸ Linguistically, the translation of *hexis* as "habit" arises from the etymological parallel between the Greek term *hexis* – which is derived from the Greek verb *echein*, "to have" – and the Latin term *habitus* – which is derived from the Latin verb for "to have," namely *habeo*... Aristotle's doctrine of *hexis* is one of his most significant and novel doctrines and no English term – whether habit, state, or disposition – will adequately convey its sense of meaning. But habit seems especially problematic insofar as in contemporary English it conveys the notion of a tendency to act in a certain way (e.g., the habit of punctuality). Although one who possesses the *hexis* of justice always acts justly, it does not follow that he always acts in the same way. Cf. Thornton C. Lockwood, "Habit, habituation, and character in Aristotle's Nicomachean ethics," in *A History of Habit from Aristotle to Bourdieu*, ed. Tom Sparrow (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2013): 24.

⁷⁹ NE 1106a15-20.

⁸⁰ Annas, *The Morality*, 50.

⁸¹ NE 1103b 25.

enemies are the barbarians or the Romans. *Hexis* is a stable disposition toward accomplishing a definite kind of action which makes it possible to carry it out with the perfection of a specific power, that is, with ease, spontaneity, and confidence of aim.⁸² A person who has been habituated in virtue (or vice) has thus acquired something of a "second nature" on the level of the power itself, through which the act of that power can be carried out in the same way as mere nature can do with seeing, hearing, and so on.⁸³

Second, *hexis* is a stable disposition but not a *rigid* disposition. The following difficulty appears whenever one thinks of virtue as a stable disposition:

For if the virtuous person must, to act virtuously, do so from a state which is stable, will not the brave person be acting from habit? And this looks like an unthinking way of acting: the actions are performed from habit are precisely those where I do not have to think about what to do. But how can I rightly be praised or blamed for what is done unthinkingly?⁸⁴

The difficulty seems even greater if one recalled that virtue comes as a result of habituation which extends for a considerable amount of time.⁸⁵ "If we define virtue by the notion of habit," argued Pinckaers in one of his articles, "we are bound to meet with paradoxical failure. Virtue then becomes a factor making for automatism in human action, and to that extent, it *lessens* its moral character."⁸⁶ Why, then, do both Aristotle and Aquinas insist that virtue result from habit?

The answer to this question lies in the proper understanding of the nature of virtue and its complexity. According to Annas, one must not forget that Aristotle already rejected any account of virtue that would be passive or deprived of its essential component, that is, human choice:

Thus an honest person's honesty may be 'fixed' in the sense that she is not, and cannot imagine being, seriously tempted to be dishonest. But this does not make her honesty into

⁸² Martin Rhonheimer and Gerald Malsbary, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC : Catholic University of America Press 2011), 192.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Annas, *The Morality*, 50.

⁸⁵ NE 1103a15-25.

⁸⁶ Servais Pinckaers, O.P., "Virtue Is Not a Habit," trans. Bernard Gilligan, *Cross Currents* 12 (1962): 67. Emphasis mine.

something like a feeling she cannot help having; rather, she's morally accountable for being honest because this is the way that she has chosen, and *continues to choose*, to be.⁸⁷

As a result, virtue is a disposition perfected by a habit, but a habit that is always rational rather than mindless. A mindless habit is produced by repeated actions which lack proper comprehension and intentional choice of an agent. Thus, although virtue is acquired through a habit it does not come about by non-rational means: "habit is not a non-rational force threatening the agent's next exercise of rationality. Rather, it should be seen as an increasing effectiveness of the agent's rationality."⁸⁸ Similarly, virtue always results from actions that are freely chosen; a virtuous habit does not abolish my deliberation but only helps me to make good choices in the future. In other words, my past choices contributed to the development of a given disposition, and my present decision is "not just a reflex determined by that disposition - it is my endorsement of that disposition."⁸⁹

Hexis also brings ease to an action. The acquisition of the habit makes the performance of action easy: by the course of abstinent acts, one acquires the habit of temperance. Having acquired this habit, he can perform the act of abstinence with the greater ease.⁹⁰ The person who is fully virtuous does not struggle to make a virtuous choice. In fact, it is easier for her to perform an act of abstinence than the opposite act of indulgence. This is because the person acts in accordance with her "second nature," acquired through habituation. To quote Pinckaers, "obedience to habit is effortless," and so following one's habit is simply a matter of following a natural bent.⁹¹ At the same time, the facility of action that comes from *hexis* is not a blind mechanism or routine, as previously

⁸⁷ Annas, *The Morality*, 51. Original emphasis.

⁸⁸ Annas, *The Morality*, 51. It should be noted that Annas's discussion here concerns exclusively a *virtuous* habit. According to Rhonheimer, "a human being who has a bad or unjust will is not someone who just looks at things 'differently,' but rather someone who increasingly does not see anything because he has distanced himself from reason." Cf. Rhonheimer, 193. In this sense, a vicious habit does not increase but decrease the effectiveness of the agent's rationality, even if a vicious person employs rational means to attain morally evil ends.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ George Grote and Alexander Bain, *Aristotle* (New York: Arno Press, 1973), 522. Cf. NE 1104b5-10.

⁹¹ Pinckaers, "Virtue Is Not a Habit," 66.

stated. "Virtue is *hexis proairetike*, a dispositional state involving choice, *proairesis*."⁹² Thus, it is *not* a mechanical habit: the virtuous person *chooses* what to do when acting virtuously.

Finally, *hexis* generates joy from an accomplished action. Aristotle famously holds that a certain delight assists those who act virtuously on account of their good habit:

We must take as a sign of states of character the pleasure or pain that supervenes upon acts; for the man who abstains from bodily pleasures and delights in this very fact is temperate, while the man who is annoyed at it is self-indulgent, and he who stands his ground against things that are terrible and delights in this or at least is not pained is brave, while the man who is pained is a coward.⁹³

Pleasure is essential to virtue. It is not something *added* to the experience, but proper to the virtuous activity itself.⁹⁴ Aristotle argues that even if a person abstained from bodily pleasures in a consistent and reliable fashion, but did not delight in doing so, such person would not be considered fully virtuous, but only continent.⁹⁵ This does not mean that the person must teach herself how to "feel good" about her action, but only that the person has not been fully habituated in virtue yet.⁹⁶

Accordingly, continence is not a virtue but a state on the way to virtue, an *imperfect* virtue or *quasi* virtue.⁹⁷ Julia Annas explains this point with greater clarity using an example of practical skill:

As we begin to learn a skill, we are held back by not being able to do it very well, and we can find it frustrating and unpleasant. As we get better at golfing, building, or speaking Italian, we enjoy doing it more, for we are less frustrated by inadequacies and failures in the ways we exercise the skill... I come to enjoy the exercise of language mastery as it no longer requires conscious working out but enables me to express my thoughts unimpededly.⁹⁸

⁹² Annas, *The Morality*, 87.

⁹³ NE 1104b5-10

⁹⁴ NE 1099a15-16.

⁹⁵ NE 1151b34-1152a3

⁹⁶ As mentioned before, Aristotle claims that feelings remain beyond human deliberation, which is different from saying that they cannot be controlled. Habituation in virtue entails an acquisition of the proper disposition in every sphere of the person, including an emotional one. This point is developed in a greater detail in the later section of this study.

⁹⁷ Cf. *ST* II-II, 155, 4.

⁹⁸ Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 69-70.

2.2. Good Operative Habit

Moving on to St. Thomas, one would quickly notice that for Aquinas, as it was for Aristotle, virtue remains essentially a habit. In fact, as Decasimo points out, "whatever else Thomas wants us to know about virtues, first and foremost he wants us to know they are habits."⁹⁹ Accordingly, in *ST* I-II 55.4, St. Thomas defines virtue as "a good operative habit, productive of good works." Although it was stated that Aristotle's *hexis* best translates to English as "disposition" to avoid confusion with the modern notion of habit, it is the same concept to which Aquinas alludes whenever he speaks of *habitus*. In fact, Thomistic habit shares many of the essential qualities of Greek *hexis*, though as always, not unqualifiedly. This becomes clear once one investigates into the nature of the Thomistic concept of habit.

First, for Aquinas, habit denotes certain perfection of the capacity: "A habit is a disposition whereby that in which the habit resides, its subject, is well or ill-disposed to the nature of that very subject or to the operation to which nature is ordained."¹⁰⁰ This is similar to Aristotle's understanding of *hexis*, which I said is a stable disposition towards the perfection of the thing defined by nature. However, given the theological outlook of St. Thomas, already here one can see certain qualification introduced by the Angelic Doctor. David L. Whidden explains the difference as follows:

In this definition Aquinas is already making a substantial adjustment to the Aristotelian idea of habit, as suggesting that a habit can be a disposition to either nature or a final end leaves room for a final end that might be above nature. The payoff for this subtle move comes when Aquinas argues that habits can be infused in humans by God, which is a most non-Aristotelian idea.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Joseph David Decasimo, *Ethics As a Work of Charity: Thomas Aquinas and Pagan Virtue* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2014): 72. The author's point is even stronger, if one recalled Thomas's change in the definition of virtue from Augustinian "good quality of the soul" to the "good habit of the soul." Cf. *ST* I-II 55.4.

¹⁰⁰ *ST* I-II 49.3

¹⁰¹ David L. Whidden, *Christ the Light the Theology of Light and Illumination in Thomas Aquinas* (Lanham: Fortress Press, 2014), 208.

Secondly, habit is difficult to change, *difficile mobile*.¹⁰² Recall the distinction between *hexis* and *diathesis*; the former being stable disposition while the latter being subject to frequent change. The same distinction is made by Aquinas who separates habit from disposition on account of stability: habit is difficult to change which is precisely what makes it different from disposition.¹⁰³ St. Thomas, however, provides more insight as to why habits are difficult to change. Decasimo notes that "operative habits reside essentially in the soul and only secondarily, or by participation, in the body."¹⁰⁴ Thus, it sometimes happens that a good skier needs time to acquire the same agility and bodily strength as he enjoyed before the injury. He does not need, however, to learn the habit of skiing again. The fact that his skiing got worse is not a result of a fading habit, but the diminishment of a bodily disposition to exercise the habit of skiing well.¹⁰⁵

Finally, Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that habits enable us to perform actions with ease and joy.¹⁰⁶ If the skier does not take pleasure in skiing or he finds skiing difficult, his habit of skiing remains imperfect. This is because for Aquinas, as it was for Aristotle, "activities which proceed from a habit are pleasurable, readily undertaken, and easily performed, since they have, in a sense, become *connatural*."¹⁰⁷ At the same time, it should be noted that the feeling of pleasure or joy, which *results* from virtuous action is to be distinguished from the feelings *shaped* by virtue. Pleasure accompanying virtuous action is universal to all virtues.¹⁰⁸ For instance, the prudent person delights on the account of truth in the same way a temperate person delights in abstaining from another glass of wine. Feelings of anger or sexual attraction, however, are shaped by their proper virtues, patience

¹⁰² *ST I-II* 49.1.

¹⁰³ *ST I-II* 49.2.3.

¹⁰⁴ Decasimo, 76.

¹⁰⁵ In contrast, those habits that reside essentially in the body are easy to change. For example, the habit of health disappears quickly with the moment one catches a cold. These habits, however, are not *operative* habits, and as such they are not genuine habits. Cf. Decasimo, 76.

¹⁰⁶ *De veritate* 20, 2; *SCG* 3, 150, no. 7.

¹⁰⁷ *De veritate* 20, 2. Emphasis mine.

¹⁰⁸ Aquinas calls it "spiritual delight in virtue," which outweighs bodily pains in the course of virtuous action, such as in the case of bravery. Cf. *ST II-II* 123.8.

and chastity, respectively. The relationship of virtue to human passions will be treated more extensively in the later section of the chapter.

2.3. *The Mean of Virtue*

If virtue is defined as a good operative habit, the obvious question is what makes it good. Decosimo suggests that the goodness of virtue has to do with its being well suited to the operation of the particular power. Since, for example, one of the human ends involves eating, a *good* operative habit of the sensitive appetite disposes that appetite to desire food perfective of humans. In other words, an operative habit is good in so far as it disposes its power well vis-a-vis that power's own nature.¹⁰⁹ But this is still very abstract. Just how exactly does the good habit produce the disposition perfective of agent's power? What is it that makes the habit good and perfective of agent's power rather than bad and destructive? Aquinas observes that the goodness of moral virtue derives above all from its conformity to the rule of reason, which aims between excess and deficiency:

...the good of that which is measured or ruled consists in its conformity with its rule: thus the good things made by art is that they follow the rule of art. Consequently, in things of this sort, evil consists in discordance from their rule or measure. Now this may happen either by their exceeding the measure or by their falling short of it; as is clearly the case in all things ruled or measured. Hence it is evident that the good of moral virtue consists in conformity with the rule of reason. Now it is clear that between excess and deficiency the mean is equality or conformity. Therefore it is evident that moral virtue observes the mean.¹¹⁰

According to Aristotle, virtue aims at what is intermediate.¹¹¹ The virtuous agent chooses between two opposite vices; one excessive, the other deficient of the good action. Thus, true virtue is not opposed to one vice, but to two vices, constituting opposite ends. For example, fortitude is a mean between cowardice (excessive fear) and recklessness (insufficient fear) while temperance is a mean between overindulgence (excessive sensual pleasure) and insensibility (deficiency of sensual

¹⁰⁹ Decosimo, 108.

¹¹⁰ *ST I-II* 64.1.

¹¹¹ *NE* 1106b29.

pleasures). Avoiding the two extremes, however, does not imply that the selected course of action must always be the same: "neither Aristotle nor Aquinas holds the silly doctrine that the mean of virtue is characterized by feeling of moderate quantity of emotion in every circumstance, no matter how trivial or extreme."¹¹² Aristotle explicitly says that the mean of action is determined by reason, more specifically, practical wisdom (*phronesis*).¹¹³ The virtuous person is characterized by doing the right thing in the right way, with the right motivation, and at the right time.¹¹⁴ Therefore, sometimes the right course of action is to become extremely angry, such as in the case of watching someone being hurt unjustly. "This is still in a mean," argues Annas, because the action is neither excessive nor defective, but displays the appropriate amount of anger.¹¹⁵

St. Thomas fundamentally agrees with Aristotle on that every moral virtue observes the mean. He calls it a "rational mean," which implies that all virtues are governed by the general standard of reasonableness, formulated in reference to specific circumstances.¹¹⁶ For example, temperance or fortitude is guided by the rational mean alone, since in these cases the mean is determined in reference to the person's own desires and life circumstances. However, there are other virtues, such as justice, which deal with external things; these, on the other hand, observe the "real mean," though never in disjunction from the rational mean proper to moral virtues.¹¹⁷

It is worth pointing out that Aquinas departs from Aristotle's description of the mean in at least one aspect. Jean Porter recalls that for Aristotle the mean is always established in reference to

¹¹² Jean Porter, "The virtue of justice" in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen Pope (Washington, D.C. : Georgetown University Press), 274.

¹¹³ NE 1107a1-2.

¹¹⁴ NE 1106b20-24.

¹¹⁵ Annas, *The Morality*, 61. This point has been examined in detail by J. O. Urmson in his article "Aristotle's Doctrine of the Mean" in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amélie Rorty (University of California Press, 1980). The author draws an important distinction between intermediacy of the disposition versus intermediacy of the emotions: "Aristotle holds excellence of character to be a mean or intermediate disposition regarding emotions and actions, not that it is a disposition toward mean or intermediate emotions and actions. This latter view is, as we have seen, absurd."

¹¹⁶ ST I-II, 64.2. Except for theological virtues which cannot be said to be possessed in excess, as for instance, one cannot be "too loving" or "too hopeful" about things. Cf. ST I-II, 64.4.

¹¹⁷ ST I-II, 64.2. For more information regarding the Thomistic distinction between real and rational mean, see Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 192.

the corresponding vices. However, sometimes virtue is not easily located between the two vicious extremes. For instance, what would be the two correlative vices for the virtue of justice? Aristotle's response is greed; but obviously, people act unjustly for many other reasons, often not associated with money at all. Furthermore, Cessario notes that in the realm of New Testament morality, justice has only one corresponding vice, namely, sinful defect, or injustice.¹¹⁸ To give more than what is required by justice in Christian terms will not be a vice but an act of charity (given, of course, that other duties are not neglected). Aquinas also mentions that the tolerance of the injustice does not have always to imply a vice, but a suffering.¹¹⁹ Consequently, argues Porter, Aquinas decides to define virtue in reference to the form of goodness towards which it is oriented rather than in reference to the corresponding vices, as preferred by Aristotle:

Aquinas understands qualities that perfect the intellectual and affective capacities of the human person, in such a way as to enable the individual to act in certain characteristic ways... Hence, for Aquinas, a particular virtue is defined by reference to the characteristic kind of good action it produces, and not in terms of the vice which it serves to check (as he observes in passing, in the context of defending a definition of virtue in general).¹²⁰

In this way, Aquinas's understanding of the mean of virtue indeed differs from Aristotle's, but it is certainly a minor difference. If one looked at the entirety of the *Summa*, he would quickly realize that Thomas prefers to discuss particular virtues in conjunction with their opposite vices.¹²¹

I have shown that the good operative habit, that is, virtue, derives its goodness from the conformity to the rule of reason as expressed by the doctrine of the mean. One might still wonder, however, how it happens that an agent "gets it right" each time he undertakes a particular action. Both Aristotle and Aquinas point in the same direction: prudence. Without this special virtue it would be impossible for an agent to discern correctly what constitutes the correct mean in the given

¹¹⁸ Cessario, 134.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. I. Litzinger, O.P. (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1964), book 5, lecture 10.

¹²⁰ Porter, "The virtue of justice," 274.

¹²¹ Cf. *ST* II-II.

situation. In a sense, it is prudence that gives content to moral virtue. Thus, the next step will be to examine the nature and role of prudence for the overall theory of virtues. Prudence is also the third defining mark of the traditional virtue ethics, as listed in this study.

3. Prudence

3.1. *Practical Reasoning and Human Action*

Prudence refers to the good operation of the practical reasoning. In Book III of *De Anima*, Aristotle writes that practical reason is “the reason which engages in calculation for the sake of something and is practical,” and it “differs from the contemplative reason because of its goal.”¹²² Contemplative and practical reason are not two separate entities, but rather one faculty of intellect operative in two different areas. As one commentator put it, “[j]ust as theoretic reason works to convert an initially brute fact into a fact intelligible to a mind seeking understanding, so it is the work of practical reason to convert the agent’s particular situation into elements of a realized good action.”¹²³ While the truth is known by means of theoretical reasoning, it belongs to practical reason to determine the best course of action to achieve what is genuinely good for an agent.

The problem for a theory of practical reason is to determine exactly the nature of the connection between the mind and action. It could be argued that one’s actions proceed directly from one’s desire. An agent apprehends something as desirable, perceives a possibility to achieve it, and takes up an action. Indeed, at one point, Aristotle claims that the object of one’s desire is “the starting point of practical reason, while its final stage is the beginning of action.”¹²⁴ The three-stage process, however, seems inadequate to express fully the reality of genuine human action. Men’s actions are not determined by the desire alone; for Aristotle, an agent is either praised or blamed for

¹²² Aristotle, *De anima*, 433a13-15.

¹²³ Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 225.

¹²⁴ Aristotle, *De anima*, 433a17-18.

his actions, which implies that human actions are rational. This in turn suggests that there must be additional stages in the process of human action, which properly account for the human mind. In the most general terms, then, the process of human action can be described as follows. First, there is a desire which specifies the object to be pursued. Then, the person deliberates about the means to attain it, and perceives what are his possibilities for acting in a given circumstance. Next, the choice is made on the best possible course of action, which then leads to its execution.¹²⁵ According to Westberg, this sequence of human action in Aristotle is “coherent and introduces the specifically human abilities of reasoning about possibilities and choosing among them.”¹²⁶ Whether each of the elements and their coherence is fully accounted for by Aristotle himself, is another question.¹²⁷

Certainly, the Philosopher devotes much of his attention to the processes of deliberation and choice. Much of what he says in Books III, VI, and VII of *Nicomachean Ethics* deals with thinking about and choosing the right means for an action which implies that deliberation and choice constitute crucial elements in practical reasoning. For Aristotle, deliberation concerns primarily with what to do as opposed to theoretical speculation over the nature of things. Accordingly, the object of man's deliberation remains within his power and can be done.¹²⁸ The decision is that at which deliberation arrives. The Stagirite claims that “the same thing is deliberated upon and is chosen, except that the object of choice is already determinate, since it is that which has been decided upon as a result of deliberation that is the object of choice.”¹²⁹ Deliberation, therefore, leads to a decision, which is a definite result of deliberation. Logically, Aristotle concludes elsewhere that “we deliberate

¹²⁵ Cf. W.D. Ross, *Aristotle*. Fifth Edition (London: Methuen and Co, 1949), 199.

¹²⁶ Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 15-16.

¹²⁷ Westberg observes that in the process of Aristotle's ‘practical syllogism,’ the dimension of demonstration and correctness in practical reasoning, provided by the universal-particular structure, is “a source of great difficulty in understanding Aristotle.” Cf. Westberg, 18.

¹²⁸ NE 1112a30-1.

¹²⁹ NE 1113a2-5.

not about *ends* but about *means* [to those ends]."¹³⁰ This could be interpreted to imply that human goods that are desired are something fixed and are not strictly speaking the object of agent's deliberation. However, as Westberg observed, Aristotle's insistence on the means rather than ends being the proper focus of deliberation "has misled many interpreters into unduly restricting the scope of practical reason" and "resulted in distorted estimates of both Aristotelian *phronesis* and Thomistic *prudentia*."¹³¹ It is not necessarily true that Aristotle's intention was to deny that an agent can reflect on his values or goals. Deliberation often includes the proper consideration of the desired object. In fact, according to some authors, the ends of human actions are not always determinate and therefore deliberation must involve specification of ends.¹³²

Deliberation and choice are crucial to understand the structure of the 'practical syllogism' in Aristotle's account of practical reasoning. According to Westberg, "the reasoning process about actions takes place in the steps preceding action itself; but the difficulty arises in describing and identifying them precisely."¹³³ Since there is no need in the present study to offer a complete summary of the syllogism, I will refer to its basic structure as comprised of three steps. First, there is a universal judgment of the form (i.e., people should be honest), second, a twofold particular application (i.e., I am a person and what I have to say is true), and third, the performance of action (i.e., I speak the truth). According to Allan, a similar syllogism can be found in Aristotle's *De Motu Animalium* with a distinction that it is based on a desirability of an end rather than on the universal principle of action. Accordingly, the major premise is an end posited by a desire, the minor premise, the means deliberated and chosen for the attainment of the end, and the conclusion is the

¹³⁰ NE 1112b 13. Emphasis mine.

¹³¹ Westberg, 16. According to the author, in much of the 19th and 20th century interpretation, Aristotelian prudence was understood to deal with the means, not the end of an action.

¹³² Daniel C. Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 7. See also, William F. R. Hardie, *Aristotle's Ethical Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 216-235; Nancy Sherman, *The fabric of character: Aristotle's theory of virtue* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 87-89.

¹³³ Westberg, 17.

performance of an action.¹³⁴ Whether the two syllogisms are really distinct has been debated.¹³⁵ What is important to the present investigation is that Aristotle's analysis of practical reasoning established a solid ground for understanding how an agent can transfer an idea into action as the result of the reasoning process.

The Aristotelian account of practical reasoning and practical syllogism significantly influenced Aquinas's account of prudence. "The virtue of *prudentia* is modeled directly on *phronesis* and is described often by Thomas as *recta ratio agibilium*."¹³⁶ Aquinas's description of practical reasoning is rooted in the simple three-staged process of intention, decision, and execution with an improved understanding of the connection between decision and action.¹³⁷ Like Aristotle, St. Thomas believes that deliberation is an important process of finding the means to an end, however, it is not essential for good practical reasoning. For Thomas, prudence concerns more a decision and choice rather than deliberation.¹³⁸ Aristotle's insistence on the crucial role of deliberation can be misleading here; for the Stagirite, deliberation was closely linked to man's rationality. For Aquinas, however, deliberation is not necessary for a rational action to take place. In fact, "a great many ordinary actions are intended, chosen, and executed (and are fully voluntary), without deliberation."¹³⁹ This is because an action is rational when it is chosen, not when it is deliberated on. Prudence, according to Aquinas, is a good operative habit of *choosing* the right means; it is the disposition of mind and right appetite to make good choices about what needs to be done.¹⁴⁰ And if an agent reaches proficiency of practical judgment, he will not need time to think about what constitutes the right course of action. Deliberation, or as Thomas calls it, counsel (*consilium*), is

¹³⁴ For a more detailed analysis of the practical syllogism, see D. Allan, "The Practical Syllogism," in *Autour d'Aristote, Recueil d'études offert à Monseigneur A. Mansion* (Louvain, 1955), 325-40.

¹³⁵ Cf. Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle's theory of the will* (London: Duckworth, 1979), 119; Hardie, *Aristotle's ethical theory*, 249.

¹³⁶ Westberg, 26.

¹³⁷ For a detailed examination of each stage, see Westberg, 119-183.

¹³⁸ Cf. *ST* I-II 57.6.

¹³⁹ Westberg, 165.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *ST* II-II 47.6.

needed, but only in those situations where the course of action is uncertain or there are multiple ways of achieving an end.¹⁴¹

Prudence is not to be confused with practical knowledge. Thomas makes it clear that *prudentia*, although it involves *scientia practica*, is not simply the knowledge of moral principles. For Aquinas, universal moral principles belong to *synderesis*, the non-deliberative faculty of practical reason capable of determining the right ends.¹⁴² As one commentator puts it, “*Synderesis*, or being able to use first principles, is what ‘moves’ prudence; so the function of prudence is to apply moral principles of *synderesis*, and practical knowledge dependent on it, to particular actions.”¹⁴³ The difference between prudence and practical knowledge can be best seen in Aquinas’s treatment of practical reasoning in his treatise on the virtues:

Prudence means something more than practical knowledge, which relates to making a general judgment about what to do, such as that fornication is evil, and one must not steal. It can happen that even having this knowledge, the judgment of reason can be impeded in a particular action so that it does not judge rightly; therefore prudence is equally a matter of virtue, since with mere knowledge, an agent may still sin against virtue.¹⁴⁴

What follows from the above passage is that the most important stage in Aquinas’s account of prudence is not so much deliberation, or even a good judgment, but an execution of the action. For Thomas, prudence perfects the three operations of practical reason-*consiliare* (*counsel*), *indicare* (*judgment*), *praecipere* (*command*)- but it is the last one, which constitutes the principal act of the

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ST* I-II 14.1. By shifting the focus from deliberation to decision in determination of the rationality of human action, Aquinas avoids the problem of time marked by the Aristotelian account of habit. The difficulty can be summarized as follows. For the Stagirite, good deliberation is the kind which entails “calculation and inquiry,” which suggests that deliberation takes time (*NE* 1142b1-5). But actions resulting from virtue are done with ease and facility so that, for example, the brave person remains “fearless and undisturbed in sudden alarms” (*NE* 1117a17-20). If that is the case, then every virtuous action either takes time, which goes against the idea of ease and facility of action produced by a habit, or, the process of deliberation in a virtuous person is instantaneous, which goes against the nature of deliberation, as being the process of “calculation and inquiry.” The difficulty has been addressed by a number of contemporary scholars. Here are some key texts and authors to consider: T.H. Irwin, “Aristotle on Reason, Desire, and Virtue” *Journal of Philosophy* 72 (1975): 567-78; Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*, 13-14; Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 252; John Henry McDowell, “Some issues in Aristotle’s Moral Psychology,” in *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 23-24.

¹⁴² Cf. *ST* II-II 47.6.

¹⁴³ Westberg, 188.

¹⁴⁴ *De veritate*, q. un. a. 6, ad. 1.

practical reason, and is thus the defining mark of the virtue of prudence.¹⁴⁵ According to Westberg, the logical conclusion behind treating *praeceptum* as the principal act of practical reason is the necessary inclusion of the two previous stages in the final one:

Praeceptum is the final stage what the process action leads to, so that the perfection of that stage necessarily implies the perfecting of the steps preceding. This is indicated by the reasoning of St. Thomas in II-II 51.2. ad.2, where he admits that there is one final end for all the different stages of the process of action, namely to live well overall ('bene vivere totum'). The three aspects of *consilium*, *iudicium*, and *praeceptum* are ordered in steps towards this end, and *praeceptum* relates directly to the final end ('immediate se habet ad finem ultimum'), while counsel and judgment relate at a distance ('remote se habent'), and have their own secondary ends. Thus, it is by virtue of its proximate relationship to the *finis* of the entire process that *praeceptum* is principal, not because it is more difficult, or requires more use of the intellect.¹⁴⁶

Aquinas's point is well taken; it is all too often that we judge well, we make a right decision, but nonetheless still fail to do what needs to be done. By emphasizing the last stage of the process, the good execution of an action, St. Thomas, more adequately than Aristotle, accounts for a connection between decision and action and indicates the essential role of prudence in making the right choices.

3.2. Prudence and Skills: Virtues in Need of Prudence

The crucial role of prudence for the acquisition and operation of moral virtues can be explained by Aristotle's analogy of skill (*techne*). Just as a builder learns to build by building, one who strives for virtue learns how to be virtuous by practicing particular acts of virtue:

¹⁴⁵ Cf. *ST* I-II 57.6.

¹⁴⁶ Westberg, 195.

We acquire virtues by first acting just as we do in the case of acquiring crafts. For we learn a craft by making the products which we must make once we have learned the craft, for example, by building, we become builders, by playing the lyre, lyre players. And so too we become just by doing just actions.¹⁴⁷

The strength of Aristotle's analogy lies in its simplicity. By imitating the good works of others, one becomes good in the process. However, a mere repetition of actions does not yet guarantee that the person will develop a full-fledged virtue. As one commentator puts it, "there is an internal habituation that is required on the level of intellect, will, and emotion that underlies the development of moral virtue."¹⁴⁸ An agent must integrate the good patterns of behavior into his character; not only externally produce an action characteristic of virtue. One might occasionally support the mission in Africa because of his friends at work who regularly donate money for charity. However, unless supporting the poor becomes a part of one's cognition, desire, and affection, he cannot be called generous – at least, not yet. According to Nancy Sherman, "[w]e misconstrue Aristotle's notion of action producing character if we isolate the exterior moment of action from the interior cognitive and affective moments which characterize even the beginner's ethical behavior."¹⁴⁹

Now, because prudence is what ensures the right choice of means for the realization of a given end, it is only logical that its operation remains essential to the process of the acquisition of a virtue. To become a builder one must be good at building, not just at repeating the action of building. This means that a person not only knows what belongs to the craft of building, but is able to actually accomplish the project of building within a specific frame of time, with a specific set of available resources, and with a specific number of helpers. In short, a good builder is good at effectively applying the practical knowledge of building in the particular setting or a construction site. The same holds for virtues. As one learns how to be generous by following the example of his

¹⁴⁷ NE 1103a 30-35.

¹⁴⁸ Daniel Westberg, *Renewing Moral Theology: Christian Ethics As Action, Character and Grace* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2015), 82.

¹⁴⁹ Sherman, *The fabric of character*, 178.

colleagues at work, he also learns how to apply effectively the knowledge of being generous in the unique circumstances of his life. Growing in prudence is thus always proportionate to the acquisition of particular virtues.

Of course, prudence, as an excellence of practical reasoning, does not develop only in reference to a particular virtue but the overall well-being of an agent. According to Annas, the disposition to be brave, for example, is unified by a grasp of what being brave, rather than cowardly, contributes to the agent's living well, achieving his final good.¹⁵⁰ The virtuous person does not only discern the course of action in the particular moment, but successfully applies this knowledge in reference to the overall aim of his life. An action will not be truly generous if it is accompanied, for instance, by feelings of guilt, which resurface on the account of neglected needs of the family. Virtuous activity requires an adequate consideration of one's overall direction in life. As Annas writes, "the virtuous person... must be an agent who has reflected on her initial moral judgments and achieved a unified understanding of her basis for making them, on a level which is more general and theoretical than those judgments themselves."¹⁵¹

Aquinas follows Aristotle in arguing that moral virtues are in need of prudence. For St. Thomas, "moral virtue cannot be without prudence because it is a habit of choosing, that is, making men choose well."¹⁵² One cannot choose well or pursue the end set by moral virtue well unless "his reason counsel, judge and command aright, which is the function of prudence."¹⁵³ Although Aquinas does not discuss Aristotle's analogy of skill extensively, he makes the same point; when someone does the good action, however, not in accord with the deliverance of his own reason but moved to it

¹⁵⁰ Annas, *The Morality*, 71.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² *ST I-II* 58.4.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

by the council of others, “his act is still not entirely perfect.”¹⁵⁴ In other words, merely doing the right thing, even if consistently, according to Aquinas, is not yet formative of a genuine virtue:

Merely to do good deeds or even consistently to do and incline to them does not a virtue make. Virtue requires that they be done well; it is as much a habit *of choosing* good action as of doing it. And that requires the presence and activity of right reason – both as habit in intellect and as that in which the appetites habitually participate. It requires that one’s sensitive appetite not interfere with but incline toward and obey reason’s judgment.¹⁵⁵

Without prudence, the moral virtues are not really virtues but habits.¹⁵⁶ And it is only when one’s ability of practical reasoning is perfected that the moral virtues can really be obtained. For as one commentator said, “in order for any given virtuous action to count towards the acquisition of a virtue it must be in accord with right reason [and] this is because the other virtues ‘are possessed along with’ prudence.”¹⁵⁷ In fact prudence is so essential for Aquinas’s account of virtue that he concludes at one point that “the whole matter of moral virtues falls under the one rule of prudence” and as a consequence, “the lack of prudence in one department of things to be done, would result in a deficiency affecting other things to be done.”¹⁵⁸ I will return to this point later in the discussion of the famous thesis of the unity of virtues.

3.3. Cleverness vs. Prudence: Prudence in Need of Moral Virtues

Good actions are the result of right choices. The right choices presuppose that an agent pursues the right ends and that he finds the right means to attain them. The virtue of prudence guarantees the correct choice of means, which has been shown above. However, prudence does not appoint the ends for action. These are set by man’s desires, and if desires are not properly formed,

¹⁵⁴ *ST I-II* 57.5. ad. 2.

¹⁵⁵ Decasimo, 125.

¹⁵⁶ James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 100.

¹⁵⁷ Andrew Kim, “Progress in the Good: A Defense of the Thomistic Unity Thesis,” *Journal of Moral Theology* 3:1 (2014): 168. Cf. Aquinas, *De virtut. card.* a. 2.

¹⁵⁸ *ST I-II* 65.1.3.

subsequent reasoning and ultimately the whole action will be wrong. It is therefore logical that the correct practical reasoning presupposes that the desires for ends have been made right by moral virtues, and that the ends pursued by a prudent person are authentically good. Just as Aristotle's discussion of skill helped illumine the essential role of prudence for the acquisition and operation of moral virtues, I will now refer to Aristotle's concept of cleverness which will be helpful in explaining the role of moral virtues for the operation of prudence.

For the Stagirite, there is a clear distinction between cleverness (*deinotes*) and prudence. Although both are perfections of the practical intellect, cleverness is markedly different from prudence in that it finds the best means to achieve *any* given end, that is, *good* or *bad*. For instance, a thief may be clever and find the most ingenious way to rob a bank. However, he cannot be called prudent because prudence concerns only *good* ends. This becomes clear when Aristotle says that cleverness is nothing but a "mere smartness" which is a domain of both noble *and* wicked alike. Prudence, on the other hand, is exclusive to the noble, as it would be impossible for a man to be "practically wise without being good."¹⁵⁹ Although Aristotle says that cleverness is necessary for prudence, it remains unclear whether cleverness is a part of prudence or a completely different form of practical reasoning.¹⁶⁰ Some scholars speculate that prudence may as well be cleverness in pursuit of good ends.¹⁶¹ The latter interpretation, however, seems unwarranted for at least two reasons. First, compare the following quotation in which Aristotle seems to exclude any possibility of identifying prudence with cleverness:

There is a faculty which is called cleverness; and this is such as to be able to do the things that tend towards the mark we have set before ourselves, and to hit it. Now if the mark be noble, the cleverness is laudable, but if the mark be bad, the cleverness is mere smartness;

¹⁵⁹ NE 1144a26.

¹⁶⁰ Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues*, 24. This is an interesting question given the fact that prudence is not a monolithic virtue but consists of many practical powers, such as, comprehension (*sunesis*), sense (*gnome*), and intelligence (*nous*). Cf. NE 1143a11-16, 1143a19-20, 1143a32-b5, respectively.

¹⁶¹ Cf. David Bostock, *Aristotle's Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 89; Carlo Natali, *The wisdom of Aristotle* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 53.

hence we call even men of practical wisdom clever or smart. Practical wisdom is not the faculty, but it does not exist without this faculty.¹⁶²

Notice the last sentence in which Aristotle writes that prudence *is not* cleverness, although the latter is needed for the proper exercise of the former. Second, and perhaps more importantly, if prudence, as argued before, is understood in a broader sense, as to be responsible not only for finding the right means towards an action but also for the specification of ends, then cleverness can be at best a *part* of prudence. This is because cleverness exclusively concerns the means, and not the ends.

Finally, prudence deliberates about "what sort of things conduce to the good life in general."¹⁶³ The man of prudence, as Aristotle puts it, deliberates well not about what is "expedient for himself," but about what is truly good in reference to his overall well-being.¹⁶⁴ Although prudence enables an agent to identify the right sort of means to achieve a particular end, the means selected are always conjoined to one's overall pursuit of happiness.

For Aquinas too, it is important to distinguish "true and perfect" prudence from other pretenders. First, St. Thomas deals with "false" prudence, which "disposes well of such things as are fitting for an evil end."¹⁶⁵ Aquinas, here, is directly influenced by Aristotle's discussion of cleverness, although he says that while cleverness can be oriented towards good *or* bad end, false prudence, or, "cunning" is always focused on the evil end.¹⁶⁶ Second, St. Thomas differentiates between "perfect" and "imperfect" prudence. The criterion here does not yet concern the assistance of grace, as both kinds of prudence are oriented to the human end. Rather, "true but imperfect" prudence is imperfect "from a twofold source": (1) the good end it assumes is not universal for the human end but concerns particular affairs, and (2) it fails in the "chief act of prudence," which consists in

¹⁶² NE 1144a23-30.

¹⁶³ NE 1140b27.

¹⁶⁴ NE 1140b25-30.

¹⁶⁵ ST II-II 47.13

¹⁶⁶ ST II-II 47.13.3.

"effective command."¹⁶⁷ The "true and perfect" prudence, therefore, is the one that "takes counsel, judges and commands aright in respect of the good end of man's whole life."¹⁶⁸ Judgments of prudence, therefore, are not only efficient but are always (at least implicitly) made in the light of the ordering of goods that will make for a whole flourishing human life.¹⁶⁹

It is precisely at this point where one sees clearly why prudence needs moral virtues for its proper functioning; prudence does not appoint the end but devises means towards that end, which must be essentially *good*. Even though on Aquinas's view, some general ends are specified by *syneresis*, the goodness of *specific* ends is determined by the moral virtues.¹⁷⁰ Prudence and moral virtues are inseparable and interconnected. Both Aristotle and Aquinas subscribe to this view.¹⁷¹

Furthermore, for St. Thomas, prudence *requires* moral virtues because of the disordered work of men's appetitive powers:

It is requisite for prudence, which is right reason about things to be done, that man be well disposed with regard to the ends: and this depends on the rectitude of his appetite. Wherefore, for prudence there is need of a moral virtue, which rectifies the appetite.¹⁷²

An agent will experience disruption in the work of the virtue of prudence if his appetites are disordered by, for example, lust or covetousness – for he will not be able to see clearly the good which is to be done if his overriding desire is to satisfy himself with pleasures or possessions.¹⁷³ It is not that an agent has an intention to pursue a particular good, deliberates and judges the best means to achieve it, and then waits for the will to decide whether execute an action or not. Rather, the

¹⁶⁷ *ST* II-II 47.13.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.* For Aquinas, as it is for Aristotle, prudence is not a monolithic virtue but a family of practical capacities. In Aquinas, however, the treatment of particular powers seems more nuanced. See Stephen J. Pope, "Overview of the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas" in *Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press), 40, for a complete list of "parts" of prudence.

¹⁶⁹ DeYoung, 140.

¹⁷⁰ Cf. *ST* I-II 58.5.

¹⁷¹ *NE* 1143b26-32; *ST* I-II, 57.4. & 58.5.

¹⁷² *ST* I-II 57.4. The disordered work of appetitive powers is a result of the Original Sin, which, for St. Thomas, "denotes the privation of original justice" and a consequent "inordinate disposition of the parts of the soul." Cf. *ST* I-II 82.1.1.

¹⁷³ DeYoung, 137.

operation of the practical intellect is moved by the appetite toward action and the appetite of an agent for action is guided *all along* by the practical intellect: “The perfecting of the whole process by virtues involves right reason depending on the right disposition of appetite, and right appetite depending on prudence.”¹⁷⁴ Hence Aquinas’s claim that “one cannot have prudence unless one has the moral virtues.”¹⁷⁵ This leads me to discuss the last item under the umbrella of prudence: the interconnectedness of virtues, or, as some prefer to call it, “the unity of virtues thesis.”

3.4. *The Unity of Virtues: Virtues in Need of One Another*

In the simplest terms, the unity thesis refers to the view that the possession of one virtue implies having them all.¹⁷⁶ Although in my analysis I will be focusing on the texts of Aristotle and Aquinas, the thesis about interconnectedness of virtues has a long and complex history.¹⁷⁷ The thesis is also widely disputed among the philosophers and moral theologians of the present time.¹⁷⁸ It is

¹⁷⁴ Westberg, 219.

¹⁷⁵ *ST I-II* 65.1.

¹⁷⁶ Although, for the sake of clarity I will be using the term “unity of virtues,” it is important to note that there are significant differences in the way the interconnectedness among virtues is defined. According to Andrew Kim and John Doris, there are at least four manifestations of the inseparability of virtues: “unity thesis” advocated by McDowell, in “Virtue and Reason,” *Monist* 62 (1979): 332, which holds that different virtues turn out to be different forms of the “single complex sensitivity”; Aristotle’s “reciprocity of virtues thesis,” which implies the strong relationship between intellectual virtue of prudence and other moral virtues but does not reduce moral virtues to the one and the same entity (*NE* 1144b30-1145a2); “the exclusionary thesis,” which holds that virtues and vices cannot coexist in one single personality, as argued by R. Kraut, in “Comments on Disunity in the Aristotelian Virtues,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy: Supplementary Volume* (1988), 83; and “the limited unity thesis,” put forward by N.K. Badhwar, in “The Limited Unity of Virtue” *Noûs* 30 (1996): 307-8, which maintains that virtues are connected but only within particular domains of life.

¹⁷⁷ Susan Wolf notes that the unity of virtues is a “tenet of Greek ethics” in general.

¹⁷⁸ The literature on the topic is overwhelming. Here listed are some of the key references: Julia Annas, *Intelligent Virtue* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011): 83-118; Neera K. Badhwar, “The Limited Unity of Virtue” *Noûs* 30:3 (Sep 1996): 306-329; Kenneth Irwin, “Disunity in the Aristotelean Virtues,” in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Supplementary Volume*, ed. Julia Annas and Robert H. Grimm (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988): 61-78; Andrew Kim, “Progress in the Good: A Defense of the Thomistic Unity Thesis” *Journal of Moral Theology*, 3:1 (2014): 147-174 and “Thomas Aquinas on the Connection of the Virtues,” PhD diss. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2013): 6-51; Richard Kraut, “Comments on ‘Disunity in the Aristotelian Virtues’ by T.H. Irwin in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, Supplementary Volume*, ed. Julia Annas and Robert H. Grimm (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988): 79-86; Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2005): 309-324 and “The Unity of the Virtues and the Ambiguity of Goodness: A Reappraisal of Aquinas’s Theory of the Virtues” *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 21:1 (Spring 1993): 137-163; Daniel C. Russell, *Practical Intelligence and the Virtues* (New York: Oxford UP, 2009): 1-34, 103-236, 333-373; Gopal Sreenivasan, “Disunity of Virtue” *The Journal of Ethics*, 13:2-3 (Sep 2009): 195-212; Susan Wolf, “Moral Psychology and the Unity of the Virtues” *Ratio*, 20:2 (June 2007): 145-167; Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*

certainly impossible here to review all the arguments made in favor and against the unity thesis in the present section – this work has been already done anyway.¹⁷⁹ Rather, the study will investigate as to why Aristotle and Aquinas subscribe to the unity thesis, while addressing the most common objections against their view. An implicit objective of this section is also to provide the final element of the present discussion of prudence.

As said before, prudence cannot function well without moral virtues and moral virtues are not really virtues without prudence: prudence and moral virtues are interconnected. What follows is that one cannot have, for example, the virtue of justice without the virtue of prudence. Or to be prudent without also being just. This seems straightforward. However, why is it that the possession of one moral virtue implies possession of the other moral virtues? Is it not common to encounter people who are, for example, generous, but not very patient? Or brave, but not particularly pious?

Here one is reminded of the previous discussion of prudence as being essential to making good judgments in particular situations. As it was said earlier, these judgments address specific moral choice at hand but always in reference to the overall good of one's life. Thus, for instance, the truly brave person "grasps how acting bravely, while done for its own sake, also forms part of her overall good in her life as a whole."¹⁸⁰ Indeed, this understanding is a part of what it means to grasp what bravery is: for the virtues always contribute to one's overall good, and not merely a particular good at hand, as argued before. When one looks at his life from this perspective, where every virtuous action contributes to his happiness, one will quickly realize that to arrive at the correct virtuous judgments in one area of life requires correct virtuous judgments in others. For instance, it is difficult to imagine how bravery would look like without justice: the person who saves a little girl

(Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984): 178-180 and *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988): x.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. Andrew Kim, "Thomas Aquinas on the Connection of the Virtues," PhD diss. (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2013).

¹⁸⁰ Annas, *The Morality*, 75.

from drowning in a pond, but the next day fails to intervene when the bartender cheats on his half-conscious customer is not really brave. As Annas put it, "it will be very seldom that realistic cases of virtuous judgment will involve merely one area [of life]."¹⁸¹

This does not mean, of course, that all virtues are exercised in the same way in every person. In her recent book, Annas argues that a soldier and a caregiver have very different ways of life. In the case of the former, courage needs to be prominent given the many risks implied by the dangerous work of a soldier; in case of the latter, it is patience which seems to be the focal virtue, especially when dealing with, for example, patients with Alzheimer. But in both cases, virtues *overlap* even if there is a notable difference in the person's lifestyle:

But the soldier will need patience as well as courage; he or she will need to be able to wait patiently for orders or for the right moment to give orders, and be able to deal with long periods of inactivity without losing focus. And the caregiver will need courage to deal with the difficulties of his or her life, carrying on often without any encouragement or gratitude.¹⁸²

This is an important point, especially in light of some the criticisms offered by contemporary scholars. For example, Badhwar argues that Aristotle's crucial premise, the view that the true conception of living well in general (*eudaimonia*) requires a true conception of *each* of its elements and their interrelations, is false.¹⁸³ This is because, according to Badhwar, the goodness of human life is not such an "organic unity," as Aristotle or Aquinas would like to have it; rather, "the goodness of a human life consists of a *variety of goods*, not all of which appear to be interrelated in such a way that fully understanding one requires fully understanding all."¹⁸⁴ To support her view, the author retreats to the common observation that some people are virtuous in one area of life, while quite lacking in wisdom in others: "someone who is wise with children and household management in general may

¹⁸¹ Annas, *The Morality*, 75.

¹⁸² Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 94.

¹⁸³ Badhwar, 313.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid. Emphasis mine.

lack the kind of experience that is necessary for wise statesmanship."¹⁸⁵ Furthermore, the author observes that the education needed to acquire the appropriate emotional dispositions in certain areas may itself be "missing from a person's developmental history."¹⁸⁶ One is left with no choice but to accept that there is "disunity in practical wisdom and in virtue across different domains of a person's life."¹⁸⁷

Of course, the previous comments about the unifying role of prudence should be sufficient to respond to Badhwar's arguments: prudence is not something that develops in men in a compartmentalized way so that each virtue requires different kind of prudence. Rather, practical intelligence "develops over one's character as a whole, in a holistic way."¹⁸⁸ This means that even though it might be hard at times to see, virtues "involve the *same* practical intelligence which operates over life as a whole, not in different and separate compartments of life."¹⁸⁹ This is because virtues are structurally similar: learning to be generous will not be a wholly different thing from learning how to be brave; though two are distinct moral virtues, both require good exercise of the same capacity of the practical reasoning. In the same vein, one could respond to Badhwar's second objection that certain people simply lack an opportunity to develop a particular virtue. If one learned how to be patient, he would quickly learn how to be generous too because it is the same faculty of prudence, which, perfected on the account of acts of patience, would guide an agent in the right exercise of the acts of generosity. Aquinas expresses the same point when he discusses the virtue of magnificence:

...it is possible for a man to have the other moral virtues, without actually having the habits of these virtues-provided we speak of acquired virtue. Nevertheless, when once a man has acquired those other virtues he possesses these in proximate potentiality. Because when, by practice, a man has acquired liberality in small gifts and expenditure, if he were to come in

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 315.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 314.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 315.

¹⁸⁸ Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 86.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 99. Emphasis mine.

for a large sum of money, he would acquire the habit of magnificence with but little practice: even as a geometrician, by dint of little study, acquires scientific knowledge about some conclusion which had never been presented to his mind before.¹⁹⁰

Cessario notes that the scholastic theologians actually coined a phrase for this state: "a truly virtuous person could be said to possess any virtue '*in preparatione animae*' even if at a given moment particular legitimate circumstances prevented the person from actually exercising the virtue."¹⁹¹ It could be said then, that just because someone does not possess specific virtue in its *actuality* due to the lack of matter, he possesses it in its *potentiality*, which becomes actualized without much difficulty once the matter is provided.¹⁹²

Now, granting that Aristotle and Aquinas are correct in saying that single virtue implies having all others in some form, one needs to tackle other problems as well. For instance, some scholars argue that possession of *all* virtues at once will inevitably result in conflicting moral demands generated by particular virtues.¹⁹³ According to Walker, different virtues may prove incompatible because of the possibility of conflict, "either on the account of observable incompatibilities between the personal qualities implied by virtues," or "the possibility of conflict between the ways in which each virtue is acquired."¹⁹⁴ As an example, he lists the following pairs of incompatible virtues: justice and kindness, conscientiousness and generosity, or truthfulness and

¹⁹⁰ *ST I-II*, 65.1.1.

¹⁹¹ Cessario, 140.

¹⁹² Of course, Badhwar's argument is flawed in other respects. Toner argues that first, some practical concerns cannot be isolated from others, which means that some aspects of the moral life will not be domain specific at all. Second, the partitioning of lives into domains is not uniform across persons. And third, although all domains seem to be important, some will be more important than others. Cf. Christopher Toner, "The Full Unity of the Virtues," *The Journal of Ethics* 18:3 (Sep 2014): 215-216.

¹⁹³ See for example, Nikolai Hartmann, *Ethik* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1926; English Translation by Stanton Coit, London: Allen and Unwin, 1932), 294-335; S. N. Hampshire, *Two Theories of Morality* (Oxford Univcristy Press, 1977), 33-43; T. Nagel, "The Fragmentation of Value," *Mortal Questions* (Cambridge University Press, 1979): 128-141; P. R. Foot, "Moral Realism and Moral Dilemma," *Journal of Philosophy* (80) 1983: 396-8; Bernard Williams, *Morality* (Cambridge University Press, 1973): 70-73 and "Conflicts of Values," in *Moral Luck* (Cambridge University Press, 1981): 76-77; J. D. Wallace, *Virtues and Vices* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978): 125-7.

¹⁹⁴ A. D. M. Walker, "The Incompatibility of the Virtues," *Ratio* 6:1 (Mar 1993): 45-46.

tact.¹⁹⁵ Accordingly, a person who possesses virtue of truthfulness will inevitably find herself in a position where she will not be able to act truthfully *unless* she forfeits the commitment to tactfulness:

There is, it seems, a range of situations in which we can exercise the virtue of truthfulness only at the expense of not exercising the virtue of tact, as when we are asked a question to which the straightforward answer will pain our questioner.¹⁹⁶

The same holds for other virtues, such as generosity and fairness, where "generosity suggests a particular course of action, while considerations of fairness militate against it."¹⁹⁷ Notice that Walker does not argue for the incompatibility among *all* virtues but only among *some* virtues in particular combination.¹⁹⁸ Sometimes, virtues are not mutually exclusive but "inversely correlated" so that an increase in one virtue results in a decrease in another.¹⁹⁹ Nuances notwithstanding, any claim that virtues are incompatible, conflicting, or inversely correlated goes directly against the kind of unity of virtues advocated before. But could this be a sufficient reason for abandoning the thesis altogether?

First, I have to note that both Aristotle and Aquinas are keenly aware of the presence of moral dilemmas in human lives. Consider the following quote from Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*:

It is difficult sometimes to determine what should be chosen at what cost, and what should be endured in return for what gain, and yet more difficult to abide by our decisions; for as a rule what is expected is painful, and what we are compelled to do is base, whence praise and blame are bestowed on those who have been compelled or have not.²⁰⁰

Sometimes the person is faced with many alternatives for action, and the difficulty comes up when one tries to identify the *better* option. Aquinas' description of the person who wishes to enter religious life but does not want to neglect his filial responsibilities is an often-quoted example of the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 45, 47.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 47.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 48.

¹⁹⁸ Bailey notes that it is no accident that certain virtues, such as temperance and courage, or (most frequently) justice and kindness, serve as evidence for the disunity thesis. In contrast, other combinations of virtues, such as generosity and kindness, or tolerance and forgiveness are rarely used. I agree with Bailey that minimal attention has been paid to what one might think of as the varied, uneven landscape of moral development in terms of groups of interrelated virtues. Cf. Olivia Bailey, "What Knowledge is Necessary for Virtue?," *Journal of ethics & social philosophy*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2010): 6.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid. 47.

²⁰⁰ NE 1110a29-34.

two seemingly opposing virtues of piety and religion.²⁰¹ One will return to this example later. Both authors also agree that the person may be conflicted on account of different passions and desires.²⁰² This, however, is different from the case at hand; for no one who is genuinely virtuous will ever be conflicted on the account of disordered emotions as his emotions were habituated in accordance with right reason. The point is that moral dilemmas are part of human reality, and neither Aristotle nor Aquinas ever attempts to deny it. What they adamantly deny is the possibility of virtues being the source of moral conflicts.

Perhaps nowhere the Philosopher more explicitly argues that no virtue can ever be opposed to another virtue than in the following passage from *Magna Moralia*:

Nor is virtue contrary to virtue. For it is by nature subject to reason, however it prescribes, so that wherever reason leads virtue inclines. For reason is what chooses the better. For neither do the other virtues arise without prudence nor is prudence complete without the other virtues, but they cooperate in some way with each other under the guidance of prudence.²⁰³

According to Aristotle, the two virtues can never be opposed to each other because they are guided by the same reason perfected by the virtue of prudence. To use the example from Annas's book, "If I am really just, then I will, when I am just, apply my understanding of what justice requires; but this understanding will be incomplete unless I can duly adjust and balance the claims of justice with those of other virtues and their goods."²⁰⁴ Thus, if I happened to be conflicted in my decision of justice on the account of kindness, this only shows that I have not yet fully understood what justice really is. This echoes the previous discussion of the global scope of prudence which finds the right means for a particular action in reference to the overall good of one's life. Many who wish to deny

²⁰¹ *ST* II-II 101.4.

²⁰² *NE* 1146a2-3; *ST* I-II 59.1.3. This does not mean that passions are evil. In fact, both Aristotle and Aquinas believe that passions are generally morally neutral in themselves, yet capable of perfecting or diminishing the value of the moral act. The relationship between passions and moral virtues will be treated more extensively in the fourth section of this chapter.

²⁰³ Aristotle, *Magna Moralia*, 1200a5-11.

²⁰⁴ Annas, *The Morality*, 78.

the unity thesis point to the presence of moral conflicts *associated* with particular areas that can be guided by virtues; but as Irwin argues, "the mere existence of moral conflicts or dilemmas does not refute the reciprocity thesis, unless one can show that distinct and separable virtues produce the conflicts."²⁰⁵ This, of course, is what Walker and others claim to do, but without giving due weight to the role of prudence and its global scope.²⁰⁶

The concept of "conflicting virtues" is also foreign to Thomas. In an article devoted entirely to this particular topic, Irwin lists at least five references where Aquinas explicitly denies the possibility of conflict between the virtues.²⁰⁷ If there is something contrary to virtue in Aquinas's writings, it is a vice. Irwin comments that there are three possibilities for action when faced with apparent evidence for opposed virtues:

- (1) We may reject the general principle that two virtues cannot be opposed, and hence we may conclude that these two virtues really are opposed.
- (2) We may accept the general principle, and conclude that at least one of these opposed conditions is not a genuine virtue.
- (3) We may accept the general principle, and conclude that these two states are not really opposed.²⁰⁸

Aquinas never subscribes to the first choice but only to the second or third (the third being his favorite).²⁰⁹ If one returns to the example of the person desiring to enter religious life while also being concerned about his family, one will quickly see how prudence guides the person in making of the right choice by consulting the overall good of one's life, which on Aquinas's terms, is hierarchically ordered:

No virtue is opposed to or inconsistent with another virtue, because according to the Philosopher... good is not opposed to good. Hence, it is not possible that piety and religion should mutually impede one another, so that the act of one is excluded on account of the act

²⁰⁵ Irwin, 68.

²⁰⁶ Annas suggests that this is partly because, unlike the ancients, people no longer perceive their lives as a coherent whole: "The ancients were quite as aware as we are that intuitively I can be fully just and less than fully brave. But they were readier than we are to accept that this shows that in fact I'm *not* fully just after all, because they laid more stress than we do on the agent's viewpoint of the good of her life as a whole." (Annas, *The Morality*, 78).

²⁰⁷ *ST* II-II, 63.1.; 129.3.4; 142.1; 157.2.1; 161.1.3.

²⁰⁸ T.H. Irwin, "Do virtues conflict? Aquinas's answer," in *Virtue Ethics, Old and New* ed. Stephen Mark Gardiner (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2005), 61.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

of another... Hence it pertains to piety to carry out one's duty, and to show due reverence to one's parents, in the requisite way. But it is not requisite that one should intend to show reverence to one's parents, more than to show reference to God.²¹⁰

What this means is that one's obligations to God should generally take precedence over one's responsibilities towards parents. Accordingly, someone who gives greater importance to the latter would be acting viciously, rather than virtuously, and his act would therefore not be an act of true piety at all.²¹¹ At the same time, as Porter rightly remarks, it would be a mistake to conclude that "our desires for higher goods, such as intellectual activity or religious worship, should always supersede our desires for lower or more basic goods."²¹² Sometimes the virtuous thing to do would be to forgo higher goods if such seems to be necessary. This is the case which Aquinas recognizes in the example of a man struggling to make a choice between religious and family commitments:

And so if our observances are necessary to our parents in the flesh, in such a way that they cannot be sustained without it, then neither do they lead us to something contrary to God, and we ought not to leave them in order to enter religious life.²¹³

In other words, it is not the virtues that are the source of moral conflicts, but "a complex family situation, calling for difficult personal choice," and "a complex social world which places inescapable demands on individuals."²¹⁴ It is exactly on the account of prudence and its global point of view that one is able to solve conflicts and act virtuously. If one's virtues seem to be the source of moral dilemmas, it only means that one's prudence is somehow deficient.

The bottom line is that if one allowed for the possibility of conflicting virtues, human lives will become disintegrated and compartmentalized. This stands in visible contrast to what Aristotle and Aquinas believe a virtuous life to be. Virtue is what makes man good as man. The less the person sees her life as an integrated whole, the more conflicts and inner tensions she will have to

²¹⁰ *ST* II-II 101.4.

²¹¹ Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 316.

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ *ST* II-II 101.4.3.

²¹⁴ Porter, *Nature as Reason*, 317.

undergo. As Annas beautifully concludes, a life in which the value sought in one aspect of life is in conflict with those pursued in another is "hardly an ideal for a virtuous life."²¹⁵

The preceding conclusion leads to the last objection commonly raised in opposition to the unity thesis: virtuous life without inner conflicts is too idealistic, and therefore impossible. The unsettling implication of the unity thesis is that nobody is actually virtuous, for if failure to be fully virtuous in one area results in denial of being virtuous in every other, then the standard for having any virtue has been set so high that it is simply beyond the capacity of people to achieve.²¹⁶ Jean Porter devoted an entire article to the case of what she calls "a flawed saint," where she attempts to reconcile Aquinas' thesis about the unity of virtues with the real life examples of people whom no one would ever hesitate to call virtuous.²¹⁷ A brief summary of the article will help to better address the difficulty at hand.

Porter's introductory remarks echo the previous point concerning prudence. She affirms that according to Thomas, someone who is virtuous must combine a reflective grasp of what it means to live a humanly good life.²¹⁸ Accordingly, because virtues are connected through prudence, genuine virtue entails possession of all others. But according to Porter, there is an inherent difficulty in Aquinas's thesis when one takes notice of those people who "combine real and even heroic virtues with equally real and crippling vices in one character and one lifetime."²¹⁹ Using the life of Martin Luther King as an example, she argues that even though King was known to have multiple extramarital affairs, he is widely recognized to be the man of genuine virtue:

²¹⁵ Annas, *Intelligent Virtue*, 89.

²¹⁶ Annas, *The Morality*, 83.

²¹⁷ Jean Porter, "Virtue and Sin: The Connection of the Virtues and the Case of the Flawed Saint" in *Journal of Religion* 75 (1995): 521-39.

²¹⁸ Porter, "Virtue and Sin: The Connection of the Virtues and the Case of the Flawed Saint," 528.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

King literally died in pursuit of his commitment to justice... If this commitment, and the courage to pursue it, are not to count as acts of true virtue in terms of our account of morality, then so much the worse for our account of morality.²²⁰

However, a "flawed saint" seems to be incompatible with what Aristotle and Aquinas say about virtues. One possibility would be to admit a truly virtuous person to be nonetheless flawed in some ways based on what Aquinas says in *ST* I-II 65.3.2 about possessing infused virtues while also experiencing difficulties in exercising them on account of past sins.²²¹ However, as Porter herself notes, this solution could be plausible only if the moral flaws in question were not too serious.²²² The other possibilities would be to flatly deny that King ever possessed true virtues or to reject the unity thesis altogether. But none of these are satisfactory. Porter, as if forced to conclude, admits that "Aquinas's thesis of the connection of the virtues cannot fully take account of the flawed saint."²²³

Perhaps identifying the person who possesses all the virtues and possesses them in a perfect state is indeed impossible, at least in this life. However, this does not yet mean that the unity thesis is wrong; there is a difference between articulating an ideal and dismissing it to be untrue based on one's inability to live it out fully. When one pursues his dreams, these are nothing but ideals, and yet no one would ever deny their validity. This is because the person's failure in achievement of the ideal says little about its validity; one might never achieve the ideal figure, but an ideal is true and

²²⁰ Ibid., 533.

²²¹ Porter notes that one of the most important differences between the acquired and the infused cardinal virtues is precisely that the latter, unlike the former, can truly be possessed even by those who consistently experience some difficulty in exercising them. (Ibid., 530)

²²² Porter observes that not all of moral failures are of the same kind. She believes that Aquinas would allow for the virtuous individual to have *some* difficulty in exercising infused virtues because of a possessed moral weakness, however, she also claims that Thomas would refuse to call someone virtuous if the moral weakness was too great as to consistently pervert one's conception of moral good. This is precisely what seems to be the problem with King's case. It is not necessarily that his consistent acts of extramarital affairs were mortal sins and therefore deprived him of infused virtues (as perhaps King's behavior was a manifestation of some psychological difficulty for which he was not finally culpable), but that his actions seriously impeded his capacity to develop and use practical wisdom as fit for the virtuous person. As Porter explains, "even if this flaw [i.e., inordinate desire for women] is not culpable, because it stems from some psychological difficulty for which the agent is not responsible, it will still skew the person's feelings and judgments in such a way as to distort the operations of the practical intellect, the will, and the passions." Ibid., 532.

²²³ Ibid., 533.

motivates the person to pursue better life. According to Annas, many ethicists struggle with the idea of the unity of virtues precisely because "modern discussions of virtue tend to stay at the level of realistic description."²²⁴ Instead, one should become comfortable with the notion of the fully virtuous person, which functions as a normative ideal even if rarely met in real life.²²⁵ Furthermore, Annas argues that people do it all the time in many modern theories:

We begin by looking for the conditions for being a moral agent, understanding this is something which actual people sometimes achieve. But as the theory progresses, we find that these conditions are so demanding that no actual people are moral agents. This is not a fault in itself; if we clearly recognized a moral ideal for what it is, we can clearly see its force and appeal.²²⁶

Finally, echoing Porter's previous comments, the ideal of a fully virtuous person does not imply that there is no room for growth in moral virtues or that an agent must attain perfection in all the virtues otherwise he cannot be really virtuous. The discussion of different degrees in virtue will certainly not go away with the basic claim of the unity thesis (having one virtue implies having all of them), but it will certainly help to illumine present discussion, and hopefully, make an ideal come closer to real life.

Certainly, neither Aristotle nor Aquinas subscribe to the extremely restrictive view of unity among virtues, namely, that the person is not virtuous to any degree until she reached the summit of his moral potential.²²⁷ This position has been generally associated with the early Stoics. Already ancient authors noted that while the Peripatetics believed that there is some sort of middle ground between virtue and vice, the Stoics believed there is nothing between the two.²²⁸ The following metaphor might be useful to understand the Stoic position:

²²⁴ Annas, *The Morality*, 83.

²²⁵ One is reminded of the life of the saints, many of which the Church calls the examples of "heroic virtue." Cf. *ST I-II*.61.4. It should also be noted that the modern dismissal of the unity thesis on account of human inability to acquire virtues implies a rather gloomy view of human nature a being incapable of achieving moral ideal.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

²²⁷ Kim, 149.

²²⁸ Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae* 7.127.

For just as those who are submerged in the ocean cannot breathe, whether they are so close to the surface that they are just about to emerge or they are down deep... so too whoever is making little progress toward the habit of virtue is no less in misery than one who has not progressed at all.²²⁹

Of course, the Stoics had their reasons for upholding such a view but I do not need to deal with these now.²³⁰ What should be of concern, rather, is that for the Stoics, one either has virtue in its perfect state or does not have it at all. Hence, Kim calls it the "capped off" virtue.²³¹ Just by looking at the Stoics, then, one sees how the unity thesis, as advocated by Aristotle and Aquinas, is *less* idealistic than it has been previously thought. Consider, for instance, the following passage from the *De Virtutibus*, where Aquinas insists that there are different degrees of completeness with respect to particular virtues:

The character of virtue does not consist in being the best of its kind in itself, but with reference to its object. For it is through virtue that someone is ordered towards the upper limit of his capacity, that is towards doing things well. That is why Aristotle says that virtue is the tendency of something complete towards what is best. However, someone can be more disposed or less disposed towards what is best; accordingly, he has virtue to a greater or lesser degree.²³²

Aquinas clearly admits the possibility of having genuine virtues without claiming the need for hitting "the upper limit of the capacity" at all times. In a later *ad contra*, he will add that "nothing prevents something from being complete with respect to virtue, and then being completed still further,"²³³ which implies that one can be considered virtuous already but not yet to the fullest of agent's capacity. In this light, Porter was right to suggest that a flawed saint can be virtuous as long as his flaws are not too serious. Russell seems to express the same point when he speaks of virtues being the "*satis* concepts":

²²⁹ Cicero, *De finibus* 3.14.48.

²³⁰ According to John Rist, the Stoics did not want to risk the distortion of their concept of moral goodness. Cf. John M. Rist, *The Stoics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 84.

²³¹ Kim, "Progress in the Good: A Defense of the Thomistic Unity Thesis," 149.

²³² *De virtut. comm.* a. 11 ad. 15.

²³³ *De virtut. comm.* a. 11 ad. 18.

Some concepts, like virtue, are such that something can be F by being F enough... We can call these concepts "satis concepts," *satis* being the Latin word for "enough"... Satis concepts are such that there are degrees of F-ness among F things, and so since something need not be "absolutely" F to be F, something can be F by being "F enough."²³⁴

Of course, the problem lies in locating the point of boundary. After all, at one point one must say that something ceases to become "virtuous enough." A few helpful quotes from Aquinas's works have been noted by Kim.

For example, one might get additional insight from Thomas's discussion of the concept of completeness, where he suggests that something can be complete in three senses. First, something is "complete simply speaking," when something is complete in all respects and lacking nothing of completeness. Second, something might be "complete in relation to the thing's nature," and the thing does not lack anything that is naturally possessed by it. Finally, something is "complete in relation to a stage of time," if the thing possesses everything that is naturally possessed at the proper stage.²³⁵ Particularly helpful to the problem of moral progress are the last two because what Aquinas seems to suggest here is that the completeness of one's virtues entails inclusion of one's natural situation. To give an example: to say that a person's intelligence is complete does not entail that he understands *everything* but only the things proper to his nature as human.²³⁶ Similarly, to say that child's virtue of courage is complete does not entail fullness of virtue as found in a Spartan soldier, but the degree of virtue appropriate to the child's age. When Aquinas speaks of moral progress in theological virtue of charity, he uses the analogy from biology and human growth: the same way one goes through different stages in life from infancy, through adolescence to an elderly age, one grows in love that increases in the person by his ongoing cooperation with grace.²³⁷ Elsewhere, Aquinas would point out that "virtues grow proportionately as the fingers of the hand," which, besides an

²³⁴ Russell, *Practical Intelligence and Virtue*, 113.

²³⁵ *De frat*, a. 10.

²³⁶ Kim, "Progress in the Good: A Defense of the Thomistic Unity Thesis," 170.

²³⁷ *ST* II-II, 24, 9.

obvious point that virtues are acquired in conjunction, seems to imply that the virtues also differ in degree (as person's fingers are uneven). When and how exactly does it happen that one's behavior becomes virtuous and then reaches the next degrees of virtue is hard to pinpoint, just as it is difficult to say when exactly does the teenager become an adult.

There is no point to inquire further about the nature of moral progress in virtue. The goal for the present investigation was to simply show that those who claim that the unity thesis is wrong on account of its inherent idealism, does not really present a serious threat to the way Aristotle and Aquinas understand the relationship among virtues. First, because even though having all virtues is quite a challenging task, one's failure to achieve it is insufficient to dismiss the whole thesis as false, and second, because the acquisition of one virtue does not imply that all other virtues are obtained to the same degree but only to the degree needed to live out a morally good life. The following points should be enough to offer substantial response in defense of the unity thesis and, consequently, to conclude the present examination of the role of prudence in the Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue ethics.

4. Virtues and Emotions

After discussing the nature and the central role of prudence, I will now proceed to examine the fourth key element in Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue theory, namely, the affective side of virtue. In the previous discussion of habit, I mentioned that a truly virtuous agent does not only do the right thing by judging correctly about things to be done, but also feels the right way. An act of generosity deprived of joy is not yet virtuous. This is because virtue, according to Aristotle and Aquinas, affects the totality of one's personhood; habituation informed by prudence extends to all

faculties of human nature involving man's intellect, will, and emotions.²³⁸ As one commentator said, "virtue is a state of the agent's character and emotions, not merely disposition to act in certain ways."²³⁹ While approaching the topic at hand, one should be aware of its complexity and the overwhelming amount of literature.²⁴⁰ However, given the important role of emotions to the life of virtue, the study will nonetheless need to examine at least the two of the following points. First, it will have to show that Aristotle and Aquinas have a *positive* attitude towards emotions. Second, it will need to explain the relationship between emotions and virtue.

4.1. *The Positive Attitude toward Emotions*

Aristotle's positive attitude toward emotions, which was later appropriated by Aquinas, can be easily shown by contrasting his views with the view held by the Stoics. While in the Aristotelian ethics an agent acts virtuously when he acts rightly and with the right amount of appropriate feelings, for the Stoics, virtue requires *apatheia*, an absence of feelings.²⁴¹ On the Stoic view, human emotions are often disruptive to the proper exercise of reason, therefore, virtue demands their

²³⁸ NE 1106b 20-26; ST I-II 50.3 ad 1.

²³⁹ Annas, *The Morality*, 55.

²⁴⁰ See, for example, Peter King, "Aquinas on the Passions," in *Aquinas's Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 101-132; Diana Fritz Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2009). D. Konstan, *The Emotions of the Ancient Greeks* (Studies in Aristotle and Classical Literature: Toronto, 2006); Claudia Eisen Murphy, "Aquinas on Responsibility for Our Emotions," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 8 (1999): 163-205; Paul Gondreau, *The Passions of Christ's Soul in the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Münster: Aschendorff, 2002); Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae 2a2ae 22-48* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Nicholas E. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, D. C: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011); Simon G. Harak, *Virtuous Passions: The Formation of Christian Character* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993); William Mattison, "Examining the Role of the Emotions in the Moral Life" in *Theology and the Social Sciences*, ed. Michael H. Barnes (New York: Orbis Books, 2001): 277-292.

²⁴¹ This should not be understood in terms of being emotionless or deprived of any sensory impulses. *Apathes* denotes a person without *pathe*, that is *disordered* emotions not just *any* emotions. Cf. Russell, Daniel C. *Happiness for Humans* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 185.

elimination.²⁴² Consider the following quotation by Arius Didymus, the Stoic philosopher and teacher of Augustus, who describes the way Stoics understand feelings:

A feeling, they say, is an impulse which is excessive and disobedient to reason which is choosing; or, an irrational movement in the soul contrary to nature...; Hence every upset is a feeling, and again every feeling is an upset... Irrational and contrary to nature are not used in their general sense; irrational is equivalent to disobedient to reason and contrary to nature is understood in a sketch of feeling as something happening contrary to the reason which is correct and according to nature.²⁴³

This negative approach to emotions, according to Annas, has to do with the emphasis that the Stoics put on the cognitive side of virtue.²⁴⁴ One perhaps recalls that for the Stoics the true good is "what is complete according to nature for a rational being as rational being"²⁴⁵ Thus, the perfection of man is nothing but a perfection of reason achieved through virtue. Virtue is what makes one ultimately happy.²⁴⁶ Now, emotions are judgments of reason.²⁴⁷ For example, if one judges certain object to be fearful, he is afraid; but the moment one changes that belief and no longer perceives the object as fearful, he stops being afraid.²⁴⁸ The problem with emotions is that because of them people attach moral value to the things which do not have it; they care about things that are not virtues, and therefore, not conducive to their happiness. Put it differently, feelings are false judgments about reality, a set of cognitive mistakes.²⁴⁹ If this is the case, then emotions have little importance to one's

²⁴² Seneca also notes that emotions are useless because the virtuous person acts just because of discerning what is the right thing to do not because he feels the right way. Cf. *On Anger*, I, 12.

²⁴³ Arius Didymus, in Stobaeus, *Eclogae (Selections)*, Book II, 88.8-89.16. At the same time, one has to be careful not to rush into conclusion that all emotions are disordered according to the Stoics. Russell remarks that a person's emotional life can be a good thing because some emotions, such as joy, good spirits, confidence, and wish, participate in virtue. The Stoics distinguished *eupatheiai*, that is, "good affections" participating in virtue, from *pathe*, that is, "passions" denoting disordered affections exclusive to virtue. (Russell, *Happiness for Humans*, 184).

²⁴⁴ Annas, *The Morality*, 60

²⁴⁵ Cicero, *De Finibus*, 3.33.

²⁴⁶ "One's aim, the Stoics say, it's being happy, for the sake of which everything is done, well it is not done for the sake of anything further; and this consists in living according to virtue, in living in agreement and further (it is the same thing) living according to nature." (Arius, 77.16-19).

²⁴⁷ Seneca, *On Anger* II.4; See also, Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 29-31; Annas, *The Morality*, 62.

²⁴⁸ Annas, *The Morality*, 63.

²⁴⁹ Accordingly, disordered emotions are simply cognitive mistakes. Cf. Russell, *Happiness for Humans*, 185.

moral life, certainly, they are accidental to the Stoic concept of happiness. Only vice, which is the corruption of reason, can make one miserable, everything else, is indifferent:

Goods, therefore, are the virtues... evils are the opposites... Neither are things which neither benefit nor harm, e.g., life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, good reputation, natural nobility; also their opposites – death, disease, annoyance, ugliness, weakness, poverty, obscurity, natural baseness and the like... For these things are not goods, but indifferents preferred according to kind.²⁵⁰

This, of course, is very different from what is found in Aristotle. Not only do the Peripatetics believe that happiness of man is greatly influenced by external goods, such as wealth or health,²⁵¹ but they hold that emotions are *essential* for the possession of authentic virtue. For the sake of brevity, I will focus on the point at hand, without being unaware, however, of the structural differences between Aristotle's and Stoics' understanding of emotions.²⁵²

First, Aristotle believes that emotions are integral part of human nature and one cannot simply eliminate them from one's life.²⁵³ Man possesses *both* rational and irrational part of the soul.

²⁵⁰ Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Philosophers*, 7.102-103. The Stoic position is often expressed through the famous analogy of a wise man, who though being tortured on a rack remains happy on the account of his virtue. Cf. Cicero, *De Finibus* 3.13.42. Once again, an important caveat needs to be kept in mind: the Stoics believe that only virtue is good, but they do not deny that it is reasonable to pursue other goods such as health or wealth.

²⁵¹ As indicated earlier, there is a clear tension in Aristotle's work on this point. On the one hand, Aristotle goes to great pains to show that external goods matter to the virtuous person and to human happiness in general. On the other hand, he seems to hold that loss of external goods cannot make the virtuous person truly unhappy. It is interesting to see how the latter view could possibly reconcile Aristotle's account with that of the Stoics. Cf. NE 1100b 22-1101a8.

²⁵² I am indebted to Russell for pointing out that the differences between the two accounts run deeper than is often thought. Russell observes that on the Stoic view, the good affections *eupatheiai* are not simply alterations or modifications of the bad affections *pathe*. Rather, these are two different emotions, so different that they are distinguished by a different name, which is meant to indicate that the virtuous and vicious person have radically different emotional lives. The Stoic account of emotions, then, stands in a visible contrast to Aristotle who held that emotions are mostly neutral and depending on their relationship to reason are good or bad, but essentially and structurally the same. As the example, Russell uses Aristotle's account of anger, saying that anger can be found in both even-tempered and hot-headed people; the difference is based on an agent's ability to hit the right "mean" between deficiency and excess, but not in the structure of the emotion itself. Russell seems to prefer the Stoic approach as he criticizes the Aristotelian account for allowing "the mistaken and unreasonable attitude to have in a better or worse way" (Russell, *Happiness for Humans*, 186). I disagree with this criticism on many grounds, the primary one being an apparent difficulty in explaining one's transition from vice to virtue. Nevertheless, I am grateful to Russell for pointing out the structural difference between the two accounts.

²⁵³ Nancy Sherman notes that Aristotle's description of emotions in *Nicomachean Ethics* is surprisingly rudimentary. The only explicit reference concerns the connection of particular emotions (anger, fear, confidence) to pleasure and pain. A much better source of Aristotle's theory of emotion, suggests Sherman, is Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, in particular Book II. Because my goal for the present section is not to conduct a systematic exposition of Aristotle's concept of human affectivity, I will limit myself to the most relevant points from *Nicomachean Ethics*. Cf. Nancy Sherman, *Making a Necessity of Virtue: Aristotle and Kant on Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 52-99.

In the irrational part, there is an element which does not participate in reason. This element is the vegetative element of the soul, which being common to all animals, "causes nutrition and growth."²⁵⁴

The other element shares in reason "in a sense":

For we praise the reason of the continent man and of the incontinent, and the part of their soul that has reason, since it urges them aright and towards the best objects; but there is found in them also another natural element beside reason, which fights against and resists it.²⁵⁵

This "natural element beside reason" is, of course, human affectivity. It often rebels against the command of reason, but Aristotle would never go as far as to say that emotions are, therefore, always bad.²⁵⁶ In fact, he distinguishes the vegetative element from the appetitive precisely on the account of the latter's capacity for cooperation with reason. Although emotions often rebel against what is discerned by reason, Aristotle takes a much more optimistic view than do the Stoics: human emotions are not only capable of being properly ordered by reason but through virtue may become "the same voice as reason":

Now even this seems to have a share in reason, as we said; at any rate in the continent man it obeys reason – and presumably in the temperate and brave man it is still more obedient; for in him it speaks, on all matters, with the same voice as reason.²⁵⁷

One more point deserves a mention. While with the Stoics the virtuous person does not need feelings to be motivated to pursue what is just, for Aristotle, person's affectivity plays an important motivational role. Aristotle is explicit in identifying the second irrational element of the soul with that which is "appetitive and in general desiring element" in men.²⁵⁸ Accordingly, the Peripatetics believe that emotional appeal is necessary to motivate humans to good actions.²⁵⁹ "The intellect of itself moves nothing," argues famously Aristotle, pointing to the important role human

²⁵⁴ NE 1102a 34-36.

²⁵⁵ NE 1102b 14-17.

²⁵⁶ Except for envy and spite, which, for Aristotle, "can play no part in a virtuous character." Cf. NE 1107a8-10.

²⁵⁷ NE 1102b25-28.

²⁵⁸ NE 1102b31.

²⁵⁹ Richard L. Johannesen, Kathleen S. Valde, and Karen E. Whedbee, *Ethics in Human Communication* (Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2008), 36.

affectivity in the overall theory of action.²⁶⁰ One can now see the inherent connection between prudence and affective side of virtue:

Desire is always what moves us; thought never moves us without desire. Therefore, Aristotle explains, deliberate choice (*phronesis*) requires a conjunction of desire and reason into "desiring thought" or "thinking desire."²⁶¹

Arguments are important in ethics, but as Annas remarks "on their own they do not make people virtuous; changes in ethical belief have to become rooted in one's emotional life."²⁶² In sum, on Aristotle's view, feelings are not only *perfective* of action, but *essential* to their very existence.

Aquinas, like Aristotle, rejects the idea that virtue eliminates passion.²⁶³ Contrary to the Stoic claim, human emotions are not "diseases or disturbances of the soul,"²⁶⁴ but psychic motors driving people towards the *telos* of their human flourishing.²⁶⁵ Even in humanity's fallen condition, Aquinas believes that passions are fundamentally oriented towards human flourishing:²⁶⁶ not in a sense that they always reliably direct one towards the proper *telos*, but because they are indispensable for the very existence of *telos*. As Lombardo explains,

The function of the passions is not to decide upon a course of action; the function of the passions is to respond to stimuli and prompt the human person to act according to the face value of those stimuli. Then the passions deferred to the judgment of reason, because only the rational appetite can command human action, and because the sense appetite naturally tends towards conformity with reason.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁰ NE 1139a-36-b6.

²⁶¹ Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, and Jeffrey Paul, *Natural Law and Modern Moral Philosophy* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13.

²⁶² Annas, *The Morality*, 54. See also NE 1179b23-31.

²⁶³ ST I-II 24.2. According to Lombardo, Aquinas distances himself from the Stoic view of the passions as intrinsically disordered in favor of the more positive Aristotelian view of the passions as good or evil depending on guidance of reason. Nicholas E. Lombardo, O.P., *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 40.

²⁶⁴ ST I-II 24.2.

²⁶⁵ Lombardo, 40. The author notes that the very placement of the *Treaties on the Passions* shortly after questions 1 to 5 of the *Prima Secundae*, in which happiness is laid out at the end of all human action, manifest the centrality of the passions to human flourishing in Aquinas's anthropology.

²⁶⁶ At numerous occasions, Aquinas affirms that passions, despite original sin and the loss of original justice, are fundamentally inclined to obey reason, and so by extension, to pursue human flourishing. See ST I 95.2; ST I-II 50.3.3; 56.4; ST III 18.2.

²⁶⁷ Lombardo, 41. For Lombardo, the idea that passions in their inner structure tend toward the guidance of reason is central to Aquinas's account and one of its most fascinating features.

Virtue and passions are therefore inextricably connected: on the one hand, passions are essential to the life of virtue as without them one would not be able to respond to the sensible objects, and, therefore, would not be able to move the will towards the ultimate *telos*. On the other hand, passions are in need of virtues for only under the guidance of reason can emotions reliably lead one to happiness. Aquinas describes this mutuality in the following passage:

The moral virtues that are concerned with the passions as their proper matter cannot exist without them. The reason for this is that otherwise it would follow that moral virtue would make the sense appetite indifferent to everything. But virtue does not consist in the passions being subject to reason, apart from their own proper acts, but rather in the passions executing the command of reason through their own proper acts.²⁶⁸

This brings me to the next question: just how exactly does the reason direct one's passions to pursue good ends? One has seen that both Aristotle and Aquinas believe that passions possess certain autonomy in that they can at times oppose reason.²⁶⁹ If virtue does not eradicate passions, how is it possible that man's emotional responses remain in agreement with the judgment of reason?²⁷⁰

4.2. *The Relationship between the Virtues and Emotions*

One possibility would be to argue that feelings are simply obstacles to the proper exercise of reason and a hindrance to virtues. On this reading, reason strives towards the elimination of passions all together (Stoics) or their total subjection (Bonaventure, Kant) to its despotic rule.²⁷¹ But

²⁶⁸ *STI-II* 59.5.

²⁶⁹ *NE* 1102b14-17; *STI-II* 56.4.3.

²⁷⁰ This is the crux of the discussion on virtue and passion in traditional virtue ethics.

²⁷¹ Bonaventure's position on the relationship between reason and passions still awaits systematic treatment. For instance, Lombardo would go as far as to say that for Bonaventure, "their [i.e., passions'] independent dynamism is an inherent threat to virtue" (Lombardo, 100-101), while others, like Kent would offer a more generous interpretation saying that Bonaventure's position is more ambiguous that it is commonly thought. Cf. Bonnie D. Kent, *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 214. From my own study of Bonaventure's writings I am inclined to argue that the medieval theologian does not give much independence to the sense appetite and indeed envisions the reason to rule the passions in the way a despotic ruler governs oppressed people. In one of the passages from the *Commentaries*, Bonaventure writes: "*Alia vero est irascibilis et concupiscibilis sensibilis, quae solummodo dicitur rationalis, quia obtemperat rationi. Et in his non consistit libertas arbitrii nec in his sicut*

both options, as I said, are at best unsatisfactory: the former poses an impossible demand to eradicate a significant part of one's affective life, while the latter suggests an inherent depravity of it. Aquinas, therefore, decides to find the "middle ground": he upholds the idea that the passions operate independently of reason but are nonetheless inclined to obey it.²⁷² He follows the intuition of Aristotle, and explains his position on this point by applying the famous metaphor of the political rule:

Rule is despotic when someone rules slaves who cannot resist his mastery, because they have nothing of their own. Rule is political and regal, however, when someone rules the free: those who are subject to being governed by ruler, but nonetheless have something of their own... In this way, therefore, the soul is set to govern the body with despotic rule. For the members of the body cannot in any way resist the mastery of the soul... But intellect or reason is said to govern the irascible and concupiscible powers with political rule, because the sense appetite has something of its own, and therefore can resist the mastery of reason... [but] the fact that the irascible and concupiscible powers resist reason in something does not mean that they do not obey it.²⁷³

It is precisely because Aquinas believes that the sense appetite is responsive to reason, that one's feelings are capable of being properly shaped by virtue: "Virtue in the irascible and concupiscible powers is nothing other than a certain habitual conformity of these powers to reason."²⁷⁴

Accordingly, passion is not just tamed by virtue; "ordinate passion helps the execution of reason's command and thus positively assists the performance of virtuous acts."²⁷⁵

What I have tried to show in this brief analysis was that both Aristotle and Aquinas hold a very positive view of human affectivity. On their account, emotions are not only perfective of the

in subiecto ponitur virtus cardinalis..." *In III Sent.*, d. 33, a.1, q.3. [The other one is the irascible and concupiscible power, which is said to be rational as long as it conforms to reason. In it, there is no freedom nor there can be posited a cardinal virtue, as a subject.] However, I disagree with Lombardo on that Bonaventure sees passions as inherently threatening to the life of virtue and in this way I am more inclined to follow Kent's interpretation. I do not think there is any evidence in Bonaventure's *Commentaries* showing that the passions are a hindrance to virtue. Bonaventure's primary point of the discussion is to deny the possibility of placing virtues in the lower part of the soul which only proves that the passions have no essential role in acquiring virtue. Furthermore, Bonaventure asserts that the irascible and concupiscible powers actually benefit from every virtuous act and thus do not hinder it. Cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 33, a.1.

²⁷² Lombardo, 100.

²⁷³ *ST* 81.1.2. Cf. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1254b5.

²⁷⁴ *ST* I-II 56.4; *ST* I-II 50.3.1.

²⁷⁵ Lombardo, 105. Cf. *ST* I-II 59.2.3

life of virtue but essential for man's pursuit of happiness. This positive approach to the emotional aspect of human experience is truly characteristic of the traditional virtue ethics, and as one shall see, very dear to Wojtyła/John Paul II's thought.

5. Virtues and Grace

The last key element in the specifically Thomistic virtue ethics is, of course, grace. Grace plays an essential role in the life of virtue, and, as I said earlier, it is indispensable for the attainment of man's final end, the communion with God. Because the question of grace and virtue is of itself topic worthy of another dissertation, the study will only consider the nature of theological virtues and the distinction between acquired and infused virtues. These should provide one with a basic understanding of the dynamic relationship existing between virtues and grace.

5.1. Theological Virtues

The prime example of grace being operative in shaping of a virtuous character is the three theological virtues of hope, faith, and charity. Even though Aquinas says that all virtues are ultimately ordered to one final end, man's communion with God, theological virtues are special in that they have God as their *direct* object and God as their *source*.²⁷⁶ Other virtues have God as their object but only *indirectly*. For instance, the immediate object of the virtue of temperance is bodily desire for food and only indirectly the communion with God. Theological virtues are also unique in that they are gifts from God and are therefore acquired independently of human effort (although such effort is required to habituate and develop them). To use Aquinas' own words, "because of them, *God* makes us virtuous, and directs us to Himself."²⁷⁷ Faith, hope, and charity, are also

²⁷⁶ *ST* I-II 62.2; *ST* II-II 17.6.

²⁷⁷ *ST* I-II 62.1.2. Emphasis mine.

distinguished by their role in moral life: theological virtues function as the roots of all other virtues, and as such provide the fundamental source of motivation for one's life.²⁷⁸ As DeYoung explains,

Given to us directly by God – in Aquinas's terms "infused" by the grace of the Holy Spirit – the theological virtues expand our natural capacities and inclinations and direct us to a supernatural end, an end *above* our nature, which will could not apprehend or achieve with our own natural power.²⁷⁹

Although all three are essential to the pursuit of the final end, Aquinas clearly assigns charity the premier role in directing all other virtues to God. This is because charity in the most perfect way disposes man towards the Divine:

Charity, because it orders human beings to their ultimate end, is the principle of all the good works that can be ordered to the ultimate end. For that reason, all the moral virtues must be infused together with charity, since it is true then that they accomplish each different kind of good work.²⁸⁰

This is interesting in light of the previous discussion on the role of prudence and Aquinas's own belief that cardinal virtues can also be infused by God's grace: if charity is what orders human beings to their ultimate end, what is the role of infused prudence? Renee Mirkes, in one of his articles, suggests that the infused virtue of prudence is able to judge correctly regarding the supernatural end only by means of the direction of charity, but this does not have to mean that the role of infused prudence is somehow diminished:

Prudence maintains its command of the other moral virtues in the supernatural plane; charity informs prudence directly and, through prudence, the other infused moral virtues. In one sense, then, charity and prudence connect the infused moral virtues, but charity is their ultimate bond because all the divine virtues are directed to the end of charity.²⁸¹

In this sense, charity and other virtues are like two principles, one higher and one lower, which are ordered to one another in the way that the higher principle is formal, while the lower principle is

²⁷⁸ *ST I-II* 63.3.

²⁷⁹ DeYoung, 142. Original emphasis.

²⁸⁰ *ST I-II* 65.3.

²⁸¹ Renee Mirkes, "Aquinas on the Unity of Perfect Moral Virtue" *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 71 (1997): 599.

material.²⁸² But if charity and other theological virtues direct men to their final end, why would anyone need *other* infused virtues?

5.2. *Acquired vs. Infused Virtues*

As DeYoung points out, Aquinas could have easily stopped at the level of theological virtues: "Rather than leaving the influence of grace neatly relegated to the theological virtues, Aquinas, argues that all the cardinal virtues-indeed, the whole range of moral virtues-have an infused form."²⁸³ To the question as to why there is a need in men's lives for other infused virtues, Aquinas replies:

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.²⁸⁴

In other words, infused moral virtues are oriented toward union with God, but they do not have God as their intentional object.²⁸⁵ In a sense, they are similar to the theological virtues in that they are created in the soul by the direct action of God.²⁸⁶ They are nonetheless different in that their object is not God himself, but certain perfection of the human power. In this aspect, they are closer to the acquired virtues, and, in fact, they often parallel their acquired counterparts.²⁸⁷ For example,

²⁸² Mirkes, 597.

²⁸³ DeYoung, 143.

²⁸⁴ *ST* I-II 63.3.2.

²⁸⁵ Lombardo, 127.

²⁸⁶ *ST* I-II 63.2. Aquinas is clear that all infused virtues (including theological virtues) are given to men by God and so are caused in them "without any action of ours." But men can decide to reject God's gifts at any time and choose to live without infused virtues. In this sense, infusion of moral virtues through grace never infringes upon human freedom, and in some way *is* dependent on human agency. Cf. *ST* I-II 55.4.6.

²⁸⁷ This is a highly disputed issue among the scholars. While clearly distinguishing between acquired and infused virtues, Aquinas never fully explains what happens to acquired virtues after receiving the infused form.

According to one group of scholars, acquired virtues somehow coexist with their infused counterparts; at the moment of conversion, acquired virtues remain in the person, even if the corresponding infused virtues are also now operative. This is based on Aquinas's claim from *ST* III 89.1.3., according to which, the loss of infused virtues does not imply the loss of acquired virtues which pre-existed in the person before the reception of grace. For the proponents of this position, also known as the "coexistence" theory, see: Angela McKay Knobel, "Can Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Life," *Studies in Christian Ethics* 23 no. 4 (2010): 382; Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 87-88; Michael Sherwin, "Infused Virtue and

both infused and acquired prudence perfect the same faculty of practical reasoning, though in a different manner: "For just as the acquired virtues perfect man to walk in accord with the natural light of reason, so the infused virtues perfect man to walk in accord with the light of grace."²⁸⁸ Thus, on the outside, an act of acquired virtue often appears identical to an act of infused virtue. The two, however, are markedly different:

Although the act of an acquired and infused virtue remain identical when looked at from the point of view of the physical action itself, still they are not when considered from the point of view of their actual forms... Thus, something judged excessive by one standard could actually become virtuous according to another standard. Take, for example, the case of the one who fasts and even willingly risks death on account of the defense of the faith.²⁸⁹

One might be temperate in reference to food and abstain from eating meat in order to stay healthy. But one may also refrain from eating meat on account of his desire to deny himself in order to become more closely united with Christ in his suffering. In both instances the activity remains the same, not eating meat, but for the believer, fasting involves something altogether new and different.²⁹⁰ Similarly, a Greek soldier who dies on the battlefield for the sake of his country is said to possess an acquired virtue of courage, but a Christian who dies for the sake of Christ, is said to possess an infused virtue of courage.²⁹¹ Materially an act remains the same but formally, it is markedly different: "the new 'form' which the infused virtue puts in the believer amounts to a real

the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtues" *The Thomist* 73, no. 1 (2009): 49.

According to the other group of scholars, at the moment of conversion, acquired virtues become either taken up or transformed into infused virtues. This view assumes that there is a continuity of the human personality before and after the reception of grace. It also asserts that having two sets of virtues, acquired and infused, would result in a compartmentalized psychology as the person performing the same activity would act on account of two distinct rules, the rule of human reason and the Divine rule. This position, which can be called a "transformation" theory, is also well represented by scholars today. See, for example: William C. Mattison, "Can Christians Possess the Acquired Cardinal Virtues?" *Theological Studies* 72, no. 3 (2011): 567; Servais Pinckaers, "The Place of Philosophy in Moral Theology," in *The Pinckaers' Reader*, ed. John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 67; John Inglis, "Aquinas's Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues" *Journal of Religious Ethics* 22 (2002):19; Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame Press, 1994), 343.

²⁸⁸ *ST I-II* 110.3.

²⁸⁹ In *III Sententiarum* d.33 q.1 a.2 quaestiuncula 4, ad 2.

²⁹⁰ Cessario, 106. Cf. *ST I-II* 63.4.

²⁹¹ *ST II-II* 123.5

participation in the *imitatio Christi*."²⁹²

What this means is that infused virtues do not simply constitute "superfluous extras" to acquired virtues. As Cessario indicates, "particular shape or 'form' which the infused virtues give to one who lives by faith amounts to more than just a new motive."²⁹³ Many theologians, most famously Aquinas' contemporary, Duns Scotus, would argue that infused virtues are in fact unnecessary multiplication of virtues.²⁹⁴ All that is operative in a virtuous agent are acquired virtues informed by theological virtues of faith, hope, and most notably, charity, which specifies a particular end in light of man's ultimate happiness with God. Thus, a person who fasts simply adds another "supernatural motive" to an already existing habit of abstaining from food. But this, according to Cessario, is to misunderstand the role of charity:

The scholastics theologians, with a precision characteristic of their trade, describe this effect of charity on a believer's moral life as a change *quoad modum tendendi in finem supernaturalem*. To put it differently, charity affects the direction, but not the substance, of an action whereby the believer reaches out towards God. Charity, then, affects the doers intention-in the strong sense of substantial purpose, not the weak sense of sporadic motive. Charity cannot account for why one act of abstinence embodies an intrinsic difference not found in another act of abstinence... Accordingly, only a distinctive virtue, the infused virtue of abstinence, can fully account for the total reality caused in the believer by the working of the Holy Spirit.²⁹⁵

At the same time, if one granted that fasting is a distinct virtue, a form of an infused virtue of abstinence, how does it relate to an already existing habit of abstinence within an agent? For on the one hand, the two kinds of virtue make up what in reality constitutes one single act in that the motive and end of acquired moral virtue is included within the material component of the motive

²⁹² Cessario, 112. I chose Cessario as a guide in exploring the relationship between acquired and infused virtues because he seems to balance the two interpretations mentioned earlier. On the one hand, he asserts that grace significantly changes the character of pre-existing acquired habits, on the other, he refuses to say that the acquired virtues are simply subsumed by their infused counterparts. Cessario does not resolve the tension that exists in between the two sets of virtues but then does not the tension remain unresolved in Aquinas's own writings? Cf. Cessario, 99-125.

²⁹³ Cessario, 111.

²⁹⁴ "Although many things are said about these infused moral virtues, in particular, that they are necessary on account of a supernatural mode, meaning, and end, in fact there seems no reason to hold for infused moral virtues, rather than the acquired virtues suffice. Why? First, because any end, not already provided for in nature, can be adequately supplied as a result of the inclination of charity. Secondly, because infused faith supplies the required mode and meeting for virtues." *Questiones in III Librum Sententiarum* d. 36, no. 28. quoted in Cessario, 103.

²⁹⁵ Cessario, 107.

and end of infused moral virtues.²⁹⁶ On the other hand, it seems that infused and acquired virtue operate on different levels, so that the loss of one does not imply the loss of the other, as in a famous case of an alcoholic who being in the state of grace and possessing the infused virtue of temperance may nonetheless lack its acquired counterpart.²⁹⁷ Furthermore, it seems that infused virtues lack the facility and ease characteristic to all virtues. Aquinas says explicitly that an infused virtue enables one to act well *despite* the influence of disordered passions.²⁹⁸ This could suggest that infused and acquired virtues are really more distant to each other one might think, which is hard to reconcile keeping in mind that they perfect one and the same power within the man (as mentioned earlier with the example of prudence).²⁹⁹ There are still other problems in Aquinas's treatment of infused and acquired virtues,³⁰⁰ which makes me conclude after Knobel that “aside from insisting that the infused virtues exist, that they are the only ‘true’ virtues, and that they differ in important ways from their acquired counterparts, Aquinas says very little about how the infused and acquired virtues are related.”³⁰¹

²⁹⁶ Mirkes, 599.

²⁹⁷ *ST* III 89.1.3. This question has been posed by Bonnie Kent in *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995), 32-33. For a concise discussion of this controversy, see Lombardo, 133-138.

²⁹⁸ *ST* I-II 63.2, 68.1.

²⁹⁹ For a good analysis of this issue, see Renee Mirkes, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Moral Virtue and Its Significance for Theories of Facility," *Thomist* 61 (1997): 189-218. For a more comprehensive study of the relationship between acquired and infused virtues in Aquinas's corpus, see Angela M. McKay, "The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas's Moral Philosophy" (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004).

³⁰⁰ Lombardo mentions two other controversies in connection with Thomistic categories of acquired and infused virtues. First, it is unclear just how much Aquinas writes about the infused virtues. His treatment of moral virtues in the *Secunda Secundae* often lacks a clear differentiation between acquired and infused virtues. Second, Thomas offers little guidance as to how one can grow in an infused virtue. While the acquired virtues are perfected by habituation made possible by human effort, infused virtues are gifts from God and so do not depend on men's activity. (Lombardo, 129-137).

³⁰¹ Angela McKay Knobel, "Relating Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues: Some Problematic Texts for a Common Interpretation," *Nova et Vetera*, English Edition, Vol. 9, No. 2 (2011): 430.

Conclusion

In summary, the investigation in the present chapter showed that to build a coherent system of ethics, rooted in the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue theory, would require that a due consideration is given to at least five essential themes. First, any virtue ethics is eudemonistic in character, and thus, some account of happiness must be given. The idea of the final end and its pursuit underlines an entire virtue theory and is indispensable for explaining the inner motivation behind desiring to be virtuous. Second, because every virtue is something stable and reliable, an adequate attention must be given to the concept of habit. This discussion is essential for understanding how virtues operate in an individual and what is gained (or lost) by developing habits. Third, no virtue ethics can really function without at least some account of practical reasoning and the virtue of prudence. While virtues are essential for developing a good moral character, prudence is what makes the work of virtues possible. The discussion of prudence is also key to explain how one grows in virtue and why virtues are interrelated in the life of a virtuous person. Fourth, virtues affect the totality of one's being, not only his intellect or will. Accordingly, for any virtue ethics to be complete, a proper consideration must be given to the relationship between virtues and passions. Hardly anyone today would think that emotions are something separate from the experience of happy life. Finally, as far as specifically Christian virtue ethics is concerned, one must account for the work of grace, which significantly transforms the shape and nature of human virtues. It would be omissive, to say at least, to discuss Christian vision of moral life without also showing how such virtues as charity or faith influence actions of the believer.

What also follows from the above summary is that all of the five elements (except for the last one which applies specifically to Christian life) are necessarily interconnected. For example, without a desire to be happy the pursuit of virtuous life seems pointless, while without virtues

happiness would be difficult to attain. Without developing prudence, virtues would be mindless habits, but without virtues, prudence would remain solely a virtue perfecting one's intellect.

Of course, the five key elements of the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue ethics, as identified in this chapter, do not exhaust the list of other concepts and ideas that can be judged important for developing virtue ethics along the lines of the thought of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas. For instance, essential for explaining why growing in virtue is a struggle would require a more systematic treatment of the Aristotelian concept of the weakness of will (*akrasia*) and the Thomistic doctrine of Original Sin. These ideas are often discussed by virtue ethicists and rightfully considered an important part of a virtue-centered approach to ethics.³⁰² One could also point to the role of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which, according to Pinsent, are “key to the new appreciation of Aquinas’s work.”³⁰³ However, it is this study’s contention that these and other concepts can fall under the five key elements listed above. For example, *akrasia* and the original sin could fit easily under the discussion of happiness (which requires an account of human nature), while the gifts of the Holy Spirit could fall under the question of grace (which would complement the discussion of infused virtues). Thus, perhaps not completely exhaustive in every sense, the five key elements of virtue ethics identified in this chapter constitute a comprehensive list of central themes of any virtue ethics bearing Aristotelian-Thomistic character. That being said, the study will now proceed to examine whether these elements can be found in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II.

³⁰² Cf. David Carr, “Virtue, Akrasia and Moral Weakness,” in *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education*, ed. David Carr and J. W. Steutel (London: Routledge, 1999): 143-157; Amelie Rorty, “Akrasia and pleasure: Nicomachean ethics book 7,” in *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics*, ed. Amelie Rorty (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980): 267-284; Terence Irwin, *The Development of Ethics: A Historical and Critical Study* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 628-653.

³⁰³ Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics Virtues and Gifts* (Florence: Taylor and Francis, 2013), xii.

Chapter Three: The Key Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work

Introduction

In an attempt to identify the key elements of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work, this section of the study will closely follow the structure set up in the previous chapter. Accordingly, the goal for the following inquiry will be to provide the most accurate and comprehensive description of Wojtyła/John Paul II's account of each of the five previously noted elements of virtue ethics. Although some immediate references to the thought of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas will be noted, the emphasis will remain on Wojtyła/John Paul II's own works.

Undoubtedly, the research material for the intended inquiry is substantial. According to many commentators, John Paul II alone was the most prolific writer of all the popes, who by his eighty-fourth birthday issued fourteen encyclicals, fourteen apostolic exhortations, eleven apostolic constitutions, forty-three apostolic letters and twenty-eight *motu proprio* – this is not to mention an abundant intellectual legacy of Karol Wojtyła, a renowned professor at KUL and later Cardinal of Kraków.¹ Accordingly, the analysis intended for this chapter will be based on the most relevant references and works, which are best suited for the presentation of a particular concept or problem at hand. It will show the continuity between the earlier works of Wojtyła and subsequent writings of John Paul II, which, at times, might be a challenge given that some concepts are better (or worse) developed depending on what motivated Wojtyła/John Paul II's intellectual interest at the particular time in his life and ministry.

¹ John Witte, and Frank S. Alexander, *The Teachings of Modern Roman Catholicism on Law, Politics, and Human Nature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 392; Joseph Durepos, *Go in Peace: A Gift of Enduring Love* (Chicago, IL: Loyola Press, 2003), xv. See Russell Shaw, "Pope John Paul II Biography" *Sunday Visitor* (October, 9, 2013). <https://www.osv.com/OSVNewsweekly/ByIssue/Article/TabId/735/ArtMID/13636/ArticleID/11439/Pope-John-Paul-II-Biography.aspx> [accessed July 10, 2016]

Furthermore, special attention will be given to language. Some of the relevant passages come from untranslated works of Wojtyła from the time he served as a faculty member at KUL. I will offer my own translations, which, however, are somewhat imperfect and in need of further verification by other scholars in the field. One must also take notice of change of tone and style, most notably in light of Wojtyła's appreciation of phenomenology and later elevation to papacy. A careful examination of Wojtyła/John Paul II's terminology will more than once prove itself essential for comprehensive understanding of discussed problem or concept.

Finally, unique to this chapter is a challenge to work off the material that lacks systematic treatment of the topic of virtues. Most references are scattered and disorganized throughout the vast number of sources. Wojtyła/John Paul II often *alludes* to certain characteristics of discussed concepts or *implies* what he believes is true, but direct and explicit references are generally rare. Thus, a substantial amount of work in this chapter will consist in finding and systematizing what Wojtyła/John Paul II *actually* says about a given idea, not infrequently by looking at broader context and searching for clues in other seemingly unrelated texts.

1. Happiness

Being one of the few scholars who explicitly address the question of happiness in Wojtyła/John Paul II writings, John Fitzgerald believes that the Polish philosopher and Pope “does not provide a detailed analysis of happiness as the fullness of good.”² He also observes that Wojtyła/John Paul II tends not to define the word “happiness” in terms of virtue.³ While one might

² John J. Fitzgerald, “Doing Good (or Evil) and Personal Fulfillment in the Thought of Abraham Joshua Heschel and Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II” (Ph.D. diss, The Catholic University of America, 2008), 19.

³ *Ibid.*, 26, footnote 53.

agree with Fitzgerald to some degree on the second claim,⁴ it is simply untrue that Wojtyła/John Paul II lacks any robust account of happiness. In fact, as it will be shown in the present analysis, teleological account of happiness underlies his entire ethical theory. To prove it, the study will examine Wojtyła's earlier writings, most notably the parts of untranslated work, *Elementarz Etyczny*, where he treats the question of happiness at length.⁵ It will also analyze John Paul II's later papal writings to show that Wojtyła/John Paul II held on to a consistent view of happiness throughout the entirety of his intellectual career.

1.1. Happiness and Human Nature

In an article devoted exclusively to the concept of human happiness, Wojtyła notes that the pursuit of happiness is something common to all people:

It is [the pursuit of happiness] something natural and therefore necessary: man cannot not desire happiness. He wants it all the time and in everything though not always naming the object of his desire... Desire for happiness does not lie on top of one's inclinations, certainly not on top of man's actions [...] no one can deny that in the depth of man's will it is constantly pulsing.⁶

Notice that for Wojtyła, desire for happiness is something *internal* to man. It flows out of his very nature, and serves him as an intrinsic principle of every action: “happiness is the goal of human nature.”⁷ Wojtyła's interpretation of happiness on this point closely resembles the traditional view of

⁴ I agree with Fitzgerald only in that Wojtyła/John Paul II does not *explicitly* define happiness in this way. Happiness and virtue, however, remain intrinsically connected in Wojtyła/John Paul II's ethics, as it will be shown later in the study.

⁵ *Elementarz Etyczny*, which best translates into English as *Introduction to Ethics*, or *Elementary Ethics*, is a series of twenty-one academic articles which Wojtyła published during his time at KUL. The title reflects the content of the series: the young professor from Kraków takes up in it the most basic elements of ethics, such as human nature, moral duty, pleasure, values, etc. The question of happiness is treated in the eleventh article, entitled “Właściwa Interpretacja Nauki o Szczęściu” (“The Correct Interpretation of the Teaching on Happiness”). Cf. Wojtyła, “Elementarz Etyczny” in *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał* (*So that Christ might work through us*). Kraków: Instytut Wydawniczy Znak, 1979. Hereafter quotations from *Elementarz Etyczny* will contain the title of the article and the page number where the article can be found in *Aby Chrystus się nami posługiwał*. All translation are mine, unless otherwise noted.

⁶ Wojtyła, “Właściwa Interpretacja Nauki o Szczęściu” (“The Correct Interpretation of the Teaching on Happiness”) in *Aby Chrystus*, 156.

⁷ Ibid.

Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas.⁸ In another article entitled “Nature and Excellence,” Wojtyła refers back to the traditional doctrine of act and potency, which he subsequently applies to his understanding of happiness:

Acting actualizes the essence of a particular being; that what belongs to it in potency, becomes in it, the reality. And behold that kind of realization on account of being's potency constitutes its end from nature ...The principle of goodness is contained in [the process of] being's self-actualization. [...] The same process takes place in man.⁹

However, among many natural inclinations which man strives to actualize, such as that of bodily sustenance or reproduction, only one perfects man in a proper sense. Wojtyła develops the point as follows:

Various goods become goals of man's desires and actions as much as they perfect man in one or the other aspect. Some, for instance, perfect his organism by supplying new energy, others, perfect his mind by increasing knowledge. Among all these goods, however, only *moral* good perfects his humanity: through it, man becomes better as man - he actualizes his latent potency to become so.¹⁰

Wojtyła believes that moral goodness is a domain of rational beings. Reason, being the “prime energy of human nature and its main power,”¹¹ ensures that man's actions are morally good, and therefore, perfective of his nature. On this reading, happiness is identifiable with achieving the perfection of human nature through moral acts done in accordance with reason: by striving after its perfection, a being strives after its happiness.

Wojtyła further elaborates on this account of happiness in *Osoba i czyn*. He distinguishes happiness (*szczęście*) from felicity (*szczęśliwość*), which can be confusing to the non-Polish speaking

⁸ As the professor of ethics, Wojtyła carefully examined Aristotelian and Thomistic concepts of happiness in *The Lublin Lectures*, under the section “The Question of Norm and Happiness” (pp. 185-213). His analysis is very thorough and well referenced, using mostly primary sources. The twenty-eight pages long lecture says a lot about Wojtyła's in-depth knowledge of the Aristotelian-Thomistic philosophy of happiness, but it does not say much about Wojtyła's *own* position on happiness. In the same way, Wojtyła analyzes the thought of Aristotle and Aquinas, the young professor examines the thought of Plato, Bentham, Hume, Kant, and Scheler; but this does not mean that Wojtyła subscribes to their philosophies. Thus, I decided to generally exclude *The Lublin Lectures* from the present investigations, and, instead, focus primarily on *Elementarz Etyczny*, which represents Wojtyła's own position on the question of happiness.

⁹ Wojtyła, “Natura i doskonałość” (“Nature and Excellence”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 140-141.

¹⁰ Ibid., 141. Emphasis mine.

¹¹ Ibid.

readers.¹² At first, the distinction seems superficial; according to the Polish language dictionary, *szczęśliwość* is simply an archaic counterpart of a more modern term *szczęście*, both referring to the state of overall well-being and joy.¹³ Wojtyła, however, believes that some semantic difference should be noted.¹⁴ Although the difference is “hard to pinpoint,” he suggests that felicity (*szczęśliwość*) contains something more akin to man's fulfillment: “to fulfill oneself and to be happy [i.e., possessing felicity] is almost synonymous.”¹⁵ Understood in this way, Wojtyła might be differentiating between the *scopes* of happiness rather than attempting to distinguish between the two different accounts of happiness.

It is noteworthy to see how the Cardinal from Kraków applies the two terms in his treatment of happiness in the section on transcendence of man in action. He says that felicity “is found in that, which is internal and intransitive in action - which is identifiable with self-fulfillment.”¹⁶ This can never happen unless “truth is actively and internally conjoined to freedom in action.”¹⁷ Exercising freedom in relation to the truth is equivalent to self-fulfillment, which in turn, produces felicity in the realm of one's personhood.¹⁸ Consequently, felicity, properly speaking, applies exclusively to humans; for only men are capable of realizing themselves through action.¹⁹

Now, happiness (*szczęście*) seems to include felicity (*szczęśliwość*), but it appears to have a greater scope. For instance, when Wojtyła considers the role of external goods for one's happiness, he tends to use the word happiness (*szczęście*) rather than felicity (*szczęśliwość*). Drawing the reader's attention to human relationships, he says that “all these relationships have some meaning for man's

¹² *OiC*, 211

¹³ *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. W. Doroszewski, vol. 1-11 (Warszawa, PWN: 1958-1969). Available online at: <http://sjp.pwn.pl/doroszewski/szczesliwosc;5503648.html> [accessed July 11, 2016].

¹⁴ *OiC*, 211.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 214.

happiness (*szczęście*).²⁰ A few lines later, when he mentions the concept of participation, he refers back to use the term felicity (*szczęśliwość*) in order to emphasize that, at its core, happiness is internal and intransitive.²¹ Similarly, when Wojtyła later speaks about pleasure, he uses the word felicity (*szczęśliwość*) and not happiness (*szczęście*):

That, which remains in close connection with self-fulfillment, we would call felicity, never pleasure. In this way, felicity remains conjoined with the experience of acting, with man's transcendence in action.²²

Though Wojtyła introduced the distinction in *Osoba i czyn*, he never used it in any of his later works, and so I will not further pursue its meaning.²³ The point is that for Wojtyła, happiness is intimately tied to the concept of human person; by his very nature, man seeks perfection, which he achieves through morally good actions, that is, actions performed in accordance with reason.

Now, rational actions are always oriented towards the good: “the will always seeks its end, and the will's end is always the good.”²⁴ For Wojtyła, this teleological character of human action is deeply embedded in the human nature, despite its fallen condition:

The fact that human will and its natural orientation towards good have not been degenerated completely reveals itself precisely in that the will becomes an object of man's duty, in that there exists a tension between that what I am, and that what I should be.²⁵

In the same passage, Wojtyła admits that people may be at times mistaken in their intellectual judgment as to what is “really adequately good” for the will, but they are nonetheless capable of “freeing ourselves from errors and perceiving the good with more clarity.”²⁶ As he later explains, “the truth about moral good rests on a proper understanding of the nature of the human being and his ends, for the good is that which corresponds to the nature on account of the end of the being

²⁰ *OiC*, 213.

²¹ Cf. *Ibid.*, 213.

²² *OiC*, 215.

²³ I will treat all of the future references to happiness as equivalent to felicity, with a possibly greater scope. This way, I do justice to Wojtyła's clear intention to differentiate between the two terms and avoid running into unnecessary complication of his overall understanding of happiness.

²⁴ Wojtyła, “Humanizm a cel człowieka” (“Humanism and the Goal of Human Being”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 150.

²⁵ Wojtyła, “Znaczenie powinności” (“The Meaning of Duty”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 144-145.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 145.

itself.”²⁷ Accordingly, the true good can be discovered only in reference to the metaphysical structure of goods, which for Wojtyła, necessarily involves God, the Creator:

There exists a hierarchical structure of beings, that is, goods [...]. God is necessarily the end of all beings [...]. In order to best reach that end, to best reveal who God, their Creator is, the First Cause of that what they are, every created being needs to simply strive to become fully itself and to achieve the ultimate self-fulfillment of which it is capable by its nature.²⁸

The teleological character of human actions is therefore inscribed in the nature of things as created by God. Wojtyła goes to great pains to emphasize that God, perceived as the ultimate end of all beings, does not oppose the natural end of man's perfection. He notes that the opposition originates because of a mistaken premise, which holds that if ethics seeks to be authentically human it must have man, rather than God, as its end.²⁹ This, according to Wojtyła, is a misinterpretation of the essential character of the human nature, which remains fundamentally open to its Creator:

God as an end of man does not pull him away from his excellence, from his fullness of humanity, but He further grounds and solidifies it. Everything that is really an excellence of man, that, which authentically perfects him, has simultaneously God as an end; it is indirectly a revelation of God's perfection, His completeness, and this is regardless whether one realizes that or not.³⁰

Teleological ethics is, thus, for Wojtyła, always rooted in Revelation.³¹ Natural ethics and Christian ethics describe one, and the same reality, albeit the former does so in an imperfect way: “this natural realism in ethics, which is linked to the rational realism of cognition, becomes in Christian ethics, a supernatural realism.”³² Christianity brings a new perspective and a new way to evaluate the reality, but does do not away with its natural component.³³

²⁷ Wojtyła, “O pochodzeniu norm moralnych” (“On the Origin of Moral Norms”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 137.

²⁸ Wojtyła, “Humanizm a cel człowieka,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 150.

²⁹ “Opposition against religious ethics very often originates from the position of humanism. If ethics wants is supposed to be authentically human, then it cannot have God as the end of human life, only man can be that end.” Cf. Wojtyła, “Humanizm a cel człowieka,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 149.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 151.

³¹ Cf. Wojtyła, “Znaczenie powinności” (“The Meaning of Duty”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 143.

³² Wojtyła, “Realizm w etyce” (“Realism in Ethics”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 138.

³³ *Ibid.*

For John Paul II as well, people are made for happiness: “God created man and woman in a paradise, Eden, because he wanted them to be happy.”³⁴ The Pope continued to hold on to his earlier view about man's happiness being intimately tied to human nature; for John Paul II, one cannot simply stop wanting to be happy. In his papal reflections, however, the emphasis in the discussion of happiness shifts from self-fulfillment and the perfection of nature to communion with God. This does not mean that the latter excludes the former; quite the contrary, the Pope insists that man is capable of becoming fully himself only in Christ.³⁵

Many scholars have noted continuity between Wojtyła's and John Paul II's view on happiness and its teleological character.³⁶ According to Spinello, the Pope's personalism remains “objective, teleological, and firmly rooted in the rich Thomistic notion of person.”³⁷ In *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II directly states that “the moral life has an essential 'teleological' character, since it consists in the deliberate ordering of human acts to God, the supreme good and ultimate end (*telos*) of man.”³⁸ Man is capable of being ordered to the good and to his ultimate end precisely because of who he is as human being:

The primary and decisive element for moral judgment is the object of the human act, which establishes whether it is capable of being ordered to the good and to the ultimate end, which is God. This *capability is grasped by reason in the very being of man*, considered in his integral truth, and therefore in his natural inclinations, his motivations and his finalities, which always have a spiritual dimension as well. It is precisely these which are the contents of the natural law and hence that ordered complex of “personal goods” which serve the “good of the person”: the good which is the person himself and his perfection.³⁹

³⁴ John Paul II, “Welcoming Address at 17th World Youth Day” (July 25, 2002), no. 2. English translation available at: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/july/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020725_wyd-address-youth.html [accessed July 31, 2016].

³⁵ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Redemptor Hominis*, no. 10. Official Latin text: AAS 71 (1979), 257-324. English translation available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_04031979_redemptor-hominis.html [accessed July 15, 2016]. Hereafter, *RH*.

³⁶ Cf. Charles E. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 104-105; Adrian J. Reimers, *Truth About the Good: Moral Norms in the Thought of John Paul II* (Ave Maria, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2011), 234.

³⁷ Richard A. Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II: The Great Pope's Moral Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2007), 105.

³⁸ *VS*, 73.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 79. Emphasis mine.

What John Paul II adds to his former reflection from the time at KUL is an observation that there are different versions of teleological ethics, which, though at first appear to be similar to the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic account, are incorrect and “not faithful to the Church's teaching.”⁴⁰ According to William E. May, John Paul II carefully distinguishes between “teleology” and “teleologisms” to mark off the correct understanding of teleological nature of ethics from its misconceived counterparts.⁴¹ “Teleologisms” are those ethical theories that, although concerned about the conformity of human acts with ends pursued by the agent, evaluate moral goodness of an action by weighing of the nonmoral or premoral goods to be gained. As a result, “concrete behavior would be right or wrong according to whether or not it produces a better state of affairs for all concerned.”⁴² As examples, the Pope identifies consequentialism and proportionalism, which besides their other flaws, “believe they can justify, as morally good, deliberate choices of kinds of behavior contrary to the commandments of the divine and natural law.”⁴³ The Pope goes on to emphasize that the morality of human acts depends primarily and fundamentally on the “object” rationally chosen by the deliberate will, which echoes the traditional doctrine of human action as developed by St. Thomas Aquinas:

In order to be able to grasp the object of an act which specifies that act morally, it is therefore necessary to place oneself in the perspective of the acting person. The object of the act of willing is in fact a freely chosen kind of behavior. To the extent that it is in conformity with the order of reason, it is the cause of the goodness of the will; it perfects us morally, and disposes us to recognize our ultimate end in the perfect good, primordial love. By the object of a given moral act, then, one cannot mean a process or an event of the merely physical order, to be assessed on the basis of its ability to bring about a given state of affairs in the outside world. Rather, that *object is the proximate end of a deliberate decision which determines the act of willing on the part of the acting person.*⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁴¹ William E. May, *An Introduction to Moral Theology* (Huntington, IN: Our Sunday Visitor Pub, 2003), 281-282.

⁴² *VS*, 74.

⁴³ Ibid., 76.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 78. Emphasis mine.

There is no need here to delve into the complex debate on John Paul II's use of Aquinas' notion of object in reference to proportionalism and consequentialism.⁴⁵ The point is that, throughout the entirety of his career, Wojtyła/John Paul II consistently referred to human happiness as something inevitably related to his nature. Man pursues happiness not because of external obligation or sense of duty, but because of the natural desire inscribed in him by God. Consequently, the pursuit of happiness is essentially teleological, which means that man, by obeying the commands of reason, reliably orients his life and actions towards the ultimate and final good, which is God.

1.2. *Happiness in the General Sense*

Before moving forward to describe in detail what happiness actually consists in for Wojtyła/John Paul II, some of the formal characteristics of happiness must be examined. It appears that his treatment of happiness in light of human nature created by God bears close resemblance to the formal notion of happiness, as identified in the previous chapter in the discussion of Aristotle's *eudaimonia*.

First, certainly happiness for Wojtyła/John Paul II consists in *becoming* or *fulfilling* one's nature through the morally good actions. This suggests that happiness is not something static but dynamic:

Happiness, about which the Gospel speaks, comes through perfection. It is not, however, bought for the "price" of perfection, but it matures in him [i.e., human being] by becoming a

⁴⁵ The debate often focuses on Aquinas's own treatment of the object of human action or its application by John Paul II in *Veritatis Splendor*. Cf. Stephen L. Brock, "Veritatis Splendor §78, St. Thomas, and (Not Merely) Physical Objects of Moral Acts," *Nova et Vetera* 6 (2008): 1-62. Brian V. Johnstone, "'Objectivism,' 'Basic Human Goods,' and 'Proportionalism,' an Interpretation of the Contemporary History of Moral Theology," *Studia Moralia* 43 (2005): 97-119. Kevin F. Keiser, "The Moral Act in St. Thomas: A Fresh Look," *Thomist* 74 (2010): 237-82. Servais Pinckaers, "A Historical Perspective on Intrinsically Evil Acts," in *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, ed. John Berkman and Craig S. Titus, trans. Mary T. Noble (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005): 199-211. Kenneth, Schmiz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1993), 58-90.

better, fuller person. Happiness is actually already present in this becoming-just as thought by Aristotle.⁴⁶

Wojtyła/John Paul II is clear that happiness being the ultimate end of one's life is not identified in a static possession of certain goods, but in an ongoing perfection of the person's nature. Even in reference to happiness found in God, Wojtyła/John Paul II prefers to use the word "participation" rather than "possession."⁴⁷

Second, Wojtyła/John Paul II clearly accepts that the final good must be one and complete; all beings are subordinated to the "the Highest Good, which is the ultimate end."⁴⁸ This Highest Good is God, who is complete on account of being the first cause of everything else: "The absolute fullness of being and goodness, which belongs to God by his nature, cannot be further perfected."⁴⁹ Only through participation in God does man become fully himself.⁵⁰

Finally, happiness is something objective in a sense that it is not dependent on man's subjective state of mind. Wojtyła argues that the moment of delight or pleasure is "irrelevant to the essence of the moral perfecting of oneself as well as for happiness."⁵¹ For the philosopher from Kraków, things like satisfaction, joy and pleasure are "subjective goods" and so can never constitute happiness. This is because feelings are fleeting, while happiness must be something stable and unchanging. Consequently, for Wojtyła/John Paul II happiness is to be found in an objective reality, which of itself does not diminish the value of its subjective elements.⁵²

1.3. *Happiness in the Specific Sense*

⁴⁶ Wojtyła, "Właściwa interpretacja nauki o szczęściu", in *Aby Chrystus*, 157.

⁴⁷ Cf. Wojtyła, "Widzenie Boga" ("Seeing God"), in *Aby Chrystus*, 167; FR, 15.

⁴⁸ Wojtyła, "Humanizm a cel człowieka," in *Aby Chrystus*, 151.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 150. Cf. *VS*, 79.

⁵⁰ Cf. RH, 10; Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 22. Official Latin text: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1025-1120. English translation available: http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html [accessed July 21, 2016].

⁵¹ Wojtyła, "Stosunek do przyjemności" ("Attitude toward Pleasure"), in *Aby Chrystus*, 158.

⁵² Cf. Ibid., 159.; *VS*, 73.

When Aristotle and Aquinas attempted to identify the essence of human happiness, they begun by dismissing things people commonly believe bring about happiness. And while it was already said that for Wojtyła/John Paul II happiness is identifiable with the perfection of human nature, it would be worth noting that, like Aristotle and Aquinas, Wojtyła/John Paul II is also eager to dismiss common misconceptions about the nature of human happiness.

First and foremost, Wojtyła/John Paul II wants to avoid confusing happiness with pleasure. As mentioned before, in *Osoba i Czyn*, Wojtyła carefully distinguishes between the two concepts on the basis of their relation to person's self-fulfillment in action:

Pleasure, however, and also pain is not of itself linked to the personal structure of self-fulfillment in action. Pleasure as well as pain “happens to” a man. This, probably, belongs to its essence, and this seems to also differentiate it from felicity, which corresponds to the self-fulfillment of person.⁵³

In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła further argues that human happiness cannot be found in carnal enjoyment, in this particular case, sexual pleasure. The Cardinal from Kraków writes that sexual pleasure deprived of its intrapersonal dimension “usurps the essential role in love” and therefore “destroys love.”⁵⁴ For Wojtyła, not only sexual pleasure alone cannot constitute man's happiness, but also it often obscures man's vision of what true happiness actually is. The following quote succinctly summarizes Wojtyła's careful attempt to distinguish true happiness from mere hedonism:

'Happiness,' if this were so, would have to be identified with mere enjoyment, with the sum of the pleasures which the 'body and sex' can bring to the relationship between man and woman. But this superficial view of happiness for one things obscures the truth that man and woman can and must seek their temporal, earthly happiness in a lasting union which has an interpersonal character [...] Still more certainly does the 'body' - if it is not 'humble,' not subordinate to the full truth about the happiness of man - obscure the vision of the ultimate happiness: the happiness of the human person in union with a personal God.⁵⁵

⁵³ *OiC*, 215. In the next paragraph Wojtyła observes that it is very common for people to identify happiness with pleasure. He also takes a note of the difficulty inherent in the process of differentiating between the two. Cf. *OiC*, 216.

⁵⁴ *LR*, 172.

⁵⁵ *LR*, 172-173.

In Wojtyła/John Paul II later writings, happiness continues to be something more than simply the sum of one's pleasures. In the *Letter to Families* from 1994, the Pope warns against a misconceived notion of love: "free love," that is, love deprived of any boundaries, conditions, or consequences. Such love, driven by passion and desire for physical pleasure is far away from making one happy: "it means nothing more than to make the individual a slave."⁵⁶ Thus conceived happiness is false, which the Pope believes is an immediate consequence of following utilitarian ethics:

As we know, at the foundation of ethical utilitarianism there is the continual quest for "maximum" happiness. But this is a "*utilitarian happiness*", seen only as pleasure, as immediate gratification for the exclusive benefit of the individual, apart from or opposed to the objective demands of the true good.⁵⁷

The decision to pursue the maximum of pleasures in one's life, according to John Paul II, is a sign of man's rejection of God and false anthropology, which is expressed by putting one's "having" over "being":

It is not wrong to want to live better; what is wrong is a style of life which is presumed to be better when it is directed towards "having" rather than "being," and which wants to have more, not in order to be more but in order to spend life in enjoyment as an end in itself.⁵⁸

At the same time, Wojtyła/John Paul II never intends to depreciate or eliminate the experience of pleasure from the proper notion of happiness. Emotions and human affectivity, which are the source of physical and emotional pleasure, cannot be simply detached from the experience of human action. As opposed to Kant, Wojtyła believes that "it would be groundless to set a person

⁵⁶ John Paul II, *Gratissimam Sane*, no. 14. Official Latin text: *AAS* 86 (1994), 868-923. English translation available: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii LET_02021994_families.html [accessed July 22, 2016].

⁵⁷ Ibid. Emphasis original.

⁵⁸ John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, no. 36. Official Latin text: *AAS* 83 (1991), 793-867. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii ENC_01051991_centesimus-annus.html [accessed July 23, 2016]. See also John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Europa*, no. 9. Official Latin text: *AAS* 95 (2003), 649-719. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii EXH_20030628_ecclesia-in-europa.html [accessed July 23, 2016].

and his action outside the sphere of emotions and pleasures.”⁵⁹ Similarly, describing Christian joy, John Paul II carefully distinguishes between the true joy and “shallow feelings of satisfaction and pleasure,” but immediately adds that “there is no conflict whatever between Christian joy and true human joys, which in fact are exalted and find their ultimate foundation precisely in the joy of the glorified Christ.”⁶⁰ Pleasure, therefore, is not bad of itself; it becomes bad when it obscures man's pursuit of authentic good, or when it becomes his sole purpose in life.⁶¹ In fact, pleasure, understood in terms of appropriate emotional reaction, has an important place in Wojtyła/John Paul II's overall understanding of virtue.

Second, connected to the above discussion of pleasure is Wojtyła/John Paul II's dismissal of the view that man's happiness lies in possession of external goods. Already in *Elementarz Etyczny*, Wojtyła notes the primacy of spiritual values over the material ones:

...in every human being capable of feeling, there is a conviction about the primacy of spiritual values. These [values] are higher; they require more effort from man, but they also more effectively introduce him to the objective good. Therefore, spiritual goods are properly what constitute man and his excellence. No one would ever doubt that moral excellence of man is being constituted objectively by his character rather than physical strength or beauty.⁶²

At the same time, spiritual values, though higher in the metaphysical order and conducive to man's excellence are “weaker” compared to their material counterpart. Wojtyła explains as follows:

Man perceives with greater force that which is material, that which immediately engages his senses and brings about satisfaction. This is exactly where the strength of material values resides - in their subjective power. Spiritual values, on the other hand, do not entertain the same direct strength; they do not win man over with the same facility and do not attract him with equal force. That is why they [spiritual values] frequently lose against material and sensory values.⁶³

⁵⁹ *OiC*, 217.

⁶⁰ John Paul II, *Dies Domini*, no. 57-58. Official Latin text: *AAS* 90 (1998), 713-766. English translation available: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_05071998_dies-domini.html [accessed July 25, 2016].

⁶¹ *VS*, 63. See also, *Oriente Lumen*, no. 11. Official Latin text: *AAS* 87 (1995), 745-774. English translation available: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_19950502_orientale-lumen.html [accessed July 25, 2016].

⁶² Wojtyła, “Wartości” (“Values”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 161.

⁶³ Wojtyła, “Co to jest asceza?” (“What is asceticism?”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 163.

If spiritual values are the means to achieve excellence and by extension bring about happiness, “it is natural,” writes Wojtyła, “for a man to do everything he can to make sure that the values, which are experienced less intensely, which are less attractive and engaging, prevail.”⁶⁴ This can be best achieved by ascesis, which according to Wojtyła, “denotes simply reliable and uncompromising activity of man at the service of his own self-perfection and self-maturation.”⁶⁵ This does not mean that spiritual values are now to be promoted *at the expense of* material values. Such a conclusion risks being an oversimplification of Wojtyła’s thought. For the Cardinal from Kraków, ascesis is not an escape from life – “quite the contrary, it is supposed to bring about the fullness of one’s life through the achievement of excellence in the most difficult areas of life.”⁶⁶ Thus, material values are not necessarily bad or evil but they are not constitutive of happiness either. As Wojtyła later explains,

There is no doubt that what is material in man and outside of him conditions in many ways both the cognition of truth as well as the realization of moral good. There is a difference, however, between ‘conditioning’ and ‘creating’ or ‘making’. Spiritual values in man cannot have their ultimate source in matter, which conditions its existence from the outside, but precisely in the spirit who creates them and who is their immediate and effective cause.⁶⁷

In his papal writings, John Paul II too makes it explicit that happiness is not to be found in external goods; the Pope often warns against the allurements of worldly goods that can easily distort, if not prevent, man’s pursuit of true happiness.⁶⁸ For example, in *Pastores Dabo Vobis*, John Paul II notes how quickly man can turn into himself and away from God on account of material goods:

The individual, “all bound up in himself, this man who makes himself not only the center of his every interest, but dares to propose himself as the principle and reason of all reality,” finds himself ever more bereft of that “supplement of soul” which is all the more necessary to him in proportion – as a wide availability of material goods and resources deceives him

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Wojtyła, “Wartości,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 162.

⁶⁸ Some might object that John Paul II actually never or rarely uses the word “happiness” in this context. However, if happiness for the Pope is identifiable with our communion with God, then an inordinate desire for material possessions clearly stands out as an impediment in man’s quest for true happiness. This should become clear from the examples provided in the text.

about his self-sufficiency. There is no longer a need to fight against God; the individual feels he is simply able to do without him.⁶⁹

Without God, man quickly loses the sense of deeper values and turns back to practical materialism, which only perpetuates the myth of self-sufficiency.⁷⁰ The immediate consequence, as the Pope identifies it, is that “life appears to have lost all meaning and the temptation grows in man to claim the right to suppress it.”⁷¹ Despite the enticements of the contemporary culture, true happiness is not found in possessions of goods, but in Jesus Christ, who alone can satisfy the desire of man's heart. Compare the following quotation from John Paul II's address to the young people gathered at the XVIIth World Youth Day in Toronto:

...many and enticing are the voices that call out to you from all sides: many of these voices speak to you of a joy that can be had with money, with success, with power. Mostly they propose a joy that comes with the superficial and fleeting pleasure of the senses. Dear friends, the aged Pope, full of years but still young at heart, answers your youthful desire for happiness with words that are not his own. They are words that rang out two thousand years ago. Words that we have heard again tonight: “Blessed are they...” The key word in Jesus' teaching is a proclamation of joy: “Blessed are they...”⁷²

At the same time, the Pope refuses to think of material things as something evil. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, he reminds his readers that “the evil does not consist in 'having' as such, but in possessing without regard for the quality and the ordered hierarchy of the goods one has.”⁷³ This quality, according to John Paul II, arises from the proper subordination of the material possessions to the primary calling of man, which is to be, not to have. “All the goods of the earth are

⁶⁹ John Paul II, *Pastores dabo vobis*, no. 7. Official Latin text: *AAS* 84 (1992), 657-804. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031992_pastores-dabo-vobis.html [accessed July 28, 2016]. Hereafter, *PDV*.

⁷⁰ See John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*, no. 23. Official Latin text: *AAS* 87 (1995), 401-522. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_25031995_evangelium-vitae.html [accessed July 31, 2016]. Hereafter, *EV*.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷² John Paul II, “Welcoming address at 17th World Youth Day” (July 25, 2002), no. 1-2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/july/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020725_wyd-address-youth.html [accessed July 31, 2016].

⁷³ John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, no. 28. Official Latin text: *AAS* 80 (1988), 513-586. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html [accessed July 31, 2016]. Hereafter, *SRS*.

wonderful,” argues the Pope in one of his messages for Lent, “both those which come from the gracious hands of God, as well as those, which come from man, who is called to participate in the act of creation through his work and talents involved.”⁷⁴

If, for Wojtyła/John Paul II, material things are good but do not constitute happiness, one might as well ask the question: what is their role (if any) in man's pursuit of happiness? Searching for an answer, one must be once again mindful of Wojtyła/John Paul II's language, which does not always mention the term “happiness” directly.

The first relevant passage comes from *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, where the Pope seems to suggest that material possessions, although they can be misused by some, are nonetheless needed for men to achieve their happiness on earth:

This then is the picture: there are some people - the few who possess much - who do not really succeed in “being” because, through a reversal of the hierarchy of values, they are hindered by the cult of “having”; and there are others - the many who have little or nothing - who do not succeed in *realizing their basic human vocation* because they are deprived of essential goods.⁷⁵

In the previously cited message for Lent from 1992, John Paul II uses a very similar wording of “self-realization,” saying that “for every man, an access to these goods [created by God and man] is a *necessary* condition for his full self-realization.”⁷⁶ A man, who despises the goods of this world as well as the goods of his own work, lives in fear.⁷⁷ Human progress, which has man for its author and promoter, belongs to the very nature of man; the question, the Pope argues, is not whether man should stop moving forward but “whether in the context of this progress man, as man, is becoming truly better, that is to say more mature spiritually, more aware of the dignity of his humanity.”⁷⁸

⁷⁴ John Paul II, “Wezwani do dzielenia się stołem stworzenia” (“Called to Share the Table of Creation”), Message for Lent 1992. Translation mine. Text available in Polish at <http://papiez.wiara.pl/doc/378747.Wezwani-do-dzielenia-sie-stolem-stworzenia> [accessed July 31, 2016].

⁷⁵ *SRS*, 28. Emphasis mine.

⁷⁶ John Paul II, “Wezwani do dzielenia się stołem stworzenia.” Emphasis and translation mine.

⁷⁷ On the account of, for instance, technological advancements which, along with their blessings and benefits, brought suffering and pain to humanity. Cf. *RH*, 15.

⁷⁸ *RH*, 15.

Earthly happiness, therefore, although certainly not reducible to the mere possession of external goods, is nonetheless at least in some respects dependent on the acquisition of essential products of man's labor. Material possessions may certainly add up to man's happiness on earth; without fundamental goods, a man's pursuit of happy life is seriously impeded and acquisition of material goods, if only properly ordered to the spiritual growth of a person, may increase one's happiness in this life. At the same time, for Wojtyła/John Paul II moral growth is always a matter of man's choice: man becomes fully himself only on account of those actions that are free and authentically good. External possessions can modify for better or worse one's inclination towards particular moral good, but are not *moral* goods in themselves. Man's happiness as such comes from doing what is right in accordance with reason and the objective truth.⁷⁹ It seems, therefore, that Wojtyła/John Paul II largely follows Aristotle on this point. As it occurred in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, the same tension marks the writings of the Polish philosopher and Pope. On the one hand, external goods are essential for man's pursuit of happiness as at times their absence results in an inability to perform morally good actions, and yet, on the other hand, external possessions are at best only perfective of happiness, as the self-fulfillment of man is properly a matter of moral development achieved through man's inner powers.⁸⁰

1.3.1. *Communion with God: Man's Ultimate Happiness*

Wojtyła/John Paul II would never deny the significance of human lives on earth. As I said earlier, he believes that man is already happy in becoming fully himself on account of his nature. However, because human nature comes from God, a person's happiness, in its ultimate and final form, consists in communion with God. Consider how frequently John Paul II connects happiness

⁷⁹ "In acting ethically, according to a free and rightly tuned will, the human person sets foot upon the path to happiness and moves towards perfection... It is essential [...] that the values chosen and pursued in one's life be true, because only true values can lead people to realize themselves fully, allowing them to be true to their nature." *FR*, 25.

⁸⁰ Cf. *ST* I-II, 5.3-6.

with the fullness of life found in God: “God alone [...] is the source of man's happiness [...] the final end of human activity, and perfect happiness;”⁸¹ “happiness [...] in God has its complete realization;”⁸² “Christ's Cross and Resurrection, [is] the source of sanctification and profound happiness in daily life;”⁸³ “profound unity with the Father, by its very nature [is] a source of joy and happiness;”⁸⁴ “friendship with God, charity and therefore eternal happiness;”⁸⁵ and “definitive happiness [is] found in God.”⁸⁶ Similar references can be found in John Paul II's other, minor documents, most notably homilies and speeches.⁸⁷ This notion of happiness, which I will refer to as “perfect happiness,” clearly predominates in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work. Human or earthly happiness is still a valid and noble goal to pursue, but men are ultimately made for happiness found in God.⁸⁸ However, what exactly does Wojtyła/John Paul II mean by “communion with God”?

⁸¹ *VS*, 9

⁸² John Paul II, *Dominum et vivificantem*, no. 67. Official Latin text: *AAS* 78 (1986), 809-900. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_18051986_dominum-et-vivificantem.html [accessed July 31, 2016]. Hereafter, *DV*.

⁸³ John Paul II, *Familiaris consortio*, no. 77. Official Latin text: *AAS* 74 (1982), 81-19. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_19811122_familiaris-consortio.html [accessed August 1, 2016]. Hereafter, *FC*.

⁸⁴ John Paul II, *Novo millennio ineunte*, no. 26. Official Latin text: *AAS* 93 (2001), 266-309. English translation available: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_20010106_novo-millennio-ineunte.html [accessed August 1, 2016].

⁸⁵ John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et paenitentia*, no. 17. Official Latin text: *AAS* 77 (1985), 185-275. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_02121984_reconciliatio-et-paenitentia.html [accessed August 1, 2016]. Hereafter, *RP*.

⁸⁶ John Paul II, *Vita Consecrata*, no. 97. Official Latin text: *AAS* 88 (1996), 377-486. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_25031996_vita-consecrata.html [accessed August 1, 2016].

⁸⁷ Notable homilies are: “Meeting with the Representatives of all the Generations of the Century at Azteca Stadium” (25 January 1999), no. 12 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19990125_mexico-generations.html]; “Letter to Young People on the Occasion of a Meeting of Russian Catholic Youth at Irkutsk” (26 July 2004), no. 2 [http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/2004/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_20040811_irkutsk.html]; “Homily in Gdańsk,” no. 3; “Homily at Beatification of Father Wincenty Frelichowski” (7 June 1999), no. 3 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19990607_torun.html]; “Message to Polish Conference of Bishops” (11 June 1999), no. 3 [https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19990611_warsaw-synod.html]

⁸⁸ In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, John Paul II recognizes the validity of human happiness when he speaks on the need for the Church to intervene in matters of social justice: “But the Church is an ‘expert in humanity,’ and this leads her necessarily to extend her religious mission to the various fields in which men and women expend their efforts in search of the always *relative happiness which is possible in this world*, in line with their dignity as persons.” *SRS*, 41. Emphasis mine.

In one his articles, Wojtyła notes that man's communion with God is “the fullness of man's spiritual life.”⁸⁹ Man comes to realize who he is and why he is by participation in God's nature. Seeing God face to face is a revelatory experience for man, who comes to learn the truth about himself and about his being. Above all, however, in communion with God man reaches the fullness of his being as inscribed in his nature.⁹⁰ Man's quest for self-realization and self-fulfillment finds its completion in the Divine: “God is an absolute fullness of being, and man, being united to Him, participates in this fullness by knowledge and love.”⁹¹ Wojtyła's reference to knowledge and love here is important, especially in light of his later papal teachings. “Knowledge of God,” writes John Paul II, “of course, has an intellectual dimension (cf. *Rom* 1: 19-20), but the living experience of the Father and the Son occurs through love.”⁹² It is that love, which, according to the Pope, constitutes the essence of man's ultimate happiness:

In the context of Revelation, we know that the “heaven” or “happiness” in which we will find ourselves is neither an abstraction nor a physical place in the clouds, but a living, personal relationship with the Holy Trinity. It is our meeting with the Father which takes place in the risen Christ through the communion of the Holy Spirit. It is always necessary to maintain a certain restraint in describing these “ultimate realities” since their depiction is always unsatisfactory. Today, personalist language is better suited to describing the state of happiness and peace we will enjoy in our definitive communion with God.⁹³

I will return to the virtue of love in the discussion of theological virtues in the later parts of the study. The relevant point here is that happiness for Wojtyła/John Paul II consists primarily in the communion with God understood both in terms of perfect realization of human nature and participation in the love of God. In this, Wojtyła/John Paul II's account of perfect happiness echoes the traditional account as developed by St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine.⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Wojtyła, “Widzenie Boga,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 168.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² John Paul II, General audience (October 6, 1999), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_06101999.html

⁹³ John Paul II, General Audience (July 21, 1999), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_21071999.html

⁹⁴ Cf. *ST* I-II.4.5; Augustine, *The Confessions* 22.32.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, there is no contradiction between earthly and heavenly happiness in Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings. The pursuit of God does not diminish or do away with the value and meaning of human nature; on the contrary, it perfects it and brings it to completion.⁹⁵

Accordingly, earthly happiness serves as a pathway to final happiness:

The biblical Revelation and the highest philosophical wisdom both agree that, on the one hand, humanity is oriented at infinity and eternity, and on the other hand, that it stands firmly on earth, in time and space. We must reach the goal which is transcendent, but only by walking the way leading through earth and history.⁹⁶

In *Elementarz Etyczny*, Wojtyła notes that man “not only matures to the fullness of his humanity, but he matures to God.”⁹⁷ Both processes are simultaneous rather than exclusive, as “the maturing of man to God has its root and origin in the supernatural seed of human nature - grace.”⁹⁸ Because Revelation goes beyond the limits of human rationality, “human nature reaches its full potential and dynamism through the supernatural powers, which are found and tied together by sanctifying grace.”⁹⁹ In the same vein, the Pope writes that “although the primacy of the eternal life is always asserted, this does not prevent us from living earthly realities righteously in the light of God.”¹⁰⁰ In fact, for John Paul II, earthly realities *should* be pursued as long as one orders his life towards the ultimate happiness with God:

Christian life is growing towards the mystery of the eternal Passover. It therefore requires that we keep our gaze on the goal, the ultimate realities, but at the same time, that we strive for the “penultimate” realities: between these and the eschatological goal there is no opposition, but on the contrary a mutually fruitful relationship.¹⁰¹

The reflection thus far suggests that the concept of happiness carries a lot of weight in Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings. As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, man's desire for

⁹⁵ See *FC*, 34.

⁹⁶ John Paul II, “Wartość zaangażowania w rzeczywistość doczesną” (“The Value of Involvement in Temporary Word”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 1.

⁹⁷ Wojtyła, “Właściwa interpretacja nauki o szczęściu,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 157.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹⁹ Wojtyła, “Widzenie Boga,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 167.

¹⁰⁰ John Paul II, General Audience (August 11, 1998), no. 5. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_11081999.html [accessed July 31, 2016]. See also *GS*, 39.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 5.

happiness is intimately connected to human nature that strives for its own perfection. This perfection is reached through acting in accordance with the true moral good, and, if penetrated by grace, ultimately actualized in communion with God. The remaining question is: what are the means by which man achieves this perfection? Wojtyła/John Paul II does not provide a monolithic answer. Man pursues his happiness by listening to the Word of God and fulfilling the commandments,¹⁰² doing service,¹⁰³ valuing the life of another person,¹⁰⁴ loving his spouse,¹⁰⁵ building a just and peaceful society,¹⁰⁶ or, simply by praying.¹⁰⁷ A careful reading of Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings, however, quickly reveals the special role of virtues, both acquired and infused, which reliably guide the person in his pursuit of happiness.

1.4. *Happiness and Virtues*

First, Wojtyła/John Paul II develops a strong connection between supernatural happiness and theological virtues. As I mentioned earlier in the discussion of specific happiness, for Wojtyła/John Paul II, supernatural happiness consists primarily in communion with God. In *Elementarz Etyczny*, the primary means by which man reaches that communion is precisely through the three virtues of faith, hope, and charity:

Human nature reaches its full potential and dynamism through the supernatural powers, which are found and tied together by sanctifying grace. Because through it man participates in the very nature of God, grace determines the participation of man in life, that is, in the

¹⁰² John Paul II, "Letter on the occasion of the IV Centenary of the Death of St. Philip Neri" (7 October 1994). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1994/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_07101994_filippo-neri.pdf

¹⁰³ John Paul II, "Meditation on the Occasion of the 12th World Youth Day" (August 21-24, 1997) https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1997/august/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19970821_meditation.html

¹⁰⁴ *EV*, 5.

¹⁰⁵ John Paul II, "Address to those attending the Convention of the Presidents of the Episcopal Commissions for the Family and Life of Europe" (13 June 2003) http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2003/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20030613_pc-family.pdf

¹⁰⁶ John Paul II, "Homily at Eucharistic Celebration for the Faithful of Malawi" (6 May 1989) https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1989/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19890506_lilongwe.html

¹⁰⁷ John Paul II, "Address at the Meeting with the Young People of 'St. Augustine's High School'" (23 February 1992) https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1992/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19920223_giovani-gambia.html

inner working of God. Directly at service [of this participation] are the three so called divine virtues: faith, hope, and charity, through which man during his earthly life, by living the most authentic human life he can, also matures to the communion with God alone.¹⁰⁸

Similar statements can be found in later papal teachings of John Paul II. The Holy Father argues that the three theological virtues are the surest way to reach man's final happiness, that is, his communion with God:

Faith, hope and love are like three stars that rise in the sky of our spiritual life to guide us to God. They are the theological virtues *par excellence*: they put us in communion with God and lead us to him.¹⁰⁹

While faith and hope sustain the person in the journey towards God, it is love which remains at the essence of one's communion with Him.¹¹⁰ To use John Paul II's own words, "love transforms life and enlightens our knowledge of God to the point [...] of perfect knowledge."¹¹¹

When it comes to earthly happiness, here too, Wojtyła/John Paul II argues that the cultivation of the virtues is essential to man's happiness on earth. One perhaps recalls that this kind of happiness is defined as man's self-fulfillment, realization of his nature as a free and rational being. Therefore, for instance, when discussing the virtue of prudence, the Holy Father writes that the "virtue of prudence [...] is the key for the accomplishment of the fundamental task that each of us has received from God. This task is the perfection of man himself."¹¹² Similarly, when analyzing the virtue of temperance, he notes that "[i]t is even indispensable, in order that man may be fully a man."¹¹³ These and other references reflect John Paul II's general definition of human virtue as that

¹⁰⁸ Wojtyła, "Widzenie Boga," in *Aby Chrystus*, 167.

¹⁰⁹ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 2000), no. 1. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20001122.html [Accessed Sept 3, 2016].

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ John Paul II, General audience (October 6, 1999), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_06101999.html [accessed Sept 3, 2016].

¹¹² John Paul II, General audience (October 25, 1978). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781025.html

¹¹³ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781122.html

whereby man becomes good as man,¹¹⁴ and thus confirms that human happiness is attainable through the practice of moral virtues.

What ought to be clear from this analysis is that there is a strong link between virtues and happiness in Wojtyła/John Paul II's ethical system. To what extent are the virtues indispensable for the fulfillment of the fundamental calling of man to be happy, and how does Wojtyła/John Paul II understand these virtues, will be the focus of the next section.

2. Habit

2.1. Good Moral Habit

Wojtyła/John Paul II speaks of virtues at multiple occasions and in different contexts. Many authors associate John Paul II's definition of virtue with the one offered in *Laborem Exercens*, where the Pope, referencing the *Summa* of St. Thomas Aquinas, defines virtue as “a moral habit, [...] something whereby man becomes good as man.”¹¹⁵ This is certainly accurate to a degree; however, it does not do justice to the rest of Wojtyła/John Paul II's work, which abounds in other descriptions of virtue.

Following the structure of the second chapter, I begin the investigation of Wojtyła/John Paul II's notion of virtue with an analysis of habit. The above-mentioned definition of virtue from *Laborem Exercens* leaves no doubt that for the Holy Father virtue remains essentially a good moral habit. However, is there more to learn about the relationship between virtue and habit from Wojtyła/John Paul II's work? Does the Polish scholar offer a robust account of virtue as *habitus*, in the way, for example, St. Thomas does?

¹¹⁴ *LE*, 9.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

Perhaps a good place to start will be an article, which Wojtyła wrote during his years at KUL, entitled “Human nature as the basis of ethical formation.” In the article, Wojtyła connects the moral formation of man with his pursuit of moral good made possible by the will:

In saying that the human being is formed through moral good, we presuppose a certain property of the human person in general and of the will in particular. To be able to be formed by moral good, the human being must be in some way disposed toward this, must be susceptible to such formation, as well as to such deformation. Consequently, the human being must have a special potentiality that conditions and makes possible such formation or deformation.¹¹⁶

This potentiality, according to Wojtyła, is of course an attribute of the will; for the will is not merely an efficient power in man, “something that gives one an ability to act, but also an ability to become.”¹¹⁷ Man has a choice to act in accordance with true good or against it. The will, accordingly, can become good or bad “not only actually but habitually.” It is worth quoting Wojtyła at length here:

A particular good or evil moral value can become fixed in the will - and here we enter the realm of virtues and vices [...] Moral good and moral evil can become crystallized in the will in a lasting, habitual way. By becoming formed in a lasting way, the will acquires certain virtues; by becoming deformed, it acquires vices.¹¹⁸

The first thing to notice about the way Wojtyła thinks of virtues and habits, is their stability. He distinguishes individual acts of the will from their habitual counterparts based on their “lasting” effect on the will. Singular actions, even if oriented towards the moral good, are not yet productive of virtues, although they do contribute to the moral formation or deformation of an agent. Virtue, for Wojtyła, is a *stable* disposition resulting from *repetitive* and *intentional* actions. Consider, for instance, what Wojtyła says about the virtue of chastity in *Love and Responsibility*:

The virtue of chastity... is a matter of efficiency in controlling the concupiscent impulses set up by the reactions mentioned. 'Efficiency' in doing something means more than the 'ability' to do it. For virtue is effectiveness, and indeed 'constant' effectiveness. If it were only

¹¹⁶ Karol Wojtyła, “Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Formation,” in *Person and Community. Selected Essays*, trans. Theresa Sandok (Peter Lang, 1993), 98.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 99.

occasionally effective it would not be efficient, for we should only be able to say that a given man had succeeded in controlling an impulse, whereas virtue must guarantee that he will certainly control it.¹¹⁹

Also in *Osoba i Czyn*, Wojtyła's word choice for *habitus* reflects their inherently stable nature: the author uses the Polish word “sprawność,” which best translates into English as “proficiency.”¹²⁰

Moving on to the writings of John Paul II, one quickly discovers the same tendency of the Holy Father to describe virtues in terms of consistent dispositions of one's faculties. For instance, while discussing the concept of solidarity, John Paul II insists that the solidarity is a moral virtue and as such, it is “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.”¹²¹ Similarly, in *Theology of the Body*, the Pope remarks that temperance, understood in terms of the constant disposition of the will, deserves to be called virtue.¹²² Elsewhere, referring to virtues in general, the Holy Father says that virtues are “dispositions permanently conferred upon human beings in view of the supernatural works they must do.”¹²³ It should not come as a surprise then, that the Pope encourages the faithful to practice virtues, in a special way those who are called to the priesthood. In one of the letters to the Archbishop Luigi De Magistris, the former Pro-Major Penitentiary of the Apostolic See, the Holy Father encourages priests to cultivate virtues, which provide a good possibility of persevering in their vocation:

In order to pursue the goal of the priesthood, one needs the mature and sound virtue that guarantees, in as much as it is humanly possible, a well-founded possibility of perseverance in the future.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ LR, 169.

¹²⁰ Cf. *OiC*, 262-263 & LR, 169. In *Osoba i czyn*, Wojtyła translates Latin *habitus* as “proficiency” (*sprawność*) and “virtue” (*cnota*). This suggests that for the Polish philosopher proficiency and virtue remains essentially the same concept with one qualification: the first is used in reference to one's body, while the second to man's inner life.

¹²¹ *JRS*, 38.

¹²² *TOB*, 128:1.

¹²³ General audience (October 22, 1999), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20101999.html [accessed Sept 4, 2016].

¹²⁴ John Paul II, “Message to the Pro-Major Penitentiary Archbishop Luigi De Magistris” (15 March 2002), no. 6. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020315_message-de-magistris.pdf. See also, “Address to the Seminarians at the Almo Collegio Capranica” (19 January 2002), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020119_collegio-capranica.html

Stability, therefore, is the first defining characteristic of Wojtyła/John Paul II's notion of virtue. The second is easily deduced from the first: virtues, if stable, are difficult to change. This is because for Wojtyła/John Paul II virtues or vices reside primarily in the will, although not exclusively.¹²⁵ The habit of the will lasts longer than, for example, bodily disposition to digest food: the one who learned to ride a bike as a child will probably know how to do it as an adult; while the bodily disposition to digest food quickly fades away when one gets sea-sick. Besides, Wojtyła/John Paul II reports, the acquisition of virtue is a long and demanding process of itself, and certainly even more demanding for those who wish to move away from vice and acquire virtue.¹²⁶ Virtues have a great impact on people's lives; they "build up the new man within us."¹²⁷ They permeate the entirety of one's being so that "we are speaking not so much of the virtue[s] as of *man* living and acting *"virtuously."*¹²⁸

Along with stability, habit, especially good habit, brings joy to one's actions. In one of his General Audiences, John Paul II, referencing Aquinas's *Summa*, writes that virtuous acts are performed "with ease, habitually, and with delight."¹²⁹ Already in *Elementarz Etyczny*, Wojtyła remarks that "moral good brings deep satisfaction while moral evil remorse, inner sadness and pain."¹³⁰ Every action, whether habitual or not, according to Wojtyła/John Paul II, if oriented towards the genuine good brings joy to one's life. Recall Wojtyła's description of self-fulfillment in action from *Osoba i czyn*: "...existentially every action is some kind of fulfillment of the person. Axiologically, however, this fulfillment is reached only through the good, while moral evil amounts to, so to speak, non-

¹²⁵ In *Osoba i czyn*, Wojtyła notes that "habitus" denotes both "virtue" (cnota) and "proficiency" (sprawność). While the former refers to the inner life of man (his will), the latter is used in reference to his body. Cf. *OiC*, 262.

¹²⁶ Cf. *LR*, 172-173; *OiC*, 262-263; John Paul II, *Reconciliatio et Paenitentia*, no. 29; *TOB*, 128:1.

¹²⁷ General audience (October 13, 1999), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_13101999.html [accessed Sept 4, 2016].

¹²⁸ General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 2. Emphasis mine. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781122.html [accessed Sept 4, 2016].

¹²⁹ John Paul II, General audience (October 20, 1999), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_13101999.html [accessed Sept 4, 2016].

¹³⁰ Wojtyła, "Stosunek do przyjemności," in *Aby Chrystus*, 158.

fulfillment.”¹³¹ Sometimes, in the process of habituation, man experiences the sense of “loss” or “inner sadness” on account of renounced goods or values. This feeling, according to Wojtyła “is a natural phenomenon” and speaks of how powerful carnal desire acts upon people’s minds and wills.¹³² It slowly disappears, however, as “this reflex will grow weaker, the values will return to their proper places” and “the will becomes calm and frees itself from a characteristic sense of loss.”¹³³ As a result, a full-fledged virtue is “the sure way to happiness,” as Wojtyła asserts in his discussion of the virtue of chastity. Properly habituated virtue cannot bring displeasure but is the source of genuine joy, which John Paul II explains in *Theology of Body*, in his discussion of the virtue of continence: “the ascesis of continence does not impoverish 'affective manifestations' but, on the contrary, it makes them spiritually more intense and enriches them.”¹³⁴

Finally, those who acquired moral virtues perform virtuous actions with facility and ease. John Paul II most explicitly alludes to this characteristic of virtues in *Veritatis Splendor* where he writes that virtuous actions lead to “connaturality” between man and the true good.¹³⁵ Through habituation, a person acquires something of a “second nature” so that he performs good actions without much effort or even deliberation. If someone abstains from food but does so reluctantly, cannot be said to possess genuine virtue yet. Though Wojtyła/John Paul II never really elaborates on this aspect of virtue, in *Osoba i Czyn*, one finds an example of “proficiency” of bodily movements that has a similar effect on the agent as other moral virtues:

The entire dynamism of movement, entire mobility of human beings, becomes so spontaneous through the factor of proficiency that a man is no longer aware and does not

¹³¹ *OiC*, 187.

¹³² *LR*, 199.

¹³³ *LR*, 198-199.

¹³⁴ *TOB*, 128:3. John Paul II speaks of the “virtue of continence,” which is not strictly virtue in Thomistic sense. Because, however, the Pope is commenting on the particular passage from *Humanae Vitae*, I am inclined to think that he accepts the terminology of virtue in reference to continence only temporarily. In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła resists naming continence as a virtue, although for different reasons than Aquinas. Continence, in the eyes of Wojtyła, becomes authentic virtue only when it transcends mere “self-mastery” over sexual urges, and recognizes the primacy of the value of another person above sexual desire. Cf. *LR*, 197-198.

¹³⁵ *VJ*, 64.

feel the involvement of the will, which effectively shapes the synthesis of actions and movements.¹³⁶

Wojtyła is careful not to reduce even the most habituated movements of the body to mere automatisms. Still, the proficiency of, for example, running presupposes activity of the will; right before I start my morning jogging or even during the jogging itself, I *want to* run. I do not have to be aware of it, but the moment I ask myself a question whether I want to run, I know that I do. My will, is involved, if it were not, my running would inevitably come to an end. Virtues are never mindless habits for Wojtyła/John Paul II; they involve choice and the work of the intellect. As the Cardinal from Kraków explains in *Love and Responsibility*,

...a fully formed virtue is an efficiently functioning control which permanently keeps the appetites in equilibrium by means of its habitual attitude to the true good *determined by reason*.¹³⁷

For Wojtyła, virtue brings efficiency to an action; efficiency that is not merely an ability to suppress one's appetites but a certain perfection of power thanks to which an agent can pursue moral good with permanency and without effort. It should be noted, however, that the “habitual attitude” never undermines the necessity of reason, which determines the nature of true good. In *Elementarz Etyczny*, Wojtyła firmly asserts that “reason is unceasingly engaged in the process of man's becoming himself, in the process of his self-perfection.”¹³⁸

Similarly, in *Veritatis Splendor*, the Holy Father remarks that the activity of man is morally good only “when it attests to and expresses the voluntary ordering of the person to his ultimate end and the conformity of a concrete action with the human good *as it is acknowledged in its truth by reason*.”¹³⁹ If one acquires a habit on account of which he performs actions without choice or comprehension, that habit is not moral; it is a form of enslavement. Conversely, virtue, as a *moral*

¹³⁶ *OiC*, 263.

¹³⁷ *LR*, 169. Emphasis mine.

¹³⁸ Wojtyła, “Natura i doskonałość,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 141.

¹³⁹ *VS*, 72. Emphasis mine.

habit, reinforces one's rationality and intentionality, while still bringing facility and effectiveness to action.

2.2. *The Nature of Virtue*

One can see that virtues for Wojtyła/John Paul II are essentially good moral habits, which create in a person something of a second nature. They enable him to perform good moral acts reliably and well, with ease and joy. In this sense, Wojtyła/John Paul II's understanding of virtue resembles closely the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic account of virtue. It would be premature to say anything more at this point about its further similarities to the thought of Aristotle or St. Thomas. Therefore, the present investigation must continue, beginning with Wojtyła/John Paul II's understanding of the mean of virtue.

2.2.1. *The Mean of Virtue and Inner Equilibrium*

In the previous chapter, I explained that at the essence of Aristotle's and Aquinas's concept of virtue lays in the doctrine of the mean. The goodness of moral virtue consists in the conformity with the rule of reason, which advises an agent to aim at that, which is intermediate, avoiding the two extremes of excess and deficiency.¹⁴⁰ An authentically brave person knows when to risk his life and when it is necessary to step down and give up the fight. Virtue guarantees that a person's actions are done well, at the right time, in the right place, and with the right attitude.

Wojtyła/John Paul II does not explicitly discuss the concept of the mean of virtue. The references from his earlier philosophical writings as well as some of the later statements about the nature of virtue suggest, however, that the Aristotelian understanding of the mean remains an important element in Wojtyła/John Paul II's account of virtue. The most relevant quote comes

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *ST I-II* 64 & *NE* 1106b29.

from *Love and Responsibility*. At the beginning of the chapter devoted to the question of continence, the Polish Archbishop notes that some people suffer from what he calls “an excessive or inadequate impressionability.”¹⁴¹ The two extreme states, of feeling too much or feeling too little, are tempered by moderation, which, according to Wojtyła, is the process of finding the “mean”:

By moderation we mean the ability to find that “mean” in the control of sensual excitability and sentimental impressionability which in each concrete case in every interpersonal configuration or situation, will best facilitate the realization of love.¹⁴²

In this sense, moderation safeguards the proper expression of love, which avoids both an excessive and deficient level of feelings. In *Osoba i Czyn*, the Polish Archbishop makes a similar point when he explains how virtues in general, understood as proficiencies, always aim at the right amount of emotive energy:

Proficiencies, by their nature, aim at the subordination of the spontaneous emotivity of an “I” subject to self-determination of this “I” [...] They do so, however, in order to use emotive energy to the maximum rather than simply to suppress it. To some degree, then, the will “curbs” the spontaneous outbursts of this energy, and, to the other, assimilates it. Properly assimilated emotive energy markedly strengthens the energy of the will itself.¹⁴³

Avoiding excess or deficiency in realm of man's sensual reactions results in a stable state of “inner equilibrium,” which, according to Wojtyła, is never merely an arithmetical medium: “moderation is not mediocrity but the ability to maintain one's equilibrium amid the stirrings of concupiscence.”¹⁴⁴ In this sense, as he himself remarks, Wojtyła does not attempt a rigid definition of the mean of virtue.¹⁴⁵ Sometimes, a more intense emotional reaction is not only appropriate, but also expected from a virtuous person (e.g., in the case of a mother reacting to her child's sickness).

Furthermore, Wojtyła believes that achievement of the aforementioned equilibrium varies from person to person: “it develops in different ways in different people, depending on their natural

¹⁴¹ *LR*, 195.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*, 196.

¹⁴³ *OiC*, 312. Translation mine.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *LR*, 196.

tendencies.”¹⁴⁶ The essential nature of virtue stays the same, argues Wojtyła, but the way in which it is practiced varies according to different combinations of interior and exterior conditions, social situation, vocation, etc.¹⁴⁷ Virtue, if it does not lead to the state of inner equilibrium, is not virtue in a full sense.¹⁴⁸ It cannot be, as the state of inner equilibrium, provides an agent with an inner gauge for one's sensual and emotional feelings, one's actions, and one's inner state of mind.¹⁴⁹

John Paul II explicitly speaks of equilibrium in context of virtue only once, when he discusses the virtue of continence in *Theology of the Body*.¹⁵⁰ Other references, however, even though scarce, suggest that for the Pope, the mean of virtue remains an important characteristic of John Paul II's understanding of virtue. Particularly instructive is one of the references to the virtue of temperance, where the Holy Father asserts that through the means of virtue one's bodily senses find “the right place” within the structure of the person:

The virtue of temperance guarantees every man mastery of the “lower self” by the “higher self”. Is this a humiliation of our body? Or a disability? On the contrary, this mastery gives higher value to the body. As a result of the virtue of temperance, the body and our senses find *the right place* which pertains to them in our human condition.¹⁵¹

John Paul II later adds that virtue of temperance, reinforced by the virtue of humility, allows man to reach the state of “inner harmony,” “man's interior beauty,” which, perhaps, is another way of saying “inner equilibrium.”¹⁵² The virtue of temperance guarantees that the person will find the right mean between excess and deficiency, that is, between overindulgence and indifference to the bodily and spiritual needs of the person.

In a similar vein, the Holy Father believes that the person who is truly just will find out just the right way of fighting for justice. For instance, in one of the messages, the Pope remarks that

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 196.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., 169.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., 196.

¹⁵⁰ *TOB*, 130:3.

¹⁵¹ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781122.html. Emphasis mine.

¹⁵² Ibid.

actively opposing violence is as important as restraining from any form of pacifism, which serves as an excuse for inaction:

...the just person clings to the conviction that nothing can justify this violation of the rights of man; he has the courage to intercede for others who suffer and he refuses to surrender in the face of injustice, to compromise with it; and likewise, however paradoxical it may appear, the person who deeply desires peace rejects any kind of pacifism which is cowardice or the simple preservation of tranquility.¹⁵³

One other example worth mentioning is the virtue of humility. On the one hand, according to the Pope, through humility people are able to “recognize the limits of our powers, and most importantly, the limits of our knowledge and judgment.”¹⁵⁴ On the other, however, humility “is not identified with humiliation or resignation. It is not accompanied by faint-heartedness.”¹⁵⁵ Humility, for John Paul II, is a virtue whereby man rejects appearances and superficiality, and learns the depth of his own spirit.¹⁵⁶ Thanks to it, man is able to perceive his own humanity in the light of truth; avoiding an overly pessimistic description of his misery on the one end, and overly optimistic belief of his own greatness on the other. The Pope's public apology for the Church's past sins provides a good example of the virtue of humility seeking the right mean:

The Church feels it her duty to acknowledge the sins of her members and to ask God and her brethren to forgive them. This request for pardon must not be understood as an expression of false humility or as a denial of her 2,000-year history, which is certainly richly deserving in the areas of charity, culture and holiness. Instead, she responds to a necessary requirement of the truth, which, in addition to the positive aspects, recognizes the human limitations and weaknesses of the various generations of Christ's disciples.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ John Paul II, “Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace” (January 1, 1984), no. 3. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19831208_xvii-world-day-for-peace.html [accessed August 2, 2016]

¹⁵⁴ John Paul II, “Common Declaration of John Paul II and the Ecumenical Patriarch His Holiness Bartholomew I” (June 10, 2002). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020610_venice-declaration.html [accessed August 2, 2016]

¹⁵⁵ John Paul II, Angelus. First Sunday of Lent (March 4 1979). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/angelus/1979/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_19790304.pdf

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ John Paul II, General Audience (September 1, 1999), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_01091999.html

There is no indication that for the Pope the mean of virtue should be understood in a rigid sense. It seems more probable that John Paul II held on to his earlier view, as expressed in *Love and Responsibility*, that the mean of virtue is not something fixed. In *Veritatis Splendor*, for instance, the Holy Father recalls the words of St. Alphonsus Liguori that “it is not enough to do good works; they need to be done well.”¹⁵⁸ Determining what it takes to “do good works well” in a particular situation is, according to John Paul II, the primary task of prudence, which will be discussed more thoroughly later on in the study. In this sense, the mean of virtue will vary depending on the person, his inner dispositions, character, life circumstances, etc.

A good example of the above-described flexibility of the mean of virtue is the Pope’s discussion of the virtue of fortitude. According to the Holy Father, fortitude is a virtue “found in the man who is ready to sustain evil, that is, to put up with adversities for a just cause, for truth, for justice, etc.”¹⁵⁹ The particular expression of fortitude, however, is a highly individual matter and depends on many factors of an internal and external nature. The Pope himself offers three examples. First, he notes that the word “courageous man” usually conjures up the soldier who defends his homeland, exposing his health to danger, and in wartime, even his life.¹⁶⁰ Nevertheless, the same courage, or, even a greater one, can be found among regular people. John Paul II supplies an example of a pregnant woman, mother of already many children, who does not give in to social and marital pressure to seek an abortion, and an example of a man who resists violating his own principles in exchange for better career.¹⁶¹ The Holy Father’s examples suggest that the mean of virtue must include the concern for one’s character and life situation; one cannot expect the mother to leave her children and fight for her country. The same act that for the soldier would be an act of

¹⁵⁸ *VS*, 78.

¹⁵⁹ John Paul II, General audience (November 15, 1978). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781115.html

¹⁶⁰ Cf. *Ibid.*

¹⁶¹ Cf. *Ibid.*

courage, for the mother would be an act of recklessness. Similarly, for the businessman, refusing to listen to others might be an act of courage, but for the soldier it might be an act of cowardice and disobedience, leading to the death of his companions.

It seems, therefore, that John Paul II does not subscribe to the rigid notion of virtue. The virtues aim at what is intermediate, however, never arithmetically; the mean is not fixed but properly discerned by practical reason which finds the best possible course of action in the particular situation.

2.2.2. The Personalistic Character of the Virtues

The second essential characteristic of Wojtyła/John Paul II's understanding of virtues is their personalistic dimension. The discussion in the preceding section revealed that the mean of virtue remains a valid category and important element in Wojtyła/John Paul II's conception of virtue. However, considering other passages, especially those where the working of a particular virtue is explicitly treated, even more important than the doctrine of the mean for Wojtyła/John Paul II, seems to be virtues' capacity to affirm and respect the value of another person. Being the lasting dispositions of one's character, virtues are perfect candidates to ensure that people respect each other and treat each other with due dignity. To make the case, the study will examine the three virtues which on Wojtyła/John Paul II's account would lose their meaning and relevance if detached from the value of personhood. These virtues are chastity, industriousness, and solidarity.

2.2.2.1. Chastity

The virtue of chastity is one of the few virtues which received a systematic treatment over the course of Wojtyła/John Paul II's entire life. Already in 1953, Wojtyła draws attention of his

readers to “this domain of life in which we encounter difficulties.”¹⁶² In a paper presented in September 1968, not even three months after publication of *Humanae vitae*, Wojtyła argues that conjugal chastity serves as an “integrating factor,” which does not suppress the expression of conjugal love, but on the contrary strengthens it and brings it to completion.¹⁶³ Later as the Pope, John Paul II frequently speaks on the virtue of chastity, most notably in his *Theology of the Body* catechesis.¹⁶⁴ The primary text in which one finds the most systematic treatment of virtue of chastity, however, is, of course, Wojtyła's *Love and Responsibility*. A brief analysis of relevant passages should suffice to show the deeply personalistic character of this important virtue.

Wojtyła begins with recollecting the traditional approach to the virtue of chastity. He notes that in St. Thomas's system chastity is linked with the cardinal virtue of temperance (which Wojtyła prefers to call moderation), which is responsible for subordinating man's sensual reactions to the rule of reason. Without it the will might easily become subject to the senses, which results in perversion of his rational nature.¹⁶⁵ The virtue of chastity, therefore, is but a part of the virtue of temperance, which enables man to subdue his sensual reactions to the value of sex.¹⁶⁶ As it was mentioned earlier, in its fuller sense, moderation is not merely subduing spontaneous outbursts of the sexual urge but “an efficient regulator which ensures consistent moderation and with it a natural equilibrium of the sensual appetites.”¹⁶⁷ For Wojtyła, however, the traditional description of the virtue of chastity as a particular expression of the virtue of temperance does not yet fully convey its full meaning. At the end of the paragraph, the Archbishop of Kraków asks:

But should we look for the essence of chastity in moderation? Is this, in fact, the best way of bringing out the real value and significance of chastity in human life? Against the

¹⁶² Wojtyła, “Religijne przeżywanie czystości” (“Religious Experience of Chastity”), in *Aby Chrystus*, 52.

¹⁶³ Wojtyła, “The teaching of *Humanae Vitae* on Love,” in *Person and Community*, 312-313.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. *TOB*, 128:1-132:6.

¹⁶⁵ *LR*, 168.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

background of our discussion and analyses so far we must, I think, endeavor to bring out and emphasize much more forcefully the kinship between chastity and love.¹⁶⁸

This does not mean that Wojtyła wishes to *dismiss* the traditional Thomistic approach to the virtue of chastity; in fact, elsewhere he will say that “whoever is not self-controlled and moderate is not chaste.”¹⁶⁹ Rather, Wojtyła *expands* on the traditional definition of virtue of chastity by indicating its deeply personalistic character, as expressed through virtue of love.

To be chaste, according to the Archbishop, is to have a “transparent” attitude to a person of the other sex, without which love is not itself, because it cannot be until the desire to use another person as one's object of pleasure is subordinated to the loving kindness characteristic of the genuine virtue of love. Chastity, argues Wojtyła, is often perceived as “a purely negative virtue.” On this reading, it is one continuous “no,” whereas it is above all the “yes” of which certain “no’s” are the consequence.¹⁷⁰ The real value of chastity, which is the most characteristic of it, is the affirmation of one's value as person, in love:

The essence of chastity consists in quickness to affirm the value of the person on every situation, and in raising to the personal level all reactions to the value of “the body and sex.” [...] the raising of these values to the level of the value of the person is characteristic of and essential to chastity. Thus also only the chaste man and the chaste woman are capable of true love.¹⁷¹

Wojtyła admits that the acquisition of the virtue of chastity is a difficult and long-term matter: “one must wait patiently for it to bear fruit, for the happiness of loving kindness which it must bring.”¹⁷²

It is, however, a noble effort and a “sure way to happiness.”¹⁷³

For John Paul II, chastity continues to be the virtue in a traditional Thomistic sense.

However, its full value lies in the protection and respect of the well-being of another person:

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 196.

¹⁷⁰ LR, 170.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 171.

¹⁷² Ibid., 172.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

The task of conjugal chastity, and still more specifically continence, lies not only in protecting the importance and dignity of the conjugal act in relation to its potentially procreative meaning, *but also* in safeguarding the importance and dignity proper to the conjugal act inasmuch it expresses interpersonal union.¹⁷⁴

What the Holy Father adds to his previous reflection on chastity from *Love and Responsibility*, is its supernatural character, whereby the effort of chaste spouses is strengthened by the power of the Holy Spirit:

At the center of conjugal spirituality, therefore, stands chastity, not only as a moral virtue (formed by love) but equally as a virtue connected with the gifts of the Holy Spirit - above all with the gift of reverence for what comes from God (*"donum pietatis"*) [...] This corresponds to the vocation of the human person to marriage. These "two," who -according to the most ancient expression of the Bible -"will be one flesh" (Gen 2:24), cannot realize such a union on the level of persons (*communio personarum*) *except through the powers that come from the spirit*.¹⁷⁵

To summarize, whether at the beginning of his career or at the end of it, Wojtyła/John Paul II puts forward a very coherent notion of the virtue of chastity. It is undoubtedly one of the central virtues in Wojtyła/John Paul II's teachings and a very good example of the virtue, which though bearing the marks of the traditional Thomistic approach, is characterized primarily through its ability to affirm and safeguard the value of another person.

2.2.2.2. *Industriousness*

Another example of the deeply personalistic character of virtue in John Paul II's thought is the virtue of industriousness. It is a new virtue in a sense; no explicit reference to it exists in the previous work of Karol Wojtyła.¹⁷⁶ Industriousness, as the Holy Father defines it, is a virtue because

¹⁷⁴ TOB, 128:6. Original emphasis.

¹⁷⁵ TOB, 131:2-3. Original emphasis.

¹⁷⁶ Wojtyła may not speak of virtue of industriousness just yet, but the texts from *Love and Responsibility* and *Osoba i czyn* are well known to constitute philosophical underpinnings for John Paul II's later argument for the dignity of human work without which, it is impossible to understand the virtue of industriousness. See esp. LR, 25-26 & *ÖiC*, 113. For a more detailed analysis of the subjective meaning of work in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II, see: Deborah Savage, *The Subjective Dimension of Human Work: The Conversion of the Acting Person According to Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II and Bernard Lonergan* (New York: Peter Lang, 2008).

it “effectively permits the person to become more human.”¹⁷⁷ To understand why industriousness is an efficient way of becoming a better human being, one must briefly recall John Paul II's teaching on the value of human labor.

The Holy Father begins his reflection on work with the Book of Genesis. He focuses his attention on chapter three, where Adam is being punished with toil in work as a consequence of sin, and chapter one, in which God creates a male and a female and commands them to “fill the earth and subdue it.”¹⁷⁸ The Pope quickly notes the difference in the scriptural text between the “toil” and “labor,” arguing that labor remains essentially a good thing for man:

...These words refer to *the sometimes heavy toil* that from then onwards has accompanied human work; but they do not alter the fact that work is the means whereby man *achieves that “dominion”* which is proper to him over the visible world, by “subjecting” the earth. [...] And yet, in spite of all this toil-perhaps, in a sense, because of it-work is a good thing for man. Even though it bears the mark of a *bonum arduum*, in the terminology of Saint Thomas, this does not take away the fact that, as such, it is a good thing for man.¹⁷⁹

In this sense, in God's original plan, man was given a capacity to work, through which he is able to reflect the image of God and fully realize himself as a person:

Work is a good thing for man-a good thing for his humanity-because through work man *not only transforms nature*, adapting it to his own needs, but he also *achieves fulfillment* as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes “more a human being.”¹⁸⁰

The virtue of industriousness, then, responds to the fundamental calling of man to work and to self-realization. As a virtue, one could certainly say that industriousness grants that a person, who is performing a work, does it well and with right attitude. In a sense, the virtue of industriousness could be another example of virtue in John Paul II's corpus that observes the mean of virtue: an industrious person would avoid unhealthy workaholism on the one hand, and laziness on the other.

¹⁷⁷ John Paul II, General audience (May 1, 2002), no. 1. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2002/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20020501.html

¹⁷⁸ *LE*, 9.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* Original emphasis.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.* Original emphasis.

However, rather than focusing on that aspect of virtue, the Holy Father decides to emphasize its deeply personalistic character. In both of his two social encyclicals *Laborem Exercens* and *Centesimus Annus*, he defines industriousness as a virtue that ensures man's self-realization as person and protects against violation of his dignity:

...it is well known that it is possible to use work in various ways against man, that it is possible to punish man with the system of forced labor in concentration camps, that work can be made into a means for oppressing man, and that in various ways it is possible to exploit human labor, that is to say the worker. All this pleads in favour of the moral obligation to link industriousness as a virtue with the social order of work, which will enable man to become, in work, "more a human being" and not be degraded by it not only because of the wearing out of his physical strength (which, at least up to a certain point, is inevitable), but especially through damage to the dignity and subjectivity that are proper to him.¹⁸¹

Similarly, in *Centesimus Annus*, the Holy Father argues that only with due consideration to virtues, such as industriousness, prudence, diligence, reliability, and fidelity in interpersonal relationships, people are able to create working communities which can be said to be authentically good and worthy of the dignity of man.¹⁸² What defines the virtue of industriousness at its very essence, then, is its capacity to safeguard the dignity and value of a working person. It is still a moral habit,¹⁸³ but the one, that ensures that a given work, besides being done well and with the right attitude, takes proper notice of the value of another person.

2.2.2.3. *Solidarity*

The last virtue that exemplifies the personalism inherent to Wojtyła/John Paul II's understanding of virtue is solidarity. Similarly to chastity, Wojtyła speaks of solidarity already in his philosophical works, most notably in chapter seven of *Osoba i Czyn*. He refers to it, however, as an *attitude* rather than virtue.¹⁸⁴ In fact, a closer reading of Wojtyła/John Paul II reveals that solidarity is

¹⁸¹ *LE*, 9.

¹⁸² *CA*, 32.

¹⁸³ *LE*, 9.

¹⁸⁴ Cf. *OiC*, 352.

defined differently by the Polish scholar, as a principle, attitude, duty, and virtue.¹⁸⁵ I will not delve into the discussion which of these is better suited for expressing the nature of the concept. This work has been already done by other scholars, most notably by Marie Vianney Bilgrien.¹⁸⁶ The focus in this section is not to settle any debates, but simply to show that the defining mark of the virtue of solidarity, as presented in the writings of John Paul II, is its personalistic character.

To understand why the Holy Father puts so much emphasis on the value of another person in his discussion of the virtue of solidarity, one must go back for a moment to his philosophical understanding of the concept of participation.

In *Osoba i Człowiek*, before ever discussing the idea of solidarity, Wojtyła examines a more fundamental concept of participation. The Polish Archbishop begins his reflection with an observation that the phenomenological analysis of the acting person would be incomplete without considering the issue of intersubjectivity, or more simply, the fact that actions can be done by human individuals acting “together with others.”¹⁸⁷ For Wojtyła, the personalistic value of the human action is a special and probably the most fundamental manifestation of the value of the person himself: “the person's self-fulfillment through an action constitutes a value of itself. This precisely is the personalistic value; for the person through action fulfills himself in it.”¹⁸⁸ By acting together with others, the human person participates in community but also fulfills himself as a person:

Participation, therefore, represents a feature of the person himself, the interior and homogeneous feature which determines that the person being and acting with others does so

¹⁸⁵ Kenneth R Himes and Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 430.

¹⁸⁶ Marie Vianney Bilgrien, *Solidarity: A Principle, an Attitude, a Duty? or the Virtue for an Interdependent World?* (New York: P. Lang, 1999). It should be noted, however, that a general consensus exist to treat John Paul II's concept of solidarity, at least in the way it is presented in *SRS*, primarily in terms of virtue. The following position can be found in: Charles E. Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 98;

Meghan J. Clark, *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014), 110; Bilgrien, 92, and Hines, 430.

¹⁸⁷ *OiC*, 325.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 330.

as a person. When it comes to the activity itself, participation, as a feature of the person, determines that by acting together with others, the person performs an action and fulfills himself through it.¹⁸⁹

Now, community expresses the reality of participation, which, as noted above, is essential for the personal fulfillment in acting together with others.¹⁹⁰ Acting in community introduces certain “subjectiveness,” as every action requires a subject to perform it. Wojtyła is careful here not to assign subjectivity to communities. He argues that when speaking of communities one may speak of “quasi-subjectiveness,” but never of subjectivity in its proper sense: “We call it ‘quasi-subjectiveness’ because the correct (substantial) subject of being and acting, also when acting with others, is *always man-person*.”¹⁹¹ While acting for the sake of the common good, man chooses what others choose and often because of what others choose. At the same time, he chooses the common good for his own good and as the end of his own striving.¹⁹² This is why Wojtyła writes that it is “impossible to define the common good without simultaneously taking into consideration the subjective moment.”¹⁹³ One also understands why participation is essential to any authentically human community.¹⁹⁴

It is at this point that the specific role of solidarity can be explained. Wojtyła first writes that solidarity is:

...the attitude of a community in which the common good properly conditions and initiates participation, and participation in turn properly serves the common good, fosters it, and advances its realization.¹⁹⁵

At the same time, solidarity is also an attitude of individuals, and as such, it means “a constant readiness to accept and to realize one's share in the community because of the membership in that particular community.”¹⁹⁶ Solidarity must “dominate” in the hearts and minds of people to the

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 335.

¹⁹⁰ *OiC*, 343.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 343-344. Original emphasis.

¹⁹² Ibid., 345.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 347.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *OiC*, 349-351.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 352.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 352.

extent it allows individuals to take responsibility for the tasks and duties of each member of the community:

This acute sense of the needs of the community, which is characteristic to the attitude of solidarity, emphasizes above any division or particularism certain mutual complementariness: that I am ready to complement by my action that, which is done by other members of the community.¹⁹⁷

In this light, solidarity is an intrinsic manifestation of participation understood as an essential feature of the person: “through this attitude man finds his own fulfillment in complementing others.”¹⁹⁸

Solidarity, being named a virtue, has not lost its essential, deeply personalistic structure. For the Holy Father, the virtue of solidarity is an ethical response to the fact of interdependence in the contemporary world. To use Wojtyla's language, it is still the most fundamental manifestation of participation whereby individual persons effectively strive for the common good and at the same time fulfill themselves as persons. What appears to be novel is the strength and determination with which solidarity is now expressed. No longer is solidarity simply an attitude, which can be changed or lost, but a virtue and a stable disposition of character that reliably lead the members of society to work for the good of others:

When interdependence becomes recognized in this way, the correlative response as a moral and social attitude, as a “virtue,” is solidarity. This then is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.¹⁹⁹

John Paul II offers some further insight to the nature of solidarity and the way it ought to operate:

Those who are more influential, because they have a greater share of goods and common services, should feel responsible for the weaker and be ready to share with them all they possess. Those who are weaker, for their part, in the same spirit of solidarity, should not adopt a purely passive attitude or one that is destructive of the social fabric, but, while claiming their legitimate rights, should do what they can for the good of all. The intermediate

¹⁹⁷ *OiC*, 353. Translation mine.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 353. Translation mine.

¹⁹⁹ *SRJ*, 38.

groups, in their turn, should not selfishly insist on their particular interests, but respect the interests of others.²⁰⁰

One could possibly read the above quote as suggesting that the Holy Father's definition of the virtue of solidarity observes the traditional doctrine of the mean of virtue: in this sense, solidarity would aim at restoring the equilibrium between extreme states of poverty and wealth.²⁰¹ This, however, is not what seems to constitute the core of the virtue, at least not for John Paul II. The Holy Father prefers to define solidarity primarily in the personalistic terms. In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, he writes that “the exercise of solidarity within each society is valid when its members recognize one another as persons.”²⁰² He repeatedly states that solidarity, above all else, is a virtue ensuring that people, regardless of their beliefs and ethnic background, are treated in a way that corresponds to their dignity as persons:

Solidarity helps us to see the “other”—whether a person, people or nation—not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our “neighbor,” a “helper” (cf. Gen 2:18-20), to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.²⁰³

On this reading, the virtue of solidarity does not differ much from, for example, the virtue of chastity; while chastity ensured the proper realization of love among spouses, solidarity ensures the proper exercise of justice among the people. Both solidarity and chastity undeniably bear the marks of traditional Thomistic virtue, but both are also something more: they safeguard the dignity of another person in particular areas of one's life.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 39.

²⁰¹ My intuition can be reinforced by John Paul II's words at the XXth World Day for Peace: "For if the essential note of solidarity is to be found in the radical equality of all men and women, then any and every policy that contradicts the basic dignity and human rights of any person or group of persons is a policy that is to be rejected. On the contrary, policies and programs that build open and honest relationships among peoples, that forge just alliances, that unite people in honorable cooperation, are to be fostered. Such initiatives do not ignore the real linguistic, racial, religious, social or cultural differences among peoples; nor do they deny the great difficulties in overcoming long-standing divisions and injustice. But they do give pride of place to the elements that unite, however small they may appear to be." Full text available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19861208_xx-world-day-for-peace.html [accessed Sept 16, 2016]

²⁰² *SRS*, 39.

²⁰³ Ibid.

The discussion of the three virtues of chastity, industriousness, and solidarity provides a convincing argument that the personalistic structure of virtue is as important (if not more important) to Wojtyła/John Paul II's understanding of virtue, than the traditional concept of the mean of virtue. The next step will be to determine what Wojtyła/John Paul II says about prudence, without which, no system of virtue-centered ethics can function well.

3. Prudence

In the second chapter, I said that prudence is an essential component of traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic theory of virtue. For both Aristotle and Aquinas, moral virtues and prudence are intrinsically connected. On the one hand, prudence informs moral virtues by specifying the right course of action in a given situation, on the other, moral virtues safeguard the proper functioning of prudence by preventing an agent from being distracted by passions.

This section will argue that for Wojtyła/John Paul II prudence also has a special role to perform in the life of a virtuous person. The challenge, however, is that the relevant references are scattered throughout his corpus and often do not speak of prudence directly. In addition, there is a host of other terms which Wojtyła/John Paul II employs, and which without careful consideration, may appear to be semantically similar to prudence, such as practical reasoning, wisdom, or conscience. This suggests that the best way of presenting Wojtyła/John Paul II's teaching on prudence will be first by examining each of the relevant terms, and only subsequently, by discussing it as the virtue of one's character.

3.1. Reason and Moral Action

Wojtyła offers a concise description of the role of reason in moral action already in *Elementarz Etyki*. He says that “the same reason, which in its cognition arrives at what is real,

prescribes also how to act.”²⁰⁴ On the one hand, reason is responsible for knowing the truth and consequently for discovering moral good, on the other, it devises the means suitable for achieving that good. Thus, Wojtyła points to descriptive and prescriptive functions of reasoning without explicitly naming them as such. At the same time, the Cardinal from Kraków does not intend to equate theoretical reasoning with its practical counterpart. The term “the same reason” is used in general rather specific sense; Wojtyła simply says that moral acting involves one and the same faculty of reasoning, which is expressed in two different ways. Furthermore, one should note that the knowledge of moral good, and thus the work of theoretical reasoning, conditions the activity of practical deliberation. Wojtyła believes that “the entry point of morally good action must consist in theoretically accurate perception of reality, which allows for specification of ends of an action.”²⁰⁵ This is consistent with Wojtyła's deeply realistic approach to ethics, described in chapter one.²⁰⁶ If the moral good is not properly discovered or correctly identified in a hierarchy of values, an agent will inevitably take an action that is not morally positive.

Theoretical and practical reasoning, therefore, are intrinsically connected with theory taking precedence over practice. My point, however, is not to develop a systematic account of the relationship between descriptive and prescriptive roles of reason in Wojtyła/John Paul II's ethics. The quote from *Elementarz Etyczny* neatly summarized the overall role of reason in moral acting but it was primarily used to ascertain Wojtyła's own use of the distinction between practical and theoretical reasoning. It is at this point that the proper examination of practical reasoning must be undertaken, as it directly concerns the work of prudence.

²⁰⁴ Wojtyła, “Realizm w etyce,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 138.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 137. See also *VS*, 72.

²⁰⁶ See also Wojtyła, “Realizm w etyce,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 138.

3.1.1. Practical Reasoning

Wojtyła explicitly links the work of reason with man's quest for moral excellence: "reason is unceasingly engaged in the process of man's becoming himself, in the process of his self-perfection."²⁰⁷ If by reason is meant both theoretical *and* practical reasoning, as argued above, then practical reasoning must have its own special role to play in virtuous activity. The virtues ensure that the person chooses what is morally good, which in turn, results in self-fulfillment. A careful reading of other pages of *Elementarz Etyczny* reveals that Wojtyła not only develops a solid account of practical reasoning, but also ties it to the proper development and practice of the virtues. In one of the relevant sections, he writes:

Reason, when determining norms for action, always orients itself towards that kind of action in reference to this or other being, which contributes to the proper self-perfection of man, to the fuller actualization of his nature and its potentiality [...] Man can only perfect himself in reference to the order of the world; beings and goods contained within it. Reason enjoys certain insight into this order and by creating norms for action it attempts to most accurately place the man within it. It does so in a better or worse way, depending on how thorough its cognition of reality is.²⁰⁸

There are four points to be inferred from this quotation.

First, Wojtyła clearly speaks of *practical* reason here. His description pertains specifically to one's way of acting rather than the way of knowing; the truth is not discovered but acted upon. He speaks twice about reason providing "norms for acting," that is, concrete *means* for pursuing specific ends. The emphasis on acting is precisely what differentiates practical from theoretical reason, according to Wojtyła. While practical reasoning is expressed by the "directing of the will according to reliable truth about the good,"²⁰⁹ theoretical reason is responsible for the "discovering of the subjective and objective reality and its correct valuation."²¹⁰

²⁰⁷ Wojtyła, "Natura i doskonałość," in *Aby Chrystus*, 141.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 141.

²⁰⁹ Wojtyła, "Znaczenie powinności," in *Aby Chrystus*, 144.

²¹⁰ Wojtyła, "Realizm w etyce," in *Aby Chrystus*, 138.

Second, “norms for acting” or simply the means to achieve an end of action, contribute to the “self-perfection” of man; they “place” him “most accurately” in the world. The language here suggests that practical reason is responsible for finding not just *any* means, but the *right* means, which ensure that a given action is done well and with concern for one’s self-perfection.²¹¹ On this reading, the work of practical reasoning is essential for establishing the “mean of virtue,” which, as it was said before, is the hallmark of moral virtues.

Third, finding out the right means involves a necessary reference to man's overall desire for self-actualization. This indicates that in the process of finding the proper means, practical reasoning considers the *whole* of one's life. Particular action must not be good only for this particular end; but it must correspond to the overarching quest for one's self-realization. This point anticipates the later discussion of the connectivity among virtues.

Finally, practical reasoning, as indicated before, is highly dependent on the work of theoretical reasoning. Man's ability to find out the right thing to do is conditioned by his prior knowledge of moral reality; depending on the degree to which this knowledge is possessed or missing, an agent’s identification of proper means will be done “in a better or worse way.”

Wojtyła does not explicitly discuss practical reasoning in *Love and Responsibility* and only briefly mentions it in *Osoba i Czyn*.²¹² Everything he says in *Elementarz Etyczny*, however, seems to be in perfect continuation with his later comments as the Pope. For instance, John Paul II distinguishes between practical and theoretical reasoning saying that “while speculative reason is ordered to

²¹¹ Assuming, of course, that the person properly recognized the moral good by means of theoretical reasoning.

²¹² In *Osoba i czyn*, Wojtyła mentions practical reasoning in light of the distinction between ontological and moral truth: “...the axiological (or moral) truth [...] is differentiated from the ontological and logical ‘truth.’ In grasping it we assert the value of an object rather than what the object itself or as cognized actually is. The ‘axiological truth’ - or rather truth in the axiological sense - which is disclosed by our investigation is not, however, the same as the so-called ‘practical truth’ and does not belong directly to so-called ‘practical knowledge.’ It is an essential element in the vision one has of human reality.” (*OiC*, 176) The following quotation echoes Wojtyła’s distinction between theoretical and practical reasoning from *Elementarz etyczny*.

knowing the truth, practical reason is ordered to doing, to directing human activity.”²¹³ The Holy Father also speaks extensively of the role of practical reasoning in *Veritatis Splendor*, noting that practical reasoning expresses the foundational insight about the good to be pursued.²¹⁴ Most of the time, however, John Paul II focuses on particular “expressions” of practical reasoning, most notably conscience and the virtue of prudence. Since my intention in this section is to provide the most comprehensive account of Wojtyła/John Paul II’s concept of prudence, I will now attend to the role of conscience, which, as I will explain, constitutes an essential element of practical reasoning, and therefore, of virtuous activity.

3.2. Conscience

Because both conscience and prudence correspond to the working of practical reasoning, one needs to be aware of the difference between the two. An extremely important and perhaps the only explicit reference, which describes the relationship between conscience and prudence in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s work, comes from one his earlier articles in *Znak*, entitled “Catholic Sexual Ethics.” The relevant passage reads as follows:

No science can be directly practical, since a practical judgment (*iudicium practico—practicum*) is always individual and particular, corresponding to what exists *hic et nunc*, whereas science is essentially general. The directly practical role of human knowledge is performed *actually* by conscience and *habitually* by the proficiency called prudence.²¹⁵

On this reading, conscience is intimately related to prudence. In fact, prudence presupposes the work of conscience that is responsible for making practical judgments in particular situation.

Prudence, then, is a *perfection* of conscience; it enables an agent to make good practical decisions in a

²¹³ John Paul II, “Message to the Participants in the Third Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of St Thomas Aquinas” (21 June 2002), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2002/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20020622_pont-acad-st-thomas.html

²¹⁴ Cf. *VS*, 52 & 59.

²¹⁵ Wojtyła, “Catholic Sexual Ethics,” in *Person and Community*, 280-281. Emphasis mine.

habitual way. Thus, everything that Wojtyła/John Paul II says about conscience can also be said of prudence, understood in terms of virtuous disposition.

John Paul II spends a considerable amount of time discussing the nature and role of conscience in *Veritatis Splendor*. He writes that “the judgment of conscience is a *practical judgment*, a judgment which makes known what man must do or not do, or which assesses an act already performed by him.”²¹⁶ Conscience *executes* what practical reason supplies. It is the defining moment, in which a person concludes that a particular action corresponds to the true good:

The judgment of conscience states “in an ultimate way” whether a certain particular kind of behavior is in conformity with the law; it formulates the proximate norm of the morality of a voluntary act, “applying the objective law to a particular case.”²¹⁷

Because of its “proximate” and decisive character, the judgment of conscience has an imperative nature: “man must act in accordance with it.”²¹⁸ However, conscience is not an independent and exclusive capacity to decide what is right and what is wrong. The judgment of conscience does not establish the law; rather, “it bears witness to the authority of the natural law and of the practical reason with reference to the supreme good.”²¹⁹ This means that one may actually err in the judgment of conscience. Wojtyła/John Paul II holds that every human act is oriented towards some good.²²⁰ Man cannot want evil for himself. However, sometimes in his perception, he can mistake objective evil for subjective good, which is what the Holy Father means when he says that “in the case of the erroneous conscience, it is a question of what man, mistakenly, *subjectively* considers to be true.”²²¹

This is an important point in light of the discussion of prudence; for conscience of its own is not yet “proficiency,” an “excellence” of practical reasoning, and therefore, may be distorted by passions or by a false perception of reality. A well-formed conscience, on the other hand, is a

²¹⁶ *VS*, 59. Original emphasis.

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 60.

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²²⁰ Cf. Wojtyła, “Humanizm a cel człowieka,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 150 & *VS*, 63.

²²¹ *VS*, 63. Original emphasis.

domain of virtuous people, specifically, prudent people who can *reliably* choose what is *objectively* good in particular situation. A judgment of conscience due to its proximity to an action constitutes an essential element of practical reasoning, but of itself is not perfective of practical thinking; on the contrary, an erroneous conscience follows an *already* erroneous practical reasoning, which is precisely the reason why the person needs prudence. To quote John Paul II, “prudence always has the task of *verifying* that they [i.e., moral judgments] apply in a specific situation.”²²²

3.3. Prudence as Virtue

Wojtyła’s preference to treat prudence as a habitual “proficiency” of practical reasoning continued into his later papal writings. For John Paul II, prudence is above all a moral virtue, more specifically, one of the four cardinal virtues.²²³ The way the Pope describes it in the context of other virtues, furthermore suggests that prudence takes precedence over other moral virtues. For example, in a previously quoted passage from *Veritatis Splendor*, the Holy Father explains that connaturality between man and true moral good develops through the virtuous attitudes:

Such a connaturality [between the person and moral good] is rooted in and develops through the virtuous attitudes of the individual himself: prudence *and* the other cardinal virtues, and even before these the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.²²⁴

Certainly, the most important virtues in the grand scheme of Wojtyła/John Paul II’s ethics are the theological virtues, most notably, the virtue of charity. Nevertheless, prudence is also distinguished; it clearly stands out from the remaining three cardinal virtues. A very similar example can be found in the Pope’s letter to artists, in which John Paul II remarks that “the moral virtues, and *among them*

²²² *VS*, 67. Emphasis mine.

²²³ John Paul II, General audience (October 25, 1978). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781025.html [accessed Sept 20, 2016]

²²⁴ *VS*, 64. Emphasis mine.

prudence in particular, allow the subject to act in harmony with the criterion of moral good and evil.”²²⁵

These observations find substantial justification in John Paul II’s catechesis on the virtue of prudence from 1978. In it, the Pope writes that “prudence is the key for the accomplishment of the fundamental task that each of us has received from God.”²²⁶ This task, explains later the Holy Father, is “the perfection of man himself.”²²⁷

3.3.1. *Prudence and the Moral Virtues*

Prudence has to do with answering the question: “What must we do?”²²⁸ It ensures that man reliably chooses what is right for him in a given situation and in reference to his overall quest for self-perfection: “The prudent man, who strives for everything that is really good, endeavors to measure everything, every situation and his whole activity according to the yardstick of moral good.”²²⁹ John Paul II elaborates on this aspect of prudence in the previously mentioned letter to artists, where he explains that through the means of prudence man acts in harmony with moral good “according to *recta ratio agibilium*” (the right criteria for action).²³⁰ This “right criterion” or “right measure” is characteristic of prudence and essential to any virtue, for as it was said, every virtue aims at what is right or intermediate. In this sense, prudence guarantees that a virtuous person will perform an action with “right measure,” that is, in a right way, with right attitude, and at the right time.

²²⁵ John Paul II, “Letter to Artists” (4 April 1999), footnote 2. Emphasis mine.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_23041999_artists.html

²²⁶ John Paul II, General audience (October 25, 1978). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781025.html [accessed Sept 20, 2016]

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ John Paul II, “Address to the Bishops of Western Canada on their “Ad Limina” Visit” (30 October 1999), no. 6.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_30101999_ad-limina-west-canada.html

²²⁹ Ibid.

²³⁰ John Paul II, “Letter to artists,” footnote 2.

John Paul II often calls for prudence when a situation is challenging and no easy solution is available. For instance, the Pope frequently refers to the virtue of prudence in the context of social justice. Speaking out on the painful experience of apartheid and the need to overcome it, the Holy Father advises the members of UNO commission that their “delicate work demands *firmness in the defense of principles* and *prudence in the choice of means* suitable for attaining your purpose.”²³¹ Similarly, addressing the issue of illegal immigration, he argues that “The necessary prudence required to deal with so delicate a matter cannot become one of reticence or exclusivity” because, as he explains, “thousands would suffer the consequences as victims of situations that seem destined to deteriorate instead of being resolved.”²³²

Prudence must also be the domain of leaders, pastors, and teachers. To the American bishops, John Paul II writes that “in our pastoral mission we must often evaluate a situation and decide on a course of action. We must do this with prudence and pastoral realism.”²³³ Concerning the issue of Holy Communion for the Divorced, pastors are called to help the divorced Catholics experience the charity of Christ, and “suggesting, with prudence and respect, concrete ways of conversion and participation in the life of the community of the Church.”²³⁴ To those in the legal profession, the Pope reminds that the exercise of the legal profession requires more than just legal

²³¹ John Paul II, “Address to Members of the Special Committee of the United Nations Organization against Apartheid” (7 July 1984), no. 4. Emphasis original. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1984/july/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19840707_onu-apartheid.html.

²³² John Paul II, “Message for World Migration Day: Undocumented Migrants” (25 July 1995), no. 2. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/migration/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_25071995_undocumented_migrants.html

²³³ John Paul II, “Address to the Bishops of the United States of America Minor Seminary of Our Lady of the Angels (Los Angeles)” (16 September 1987), no. 14. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1987/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19870916_vescovi-stati-uniti.html

²³⁴ Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, “Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church concerning the Reception of Holy Communion by the Divorced and Remarried Members of the Faithful” (14 September 1994), no. 6. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_14091994_rec-holy-comm-by-divorced_en.html. Even though the letter has been authored by CDF, John Paul II gave his approval to it and ordered its publication.

knowledge and expertise: lawyers “must also be persons of wisdom and prudence.”²³⁵ John Paul II often prayed for prudence for world leaders and politicians.²³⁶

Prudence ensures that these and other virtuous agents acquire an authentic grasp of general principles of an action and, accordingly, are able to choose what is right in a reliable way *regardless of* the circumstances. Someone who is brave knows how to defend the victim of a street robbery, but also knows how to take care of his own kids. For virtues, as mentioned earlier, are not mere automatisms, codified responses, but intelligent moral habits. Virtuous people do not act out of mindless reflexes, but a carefully developed disposition of the will and intellect, which always involves choice and engages practical reasoning. Habits acquired without prudence will inevitably be mindless and, consequently, useless. In *Elementarz Etyczny*, Wojtyła argues that “praxis detached from theory may just as well become mechanistic activism, and more than once it would be a wasted effort.”²³⁷ What this means is that one who wishes to acquire genuine virtue must possess at least some knowledge of what he is doing. John Paul II highlights this point in his treatment of the virtue of purity:

When this ability, that is, virtue, leads to abstaining “from unchastity,” it does so because the man who possesses it knows “how to keep his own body with holiness and reverence, not as the object of lustful passion.” What we have here is a *practical ability that enables man to act* in a definite way and at the same time *not to act* in a contrary way.²³⁸

One cannot develop an authentic virtue by simply following the commands of others or blindly copying what others do, even if what they do is virtuous. Genuine virtue can only be acquired by

²³⁵ John Paul II, “Address to the Members of the Alumni Association of the Academy of American and International Law” (27 September 1986), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19860927_giuristi-americani.html

²³⁶ Cf. John Paul II, “Address at the Farewell Ceremony from Korea” (9 October 1989), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1989/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19891009_congedo-corea.html; “Address to H.E. Mr Edward John Stevens, Ambassador Of Australia To The Holy See” (11 January 1997). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1997/january/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19970111_ambassador-australia.html; “Address To H.E. Mr. Walter Woon, New Ambassador of Singapore Accredited to the Holy See” (12 December 2003). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2003/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20031212_singapore-ambassador.html

²³⁷ Wojtyła, “Realizm w etyce,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 139.

²³⁸ *TOB*, 54:2. Original emphasis.

practical recognition of the reasons and the means behind a given action. That is why prudence both conditions the acquisition of moral virtues and develops along with them.

In chapter two, I highlighted this point by referring to Aristotle's analogy of skill, but the same use of the word "skill" cannot be found in the work of Wojtyła/John Paul II. The Pope often speaks of skills, but not in the immediate context of acquisition of virtue. For example, in the address to the participants in the study week organized by The Pontifical Academy of Sciences, the Holy Father encouraged scientists that "the prospects of genetic therapy for treating diseases are likewise hopeful and deserve the commitment of science and the *skill* of those carrying out research."²³⁹ To artists gathered at St. Peter's square, he expresses gratitude for "putting their musical talent and *skill* at the service of the liturgy."²⁴⁰ Besides scientists and artists, John Paul II applauds the skills of actors and people of culture,²⁴¹ doctors,²⁴² teachers,²⁴³ athletes,²⁴⁴ and even parents.²⁴⁵ Each time the Pope refers to human skills, he seems to have in mind particular abilities of men to perform well and reliably specific tasks corresponding to their basic human needs. In short, it seems that the term "skill" in John Paul II's writings is reserved for *technical* skills, such as artistry or medicine.

²³⁹ John Paul II, "Address to the Participants in the Study Week Organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences" (6 November 1987), no. 4. Emphasis mine. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1987/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19871106_accademia-scienze.html.

²⁴⁰ John Paul II, Angelus (November 23, 2003). Original emphasis. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/angelus/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_20031123.html

²⁴¹ John Paul II, "Address to Conference Sponsored by Councils for Culture and Social Communications" (19 November 1998). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19981119_cinema.pdf

²⁴² John Paul II, "Address to the Participants in the Symposium on Cardiology held in Rome" (30 May 1989). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1989/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19890530_convegno-cardiologia.pdf

²⁴³ John Paul II, "Address to Italian Educational Institutes" (24 November 1998). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1998/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19981124_fidae.pdf

²⁴⁴ John Paul II, "Address on the Occasion of the Athletics World Championships" (2 September 1987). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1987/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19870902_campionato-atletica.html

²⁴⁵ John Paul II, "Address to Participants in the Third International Congress on the Family" (30 October 1978). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19781030_icu.pdf

The Pope never speaks of “skills” in reference to the proficiencies of man’s inner faculties of will or intellect - these are properly categorized as virtues. In fact, skills alone are not yet what make one complete and happy. Addressing those in the medical profession, John Paul II writes that the proper care for the sick presupposes that “the doctor, in addition to his professional skill, also has an attitude of loving concern inspired by the Gospel image of the Good Samaritan.”²⁴⁶ In the same vein, he notes that the young people aspiring to be effective workers in the media, must be trained “with not only technical knowledge but also spiritual and intellectual expertise.”²⁴⁷

Furthermore, skills, unlike virtues, according to Wojtyła/John Paul II, can be put to *bad* use. For example, athletes, who work strenuously to achieve better results, may fall into the temptations of unhealthy competition and idolatry of the body:

Sport, however, becomes an alienating phenomenon when the performance of skill and physical strength results in idolatry of the body; when exaggerated competition leads to regarding one's opponent as an enemy to be humiliated; when the enthusiasm of fans prevents an objective evaluation of the person and events and, above all, when it degenerates into violence.²⁴⁸

This is a notable example, given that in another letter John Paul II speaks of physical skill in *positive* terms, explaining how sports and discipline contribute to one’s overall well-being.²⁴⁹

John Paul II’s use of the term “skills” is helpful but does not shed additional light on the role of prudence. One can only expect that some practical knowledge be involved in the process of acquiring of a new skill. What is evident is that, for the Pope, skills are not virtues. They are human abilities, which undoubtedly desirable, are not yet morally perfective of persons. They can be used

²⁴⁶ John Paul II, “Speech to the Congress of the Catholic Doctors” (July 7, 2000), no. 2. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jul-sep/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000707_catholic-doctors.pdf

²⁴⁷ John Paul II, “Address to the Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Commission for Social Communications” (20 March 1992), no. 3. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1992/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19920320_plen-pccs.pdf

²⁴⁸ John Paul II, “Address to the Managers, Players and Supporters of the Roma Sports Association” (30 November 2000), no. 2. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/oct-dec/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20001130_asroma.pdf

²⁴⁹ John Paul II, “Address on the Occasion of the Athletics World Championships,” no. 3.

for good *or* bad ends; which suggests that prudence cannot be involved in the process of acquiring skills (at least those put to a bad end) on John Paul II's reading, as prudence always orients an agent towards genuine good. This point will be discussed more thoroughly in the discussion of prudence and cleverness.

As for now, the role of prudence in the acquisition of virtues can be better grasped by attending to Wojtyła's description of the virtue of chastity. As it was said before, for the Cardinal from Kraków, the essence of the virtue of chastity lies not so much in keeping one's sexual urges in place, but in the affirmation of the value of another person in sexual acts. This process of the recognition of the hierarchy of objective values, in which the value of the person remains superior to the pleasure resulting from sexual intimacy, is called "objectivization."²⁵⁰ Without objectivization, the virtue of chastity remains incomplete. The important thing to remember is that for Wojtyła, objectivization is above all a *practical* value:

There is no valid continence without recognition of the objective order of values: the value of the person is higher than the values of sex. Practical recognition, that is to say a recognition which influences action, is meant here.²⁵¹

The virtue of chastity only makes sense if it is *practically* informed by means of objectivization, which, as Wojtyła notes, "fully explains the necessity for containing impulses aroused by carnal desire and sensuality."²⁵² Practical reasoning is thus actively engaged in the process of the development of chastity: "only as this value [of another person] gradually takes possession of the mind and the will does the will become calm and free."²⁵³ Wojtyła, of course, does not explicitly point his finger at prudence, but he clearly implies its involvement; as no man can achieve the virtue of chastity without practically recognizing and affirming the value of another person in each sexual act. To do this well, one will need proficiency in practical reasoning, which is tantamount to the work of

²⁵⁰ LR, 197.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., 198.

²⁵³ Ibid.

prudence. The preceding argument is further strengthened by John Paul II's statements that "man cannot be truly prudent... if he is not as well temperate"²⁵⁴ and that "continence does not appear in isolation... but always in connection with the other virtues, and thus in connection with prudence, justice, fortitude, and above all with love."²⁵⁵

3.3.2. *Cleverness and Prudence*

However, prudence is not just about finding the right means; prudence also concerns what is authentically good. In the second chapter, I explained this point by drawing attention to the Aristotelian discussion of prudence and cleverness. I will now examine whether the same distinction can be found in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II.

The Polish philosopher and Pope never intended to analyze extensively the virtue of prudence, much less to distinguish it from the similar concept of cleverness. However, occasional references indicate he is well aware of the difference between being "prudent" and merely "smart" or "clever." For instance, in the catechesis from 1978, he writes that,

...a prudent man is not one who – as is often meant – is able to wangle things in life and draw the greatest profit from it; but one who is able to construct his whole life according to the voice of upright conscience and according to the requirements of sound morality.²⁵⁶

What distinguishes the two, then, is not that a clever man cannot find the right means for particular action and that the prudent one can. Clever people may be just as good at identifying the most suitable means for action as prudent people are. However, clever people, in John Paul II's reading, usually pursue *evil* ends; they tend to misuse their gift of intelligence and practical reasoning by seeking personal gain and prestige. Consider how John Paul II uses the word "clever" in his writings. For instance, on one occasion, the Pope remarks that the moral truth is being threatened, especially

²⁵⁴ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 2.

²⁵⁵ *TOB*, 128:2.

²⁵⁶ John Paul II, General audience (October 25, 1978).

if it is identified with the opinion of the majority, which “has been artificially induced by *clever* forces of manipulation.”²⁵⁷ Similarly peace, according to the Pope, is continually endangered by vested interests; by “diverging and opposing interpretations, and even by *clever* manipulations for the service of ideologies and political systems that have domination as their ultimate aim.”²⁵⁸ In the interest of the economy, many material needs are created and increased “through *clever* advertising,” leading to the stifling of religious and moral values.²⁵⁹ Finally, the Pope observes many people today, especially weak and poor are being exploited by the “clever and unscrupulous.”²⁶⁰

In short, for John Paul II, “cleverness” functions as a negative category describing the ability which makes use of one’s intelligence and knowledge to produce the most effective means for achieving a bad end. In this, cleverness is being contrasted with prudence, which always leads to the moral good. It is hard to judge, especially given the limited references, whether cleverness and prudence are structurally the same for John Paul II. The Pope does not deny that clever people are good at finding the right means for evil actions, but this seems insufficient to claim that cleverness is essentially the same as prudence except for the end being pursued. The most plausible explanation is that the two processes are distinct. Finding the means to a good end, more often than not, differs substantially from finding the means to an evil end. For instance, it is easier to steal than to earn something by hard work. Being prudent often requires more effort and skill on the part of the agent precisely because the end that the person pursues is good.

²⁵⁷ John Paul II, “Address to the Young People during the Visit at the Sidney Cricket Ground” (25 November 1986), no. 6. Emphasis mine. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861125_giovani-sidney-australia.html

²⁵⁸ John Paul II, “Message for the Celebration of the XIX World Day of Peace” (1 January 1986), no. 2. Emphasis mine. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19851208_xix-world-day-for-peace.pdf

²⁵⁹ John Paul II, “Address to the German Bishops on their Ad Limina Visit” (15 November 1999), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_15111999_ad-limina-german.pdf

²⁶⁰ John Paul II, “Address to the Members of the Diplomatic Corps Accredited to the Government of the Republic of Korea” (4 May 1984), no.3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1984/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19840504_corpo-diplomatico-seoul.html

This leads to another point – that a prudent person seeks not only the right means towards the right end, but does so in reference to one’s overall quest for moral excellence and ultimately, a happy life. I have already alluded to this aspect of prudence when I discussed the quotation from Wojtyła’s *Elementarz Etyczny*. However, in order to understand more thoroughly how prudence determines the right course of action in light of one’s overall desire for self-growth, proper attention must be given to Wojtyła/John Paul II’s understanding of the unity of virtues.

3.4. *The Unity of Virtues*

According to John Paul II, the virtues are necessarily connected. The Pope speaks of this aspect of the virtues on numerous occasions, but most explicitly in his series of catechesis devoted to the cardinal virtues. For example, commenting on virtue of temperance, the Holy Father writes that

...all these attributes, or rather attitudes of man [i.e., virtues], coming from the single cardinal virtues, are connected with one another. So it is not possible to be a really prudent man, or an authentically just one, or a truly strong one, unless one also has the virtue of temperance. It can be said that this virtue indirectly conditions all other virtues, but it must also be said that all the other virtues are indispensable for man to be “temperate” (or “sober”).²⁶¹

Similarly, when discussing virtue of fortitude, he claims that “the truly prudent man, in fact, is only he who possesses the virtue of fortitude; just as also the truly just man is only he who has the virtue of fortitude.”²⁶² But not only cardinal virtues are interconnected; the Pope argues that human virtues “should not be seen in isolation from Christian virtues as a whole.”²⁶³ In fact, “all the characteristics designated as secondary virtues can be given their full meaning only if they are linked

²⁶¹ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 2.

²⁶² John Paul II, General audience (November 15, 1978).

²⁶³ John Paul II, “Discours au Président de la République Fédérale d’Allemagne, S.E. M. Richard von Weizsacker” (3 March 1994), no. 6. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1994/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19940303_presidente-germania.pdf

to the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance.”²⁶⁴ A good example comes from previously quoted passage from *Theology of the Body*, where John Paul II notes that continence always appears in conjunction with both cardinal and theological virtues:

...this virtue [i.e., continence] does not appear and act abstractly and thus in isolation, but always in connection with the other virtues (“*nexus virtutum*”), and thus *in connection* with prudence, justice, fortitude, *and above all with love*.²⁶⁵

Besides continence, one may offer an example of two other closely connected virtues: the virtue of justice and the virtue of mercy. John Paul II spends a considerable amount of time trying to link the two in one of his general audiences. The Pope affirms the privileged place of charity, which is undeniably the highest of virtues, but also points out its dependence on justice:

There can be no love without justice. Love “surpasses” justice, but at the same time it finds its verification in justice. Even a father and a mother, loving their own child, must be just in his regard. If justice is uncertain, love, too, runs a risk.²⁶⁶

It is so important for the Pope to acknowledge the mutual interdependence between love and justice (both being indispensable for living out an authentically Christian life) that he returns to the issue in his encyclical *Dives in Misericordia*:

...although justice is an authentic virtue in man, and in God signifies transcendent perfection nevertheless love is “greater” than justice: greater in the sense that it is primary and fundamental. [...] Mercy differs from justice, but is not in opposition to it, if we admit in the history of man.²⁶⁷

These and other references suggest that John Paul II is a strong proponent of the unity of the virtues. He not only says that virtues are related to each other, but that one cannot be truly virtuous in an area of life without being virtuous in another. However, it is one thing to state something, quite different, to offer a convincing argument for why the particular claim is true.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ *TOB*, 128:2.

²⁶⁶ John Paul II, General audience (November 8, 1978), no. 4.

²⁶⁷ John Paul II, *Dives in Misericordia*, no. 4. Official Latin text: *AAS* 72 (1980), 1177-1232. English translation available: https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30111980_dives-in-misericordia.html [accessed October 5, 2016]. Hereafter, *DM*.

Unfortunately, Wojtyła does not offer any explicit justification for the validity of the unity thesis nor for his own acceptance of it.²⁶⁸ Whenever the topic is brought up in his later papal writings, whether in reference to particular virtues or all virtues, the Holy Father, too, lacks a substantial explanation as to why virtues are necessarily connected. It almost seems as if for Wojtyła/John Paul II, the unity thesis was an obvious matter not needing any explanation, which, as argued in chapter two, is not necessarily true for everyone.²⁶⁹

There are some passages in John Paul II's writings, however, which could at least partially explain the reason behind the Pope's acknowledgment of the unity thesis in his work. First, the Holy Father believes that the person's life constitutes an integral whole. Man's moral growth concerns the entirety of his being. Consequently, one cannot pursue excellence in one area of life while neglecting the other. The virtues, as argued before, ought to lead man to the perfection of his *entire* being, not just its parts. If that is so, a person's activities and moral efforts must extend to *all* areas of his life. Particularly enlightening in this matter, is the Pope's address to young people in Cuba:

You cannot be truly committed to your country unless you carry out your duties and meet your obligations in the family, at the university, in the workplace, in the world of culture and sports, in all the different settings in which the nation becomes a reality and civil society brings together the unrivalled creativity of the human person. Nor can you be committed to the Church without being actively and resolutely present in all the areas of society in which Christ and the Church become incarnate.²⁷⁰

John Paul II alludes here to the need to live an *integrated life*. One cannot be a good citizen without being a good family member, or without fulfilling his responsibilities as a worker. He cannot be a faith-filled Christian without attending to the social needs of the day. In short, one cannot develop

²⁶⁸ In a sense that Wojtyła does not directly address the issue in his philosophical writings. This is different from saying that he rejects the unity thesis altogether, which would be unwarranted given, for example, his treatment of the virtues of temperance, chastity, and love, which remain intrinsically connected.

²⁶⁹ It could have been that Wojtyła/John Paul II was either simply not interested in discussing the unity thesis altogether, or that he thought it to be an obvious characteristic of virtues. The latter claim seems more plausible to me given Wojtyła/John Paul II's extensive training in the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic account of virtue.

²⁷⁰ John Paul II, "Message to the Young People of Cuba" (23 January 1998), no. 4.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_23011998_lahavana-youth.html

one virtue without the other. This is perfectly consistent with the Holy Father's earlier comments from his catechesis on cardinal virtues:

When we speak of virtues—not only these cardinal ones, but *all* of them, every virtue—we must always have in mind the real man, the actual man. Virtue is not something abstract, detached from life, but, on the contrary, it has deep “roots” in life itself, it springs from the latter and forms it. Virtue has an impact on man's *life*, on his actions and behavior.²⁷¹

Virtues concern one's entire life, not just particular actions. John Paul II repeatedly notes that man's fundamental vocation is holiness, which by its very definition denotes an integrated life and calls for the need to cultivate virtues:

Through profound union with Christ, begun in Baptism and nourished by prayer, the sacraments and the practice of the Gospel virtues, men and women of all times, as children of the Church, have reached the goal of holiness.²⁷²

Second, if prudence, as said earlier, is “the key for the accomplishment of the fundamental task that each of us has received from God [...] the perfection of man himself,”²⁷³ then human efforts towards living out an integrated life must be dependent on the work of prudence. I do not intend to read too much into the text; John Paul II does not *directly* say anywhere that virtues are interconnected on account of prudence. However, his description of prudence, along with Wojtyła's earlier comments on practical reasoning, could serve at least as a probable explanation of John Paul II's affirmation of the traditional unity thesis in his work. If prudence is an excellence of practical reasoning, and practical reasoning is at work in *every* virtue, which was showed earlier, then prudence, for Wojtyła/John Paul II, must constitute the basis for mutual connectivity among virtues. For one does not develop one kind of practical reasoning while exercising the virtue of justice, and a different type of practical reasoning while exercising the virtue of temperance; rather, one grows proficient, to use Wojtyła's wording, in the use of one and the same intellectual capacity.

²⁷¹ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 2. Emphasis mine.

²⁷² John Paul II, “Homily for Canonization of 27 New Saints” (May 21, 2000), no. 1.
http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_20000521_canonizations.html

²⁷³ John Paul II, General audience, October 25, 1978.

Unfortunately, the Polish philosopher and Pope does not address the issues commonly raised in opposition to traditional view of the unity among virtues. There is no attention given to the case of “conflicting virtues” or “excessive idealism” in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s writings. This should not come as a surprise given that the Polish philosopher and Pope never intended to justify the unity claim, much less his own reasons for accepting it. It could be inferred from his writings that Wojtyła/John Paul II would have rejected the idea of conflicting virtues based on what he says, for instance, about the virtue of justice and the virtue of mercy. Often thought as contradictory, for the Pope, they are profoundly complementary: someone who is just must also be loving, otherwise his justice will be cold and cruel or his love be foolish and deceptive. It could also be inferred that for Wojtyła/John Paul II, the Christian life functions as an ideal. The Polish Philosopher and Pope never denied that the acquisition of all the virtues and living a life of integrity and happiness is a challenging task.²⁷⁴ It is a task, which is given to a man on earth, but which can be fully achieved only in heaven. The fact remains that Wojtyła/John Paul II does not attempt to argue for the validity of the unity thesis, even though it is evident from his writings that he subscribes to it.

3.5. *Prudence and Wisdom*

Before concluding the discussion of prudence, one more point needs to be mentioned. In his catechesis on prudence, which contains the Pope’s most elaborate account of the virtue of prudence, the Holy Father writes that “the Christian has the right and the duty to look at the virtue of prudence also in another perspective.”²⁷⁵ This perspective, according to the Pope, is inscribed in God himself, more specifically in his Providence through which everything including man is

²⁷⁴ One is reminded of the title of the 14th paragraph from the Pope’s letter to families, “Love is demanding.” Cf. John Paul II, *Gratissimam Sane*, 14.

²⁷⁵ John Paul II, General audience (October 25, 1978).

ordained towards one goal, that is, salvation. To understand the Holy Father's point better, it will be helpful to quote him at length here:

But the Christian has the right and the duty to look at the virtue of prudence also in another perspective. It is, as it were, the image and likeness of the Providence of God himself in the dimensions of concrete man. For man – as we know from the book of Genesis – was created in the image and likeness of God. And God carries out his plan in the history of creation, and above all in the history of mankind. The purpose of this plan is – as St Thomas teaches – the ultimate good of the universe. The same plan in the history of mankind becomes simply the plan of salvation, the plan that embraces us all [...] Well, man who is the image of God, must – as St Thomas again teaches – in some way be providence: but within the proportions of his life. [...] He must march towards salvation, and help others to save themselves. By helping others, he saves himself.²⁷⁶

The above passage seems to be a description of an *infused* prudence. Notice that the central point of the passage still concerns human *activity*; the man “must march” towards his salvation and pursue what is in accordance with God's eternal plan. The difference between this account of prudence and the Pope's previous comments is that here, prudence is being informed by faith. Man acknowledges that his ultimate destiny is not *only* self-perfection attainable by human effort, but salvation, which comes from God. Thus, in order to fulfill his destiny, he needs a different type of prudence, prudence that comes directly from God.

This interpretation of the above text can be further justified by looking at John Paul II's description of wisdom. According to the Pope, “wisdom is *not* mere intelligence or practical ability, but rather a participation in the very mind of God who with his wisdom [has] established man.”²⁷⁷ It is the ability to penetrate the deep meaning of one's being, of life and of history, going beyond the surface of things and events to discover their ultimate meaning, willed by the Lord.²⁷⁸ One could see the parallels between these statements referring to wisdom, and the Pope's “second perspective” on prudence provided in the passage above. However, the two are markedly different, as wisdom does

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ John Paul II, General audience (January 29, 2003), no. 3. Emphasis mine.
http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2003/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20030129.html

²⁷⁸ Ibid.

not concern *practical reasoning*, while prudence, whether infused or not, does. The Pope is remarkably consistent in tying wisdom to the work of *theoretical* reasoning. In one of the speeches, he explains that “understanding and wisdom are the fruit of a *contemplative* eye upon the world.”²⁷⁹ Even when the Holy Father refers to an *infused* wisdom, it is still an ability of *theoretical* reason, and as such, it must be differentiated from infused prudence:

Yet the priority accorded this wisdom does not lead the Angelic Doctor to overlook the presence of two other complementary forms of wisdom – *philosophical* wisdom, which is based upon the capacity of the intellect, for all its natural limitations, to explore reality, and *theological* wisdom, which is based upon Revelation and which explores the contents of faith, entering the very mystery of God.²⁸⁰

Prudence in the “second perspective” seems, therefore, to be nothing but an infused prudence, which, informed by the light of faith, ensures that man pursues his ultimate good, identified as salvation.

In summary, it is certainly safe at this point to conclude that prudence has a special role in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s overall understanding of the virtues. Prudence denotes an excellence of practical reasoning, which in turn makes it a “key virtue” in man’s struggle for self-perfection. As such, it always contributes to man’s true moral good, unlike cleverness which can be misused. Finally, prudence is always at work whenever moral virtues are exercised. Thus, prudence remains essential to any virtue, and because it is an excellence of one and the same practical reasoning, other virtues must be necessarily connected. As an infused virtue, prudence reliably guides an agent towards his ultimate goal understood as salvation. This is different from wisdom, which supplies a deep insight into ultimate realities but does not immediately concern the sphere of one’s activity.

After the careful examination of prudence, the study will now proceed to discuss the fourth item on the list, that is, the relationship between virtues and emotion

²⁷⁹ John Paul II, “Message for the 36th World Communications Day” (12 May 2002), no. 4. Emphasis mine. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20020122_world-communications-day.pdf

²⁸⁰ FR, 44. Original emphasis.

4. Virtues and Emotions

Virtues affect the *entirety* of one's being. Besides reason and will, they perfect a person's affectivity. In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła beautifully grasps this point when he says that the value of the person, affirmed through the practice of virtue of chastity, "must be not merely *understood* by the cold light of reason but *felt*."²⁸¹ For John Paul II, as well, virtues involve the whole of one's being; they "build up the new *man* within us."²⁸² Supported by grace, virtues counteract the consequences of original sin that introduced "triple disunity," which stands for the disorder introduced to the relationship between three main faculties of man – his reason, will, and body.²⁸³ It should not come as a surprise, then, that Wojtyła/John Paul II attributes a special role to virtues in his description of human emotions. The virtues bring the best out of human affectivity and guarantee the truly integrated moral life.

Since the focus in this part of the study is on emotions in the context of virtue, the two following points will be examined. First, the study will show that Wojtyła/John Paul II holds a *positive* view of human emotions. Second, it will provide an explanation on the relationship between virtues and one's emotional responses. To achieve these goals, the study will consult Wojtyła's teaching on human affectivity, particularly his analysis in *Osoba i Czyn*.

²⁸¹ LR, 199. Emphasis mine.

²⁸² John Paul II, General audience (October 13, 1999), no. 4. Emphasis mine.
https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_13101999.html.

²⁸³ Wojtyła, "Znaczenie powinności," in *Aby Chrystus*, 144. Wojtyła also refers to the "triple unity" to describe the internal harmony within the man before the Fall. The description is worth quoting as it echoes the Thomistic discussion of original justice: "...in the untainted state of nature before the Fall ...the man is fully ordered in himself. His body does not resist and rebel against the soul, the lower faculties are perfectly subjected to the higher powers. There is a certain spiritual harmony within the man, the reason and the will are not in defense, but they reign and govern." Cf. Ibid. See also, *ST I-II* 85.3.

4.1. *The Dynamics of Human Emotions*

Wojtyła/John Paul II emphasizes ontological unity of the human person.²⁸⁴ In Wojtyła's writings, the human being is characterized by the psychosomatic complexity in need of integration.²⁸⁵ While the term *soma* denotes primarily the material component with the man, that is, his body and inner organs, *psyche* refers to all the immaterial manifestations of his being, that is, his emotivity.²⁸⁶ The two must be distinguished but never separated, as for instance, man's emotional life is often dependent on the proper functioning of his body.²⁸⁷ Accordingly, Wojtyła explains that the somatic reactivity is essentially different from its emotive counterpart in that the former responds to the external stimuli but does not yet transcend the capacity of the body, while the latter transcends purely bodily reactions and results in *emotions* (*emocje*) which are irreducible to somatic reactivity.²⁸⁸ Emotions arise as a result of *emotional stirring* (*wzruszenie*), and in this, emotional stirring is to be differentiated from mere *excitement* (*podniecenie*), which according to Wojtyła, seems to correspond better to the person's somatic reactivity rather than his emotivity.²⁸⁹ It is at this point the Archbishop defines what he means by "emotion":

We speak here of different emotions, various manifestations of man's emotionality. At the core of each of these always lies certain emotional stirring (*wzruszenie*). This emotive core appears to be radiating internally, producing every time a different emotional experience. It is this experience that we call "emotion."²⁹⁰

Wojtyła further specifies that every emotion is unique. Emotions may have the same "content" but are always experienced anew and with varying intensity. Depending on their "distance" from

²⁸⁴ Cf. *OiC*, 242 & *VS*, 48.

²⁸⁵ Cf. *OiC*, 246-247.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.* 247.

²⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 277. The same contrast between somatic and emotive reactivity can be identified in John Paul II's discussion of "arousal" and "emotion" in *Theology of the Body*. The Pope notes that while the former is "first of all 'bodily' and in this sense 'sexual,'" the latter "though it is stirred by the reciprocal reaction of masculinity and femininity, refers above all to the other person understood in his or her 'wholeness.'" Both "arousal" and "emotion" reveals "the subjective reactive-emotive richness of the human 'I.'" Cf. *TOB*, 129:5-130:3.

²⁸⁹ *OiC*, 294.

²⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 295.

emotional stirring, emotions can be fleeting or they can grow to be lasting “emotional states” (*stany uczuciowe*), which partake in the activity of the will.²⁹¹ Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Wojtyła argues that emotions remain beyond the subject’s conscious efficacy – emotions simply happen *to* man. It is worth quoting the relevant passage at length here:

Emotional experiences—emotional stirrings or excitements, and subsequent individual emotions or even passions—as a rule, “happen” in man understood as a subject. They appear spontaneously—which means that they are not the results of subject’s efficacy and self-determination. Consequently, one must presuppose certain psychic efficacy at the core of emotive dynamism; without it, everything that happens to man in his emotivity would have to remain inexplicable.²⁹²

According to Wojtyła, particular emotion or passion, especially if it is intense, may significantly decrease one’s efficacy in action: an emotionally engaged person acts “as if he were not his own master, as if he lost control over his very self, or could no longer grasp it.”²⁹³ As a consequence, Wojtyła argues that every man is presented with a “special task” on account of his desire for self-possession and self-determination.²⁹⁴ This “special task” is realized through the process of *integration*, which, according to the Archbishop, consists in reconciling of an emotive reactivity to subjective efficacy of the person, or, as it will be argued, habituation of the sensitive appetite by means of virtues.²⁹⁵

Because one’s attitude towards emotions in no small degree conditions the way the person thinks about virtues, one must explore what attitude guides Wojtyła/John Paul II in his reflection on human emotivity. The next paragraphs will argue that besides being an essential part of one’s psyche, emotions, for Wojtyła/John Paul II, remain *positive* psychological phenomena, which, if properly formed, may greatly enrich one’s spiritual and moral life.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² Ibid., 299.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., 300.

²⁹⁵ Cf. *OiC*, 307 & 308.

4.2. *The Positive Attitude to Emotions*

It was noted above that intense emotions might have a strong impact on one's ability to control his actions. However, for Wojtyła, the spontaneous and pervasive nature of emotions does not yet determine their negative character. In fact, the Archbishop argues that "emotions or passions of themselves do not yet imply disintegration of the person."²⁹⁶ Even though a person's emotivity may contribute to the "blurring between subjective and efficacious 'I'" and "to some degree impose its values on the will," Wojtyła clearly states that as such, "it does not constitute an obstacle for person's integration in action."²⁹⁷ In this, the Archbishop from Kraków explicitly rejects the approach taken by the Stoics or Kant, who wish to suppress one's emotional life on account of its irrational influence on human reason.²⁹⁸ He believes that such a negative attitude approach towards human emotions is a result not so much of certain implicit bias or suspicion towards emotions but of anthropological and ethical apriorism, which remains ignorant of ethical experience:

The view according to which human emotivity, and in particular human emotionality, is considered to be a source of person's disintegration can be characterized by certain ethical and anthropological apriorism. Apriorism by its nature does not take notice of experience. Pointing at human emotivity and emotionality exclusively as a source of person's disintegration in action, in a sense predetermines the nature of a man as the one who is condemned for disintegration. In this light, we can define the Stoic position as pessimistic. The pessimism here flows—particularly in Kant—from idealism.²⁹⁹

Wojtyła speaks of this "pessimism" again during his papacy. In one of the catechesis on the virtue of temperance, John Paul II rejects an approach to ethics that disregards emotions and aims at their eradication from moral life. The Holy Father specifically criticizes Stoic position for its preference for emotional "indifference" over an attitude of openness towards the rich experience of emotional

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 301.

²⁹⁷ Ibid. 303.

²⁹⁸ Wojtyła himself points to the Stoics and Kant as those who considered emotions to be the source of personal disintegration: "Such a view marked the Stoic philosophy, and in modern times to some extent was revived in Kant." *OiC*, 300.

²⁹⁹ *OiC*, 300. Wojtyła defines what he means by apriorism in one of the articles from *Roczniki Filozoficzne*. Discussing the two orientations in philosophy, empiricism and rationalism, he argues that apriorism is a *radical* form of rationalism which mistakenly claims that "immediate and self-evident primary judgments have their source in reason alone, and not in experience." Wojtyła, "The problem of experience in ethics," in *Person and Community*, 108.

values, which the person is “endowed” with as with a gift. It is worthwhile to quote John Paul II at length here:

This does not mean that the virtuous, sober man cannot be “spontaneous,” cannot enjoy, cannot weep, cannot express his feelings; that is, it does not mean that he must become insensitive, “indifferent,” as if he were made of ice or stone. No, not at all! It is enough to look at Jesus to be convinced of this. Christian morality has never been identified Stoic morality. On the contrary, considering all the riches of affections and emotivity with which every man is endowed – each in a different way, moreover: man in one way, woman in another owing to her own sensitivity – it must be recognized that man cannot reach this mature spontaneity unless by means of continuous work on himself and special “vigilance” over his whole behavior.³⁰⁰

The two quotations above should suffice to prove that Wojtyła/John Paul II never intends a negative approach towards human emotivity. Emotions are valuable psychological phenomena, which, if properly formed, may turn out to be advantageous to the spiritual growth of the person. In fact, Wojtyła explicitly alludes to this positive function of emotions in his discussion of the person’s subjectivity, where he explains that through the process of integration, “emotion adds specific sharpness to man’s efficacy, and along with it, the entire personal structure of self-possession and self-governance.”³⁰¹ It is through man’s emotivity, argues the Archbishop, that one’s conscious experiences become vivid and clearly expressed:

These [i.e., emotions] by their nature are accessible to consciousness – and indeed have a specific ability, as it were, to attract consciousness. Thus we not only become conscious of our emotions but also our consciousness, and, in particular our experience derive from them a special expressiveness. The expressiveness of human experience seems to have an emotional rather than a conscious character. We may even say that it is to emotion in the normal course of experience – that is, apart from extreme or nearly extreme situations – that man owes that special “value” of his experiences which consists in their subjective expressiveness.³⁰²

However, the value of emotions in one’s moral life becomes most apparent when they affect the will, which responds to specific values with spontaneity characteristic to emotions.³⁰³ Shaped by

³⁰⁰ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 4.

³⁰¹ *OiC*, 303.

³⁰² *Ibid.*, 305.

³⁰³ *Ibid.*, 306.

virtues, emotions strengthen the energy of the will itself, and if assisted by reason, reliably orient the person to choose spontaneously the moral good.³⁰⁴

Of course, emotions can also get out of hand. A *positive* attitude towards emotions does yet not mean that every emotion is *morally* praiseworthy; rather, by positive attitude I mean that emotions are morally *relevant* and have *potential* to be used in the right way. I believe that this approach is characteristic of Wojtyła/John Paul II, and remains in contrast to the *negative* approach taken by Kant or Stoics. The point of the analysis here is not to argue that *unattended* emotions are *morally* good. In fact, Wojtyła/John Paul II often says that excessive or unattended emotional states may pose significant danger to one's moral growth. He alludes to it theoretically in *Osoba i Czyn* when he speaks of the tension that exists between the person's emotivity and efficacy,³⁰⁵ and practically in *Love and Responsibility*, when he supplies an example of an "uncontrolled" sexual emotion directed at bodily pleasure.³⁰⁶ Man still needs to temper his emotions, but not because they are bad per se, but because they can be misused by one's intellect and will. Examining the role of virtue in shaping one's emotive reactions and how exactly the virtues affect a person's will and intellect in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II, will be the task of the next section.

4.3. *Virtue and Integration*

In *Osoba i Czyn*, Wojtyła speaks of virtues directly in light of the process of integration:

Integration of the person in action on the basis of human emotivity (emotionality and emotivity) is accomplished through proficiencies, which from the ethical point of view deserves to be called "virtues."³⁰⁷

³⁰⁴ Ibid., 310.

³⁰⁵ Cf. Ibid., 306.

³⁰⁶ Cf. *LR*, 156. John Paul II cautions numerous times against blindly following of one's passion which leads to inner slavery. Cf. John Paul II, "Message to the Young People of Cuba" (23 January 1998), no. 5.; *PDI*, 4.; "Homily at 46th International Eucharistic Congress in Wrocław" (1 June 1997), no. 5. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/travels/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_01061997_statio-orbis.html

³⁰⁷ *OiC*, 310.

It would be helpful to recall that integration is a key process for Wojtyła; thanks to it a person becomes literally integrated as a person; his emotive spontaneity perfectly patterns the efficacy proper to him as a subject of an action. “The tension between efficacy and emotivity of a person,” explains the Archbishop, “originates from the fact that human emotivity introduces spontaneous orientation towards values.”³⁰⁸ This orientation can be expressed through an attraction or repulsion; the former implies emotive orientation “at” certain value, the latter, direction “away” from it.³⁰⁹

Now, the efficacy proper to the subject expresses itself through self-determination, that is, cognitive determination and deliberation. These presuppose consideration for the truth, and an intention to pursue it.³¹⁰ However, Wojtyła insists that emotion as such points to a value, but “on its own does not cognize nor desire it.”³¹¹ Cognition of emotionally experienced values, therefore, must involve the exercise of a higher power that transcends a person’s emotivity and recognizes moral good. That power, according to Wojtyła, is, of course, human reason:

Efficacy and along with it also personal self-determination is formed through choice and decision – and these presuppose a dynamic relation to truth in the will itself. In this way, however, a new transcendent factor is introduced into the spontaneous experience of value... This factor directs the person toward his fulfillment in the action not solely through emotional spontaneity but by means of the transcendent relation to truth and the related obligation and responsibility. In the traditional approaches, this dynamic factor in personal life was defined as “reason.”³¹²

If integration denotes the process of alignment of one’s spontaneous emotive energy to the exercise of the will, it is reason that ensures the overall success of the process itself. Wojtyła believes that besides being an ability of intellectual cognition, reason denotes “an ability and power superior to

³⁰⁸ Ibid., 308.

³⁰⁹ Ibid.

³¹⁰ *OiC*, 307.

³¹¹ Ibid., 305.

³¹² Ibid., 307.

the emotions and emotive spontaneity of a man, capable of being guided in choice and decision by truth about the good itself.”³¹³

One can see how human emotivity, will, and reason, all come together in Wojtyła’s description of the process of integration, which, if done well, results in a person’s self-fulfillment in action. In this light, virtue is nothing but a habitual expression of the process of integration. It ensures that in a concrete situation all three faculties of man cooperate in an efficient and reliable way, producing a morally praiseworthy act:

As far as the reference to values is concerned, the integrating process of developing proficiency of one’s psyche leads gradually to the point where the will – guided by the light of reason – is able, by spontaneous reference to emotion, by a spontaneous move of attraction or repulsion, to choose what is really good; it is also able to reject what is really bad.³¹⁴

Genuine virtues, then, can never be considered as means of mere suppression of one’s emotive energy. Although one could say that they do aim at certain subordination of spontaneous emotivity as shown above, virtues do so “in order to *use* emotive energy to the maximum rather than simply to suppress it.”³¹⁵ Indeed, suppression of one’s emotional experiences could hardly reflect the process of integration. One could see the same point being developed already in the earlier analysis of virtue of chastity from *Love and Responsibility*, and can see it in later papal writings, for instance, in John Paul II’s discussion of continence in *Theology of the Body*.³¹⁶

4.3.1. *Using vs. Suppressing Emotions*

Wojtyła only briefly explains how is it that a virtuous person is able to *use* emotive energy rather than simply *suppress* it. In his description of “transformed spontaneity” in *Osoba i Czyn*, he insists that emotions can in fact retain their spontaneous character while at the same time being

³¹³ Ibid., 307.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 311.

³¹⁵ *OiC*, 312. Emphasis mine.

³¹⁶ Cf. *LR*, 170 & *TOB*, 129-130.

subordinated to the rule of reason.³¹⁷ In a footnote, the Archbishop directly references Aristotle's metaphor of the political rule of reason to explain his position on the issue:

This belief [i.e., of using rather than suppressing emotive energy] appears to be also contained in what Aristotle says of the power of the intellect and the will over emotions having a "political" (or "diplomatic") rather than an absolute character (cf. *Politics*, bk. 1, chap. 3; *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. 4, chaps. 3-5). We may also add that one of the elements of the "political" nature of this power is to know when it is to be exercised in an "absolute" manner.³¹⁸

It is noteworthy that Wojtyła employs the same metaphor also in *Love and Responsibility* in reference to the virtue of chastity, where he also argues that the pure force of reason with no proper consideration for one's emotional experience may result in an opposite outcome to the one intended by virtue:

Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas [...] both emphasize that in relation to the sensual and emotional sphere of his inner life a man must employ appropriate tactics, and even a certain diplomacy (*principatus politicus*). The use of imperative is of little avail here, and it may even produce results the very opposite of what was intended [...] every man must effectively deploy the energies latent in his sensuality and his sentiments, so that they become allies in his striving for authentic love, for they may, as we know, also be its foes.³¹⁹

Reason, therefore, rules emotions, but in a way that respects their independency: more by means of persuasion and influence than coercion. Unfortunately, Wojtyła/John Paul II never elaborates further on Aristotle's metaphor. It seems, however, that the double reference to the political rule of reason contained in the two different works is not coincidental. This can suggest that Aristotle's metaphor closely reflects Wojtyła/John Paul II's own way of thinking about the relationship between reason and emotions. It also remains in perfect consistency with the earlier point about Wojtyła's positive attitude towards a person's emotivity.³²⁰

³¹⁷ *OiC*, 311.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 311, footnote 72.

³¹⁹ *LR*, 200.

³²⁰ Aristotle's metaphor excludes the possibility of inherently evil emotions; every emotion can be shaped in accordance with the rule of reason through the process of habituation. This is a significantly different approach to the previously mentioned negative attitudes of the Stoics or Kant, who perceived emotions to be a "hindrance" to one's moral excellence.

To summarize, Wojtyła/John Paul II presents a positive view of human emotivity. Emotions constitute an essential element of one's psyche and are consequently intrinsically connected to one's experience of a subject in action. Emotive energy constitutes a powerful force within a man, but not necessarily a negative force. If properly assimilated in the process of integration, emotions can strengthen one's will and contribute to deeper and more meaningful experience of one's efficacy. Crucial to this process is the work of virtues, which ensures that the will, enlightened by reason, utilizes rather than suppresses emotive energy and efficiently orients the person to pursue what is authentically good.

5. Grace and Virtues

The examination of the nature and role of virtues in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work remains incomplete without at least, briefly mentioning the effect of grace. According to Wojtyła/John Paul II, contemporary man finds himself in a redeemed state (*status naturae reparaetae*), in which "grace was restored but consequence of sin remained."³²¹ Man needs grace for salvation, and in this sense, grace denotes a supernatural gift of God freely bestowed upon him through which "he is called and made 'capable' of sharing in the inscrutable life of God."³²² At the same time, grace perfects one's actions already here on earth. In *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II argues that grace enables us to "possess the full freedom of the children of God (cf. Rom 8:21) and thus to live our moral life."³²³ On this reading, grace assists men in choosing what is authentically good in relation to the objective truth.³²⁴

If Wojtyła/John Paul II ascribes such a prominent value to grace in one's moral life, the same grace must certainly influence the virtues. The Pope often says that virtues are acquired and

³²¹ Wojtyła, "Znaczenie powinności," in *Aby Chrystus*, 144. RH, 8.

³²² DV, 9.

³²³ VS, 18.

³²⁴ VS, 45.

cultivated “with the help of God’s grace.”³²⁵ Accordingly, to better understand the inner dynamic that exists between virtues and grace in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s work, one needs to attend to his description of virtues which are specifically influenced by grace, and these are, of course, theological and infused virtues.

5.1. *Theological Virtues*

Wojtyła mentions theological virtues already in *Elementarz Etyczny*. In one of the sections concerning the ultimate end of man, he applauds Aristotle’s intuition for claiming that man’s ultimate end lies in the full realization of his rational nature. The difference, argues the Archbishop, is that for Christians, this realization finds its ultimate expression beyond man’s capacity, namely, in the communion with God, made possible by grace. It is here that theological virtues become necessary for the fulfillment of one’s final end:

Human nature reaches its full potential and dynamism through the supernatural powers, which are found and tied together by sanctifying grace. Because through it man realistically participates in the very nature of God, grace determines participation of man in life, that is, in the inner working of God. Directly at service [of this participation] are the three so called divine virtues: faith, hope, and charity, through which man during his earthly life, by living the most authentic human life he can, must also mature to the communion with God alone.³²⁶

For Wojtyła/John Paul II, grace is essential to the very existence of theological virtues: faith, hope, and charity simply do not make sense without grace, and therefore are reserved exclusively for believers.³²⁷ This is because theological virtues have God as their immediate *source* and *object*. First, theological virtues cannot be simply acquired by human effort. John Paul II is clear that theological virtues are freely given to man on account of Christ’s redemption: “...the fundamental gift of the

³²⁵ See for example, *VS*, 61 & 93.

³²⁶ Wojtyła, “Widzenie Boga,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 167.

³²⁷ Wojtyła, “Ethical and moral considerations,” in *Person and Community*, 105.

Spirit is sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*), with which we receive the theological virtues.”³²⁸

Faith, hope, and charity are literally “poured out by God into the heart of believers.”³²⁹ Thus, the theological virtues have God as their proper source. Second, theological virtues are always oriented at God: “they put us in communion with God and lead us to him.”³³⁰ Unlike other human virtues oriented towards perfection of man attainable through his own powers, the theological virtues properly “adapt man’s faculties for participation in the divine nature.”³³¹ Accordingly, each of the three virtues finds its proper expression in God, as its object:

Thus, by faith the believer considers God, his brethren and history not merely from the standpoint of reason, but from the viewpoint of divine Revelation. By hope man looks at the future with trusting, vigorous certitude, hoping against hope (cf. *Rom* 4:18), with his gaze fixed on the goal of eternal happiness and the full achievement of God’s kingdom. By charity the disciple is obliged to love God with his whole heart and to love others as Jesus loved them, that is, to the total giving of self.³³²

However, the exercise of faith, hope, and charity implies the knowledge of the object itself, and for that, a man needs Revelation. Therefore, as Wojtyła argues, one must “draw upon the full content of revelation” as “without theology, there is no way to give a fully adequate interpretation of moral norms or of the so called theological virtues.”³³³

Besides being specifically Christian virtues, in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s anthropology, theological virtues hold a privileged place among the other virtues. In one of the homilies to the seminarians, the Pope writes that faith, hope and charity “are the foundation of Christian life and, in

³²⁸ John Paul II, “Letter to Priests for Holy Thursday” (25 March 1998), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_31031998_priests.pdf

³²⁹ John Paul II, General audience (November 11, 1998), no. 6. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_11111998.html

³³⁰ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 2000), no. 1. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2000/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20001122.html [accessed Sept 3, 2016].

³³¹ John Paul II, General Audience (July 22, 1998), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_22071998.html

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ Wojtyła, “Ethical and moral considerations,” in *Person and Community*, 105.

particular, of priestly life.”³³⁴ A similar preference can be noted in his listing of the virtues in *Veritatis Splendor*,³³⁵ Catechesis on Virtues of Faith, Hope, and Charity,³³⁶ as well as the Message for Lent from the year 2000.³³⁷ John Paul II also directly ties theological virtues to the work of the sacraments, which are essential to the development of other Christian virtues: “Sacraments are expressions of faith, hope, and charity. On the other hand, development of these and all other virtues in Christian life is stirred by the sacraments.”³³⁸

The highest of the virtues is, of course, love, which Wojtyła/John Paul II constitutes the “apex” of Christian morality.³³⁹ “Love,” argues the Pope in one of the catechesis, “is the greatest virtue on earth; it is the one that crosses the threshold of life and death. For when the time of faith and hope ends, love continues.”³⁴⁰ One cannot live an authentically Christian life and exercise other virtues well without love, which ties them altogether: “Through the power of the Holy Spirit, charity shapes the moral activity of the Christian; it directs and strengthens all the other virtues, which build up the new man within us.”³⁴¹ On this reading, theological virtues, most particularly Christian

³³⁴ John Paul II, “Homily at the Mass for the Community of the Roman Seminary” (15 June 1997), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1997/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19970615.pdf

³³⁵ *VS*, 64.

³³⁶ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 2000).

³³⁷ John Paul II, “Message for Lent” (21 September 1999). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/len/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20000127_lent-2000.html

³³⁸ Jan Paweł II, *Katechezy Ojca Świętego Jana Pawła II: Kościół*, ed. Włodzimierz Zęga (Kraków: Wydawnictwo M, 1999), 26:1. Translation mine. Original text in Polish: “*Sakramenty są wyrazem wiary, nadziei i miłości. Z drugiej strony rozwój tych i wszystkich innych cnót w życiu chrześcijańskim pobudzany jest przez sakramenty*”

³³⁹ John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 2000); *TOB*, 431, *LR*, 17.

³⁴⁰ John Paul II, General audience (October 25, 1978).

³⁴¹ John Paul II, General audience (October 13, 1999), no. 4. Although, it clearly follows from Wojtyła/John Paul II’s writings that one *needs* Christian virtues to live a whole and authentically Christian life, there is one passage which seems to suggest otherwise. In an apostolic exhortation, *Redemptoris Custos*, the Holy Father writes that “St. Joseph is the model of those humble ones that Christianity raises up to great destinies... he is the proof that in order to be a good and genuine follower of Christ, there is no need of great things – it is enough to have the common, simple and human virtues, but they need to be true and authentic.” The Pope’s words should be correctly interpreted here. One should take notice that this fragment is a direct quote from Paul VI’s Discourse from March 19, 1969. John Paul II uses the words of Paul VI not to water down the importance of Christian virtues but to emphasize the validity of human virtues, which have their proper place in Christian life. Consider how the Holy Father introduces the quote: “What is crucially important here is the sanctification of daily life, a sanctification which each person must acquire according to his or her own state, and one which can be promoted according to a model accessible to all people.” John Paul II’s emphasis is clearly on the sanctification of *each person in accordance to one’s state*, not the sanctification of specifically a *Christian* life. Those who practice human and simple virtues become better people, as John Paul II reiterates one

charity, informs the work of other virtues. For example, in his catechesis on temperance, John Paul II notes that “a temperate man is one who does not abuse food or drink.”³⁴² The essential role of temperance in this case is thus to prevent one from eating too much or too little. However, the same abstinence from food proper to the cardinal virtue of temperance is also characteristic to the *Christian* virtue of temperance, and the difference for the Pope, seems to be twofold. First, the two virtues differ in regards to the source or motivation. While for the non-believer abstaining from food can be motivated by the desire to be healthy, for a Christian, an abstinence is motivated by charity and the concern for others. Second, the temperance of a non-believer can differ from the temperance of a Christian on account of different objects; while the former seeks one’s own good, i.e., health, the latter, informed by theological virtues, seeks the well-being of others. As John Paul II explains, “abstaining from food will dispose [us] more fully in heart and in spirit to share [our] goods in solidarity with those who have little or nothing.”³⁴³ The relationship between the infused and acquired virtues will follow in the later parts of this section.

John Paul II also differentiates between *theological* and *infused* virtues, but does not offer any substantial explanation as to why the two sets of virtues deserve to be distinguished. For instance, commenting on the passage from Paul’s letter to Romans, the Holy Father only notes that theological and infused virtues come from the Holy Spirit and direct the person towards God:

The words of the Apostle Paul remind us that the fundamental gift of the Spirit is sanctifying grace (*gratia gratum faciens*), with which we receive the theological virtues –faith, hope and charity – and all the infused virtues (*virtutes infusae*), which enable us to act under the influence of the Holy Spirit.³⁴⁴

paragraph before the quoting of Paul VI that work “makes man, in a sense, a better man.” (cf. *Ibid.*, 23). Certainly, developing human virtues does not oppose acquisition of Christian virtues, which I will show later, but to say that human virtues are sufficient for living an authentically Christian life is a misinterpretation, especially in light of other writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II.

³⁴²John Paul II, General audience (November 22, 1978), no. 3.

³⁴³ John Paul II, “Message for Lent” (31 January 1989). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/len/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_31011989_lent-1989.pdf

³⁴⁴ John Paul II, “Letter to priests for Holy Thursday” (25 March 1998). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1998/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_31031998_priests.html

The Pope is also more eager to distinguish between theological virtues and the gifts/fruits of the Holy Spirit rather than to attend to the subtle difference between theological and infused virtues:

While the virtues are dispositions permanently conferred upon human beings in view of the supernatural works they must do, and the gifts perfect both the theological and the moral virtues, the fruits of the Spirit are virtuous acts which the person accomplishes with ease, habitually and with delight (cf. St Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, I-II, q. 70 a. 1, ad 2).³⁴⁵

However, some clue can be found in Wojtyła's article from 1967, in which the Archbishop explicitly comments on the nature of infused virtues. The relevant passage reads as follows:

I should emphasize that *all* the virtues and norms contained in revelation are "theological." If the term "theological" applies in a special way to the virtues of faith, hope, and charity, this is because these three virtues (or "norms") *express in a special way the relation—revealed through 'facts and words'—of human beings to God.* The nature of this relation is such that our relation to God, to others, and to ourselves conforms, corresponds, and "is a response" to God's relation to us.³⁴⁶

Accordingly, it seems that for Wojtyła the difference between the three theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity and other "theological virtues," (which for the sake of clarity I call infused) is more that of *degree* rather than of *kind*. Both sets of virtues constitute man's response to God's Revelation, that is, are acquired exclusively with the help of God's grace, and both point to God as their object. The difference is that the three theological virtues do so in a "special way." Although Wojtyła does not explicitly quote St. Thomas here, his emphasis on the "special nature" of the three theological virtues may as well echo the distinction drawn by his great master, according to whom

³⁴⁵ General audience (October 20, 1999), no. 3. Another relevant passage, which speaks of the relationship between virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, can be found in the Holy Father's letter to the priests from 1998: "...the Church regards the gifts of the Holy Spirit as a special awakening of the human soul and its faculties to the action of the Paraclete, and as such 'they complete and perfect the virtues of those who receive them. They make the faithful docile in readily obeying divine inspirations' (CCC, No. 1831). This means that the moral life of Christians is sustained by these 'permanent dispositions which make man docile in following the promptings of the Holy Spirit' (ibid. No. 1830). These bring to maturity the supernatural life which grace works in every human being. Indeed, the gifts are wonderfully well adapted to our spiritual dispositions, perfecting them and opening them in a special way to the action of God." (John Paul II, *Letter to the Priests for Holy Thursday, March 25, 1998*, no. 3).

³⁴⁶ Wojtyła, "Ethical and moral considerations," in *Person and Community*, 105. Emphasis original.

theological virtues have God as their *immediate* object as opposed to other infused virtues, which point to God, but only *indirectly*.³⁴⁷

5.2. *Infused and Acquired Virtues*

In addition to theological and infused virtues, Wojtyła/John Paul II often mentions acquired virtues or simply, human virtues. While theological/infused virtues, as said before, are accessible exclusively to believers, acquired virtues can be developed by everyone who pursue moral good in action:

Moral good and moral evil can become crystallized in the will in a lasting, habitual way. The will can become formed or deformed in a lasting way. By becoming formed in a lasting way, the will acquires certain virtues; by becoming deformed, it acquires vices.³⁴⁸

In an article from 1967, Wojtyła clearly distinguishes between “natural virtues” and “revealed virtues.” Posing a question whether the content of revealed virtues can be known without the revelation and faith, the Archbishop argues that natural and revealed norms or virtues, though not mutually exclusive, remain irreducible:

What is the relation between norms contained in revelation and the norms of natural law, between “revealed virtues” and “natural virtues”? [...] According to revelation, particularly the teachings of St. Paul, the content of revealed precepts can also be known and is in fact known without revelation, in a natural way. [...] Obviously, such a purely rational interpretation of revealed norms involves a certain “compression” and “abbreviation” of them. A purely philosophical interpretation is not adequate. In order to arrive at a wholly adequate interpretation, we must turn to theology and draw upon the full content of Revelation.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ Cf. I-II 63.3.2.

³⁴⁸ Wojtyła, “Human nature as the basis of ethical formation,” in *Person and Community*, 99.

³⁴⁹ Wojtyła, “Ethical and moral considerations,” in *Person and Community*, 104.

“Abbreviated” or “compressed” character of acquired virtues has to do with their limited scope, not inferior nature; Wojtyła/John Paul II would never deny the importance and validity of human virtues.³⁵⁰

Consider, for example, John Paul II’s description of the virtue of solidarity. On the one hand, solidarity functions as a human virtue: “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good.”³⁵¹ The Holy Father explains that solidarity is a task of *all*; everyone must grow an attitude of solidarity, which the Pope identifies as the path to universal peace and true development.³⁵² On the other hand, solidarity also functions as a specifically Christian virtue. Informed by faith and charity, “it seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation.”³⁵³ *Both* virtues are needed in the world today and both virtues are worthy of pursuit; the difference is that in case of an infused virtue of solidarity, a person acquires new motivation and new purpose for acting in solidarity with others.

In a similar vein, the Pope distinguishes between an infused and acquired justice. In one of the catecheses, the Holy Father argues that justice is a virtue attainable by everyone, believers and non-believers alike:

To be just means giving each one what is due to him [...] It is necessary, therefore, to deepen our knowledge of justice continually. It is not a theoretical science. It is virtue, it is capacity of the human spirit, of the human will and also of the heart. It is also necessary to pray in order to be just and to know how to be just.³⁵⁴

³⁵⁰ John Paul II beautifully expresses this point when he says that “we have within us the capacities for wisdom and virtue” as “each and every human person has been created in the ‘image and likeness’ of the One who is the origin of all that is” John Paul II, “Address at the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations Organization” (5 October 1995), no. 18. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1995/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_05101995_address-to-uno.html

³⁵¹ *JRS*, 38.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 39.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, 40.

³⁵⁴ John Paul II, General audience, (November 8 1978), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/1978/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_19781108.html

At the same time, justice is also owed to God and divinely inspired on account of the theological virtue of charity.³⁵⁵ Furthermore, the papal discussion of the virtue of justice sheds additional light on the nature of acquired virtues; for justice, according to the Pope, remains “in a certain way, greater than man, than the dimensions of his earthly life.” “In this transitory world,” argues John Paul II, “it is not possible to achieve the full measure of justice.”³⁵⁶ The human virtues, therefore, appear somewhat *imperfect* compared to their infused equivalents. Again, not in a sense that human virtues are deficient or less valuable but simply that they are limited in light of the supernatural motivation and ends characteristic to infused virtues.

Although Wojtyła/John Paul II does not develop any systematic treatment of how the two sets of virtues, human and infused, coexist in a person, at least two observations should be made.

First, Wojtyła/John Paul II believes that grace builds on nature rather than destroys it.³⁵⁷ If what can be said of the relationship between grace and nature is at least partially reflective of the relationship between infused and acquired virtues, then infused virtues “transform” human virtues on account of their strong adherence to the object of faith. An insightful passage comes from the *Elementarz Etyczny*:

Of course, in proportion to how grace is being assimilated by nature and its operations, it becomes more and more man’s own way of being and acting. And here precisely lies the foundation of what we call Christian morality. More important than the supernatural origin of norms is the supernatural transformation of nature, resulting in a changed way man acts and operates.³⁵⁸

If this is correct, then for instance, an infused virtue of wisdom and an its acquired equivalent do not function as two separate virtues in a person, but as one virtue transformed by grace. This is very similar to the observations made in chapter two, where one read that the particular action may remain materially the same, yet formally different. In the case of the virtue of wisdom, a non-

³⁵⁵ Ibid.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

³⁵⁷ Cf. Wojtyła, “Natura i doskonałość,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 142 & FR, 43.

³⁵⁸ Wojtyła, “Natura i doskonałość,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 142

believer and believer alike can arrive at the same judgment that killing innocent people is wrong because it damages the good of society (materially the same act). For a Christian, however, the same judgment is further motivated by love for others who are made in God's image and likeness (a formally different act).³⁵⁹ The earlier examples of the virtues of solidarity and justice prove the same point, which suggests that for Wojtyła/John Paul II, acquired virtues become transformed by grace *at the moment* of conversion, and properly function as infused virtues.

Second, human virtues predispose the person for the reception of grace. This is not to say that infused virtues cannot be had *unless* one develops corresponding human virtues. As it was shown before, Wojtyła/John Paul II holds that infused virtues come directly from God and can be obtained regardless of whether one possess human virtues or not. However, in one of the passages from *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła believes that human actions, and thus also human virtues, matter for the acquisition and exercise of the infused virtues:

...Christian morality, basing itself on the Gospels, knows love as a supernatural, a divine virtue. Let us take this as our starting point, and proceed to analyze primarily the way in which on the human level this virtue is formed and manifests itself in the woman-man relationship. *For every supernatural virtue takes root in nature and assumes a human form as a result of man's own actions, both in his interior and in his external behavior.*³⁶⁰

According to this passage, every infused virtue can and must be understood in light of human nature. Even the greatest among supernatural virtues, love, manifests itself on the human level. Accordingly, infused virtues in a sense “adapt” to one’s moral state of character. “Taking root in nature” and “assuming human form” is conditioned by man’s actions that dispose him, in a better or worse way, to receive God’s grace and along with it the corresponding infused virtues. Thus, for example, in his apostolic exhortation *Pastores gregis*, John Paul II insists that “episcopal ordination does not infuse the perfection of the virtues” and therefore “the Bishop is called to pursue his path

³⁵⁹ John Paul II distinguishes between *philosophical* and *theological* wisdom in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*. In his description, he closely follows St. Thomas, according to whom the two forms of wisdom are “complementary,” with the former being based on the capacity of human intellect alone, the latter based upon Revelation. (FR, 44.)

³⁶⁰ LR,120. Emphasis mine.

of perfection with greater intensity so as to attain to the stature of Christ, the perfect Man.”³⁶¹

Similarly, one may obtain an infused virtue of temperance by going to confession, but without proper habituation of sensual appetite characteristic of acquired virtue, he may quickly lose it; for “on account of sin [man] loses the divine life of grace.”³⁶²

To summarize, Wojtyła/John Paul II clearly distinguishes between human and infused virtues. Both are referred to as virtues and both are worthy of human pursuit. However, when it comes to describing how the two sets of virtues coexist in the person, Wojtyła/John Paul II’s description is rather limited. Certainly, infused and human virtues are not opposed to each other. Infused virtues do not abolish the work of human virtues, but builds on them and transforms them in light of supernatural faith. Wojtyła’s comments on grace and nature are particularly instructive of this point. However, infused and acquired virtues are also somehow independent according to the later papal comments; infused virtues can be obtained or lost independently from human virtues. Unfortunately, the apparent tension remains unresolved.³⁶³

Conclusion

The investigation of the present chapter reveals that some of the key elements of virtue ethics can be identified in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s work. Already as a young bishop, Wojtyła develops a substantial understanding of human happiness. He notes that desire for happiness is universal to all men, who naturally strive to realize fully the potential of human nature. By pursuing the moral good, discerned by reason, one becomes self-fulfilled, or, simply happy on account of

³⁶¹ John Paul II, *Pastores gregis*, no. 13. Official Latin text: *AAS* 96 (2004), 825-927. English translation available: http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_20031016_pastores-gregis.html [accessed October 23, 2016].

³⁶² John Paul II, *Angelus* (November 1, 2001), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/angelus/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_ang_20011101.html

³⁶³ This similar tension is present in the Thomistic account of the relationship between acquired and infused virtues.

good works. In the writings of John Paul II, the emphasis shifts from achieving perfection by human efforts alone to entrusting oneself to God, who is the very author of human nature, and therefore, the only true good able to satisfy man's longing. Consequently, happiness cannot be found in pleasures or things, not even virtues themselves. The latter, however, not constituting happiness themselves, remain essential for man's struggle to achieve it.

When organized and properly categorized, scattered references further suggest that Wojtyła/John Paul II treats the structure of virtues rather extensively. Wojtyła writes prolifically on the topic, albeit using his own terminology of "proficiencies" to denote virtues, and "inner equilibrium" to describe the resulting state of virtuous activity, which can be linked to the traditional doctrine of the mean of virtue. A notable mark of Wojtyła/John Paul II's account of the virtues is their deeply personalistic character, which besides attending to the immediate object, seeks the affirmation of the value of another person.

Wojtyła/John Paul II also takes notice of the essential role of prudence. Despite limited and often scattered references, this important virtue carries much weight in the writings of the Polish Archbishop and the later papal teachings of John Paul II. Prudence is represented first as the perfection of practical reasoning, enabling the person to pursue what is authentically good. Wojtyła in particular, distinguishes between the work of prudence and the activity of conscience, which constitutes the final stage in the process of practical reasoning. Prudence defined as virtue (whether acquired or supernatural) can only be put to good use, unlike the similar ability of cleverness. Wojtyła/John Paul II also explicitly states that virtues are necessarily connected, without however, substantially justifying his position, or, identifying the central role prudence plays in the unity thesis.

Because virtues affect the entirety of one's being, not only his intellect and will, Wojtyła/John Paul II also speaks of virtues in the context of emotional life. Particularly insightful in this regard is Wojtyła's treatment of human emotivity from *Osoba i Czyn*. The young Archbishop

argues that because of the spontaneous nature of emotions, man faces a specific task of integration, which consists in an intelligent subordination of emotive energy to the rational efficacy of a person. In this process, the work of virtues is not only highlighted, but also deemed indispensable for the success of the integrating process in a person.

Finally, Wojtyła/John Paul II also emphasizes the special role of grace in the operation of virtues. Due to the original sin and his fallen, but redeemed nature, a man needs God's grace, and along with it, particular virtues that enable him to pursue his final goal. Wojtyła/John Paul II categorizes virtues into theological, infused, and acquired, according to their relation to grace. Although the distinctions are clearly made and used in consistent manner, Wojtyła/John Paul II does not fully explain why, for example, theological virtues are different from infused, or how acquired virtues coexist with their infused equivalents in one and the same agent.

Therefore, the five key elements of virtue ethics as identified in chapter two are not only present in the thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II, but also occupy a significant portion of his moral teaching. Moreover, these are not random and unrelated concepts; the way Wojtyła/John Paul II's develops his account of each of the elements presupposes or requires other elements to work. For example, virtues will not make sense without identifying happiness as realization of one's being qua moral good, or without attending to one's emotivity.

This in turn suggests that though perhaps not always in an explicit or organized manner, Wojtyła/John Paul II does develop an account of virtue ethics, which deserves to be recognized by contemporary scholarship. The study will now proceed to assess the significance of this conclusion.

Chapter Four: **The Relevance of Identifying the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work**

Introduction

The third chapter showed that the key elements of virtue ethics are present in the work of Wojtyła/John Paul II. The present chapter will evaluate to what extent this finding impact the way the moral theology of the Polish philosopher and Pope is perceived today. In order to acquire the most comprehensive answer, one needs to consider the following three points.

The first point is to assess the significance of the presence of elements of virtue ethics for Wojtyła/John Paul II's own ethical system. Showing just how important the elements of virtue ethics are for the way the Polish philosopher and Pope structures his moral system is essential. Because a thorough exposition of Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral thought is already a challenging task (and certainly beyond the scope of this project), the analysis will rest on the three most common characterizations of the moral methodology of Wojtyła/John Paul II, namely, its phenomenological, personalistic, and normative character.

The second point is to evaluate the significance of Wojtyła/John Paul II's treatment of particular elements of virtue ethics for the broader field of virtue ethics. In other words, one needs to show whether the Polish philosopher and Pope brings anything new to the field. While doing so, this section will refer to the findings of the third chapter and compare them with the traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic approach that has been appropriated, though not without qualifications, by many of the contemporary scholars. This section will also show in what ways Wojtyła/John Paul II goes beyond the traditional virtue theory.

Lastly, one needs to establish whether the elements of virtue ethics, as presented by Wojtyła/John Paul II, may, or may not be included in the list of his major contributions to the broader renewal of moral theology as called for by the Second Vatican Council. This section will

focus on the modern attempt to rehabilitate virtue while also linking it to the findings of the present project and some of Wojtyła/John Paul II's own statements pertaining to the future of moral theology.

1. The Relevance of the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Own Work

Rarely do contemporary scholars attempt to assess the relevance of the presence of the elements of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral thought. When they do, they tend to treat it as a rather insignificant element of his overall methodology. Some openly deny that John Paul II ever considered virtue ethics to be of much influence on his own moral system. For instance, Spinello believes that although Holy Father puts great emphasis on the virtue of solidarity, "John Paul II does not subscribe to a virtue ethic."¹ Similarly, Jones claims that "John Paul II does not use virtue as a core category for his moral theology."² Others simply remain silent on the topic altogether, or, treat on particular virtues without making clear statements as to where these virtues fit into the overall thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II.³

A possible explanation for the relatively small interest in the elements of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work concerns the way his moral methodology has been presented. My contention is that due to the complexity of Wojtyła/John Paul II's methodological commitments and rather limited references to virtues, scholars tended to focus on other areas of Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral thought. This, of course, is a praiseworthy and much-needed work; but it also has led

¹ Spinello, 105.

² David Albert Jones, "John Paul II and moral theology," in *The Legacy of John Paul II*, ed. Hayes, Michael A., and Gerald O'Collins (London: Burns & Oates, 2008), 103.

³ Many books have been written in an attempt to summarize and assess the moral wisdom of Wojtyła/John Paul II. It is remarkable to see how few highlight the role of virtues – not in a sense of individual virtues (such as chastity or solidarity, which have been studied) but the virtues in general, as being constitutive of Wojtyła/John Paul II's whole system of ethics. Cf. Gerard Mannion, *The Vision of John Paul II: Assessing His Thought and Influence* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2008); Richard A Spinello, *The Genius of John Paul II: The Great Pope's Moral Wisdom* (Lanham, MD: Sheed & Ward, 2007); Rocco Buttiglione, *Karol Wojtyła: The Thought of the Man Who Became Pope John Paul II* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997); Jaroslaw Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

to an obscuring of the importance of virtues in the writings of Polish philosopher and Pope.

Accordingly, the following section will now examine some of the most common characterizations made in reference to Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral theology and show that the elements of virtue ethics constitute a vital part of each of these characterizations.

1.1. Phenomenology

Most contemporary scholars agree that Wojtyła's ethical writings are a unique blend of Thomistic metaphysics and modern phenomenology.⁴ Some, like Modras or Reimers, wish to argue that Thomistic influence remains more fundamental in the writings of Wojtyła; after all, he was first trained as a Thomist and only subsequently encountered Scheler.⁵ Wojtyła himself admits at numerous occasions that metaphysical reflection regarding the human person enjoys certain precedence over phenomenological analysis; however, he is also clear that an adequate anthropology remains incomplete without proper examination of person's subjectivity and efficacy as revealed by experience.⁶ Accordingly, Wojtyła gives much attention to the phenomenological description of the human person, which presupposes the operation of virtues.

The key text comes from the fifth chapter of *Osoba i czyn*, where Wojtyła concludes his reflection on the process of integration of person in action. Since some readers might not be familiar with Wojtyła's argument in *Osoba i czyn*, I will begin by briefly explaining the concepts of self-determination and self-possession, which are necessary to understand the concept of integration, the focus of chapter five.

⁴ For a good overview of the literature devoted to Wojtyła's methodology, see Spinello, pages 219-225.

⁵ Cf. Adrian J. Reimers, "The Thomistic Personalism of Karol Wojtyła" in *Attidel IX Congresso tomistico internazionale*, vol. 6 (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1992), 364-369; Ronald Modras, "The Thomistic Personalism of John Paul II," *Modern Schoolman* 59 (1982): 117-127.

⁶ Cf. Wojtyła, *Person and Community*, 93 & 193; *Wykłady Łubelskie*, 73 & 178; *Elementarz Etyczny*, 138. In *Osoba i czyn*, Wojtyła clearly aims at achieving complementary view of human person and ethical action: "By treating the person in an exclusively metaphysical way as a subject of existence and acting, that is, '*suppositum*' we are significantly distanced from that which constitutes the source of experience. It is therefore better to interrelate and supplement these two aspects, of being (as a human person) and of subjectivity proper to the experience of acting." *OiC*, 74.

One needs to remember that the thrust of the phenomenological analysis in *Osoba i czyn* is to reconcile the *subjective* dimension of the person proper to himself as a subject experiencing the effects of his own actions, with its *objective* counterpart corresponding to the fact of a person's being and existing in the world. Such reconciliation guarantees the most comprehensive understanding of the human person and moral action.⁷ Wojtyła argues that fundamental to this endeavor is a person's freedom, more specifically, his ability to determine himself through actions made possible by free will:

Every action confirms and also specifies the relation, in which the will manifests itself as a feature of the person and the person manifests himself as a reality with regard to his dynamism that is properly constituted by the will. It is this relation that we call 'self-determination.'⁸

The self-determination of person constitutes the very basis for meaningful moral acting, which Wojtyła defines in terms of the subject's becoming (*stawanie się, fieri*):

Self-determination is related to becoming... It is that becoming of the person which both has its own specific nature which may be disclosed in a phenomenological way, and indicates its own, separate ontological identity, while in morality it stands out as an existential fact characteristic of man. This is why in the conclusion to the preceding chapter attention was drawn to morality.⁹

Now, self-determination is in turn dependent on self-possession: "Because 'I will' is an act of self-determination at a particular moment, it presupposes self-possession."¹⁰ The man determines whom he is by virtue of his actions by being literally in possession of himself.¹¹

The self-determination of a person is also dependent on self-governance "without which it is impossible to explain self-determination."¹² Self-governance, explains Wojtyła, is understood best in terms of personal complexity: "the person is, on the one hand, the one who governs himself and, on

⁷ *OiC*, 74.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 131.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 131-132.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 132.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*, 133.

the other, the one who is governed.”¹³ Self-possession and self-governance are thus two essential aspects of personhood. Kupczak notes that both categories permeate Wojtyła’s ethical thinking. On the one hand, Wojtyła argues in one of his articles on a family that the ability to become a gift for others is rooted in the subject’s self-possession.¹⁴ On the other hand, in a different article from 1975, self-governance is presented as the way in which Christian couples participate in the kingly dignity of Jesus Christ.¹⁵ The crucial role of self-possession and self-governance as two essential characteristics of a person enabling him to become a gift to another person is also emphasized by Wojtyła in *Love and Responsibility*.¹⁶

Self-determination, then, is dependent on the processes of self-governance and self-possession, which, in turn are dependent on virtues (proficiencies): “The personal structure of self-governance and self-possession is realized by means of different proficiencies.”¹⁷ Why does the self-possession and self-governance of the person presuppose virtues? Because for Wojtyła, the human person is a psychosomatic being with spontaneous emotive energy, which does not always follow the command of will and reason (as shown in chapter three). One cannot be fully in possession of oneself or in control of oneself without successful integration of his emotions.¹⁸ The process of

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Wojtyła, “Rodzina jako *communio personarum*” (Family as the communion of persons”) *Ateneum Kapłańskie* 66, no.3 (1974): 351. On the same point, see also: *TOB*, 123:5.

¹⁵ Wojtyła, “Rozważania pastoralne o rodzinie” (“Pastoral reflections on family”) *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych* 3 (1975): 66.

¹⁶ *LR*, footnote 21. Wojtyła explains the relationship between the two categories in a separate section of *Osoba i czyn*. According to it, self-possession is a more fundamental category to self-governance, both of which make up what Wojtyła labels as self-determination of the person: “Since man’s power to govern himself is his distinctive property it presupposes self-possession and is in a way one of its aspects or its more concrete manifestations. The self-governance that is found in the person is possible only when there is self-possession that is proper to the person. Self-determination is conditioned by one as well as by the other. Both are realized in an act of self-determination, which is constituted by every real human ‘I will.’” *OiC*, 133.

¹⁷ *OiC*, 311.

¹⁸ “Man as a complex, 'many-layered' being manifests himself in many different dynamisms, each with its own specific interior ends. The physical, psychic and personal levels (instinct, emotion and recognition of the value of the person) all have a part in the experience of love. Integration of these three kinds of dynamism takes place in human action, and in this particular case in the act of loving. They become part of the human act, which means that its integral character manifests itself in each part in a way appropriate to that part. Integration is not something arbitrary but constitutes a programme of 'making oneself whole', fulfilling oneself, which is characteristic of man as a person. Therefore, failure to integrate these factors in actions is more than 'lack of integration'; it is 'counter-integration'. Non-

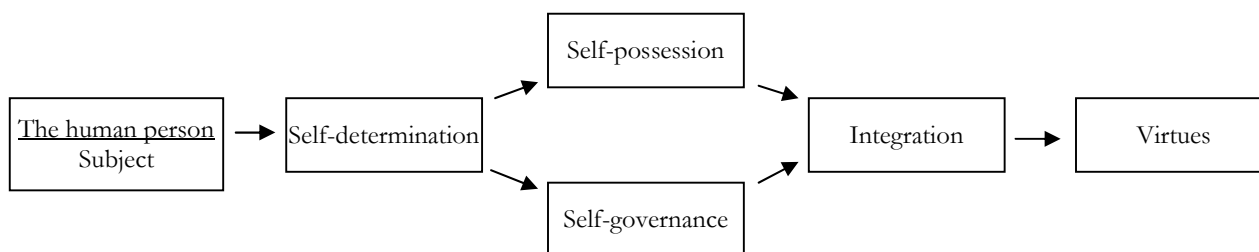
integration is thus described as being essential to the attainment of self-possession and self-governance:

“The problem of integration”[...] consists in the realization of the personal structure of self-governance and self-possession on the basis of that psychical subjectivity which is spontaneously shaped by the numerous and rich emotive events with their appropriate spontaneity of attraction and repulsion.¹⁹

It is through the process of integration that one comes to appreciate the role of virtues in Wojtyła’s phenomenological analysis of human action. It is noteworthy that the philosopher explicitly points his finger at moral proficiencies as the primary means through which integration takes place within man:

The integration of the person and the action on the basis of emotivity (emotionality and emotivity) of the human psyche is accomplished through proficiency, which from the point of view of ethics deserves to be called ‘virtues.’²⁰

In other words, one is unable to fulfill himself as a subject-person completely without being virtuous. The following graph illustrates well the connection between virtues and person’s subjectivity:



If the fulfillment of the human person as a subject of his actions depends on self-determination, and self-determination presupposes self-possession and self-governance, which in turn are in need of the

integration signifies a (more or less deep-seated) incapacity for self-possession and self-mastery by way of self-determination.” *LR*, footnote 34.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 310.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

process of integration, which is accomplished by means of virtues, then virtues are essential for one's experience of being the subject of one's actions.

Now, it is true that for Wojtyła integration is a complementary process: "integration is a complementary aspect of the dynamism of the person, an aspect that, as we saw, is complementary to transcendence."²¹ Accordingly, some would argue that virtues have at best a complementary function to perform, thereby downgrading their overall importance. However, Wojtyła's designation of the process of integration as being complementary should not be interpreted as less essential; rather, it is meant to address the same reality of the person, albeit from a different perspective:

Man experiences himself as the agent of his action and is thus its subject. He also has the experience of himself as the subject, but the experience of subjectiveness differs from that of efficacy [...] every action contains a synthesis of efficacy and the subjectiveness of the human ego. Insofar as efficacy may be viewed as the domain where transcendence manifests itself, integration is manifested in subjectiveness.²²

Wojtyła is clear that both the "transcendence of the person in action" and the "integration of the person in action" are elements of the same structure, of the same dynamic reality that is determined by the person and the act.²³ This is visible already in the self-possession and the self-governance of the person: "he who governs himself is at the same time subjected and subordinate to himself. He who possesses himself is simultaneously in possession of himself."²⁴ Lacking either one would result in an impoverished account of the dynamic reality of the person.

What this means for the present question is that without the process of integration and thus also virtues, one would be incapable of explaining how actions affect one's character –the description of the person as being an object of one's own actions would be impossible. This is a

²¹ *OiC*, 314. Wojtyła defines transcendence etymologically as "going beyond a threshold or a boundary." There are two kinds of transcendence. First, there is a "horizontal transcendence" which refers to the person's ability to go beyond his cognitive limits towards an object outside of him. And second, there is a "vertical transcendence," which is rooted in the person's freedom so that when a person wills or cognizes something outside of himself, he is at the same time determining himself as a subject. It is this second sense that Wojtyła emphasizes the most in his work. Cf. *OiC*, 147.

²² *OiC*, 233.

²³ *Ibid.*,

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 232.

serious implication, especially in light of the overall purpose of *Osoba i czyn* which is precisely to reconcile both the subjective and objective aspects of the human person as revealed in action. Virtues, then, carry more weight in Wojtyła's phenomenological analysis than one might have thought. Certainly, they are not the main focus of *Osoba i czyn* (Wojtyła spends roughly three pages discussing the role of virtues), but they are an important piece of the puzzle which, if taken away, would render the entire picture incomplete.

1.2. Personalism

Another frequently cited characteristic of Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral theology is its deeply personalistic dimension.²⁵ In one of his articles on the history of personalist movement, Hellman traces Wojtyła's interest in modern personalism from ever since Wojtyła was a young priest up to the time of his election to the papacy.²⁶ Hellman points to many factors that were influential in drawing the young philosopher from Kraków to a new ethical system, most important being a chance, personalities, and hard political circumstances.²⁷ As both Poland and France were more and more divided between 'nationalists' and Communists, explains Hellman, "a defense of the human person against the excesses of the Right and Left was always more attractive."²⁸ The personalist interest of Wojtyła might have also developed during his years as a seminarian under the Nazi occupation. According to Peters, the atrocities of war were instrumental in the development of

²⁵ Cf. Miguel Acosta and Adrian J. Reimers, *Karol Wojtyła's Personalist Philosophy: Understanding Person & Act* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2016); Kenneth L. Schmitz, *At the Center of the Human Drama: The Philosophical Anthropology of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1993); Jarosław Kupczak, *Destined for Liberty: The Human Person in the Philosophy of Karol Wojtyła/John Paul II* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2000).

²⁶ Hellman, "John Paul II and the Personalist Movement," *Cross Currents*, vol. 30, no. 4 (Winter 1980-1981): 409-419.

²⁷ Hellman, 413.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 410.

Wojtyła's sensitivity for the value and dignity of the human person, which in turn resulted in his interest in personalist philosophy.²⁹

But besides the historical and political reasons, Wojtyła found in personalism the new and more promising way of explaining the teachings of the Church. In an introduction to John Crosby's article on the personalism of John Paul II, Janet Smith offers a concise argument for the strength of Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalistic approach to ethics:

Personalism for its moral judgments does not look first to the will of God, divine law, or natural law as the foundation for moral truths. Rather it takes the truth about man as its foundation – a truth that differs not at all with the will of God or divine law or natural law – but a truth that is in ways more accessible to man than other avenues to truth. It is, after all, the phenomenon of which he has the most direct experience, to which he has most direct access.³⁰

There is no doubt, to use Curran's words, that as a "philosophical ethicist, John Paul II has made the human person the center of his ethics"³¹ The inherent dignity of a human person constitutes a foundational anthropological assumption crucial to Wojtyła's ethical reflection in *Love and Responsibility* and *Osoba i czyn*, as well as in his later papal teachings, most notably *Redemptor hominis*, *Veritatis splendor*, *Evangelium vitae*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, and apostolic exhortations such as *Familiaris consortio*. The intention of this section, however, is not to focus on the personalism in Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings (this work has been already done), but on the virtues and their role in Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral thought *in light* of his commitment to personalism.³² Thus, the next

²⁹ Danielle M. Peters and Johann G. Roten, *Ecce Educatrix Tua: The Role of the Blessed Virgin Mary for a Pedagogy of Holiness in the Thought of John Paul II and Father Joseph Kentenich* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2010), 11.

³⁰ John F. Crosby, "The personalism of John Paul II as the basis of his approach to the teaching of *Humanae vitae*" in Janet E. Smith, *Why Humanae Vitae Was Right: A Reader* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 193.

³¹ Curran, *The Moral Theology of Pope John Paul II*, 91.

³² It seems necessary, however, to at least distinguish Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalism from its other contemporary forms. Particularly instructive in this regard is Grabowski's article, "Person or Nature? Rival Personalism in 20th Century Catholic Sexual Ethics," in which the author contrasts and compares the three major versions of modern personalism. The first accepts the limitation of the concept of nature conceived along biological lines and consequently moves on to focus on more important personal values. This approach is represented by Louis Janssens. The second seeks to resuscitate the traditional concept of nature with the aid of personalistic language, and such has been developed by Paul Quay. Finally, the third argues that nature represents more than mere biology and hence has to be integrated with the new focus on values, which is the position taken by Wojtyła/John Paul II. This version of personalism is also

few paragraphs will focus on three instances where Wojtyła/John Paul II's argument is deeply personalistic and which simultaneously involves the work of virtues.

1.2.1. *Contraception*

In the previously mentioned article, Crosby analyzes in detail the Pope's argument against the use of contraception. He notes that in addressing the issue, John Paul II does not look first to the will of God and divine prohibition, but that "his answer is that contraception is opposed to the 'truth about man,' as he [i.e., Holy Father] likes to say, and that this is in a sense a deeper answer to the question."³³ Crosby points out that this distinctively personalistic approach to the issue is a result of Wojtyła/John Paul II's fascination with the subjectivity of the human person, which gives "access" to a better understanding of his being:

John Paul goes beyond the philosophical tradition which he inherits... This tradition had defined the person, to quote the classical formula of Boethius, as an "individual substance of rational nature," but it did not, it precisely did not express itself in terms of self-presence, subjectivity, inter-subjectivity, interiority, solitude, communion. Now John Paul, while of course entirely affirming the substantiality and the rationality of the person, does speak, indeed makes a point of speaking, and takes particular delight in speaking, in just these "subjective" terms.³⁴

To back up his claim, Crosby points to the text from *Theology of the Body*, specifically Holy Father's exegesis of the two accounts of the creation story from Genesis, where the account contained in chapter two describes man in more "subjective" terms as opposed to its "priestly" and more "objective" counterpart found in chapter one.³⁵ It might be added that Wojtyła stresses the same point already as a young bishop; first, in reference to Thomistic personalism, when he says that "St. Thomas gives us an excellent view of the objective existence and activity of the person," but

unique in that it advocates for the equality of both ends of marriage (union and procreation) without putting one before the other. Cf. *Ibid.*, 307. Needless to say, my use of personalism in this study refers exclusively to the third approach.

³³ Crosby, 196.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 200.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 200. Cf. *TOB*, 1:1-3:4.

makes it difficult “to speak in his view of the lived experiences of the person,”³⁶ and second, in regards to the cosmological view of human person espoused by Aristotle, which “implies a belief in the reducibility of the human being to the world,” but “excludes the possibility of accentuating the irreducible in the human being.”³⁷

Thanks to his interest in personal subjectivity, Wojtyła/John Paul II is better equipped to argue against the evil of contraception: the contraceptive act is no longer deemed morally reprehensible solely because it goes against the natural function of reproductive organs which is to procreate, but because it undermines the very reality of self-donation between spouses. One cannot become a gift to someone unless he gives himself totally to another person, which includes one’s openness to accepting children:

One can say that in the case of an artificial separation of these two meanings [i.e., unitive and procreative] in the conjugal act, a real bodily union is brought about, but it does not correspond to the inner truth and dignity of personal communion, “*communio personarum*” This communion demands, in fact, that the “language of the body” be expressed reciprocally in the integral truth of its meaning. If this truth is lacking, one can speak neither of the truth of the reciprocal gift of self nor of reciprocal acceptance of oneself by the person. Such a violation of the inner order of conjugal communion, a communion that plunges its roots into the very order of the person, *constitutes the essential evil of the contraceptive act*.³⁸

But how can one become a gift to someone in the first place? In fact, is not the nature of the person, to quote Wojtyła himself, “incompatible with the surrender to another?”³⁹ The Archbishop from Kraków tackles the difficult question already in *Love and Responsibility*, admitting that a profound paradox is found within human nature: on the one hand, no person can be transferred or ceded to another. On the other, every person is able to step out of himself. Indeed, he needs to reach out to others if he wishes to become fully human. Wojtyła solves the anthropological riddle by arguing that “what is impossible and illegitimate in the natural order and in a physical sense, can

³⁶ Wojtyła, “Thomistic personalism,” in *Person and Community*, 170-171.

³⁷ Wojtyła, “Subjectivity and the irreducible in the human being,” in *Person and Community*, 210-211.

³⁸ *TOB*, 123:7. Original emphasis.

³⁹ *LR*, 96.

come about in the order of love.”⁴⁰ In fact, he argues that “the fullest, the most uncompromising form of love consists precisely in self-giving, in making one’s inalienable and non-transferable ‘I’ someone’s else’s property.”⁴¹ Self-donation is thus possible only in love.⁴²

However, as the old adage goes, “you cannot give what you yourself do not have.” Thus, Wojtyła/John Paul II insists that to transfer the “non-transferable” to someone, one needs to first be in possession of himself: “Man is *person precisely because he possesses himself and has dominion over himself*.”⁴³ To possess oneself, explains Holy Father, means to be in control over one’s body and soul, which in turn allows for the sharing of oneself with another person: “Indeed, inasmuch as he is master over himself he can ‘give himself’ to another.”⁴⁴ How does man grow in self-mastery? By means of virtue, specifically the virtue of chastity, without which, argues John Paul II, “mutual self-giving and human procreation in the context of true love cannot be achieved.”⁴⁵ In this light, virtue serves as a necessary pre-condition for expressing the personal love between spouses.⁴⁶

However, besides being a pre-condition to genuine self-donation, the virtue of chastity can help a couple to plan the family responsibly without the need to practice contraception. Commenting on the passage from *Humanae Vitae*, the Pope emphasizes the important role of periodic continence, which he directly links to the virtue of chastity: “In the case of a morally right regulation of fertility brought about by periodic continence, the point is clearly to practice *conjugal chastity*.”⁴⁷ Even though both contraception and periodic continence may be thought of as formally aiming at the same thing, namely, avoidance of conception, there is a substantial difference between

⁴⁰ LR, 96.

⁴¹ Ibid., 97.

⁴² Cf. GS, 24.

⁴³ TOB, 123:5.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ TOB, 121:1. The Pope is quoting directly from GS, 51.

⁴⁶ The role of virtue of chastity in light of the Pope’s treatment of contraception is similar to that of virtues in Wojtyła’s phenomenological analysis of human person. Just as a person cannot experience himself as a subject of his own actions unless he remains in possession of himself, which is achieved through virtues, so cannot a person become fully a gift to another person unless he is in control of his sexual urges, which is achieved through virtue of chastity.

⁴⁷ TOB, 124:6. Original emphasis. See also TOB, 130:4.

the two: while the former involves an objective refusal to share the totality of one's being with another person, the latter enables the couple to responsibly plan their family in a way that corresponds to their dignity as persons.⁴⁸ In fact, the Holy Father argues, periodic continence "favors attention to one's partner, helps the spouses to drive out selfishness, the enemy of true love; and deepens their sense of responsibility" to God and one another.⁴⁹ Avoidance of conception is achieved but in a way that is fully compatible with the deeply personal meaning of spousal love. John Paul II suggests that the truth of responsible parenthood is linked to the moral maturity of the couple, which in turn explains why some people might confuse periodic continence with just another form of contraception:

In the common way of thinking, it often happens that the "method," detached from the ethical dimension proper to it, is applied in a merely functional and even utilitarian way. When one separates the "natural method" from the ethical dimension, one no longer sees the difference between it and other "methods" (artificial means), and one ends up speaking about it as if it were just another form of contraception.⁵⁰

In other words, one must not think of periodic continence as the mechanical application of biological laws. The Pope emphasizes that the right way of understanding and practicing periodic continence is precisely that of virtue, which is able to shape the human person from within:

...knowledge of the "rhythms of fertility – though indispensable – does not yet create that interior freedom of the gift that is spiritual in nature... This freedom presupposes that one is able to direct sensual and emotive reactions in order to allow the *gift* of self to the other "I" *on the basis of the mature possession* of one's own "I" in its bodily and emotive subjectivity."⁵¹

There is no need to extend the present discussion. Wojtyła/John Paul II argues for the evil of contraception in personalistic terms. In his argument, he refers to the person's subjectivity, which reveals man's ability for self-donation. Contraception is precisely wrong because it defies the authenticity of conjugal act between spouses. The virtues, most particularly the virtue of chastity,

⁴⁸ TOB, 125:2.

⁴⁹ TOB, 125:6. The Pope quotes from *HV*, 21.

⁵⁰ TOB, 125:4.

⁵¹ TOB, 130:4. Original emphasis.

enable the spouses to share their very selves in an authentic and fruitful way. By practicing periodic continence, spouses are also able to achieve the same end assumed by contraception yet without violating the dignity of the conjugal act. Therefore, the virtues are relevant to Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalistic analysis of the sexual act. I will now proceed to examine whether the same can be said of other moral issues influenced by personalism.

1.2.2. *Abortion*

Ethical personalism also infuses Wojtyła/John Paul II's thinking about the intrinsic value of the life of the unborn. Wojtyła alludes to the fact that “man is somebody from the moment of conception” already in *Osoba i czyn*.⁵² He explicitly asserts that “a new human being is a person” in *Love and Responsibility*, and he also argues that “when a new human being is conceived a new spirit is conceived simultaneously, united in substance with the body, which begins to exist in embryo in the mother's womb.”⁵³ John Paul II speaks out on the sanctity of human life on multiple occasions, but most notably in his encyclical *Evangelium vitae*, where, as one author says, “the pope appears to be engaged in a summation of Catholic thought on the subject of human dignity.”⁵⁴

In *Evangelium vitae*, John Paul II engages in a discussion on abortion on multiple levels. The Pope refers to natural law and an ability of every person to know the intrinsic value of human life,⁵⁵ the Divine prohibition on taking the life of an innocent person as expressed by the fifth commandment,⁵⁶ the long-standing tradition of the Church condemning the practice of abortion,⁵⁷

⁵² *OiC*, 220. Wojtyła reserves the term “somebody” to denote a subject who is a person: “The subject is always one and the same; it is the subject that is all a person, a ‘somebody,’ and does not cease to be a person in the whole sphere of the causations of nature which, as already noted, differs from the causation of the person.” Cf. *OiC*, 115.

⁵³ *LR*, 54-55.

⁵⁴ Christopher Tollefsen, “A Catholic Perspective on Human Dignity” in Dilley, Stephen, and Nathan J. Palpant, *Human Dignity in Bioethics: From Worldviews to the Public Square* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 50.

⁵⁵ *EV*, 2.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 61.

the teaching of universal magisterium about the inviolability of human life,⁵⁸ as well as other philosophical arguments such as an argument from individuation and potentiality.⁵⁹ Regardless of his preferred form of argument, the Pope's underlying anthropological assumption stays one and the same: every person is bestowed with an intrinsic human dignity which cannot be taken away or transferred to anyone else. As such, every person, whether still in his mother's womb or on his deathbed, deserves to be protected, valued, and never used as a means to an end. John Paul II explains that this must be true because of the three following points. First, the human person has dignity because of his origin in God who alone is the author of life. Second, the human person has dignity because of his nature, which is made in the image and likeness of God. And third, the human person has dignity because he is made for God in that his whole being is oriented towards the Creator.⁶⁰

The intention of this section is not to engage in a highly contested debate surrounding the moral legitimacy of abortion.⁶¹ It will not try to justify Wojtyła/John Paul II's claims nor prove him wrong. What it aims to show is that in his deeply personalistic rhetoric regarding the sanctity of human life, the Holy Father often refers to virtues, most specifically to the virtue of justice, which appears crucial for his defense of the human life of the unborn.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 62.

⁵⁹ According to the argument from individuation, the human embryo deserves a moral status equal to those of adults on account of its being individual entity with a unique genetic code which is an essential characteristic of being a human person. The second argument from potentiality claims that the human embryo needs to be treated with dignity as it is already a person with a potential to reach the next stages of psychosomatic development. Proponents of this view argue that if unimpaired, human embryo will inevitably acquire characteristics proper to an adult person. It appears that the Pope espouses both arguments in *EV*, 60.

⁶⁰ *EV*, 34-38. Cf. Tollefsen, 51-59.

⁶¹ Cf. Angela Senander, "Toward Liberation from Abortion: A Catholic Reflection on Abortion in the United States" (Ph.D. diss., Boston College, 2000); Kathy Rudy, *Beyond Pro-Life and Pro-Choice: Moral Diversity in the Abortion Debate* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996); Frances Kissling, "Is There Life after Roe? How to Think about the Fetus," *Conscience* 25, no. 3 (2004-5): 11-20; James R. Kelly, "A Dispatch from the Abortion Wars: Reflections on 'Common Ground,'" *America* (September 17, 1994): 8-13; Ken Woodward, "Catholics, Politics & Abortion," *Commonweal* (September 24, 2004): 11-13; Mario M. Cuomo, "Persuade or Coerce? A Response to Kenneth Woodward," *Commonweal* (September 24, 2004): 13-16; Germain Grisez, "Catholic Politicians and Abortion Funding," *America* (August 30-September 6, 2004): 18-19.

First, John Paul II frequently uses the term “injustice” to describe common violations of the fundamental right to life:

Today there exists a great multitude of weak and defenseless human beings, unborn children in particular, whose fundamental right to life is being trampled upon. If, at the end of the last century, the Church could not be silent about the injustices of those times, still less can she be silent today.⁶²

For the Pope abortion is clearly an injustice, in fact, it is one of the most grievous forms of injustice because it is directed at the weakest members of society – the unborn children who cannot defend themselves.⁶³ The Holy Father, quoting from *Gaudium et Spes*, often refers to abortion as an “unspeakable crime.”⁶⁴ In one of the sections of *Evangelium vitae*, he explicitly defines the evil of abortive practice as being directly opposed to the virtue of justice:

Certainly, from the moral point of view contraception and abortion are specifically different evils: the former contradicts the full truth of the sexual act as the proper expression of conjugal love, while the latter destroys the life of a human being; the former is opposed to the virtue of chastity in marriage, the latter is opposed to the virtue of justice and directly violates the divine commandment “You shall not kill.”⁶⁵

In other documents, such as *Familiaris consortio*, John Paul II continues to use the language of injustice. He writes that procedures such as sterilization or abortion constitute “grave offense[s] against human dignity and *justice*.”⁶⁶ In a letter to the president of Brazil, pro-choice legislation is deemed “radically unjust,”⁶⁷ as it is in other documents, such as the Pope’s address to the new

⁶² *EV*, 5.

⁶³ Cf. *EV*, 58.

⁶⁴ *GS*, 51. See also *EV*, 58; “Address to the Bishops of The United States of America Chicago” (Friday, 5 October 1979), no. 6. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1979/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19791005_chicago-usa-bishops.html; “Address to the Bishops of Canada on their ‘Ad Limina’ Visit” (Tuesday, 27 September 1988), no. 7. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1988/september/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19880927_canada-ad-limina.html

⁶⁵ *EV*, 13.

⁶⁶ *FC*, 30. Emphasis mine.

⁶⁷ “Address to Mr. Fernando Henrique Cardoso, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil” (Friday, 14 February 1997), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1997/february/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19970214_presidente-brasile.html [accessed December 12, 2016]

ambassador of Portugal to the Holy See or in the message for the 20th World Communications Day.⁶⁸

The issue of abortion is, therefore, an issue of justice for John Paul II. Abortion is not only a private matter, which focuses on the moral choice made by the mother but also a social issue requiring an adequate response from society. For this reason, John Paul II often speaks about the impossibility of building a truly just society without protecting the lives of the unborn children:

...there will never be justice, including equality, development and peace, for women or for men, unless there is an unfailing determination to respect, protect, love and serve life – every human life at every stage and in every situation.⁶⁹

Unfortunately, many modern societies, though claiming to be committed to the work of justice and the value of human dignity, pose at the same time the greatest threat to some of the weakest members of the human family:

However, this impressive reassertion of human dignity, acclaimed in so many quarters, brings us face to face with this paradox: at the very moment when the demands for fundamental human rights seem to be receiving ever wider recognition, the most basic of natural rights, namely the right to life and the value of life, are increasingly threatened, and this often in the very societies which view themselves as defenders of the cause of justice.⁷⁰

It is precisely here where one can see how deeply indebted to the virtue of justice is John Paul II's defense of the life of the unborn. For the Holy Father respect for life "demands an ever greater degree of rigorous respect for justice."⁷¹ The well-being of citizens, strong and weak alike, can only be truly safeguarded "by a constant reference to the demands of justice, moral rectitude and

⁶⁸ "Address to the New Ambassador of Portugal to the Holy See" (Monday, 13 November 2000), no. 2. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/oct-dec/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20001113_portugal.pdf "The Message for the 20th World Communications Day" (Sunday, 11 May 1986), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/communications/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_24011986_world-communications-day.html [accessed December 12, 2016]

⁶⁹ "Message for the Fourth World Conference on Women" (26 May 1995), no. 7. http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/letters/1995/documents/hf_jp-ii_let_19950526_mongella-pechino.html [accessed December 12, 2016]

⁷⁰ "Address to Mr. Terence Barry McCarthy, the New Ambassador of Australia to the Holy See" (Monday, 2 December 1991). https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1991/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19911202_ambasciatore-australia.html [accessed December 12, 2016]

⁷¹ SRS, 26.

the spiritual dimension of the human person.”⁷² This does not mean that justice serves as an abstract concept the purpose of which is to supply norms for a larger society. For John Paul II, justice is above all an internal disposition of one’s heart: “It is not a theoretical science. It is a virtue, it is the capacity of the human spirit, of the human will and also of the heart.”⁷³ This explains why in his address commemorating the fifth anniversary of publication of *Evangelium Vitae* the Pope specifically points to the two virtues, justice and solidarity, as means for building the new “culture of life:”

To all the members of the Church, the people of life and for life, I make this most urgent appeal, that together we may offer this world of ours new signs of hope, and work to ensure that justice and solidarity will increase and that a new culture of human life will be affirmed, for the building of an authentic civilization of truth and love.⁷⁴

It should also be mentioned that besides justice and solidarity, John Paul II points to other virtues, such as the virtue of courage, which remains essential to the creation of the culture of life:

What is needed is the courage to speak the truth clearly, candidly and boldly, but never with hatred or disrespect for persons. [...] To be pro-life then, to defend the right to life, means to stand up for the truth, especially the truth about the God-given dignity and worth of every human being.⁷⁵

What the above references show is that Wojtyła/John Paul II’s commitment to the life of the unborn involves recourse to virtues, most notably the virtue of justice. While the anthropological assumption about the intrinsic dignity of every human life remains deeply embedded in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s personalism, virtues equip people with ability and determination to protect the life of innocent babies. This conclusion is not meant to say that the Pope argues against abortion

⁷² “Address to the new Ambassador of Great Britain to the Holy See” (June 14, 1988). http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1988/june/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19880614_ambasciatore-gran-bretagna.html [accessed December 12, 2016]

⁷³ General audience (November 8, 1978), no. 4.

⁷⁴ “Address at the Commemoration of the Fifth Anniversary of the Encyclical ‘Evangelium Vitae’” (Monday, 14 February 2000), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2000/jan-mar/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20000214_acd-life.pdf [accessed December 12, 2016]

⁷⁵ “Address to the Participants of the Seminar Sponsored by the International Right to Life Federation” (Saturday, 1 March 1986), no. 2. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1986/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19860301_pro-vita.html See also, General Audience, November 8, 1978, no. 4., where the Pope commends the mother of an already large family for saying “no” to abortion whereby exercising the “heroic virtue of fortitude.”

from the perspective of virtue ethics but simply that virtues supplement his account in an important way and make it more effective. In concrete terms, just as chastity enables the spouses to become the gift to each other in the act of conjugal love, so does the virtue of justice, supported by other virtues such as solidarity and fortitude, allow the people of this day and age to actively resist the “culture of death” and work towards the promotion of life.

1.2.3. Suffering

Wojtyła/John Paul II knew what it meant to suffer. In the third grade he lost his mother; three years later, he lost “Mundek,” his beloved brother. One night after coming back from work, he found his father lying dead on the floor.⁷⁶ By the age of twenty-one, Wojtyła was an orphan. Then the Nazis took over his country and he was forced to take up hard manual work in a stone quarry.⁷⁷ In the meantime, his friends and professors were regularly being deported to concentration camps or simply shot in the middle of the day.⁷⁸ In 1944, he was run over by a German truck and nearly died.⁷⁹ Then, after the war was over, he was hoping to see a free Poland upon his arrival from Rome, but instead, he found his country in ruins and the Church in chains.⁸⁰ Only three years after the election to papacy he was shot at St. Peter’s square in 1981; he barely survived.⁸¹ After the intense recovery and over a decade of hard work, he was diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease: his mobility was reduced, his physical appearance distorted, and his voice taken away.⁸² But instead of despising suffering, Wojtyła/John Paul II embraced it; throughout his lifetime, he insisted that regardless of

⁷⁶ Cf. Weigel, 29, 32, 68.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 67-71.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 71.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 90.

⁸¹ Ibid., 412.

⁸² Ibid., 782.

how physically or mentally ill one might be, every human person has dignity and so does their suffering.

That suffering has meaning Wojtyła expressed already *before* becoming a priest, for example, through his poetry. According to Szulc, when the young playwright informed his mentor Kotlarczyk of the new play, *Job*, he described it as a “new drama, Greek in form, Christian in spirit, with the eternal contents, as in any drama, about suffering.”⁸³ In his letter, Wojtyła made it specific that “the play’s central message is that suffering is not always about punishment” and that Christ’s sacrifice shows “the meaning of suffering.”⁸⁴

Wojtyła continued to espouse a positive view towards suffering as an Archbishop of Kraków. For instance, during one of his pastoral visits to the sick in the infirmary of the Daughters of Charity of St. Vincent a Paulo, he said that

...although I am young and strong, although I fly in airplanes, climb mountains, ski, I still turn to the weakest, so that by the riches of their suffering they may bring down the strength and power of the Holy Spirit and the blessing of God upon my work in the Archdiocese.⁸⁵

In *Love and Responsibility*, he further remarked that “the awareness of the joys and sufferings of another being bids us think tenderly not only of other people, but also for instance of the animals who share our lot.”⁸⁶ In this sense, the human ability to suffer helps the person to share in the life of other beings, particularly other persons who are weak, or sick, and those who are in any way afflicted physically or morally.⁸⁷

Although these references suggest that from his earliest years Wojtyła adopts the positive approach towards human suffering, a more detailed examination of his pre-papal writings is yet to

⁸³ Tad Szulc, *Pope John Paul II: The Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1995), 113.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Adam Boniecki, *The making of the Pope of the millennium: kalendarium of life of Karol Wojtyła* (Stockbridge, Mass: Marian Press, 2000), 234.

⁸⁶ LR, 201.

⁸⁷ LR, 204. According to Wojtyła, this group of people have special “right to tenderness.” Cf. Jeffrey Tranzillo, *John Paul II on the Vulnerable* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

be undertaken.⁸⁸ Because the goal is not to provide a fully systematized account of Wojtyła/John Paul II's theology of suffering, but only to show its deeply personalistic character in relation to virtues, this section will consider his most significant document on the value of Christian suffering, namely, John Paul II's apostolic letter, *Salvifici Doloris*.

Already at the beginning of the document the Holy Father points to the transcendental dimension of suffering as an essential element of human nature, which distinguishes the person from the rest of created world:

...even though man knows and is close to the sufferings of the animal world, nevertheless what we express by the word "suffering" seems to be particularly *essential to the nature of man*. It is as deep as man himself, precisely because it manifests in its own way that depth which is proper to man, and in its own way surpasses it. Suffering seems to belong to man's transcendence: it is one of those points in which man is in a certain sense "destined" to go beyond himself, and he is called to this in a mysterious way.⁸⁹

In its most fundamental sense, suffering is always personal. Through suffering man discovers something about himself, something about his own nature, his own brokenness, but at the same time, he is given a unique opportunity to share in the personhood of others. Because suffering is personal, it is also unique: "as a personal fact contained within man's concrete and unrepeatable interior, suffering seems almost inexpressible and not transferable."⁹⁰ The Holy Father is careful not

⁸⁸ The two recent dissertations by Harman and Fernandes, both explicitly discussing the question of human suffering in John Paul II's and Wojtyła's work, provide a very rudimentary examination of Wojtyła pre-papal treatment of the meaning of human suffering. For example, Harman attempts to show how the concept of participation from *Osoba i czyn* serves as the hermeneutical key to understand the experience of suffering in *Salvifici Doloris*. He argues that while man is certainly faced with realities that are not of his own choosing when he faces suffering, he is not without the option of making his suffering an active offering, and doing so through mystical participation with the suffering of Christ. However, Harman never shows whether the same can be said of Wojtyła's writings before *Salvifici Doloris*. Fernandes too fails to account for Wojtyła's pre-papal understanding of the value of human suffering. One of the sections of his work entitled, "Wojtyła on the Value and Meaning of Personal Suffering," is based virtually entirely on *Salvifici Doloris* with rare or non-existent references to the earlier philosophical works of Wojtyła. Cf. Peter C. Harman, "Towards a Theology of Suffering: The Contribution of Karol Wojtyła/Pope John Paul II," S.T.D. Diss. (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America, 2010); Ashley K Fernandes, "Euthanasia, assisted suicide, and the philosophical anthropology of Karol Wojtyła," Ph.D. Diss. (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University, 2008).

⁸⁹ John Paul II, Encyclical Letter, *Salvifici doloris*, no. 2. Original emphasis. Official Latin text: AAS 76 (1984), 210-250. English translation available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_letters/1984/documents/hf_jp-ii_apl_11021984_salvifici-doloris.html [accessed December 13, 2016]. Hereafter, *SD*.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

to reduce human suffering to any particular form of experience, but he suggests a distinction into “moral” (subjective) and “physical” (objective) dimensions of human suffering without, however, undermining the “psychological” and “physical” whole of the human person.⁹¹

In the subsequent sections of the document, the Pope turns to the Sacred Scriptures, “the great book about suffering.”⁹² His profound meditation on various texts of Scriptures is still personalist in tone, although the emphasis shifts from a philosophical treatment of the human person to a more theological reflection, centered on themes like sin, grace, and redemption.

Harman succinctly summarizes the Pope’s scriptural meditation on the meaning of suffering in *Salvifici doloris* by pointing to the four levels of “the contemplation of suffering.” The first level concerns the fact that suffering is a justified punishment for sin. The second, based on the story of Job, represents the bridge between an inadequate and overly punitive account of suffering and a more total vision of God’s justice. The third level involves the scandal of the cross within the mystery of Christian redemption. Finally, the fourth is the mystical experience of suffering, man’s participation and incorporation in the sufferings of Christ in his own life.⁹³

Of particular interest to this project is the last chapter of *Salvifici Doloris*, in which John Paul II returns to a more phenomenological analysis of human suffering as revealed by the story of the Good Samaritan. The parable, according to the Pope, provides one with an adequate response to the reality of suffering; it indicates “what the relationship of each of us must be towards our suffering neighbor.”⁹⁴ John Paul II takes notice of the two elements in an encounter of the Good Samaritan with the injured man. First, he observes that the Good Samaritan “stopped” beside the suffering person, becoming available to him in the totality of his being:

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid., 6.

⁹³ Harman, 266-276.

⁹⁴ *SD*, 28.

We are not allowed to "pass by on the other side" indifferently; we must "stop" beside him. Everyone who stops beside the suffering of another person, whatever form it may take, is a Good Samaritan. This stopping does not mean curiosity but availability. It is like the opening of a certain interior disposition of the heart, which also has an emotional expression of its own.⁹⁵

Second, the Good Samaritan offered his help without withholding anything of his own in order to alleviate the suffering of another person. By doing so, he shared his very self with the injured man:

Nevertheless, the Good Samaritan of Christ's parable does not stop at sympathy and compassion alone [...] a Good Samaritan is one who brings help in suffering, whatever its nature may be. He puts his whole heart into it, nor does he spare material means. We can say that he gives himself, his very "I", opening this "I" to the other person. Here we touch upon one of the key-points of all Christian anthropology. Man cannot "fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself." A Good Samaritan *is the person capable of exactly such a gift of self*.⁹⁶

Suffering is thus an opportunity, a unique chance to share in the personhood of others; it is present in the world to "unleash love in the human person, that unselfish gift of one's 'I' on behalf of other people, especially those who suffer."⁹⁷ The story of Good Samaritan thus "expresses a deeply Christian truth," but at the same time, it remains "very universally human."⁹⁸

Now, to say that virtues are crucial in caring for others is to state the obvious. The Good Samaritan could never offer the gift of himself to the injured man unless he was generous, patient, or courageous. However, to highlight the role of virtues, one does not need to go beyond anything else John Paul II says in the letter. For the Pope, caring and helping is conditioned by an earlier noticing of the suffering of others. However, what enables a person to be "sensitive" enough as to abandon his own plans and travels and assist those in need? The answer the Pope gives is the virtue of compassion:

The name "Good Samaritan" fits *every individual who is sensitive to the sufferings of others*, who "is moved" by the misfortune of another. If Christ, who knows the interior of man, emphasizes this compassion, this means that it is important for our whole attitude to others' suffering.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ *SD*, 28. Original emphasis.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 29.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Therefore one must cultivate this sensitivity of heart, which bears witness to *compassion* towards a suffering person. Sometimes this compassion remains the only or principal expression of our love for and solidarity with the sufferer.⁹⁹

In *Salvifici Doloris*, compassion is given different names. From the passage above one learns that compassion is similar to “sensitivity of heart”; it is the primary expression of one’s love and solidarity with those who suffer. Earlier, the Pope describes it terms of “the opening of a certain interior disposition of heart,” something which involves the totality of one’s being, including one’s “emotional expression.”¹⁰⁰ However, compassion is clearly a virtue for John Paul II: “It is the virtue that prompted the Good Samaritan to stop beside the victim on the road.”¹⁰¹ As such, it is a stable disposition, a moral habit, which enables a person to be compassionate to those in need, “not only when it is emotionally rewarding or convenient, but also when it is demanding and inconvenient.”¹⁰² Because it is ultimately oriented towards the well-being of others, compassion has an important motivational role: it provides a person with an “incentive to actions aimed at bringing help to the injured man.”¹⁰³ As a moral virtue, compassion cannot be “misused.” In cases of euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide, John Paul II distinguishes “misconstrued” compassion from its “true” counterpart:

...even if it is motivated by sentiments of a misconstrued compassion or of a misunderstood preservation of dignity, euthanasia actually eliminates the person instead of relieving the individual of suffering.¹⁰⁴

True compassion, argues the Pope, “leads to sharing another’s pain; it does not kill the person whose suffering we cannot bear.”¹⁰⁵

⁹⁹ Ibid., 28. Original emphasis.

¹⁰⁰ *SD*, 27.

¹⁰¹ “Homily at Coliseum in Los Angeles” (Tuesday, 15 September 1987), no. 6. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/homilies/1987/documents/hf_jp-ii_hom_19870915_coliseum-los-angeles.html [accessed December 16, 2016]

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ *SD*, 28.

¹⁰⁴ “Address to the Participants in the 19th International Conference of the Pontifical Council for Health Pastoral Care” (Friday, 12 November 2004), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/2004/november/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_20041112_pc-hlthwork.html [accessed December 16, 2016]

One might wonder if caring for others would be possible without acquiring the virtue of compassion. Surely, *occasional* help does not yet require one to develop a moral habit, but such an approach seems to fall short of the moral ideal represented by the Good Samaritan. The way John Paul II interprets the story clearly indicates that the virtue of compassion is much needed and serves as pre-condition to the subsequent works of charity. Once again, the pattern can be noticed: virtues are the vehicle for sharing of one's very self with other persons. Only by becoming compassionate is one able to truly share in the sufferings of others and become the total gift to those in need.¹⁰⁵ The habit of virtue ensures that compassionate actions are done consistently and with ease.

While Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral theology is often associated with personalism, rarely if ever is Wojtyła/John Paul II's personalism associated with virtues. By looking at three moral issues, contraception, abortion, and suffering, this section has shown that when Wojtyła/John Paul II refers to the value and dignity of human person he systematically points to virtues. These virtues are used either to protect one's dignity or to enable the person to make a gift of oneself to others. Furthermore, at least in the three cases reviewed, virtues serve as pre-conditions to what Wojtyła/John Paul II envisions to be the solution to the problem. First, in the case of contraception, he argues that contraceptive practices undermine the reality of self-donation. The solution is to abstain from contraception and to use periodic continence instead, which is a form of the virtue of chastity. Second, in the case of abortion, killing the unborn is against the fundamental right of every human person to live. The solution is achieved by respecting the rights of others, which is the proper role of the virtue of justice. Third and finally, in the case of suffering, the Pope argues that through human suffering the person is able to become a gift to someone else in the act of mercy.

¹⁰⁵ *EV*, 66.

¹⁰⁶ In *Redemptor Hominis*, John Paul II makes a more general point that "in order to be able to serve others worthily and effectively we must be able to master ourselves, possess the virtues that make this mastery possible." Cf. *RH*, 21.

This result cannot be achieved unless one is sensitive enough to notice the suffering of others, something that the virtue of compassion ensures.

1.3. *Legalism*

Scholars generally agree that, besides being personalistic, Wojtyła/John Paul II's ethics is also normative in character.¹⁰⁷ This is certainly true; norms and commandments constitute an important part of ethical experience for the Polish philosopher and Pope. However, problems loom whenever one attempts to turn Wojtyła/John Paul II to a strict deontologist. Using this interpretation, which is advocated by Charles Curran, there is understandably no room for virtue in the classical Aristotelian-Thomistic sense.¹⁰⁸

According to Curran, John Paul II's methodology can be characterized as "schizophrenic."¹⁰⁹ On the one hand, the Pope follows the deontological or legal model in questions of personal and sexual morality, but shifts to what Curran calls a "relationality-responsibility" model in matters of social life.¹¹⁰ Curran also interprets Holy Father's most important moral encyclical, *Veritatis Splendor*, as primarily following the legal model.¹¹¹ By arguing against Curran's view, this section hopes to show that the basic elements of virtue-centered ethics are profoundly compatible with John Paul II's methodology.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Spinello, 17; Buttiglione, 151; Smith, 67.

¹⁰⁸ Other authors who are often quoted to accuse John Paul II of being excessively focused on law in *Veritatis Splendor* are Gareth Moore and William Spohn. Cf. Gareth Moore, "Some remarks on the use of scripture in *Veritatis Splendor*" in *The Splendor of Accuracy: An Examination of the Assertions Made in Veritatis Splendor*, ed. Joe Selling and Jan Jans (Kampen, Kok Pharos, 1994), 81.; William C. Spohn, "Morality on the way of discipleship: the use of scripture in *Veritatis splendor*" in *Veritatis Splendor: American Responses*, ed. Allsopp, Michael E., and John J. O'Keefe (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 100.

¹⁰⁹ Curran, *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 103.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 104.

1.3.1. *The Use of Scriptures*

Curran's accusations of the Pope's legal approach to morality in *Veritatis Splendor* stems largely from his interpretation of the Holy Father's use of Scriptures. According to Curran, "the encyclical uses scripture to prove that Jesus saw the moral life in terms of obedience to the commandments."¹¹² First, Curran argues that the Holy Father misinterprets the parable of the rich young man; "the thrust of the story of the rich young man is the question of riches and not the question of all Christians being called to obey the commandments found in the Old Covenant."¹¹³ Second, he claims that morality involves a change of heart, or, conversion in response to the love of God. Contrary to what the Pope proposes, "obedience to commandments is not the primary aspect of the morality found in scripture."¹¹⁴ To support his case, Curran quotes the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25 where the same question regarding eternal life is answered in terms of doing the acts of mercy (taking care of the hungry, naked, and poor) rather than following the commandments. Finally, according to Curran, the encyclical uses Scriptures to "support the notion of intrinsic evil proposed by the contemporary hierarchical magisterium... but scripture does not know any of these concepts."¹¹⁵ While it is beyond the scope of the present study to answer Curran's criticism in light of what constitutes the correct use of Scriptures in these particular instances, this work disagrees with the way he portrays John Paul II's commitment to normative ethics.

Wojtyła/John Paul II never considers norms to be the sole reason for morality. As early as in *Elementarz Etyczny*, Wojtyła explains that norms, including the norms contained in Sacred Scripture, correspond to the basic orientations of human nature:

The source of knowing moral norms is always in some way nature and reason ... Reason comes to know the truth about moral good in reference to what constitutes the object of human acts. The truth about the good is based on the understanding of human nature and

¹¹² Curran, *John Paul II and Moral Theology*, 52.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 53.

its ends; for good is that, which corresponds to the nature of a being by virtue of its end. Therefore, also the moral norms contained in Sacred Scripture, particularly in the Gospels, become actual norms for human acting as far as they are known by reason to be in accordance with human nature, with its strivings, aspirations, and potentialities. [...] Much less, none of the revealed moral norms can ever be opposed to reason and human nature.¹¹⁶

The goal of the moral life for Wojtyła is not following norms but achieving moral perfection, which consists in the pursuit of the moral good known by reason to be in accordance with man's nature.¹¹⁷

Norms have an essential role to play in that they guide an agent to choose what constitutes the true moral good, but they are chronologically subsequent to the knowledge of the moral good. In other words, reason first discovers what is good for the person by reflecting on the nature of human being, and only then comes up with norms and rules for acting:

Reason is the main power and faculty within human nature. In its normative operations, it begins by first recognizing who the human being is (that is, what is his nature) in order to then state accurately what he is meant to become... Reason, while creating norms for acting, is guided by the knowledge of what contributes to the perfection of a man – to the fuller actualization of his nature in reference to this or other being.¹¹⁸

Curran's accusation seems to ignore the fact that for Wojtyła norms are rooted in the metaphysical reality of human nature. One does not just come up with norms and follows them as if they were the sole end and reason for morality. By emphasizing norms and commandments, Wojtyła points to yet another fundamental moral orientation of every human person, which is to reach the fullness of one's potential achieved in virtues.¹¹⁹ Using this interpretation, and contrary to Curran's, "the foundation of all duties is the duty of the person toward himself and toward his own self-realization."¹²⁰

¹¹⁶ Wojtyła, "O pochodzeniu norm moralnych," in *Aby Chrystus*, 137.

¹¹⁷ Wojtyła, "Natura i doskonałość," in *Aby Chrystus*, 141.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ The same point has been made by Pinckaers who observed that "the law and our natural rights correspond with precision to personal qualities and virtues" Cf. *Sources of Morality*, 453. According to the French theologian, virtues are not merely habitual responses of conformity to external law but the qualities of one's character through which person's natural inclinations are developed and strengthened, and a profound harmony is established with the inner law inscribed in the "heart." Cf. Ibid.

¹²⁰ Buttiglione, 151.

In *Veritatis Splendor*, John Paul II is even more explicit as to what he considers to be the fundamental goal of morality:

Acting is morally good when the choices of freedom are in conformity with man's true good and thus express the voluntary ordering of the person towards his ultimate end: God himself, the supreme good in whom man finds his full and perfect happiness.¹²¹

While norms are important, moral life is not defined in terms of following rules. Instead, it is defined in light of human happiness, which is ultimately found in God alone. Almost as if knowing that critics like Curran or Moore would accuse him of “putting primary emphasis on obedience to the Ten Commandments and laws” in the story of young rich man,¹²² John Paul II explains that the parable is *not* about following the rules but about living life in a meaningful way:

In the young man, whom Matthew's Gospel does not name, we can recognize every person who, consciously or not, *approaches Christ the Redeemer of man and questions him about morality*. For the young man, the *question* is not so much about rules to be followed, but *about the full meaning of life*. This is in fact the aspiration at the heart of every human decision and action, the quiet searching and interior prompting which sets freedom in motion. This question is ultimately an appeal to the absolute Good, which attracts us and beckons us; it is the echo of a call from God who is the origin and goal of man's life.¹²³

For many contemporary authors John Paul II, in fact, renews an old rule-dominated approach to morality by introducing the “new” way of looking at the moral life through the prism of human happiness:

Veritatis splendor begins by focusing on the issue of happiness as the opening question in moral theology. Such a starting point avoids the root of the problem of rationalism in a way that the older system of legalism, with its focus on what was permitted or forbidden, could not do.¹²⁴

In directing the human striving for fulfillment toward the possession of the good, rather than toward conformity to a rule, the Pope reflects his deep concern for the good of the person and his

¹²¹ *VS*, 72.

¹²² Curran, *John Paul II and moral theology*, 53

¹²³ *VS*, 7. Original emphasis.

¹²⁴ Francis M. Walsh, "The Moral Theology of John Paul II: A Response to Charles E. Curran," *The Heythrop Journal* 53, no. 5 (2012): 791. See also Livio Melina, "Desire for Happiness and the Commandments in the First Chapter of *Veritatis Splendor*," *The Thomist* 60 (1996), 342; Servais Pinckaers, "The Use of Scripture and the Renewal of Moral Theology: The Catechism and *Veritatis Splendor*," *The Thomist* 59 (1995): 1-6.

happiness, marking his theology to be primarily personalistic and eudemonistic rather than rule-oriented.¹²⁵ Upon this reading, commandments are presented in a new light, not as a burden but as a way to freedom and help in the attainment of human happiness.

1.3.2. Conscience

Curran also finds John Paul II guilty of legalism in his presentation of the role of conscience. According to him, “there can be no doubt John Paul II develops his understanding of conscience in terms of a legal model.”¹²⁶ Curran supports his claim with multiple quotes from the encyclical, most notably the Pope’s definition of conscience as the proximate norm of morality.¹²⁷ He argues that the legal model of conscience is “not adequate” because “the vast majority of our moral decisions are not made by reference to a law.” Curran then explains that “the most important decisions in life – marriage partner, vocation, friends, coping with limitations, short-comings, and sufferings of human existence – are not made in response to a law.”¹²⁸

Once again, Curran does not err in saying that John Paul II puts much emphasis on norms, but in that he distorts the meaning of norms in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s overall moral theory. Emphasizing norms is not tantamount to following rule-based ethics. Although John Paul II often refers to norms as a vital element of ethical experience, the emphasis on norms does not yet make him a deontologist. To be one, John Paul II would need to adopt a “legal” model in his ethics, meaning that the moral rightness or wrongness of an ethical act would solely depend on adherence to rules. However, this approach is not what Wojtyła/John Paul advocates in his writings. In fact, in *Veritatis Splendor*, the Holy Father seems to directly distance himself from this approach to morality

¹²⁵ Walsh, 794.

¹²⁶ Curran, *John Paul II and moral theology*, 127.

¹²⁷ Ibid., Cf. *VS*, 60.

¹²⁸ Curran, *John Paul II and moral theology*, 128.

by asserting that “the moral life has an essential ‘teleological’ character, since it consists in the deliberate ordering of human acts to God.”¹²⁹

Now going back to the question of conscience, this work agrees with Welsh’s argument that John Paul II does not follow the legal model in his examination of conscience. The Pope rejects the notion that actions that are objectively contrary to the human good, even though they be done in invincible ignorance, can be morally good or meritorious.¹³⁰ If the Pope were to follow a legalistic model of conscience, then he would have to admit that the moral goodness of an action depends *exclusively* on the conformity to the rule of conscience. However, the Holy Father clearly says that conscience can be mistaken.¹³¹ The person acting under the command of erroneous conscience adheres to its rule but still chooses what is morally evil; not by violating the rule of conscience but precisely by following it.¹³² This conclusion occurs for John Paul II because the moral value of an act is judged by reference to the *objective* good of the person, not what the person *subjectively* considers to be good in his conscience:

It is possible that the evil done as the result of invincible ignorance or a non-culpable error of judgment may not be imputable to the agent; but even in this case it does not cease to be an evil, a disorder in relation to the truth about the good. Furthermore, a good act which is not recognized as such does not contribute to the moral growth of the person who performs it; it does not perfect him and it does not help to dispose him for the supreme good.¹³³

In other words, conscience does not decide what is good or evil, but only discovers the moral quality of the good in reference to the objective truth.¹³⁴ As Welsh argues, “for the Pope, evil acts are not

¹²⁹ *VS*, 73.

¹³⁰ Welsh, 796.

¹³¹ *VS*, 62. Cf. *GS*, 16.

¹³² If the conscience is properly formed in reference to the truth, then, of course, following the command of conscience leads to a morally good action. But this is different from saying that the moral value of an action depends on the conformity to the rule of conscience. For John Paul II, actions are morally good because they are in accordance with the true good of the person.

¹³³ *VS*, 63.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 60.

evil because they are forbidden, but because they are in opposition to the true good of the person.”¹³⁵

Seen in this light, conscience stands as a witness to man’s freedom. By exercising its normative role, it assists the person in choosing what is authentically good for his personal growth and happiness. Accordingly, conscience leads not so much to a meticulous observance of universal norms as to “a creative and responsible acceptance of the personal tasks entrusted to him by God.”¹³⁶ Even while forming one’s conscience, the Holy Father observes that “knowledge of God’s law in general is certainly necessary, but it is not sufficient: what is essential is a sort of ‘connaturality’ between man and the true good”¹³⁷ It is the “heart” converted to the Lord and to the love of what is good, claims the Pope, “which is really the source of *true* judgments of conscience.”¹³⁸ This is far from treating conscience as a faculty for which the sole purpose is to enforce the commands of the law. Curran, though perhaps correct in saying that John Paul II puts an emphasis on the normative role of conscience, fails to take notice of the broader context in which John Paul II frames his discussion – the fundamental calling of man to be happy, made possible not by adherence to rules or norms but a pursuit of true good which is practically recognized by a well-formed [i.e., virtuous] conscience.

What slowly emerges from the following reflection on the alleged “legalism” in Wojtyła/John Paul II’s moral methodology is that by way of arguing against it, one can come to appreciate the deeply teleological and eudemonistic character of Wojtyła/John Paul II’s ethics. Curran’s accusation of an excessive legalism present in John Paul II’s use of scriptures or his treatment of conscience in *Veritatis Splendor* is precisely best answered by pointing to the elements of the Holy Father’s ethical theory, which was identified in chapter 3 to be the key elements of virtue

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ *VJ*, 55.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 64.

¹³⁸ Ibid. Original emphasis.

ethics. Perhaps the insistence of certain authors, like Curran or Moore, on the legal model as being dominant in papal ethical reasoning, besides being a distortion of John Paul II's thought, ultimately contributed to obscuring of the profound similarities between his moral theology and what is generally considered to be virtue ethics today.

This section showed that the elements of virtue ethics are deeply embedded in Wojtyła/John Paul II's moral theory. By examining the most common characterizations of his system, his commitment to phenomenology, his appreciation of personalism, or his alleged legalism, Wojtyła/John Paul II proves to be in harmony with basic orientations of virtue ethics. In fact, at times virtues appear to be indispensable for some elements of his ethical theory. However, this is different from saying that Wojtyła/John Paul II is a strict virtue ethicist. A virtue ethicist is someone who intentionally and systematically refers to virtue-ethics in approaching moral issues. Clearly, Wojtyła/John Paul II is not doing that in his writings. Nevertheless, one does not need to commit to virtue ethics in order to appreciate and value some of its elements. Concepts, such as happiness, practical reasoning, or virtues are not only present in the thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II, as it was shown in chapter three, but they constitute a significant if not vital element for his own moral reasoning. Therefore, it is accurate to speak of virtue-ethics as operative in the thought of the Polish philosopher and Pope, even if at times such ethics remains underdeveloped.

A different question is whether there is anything new in the way Wojtyła/John Paul II treats virtue ethics in his writings. Does his characterization of each of the elements of virtue ethics bring anything new to the field, or is it simply a reiteration of the traditional virtue theory as envisioned by Aristotle and St. Thomas? Finding an answer to this question will be the focus of the next section and a great help in formulating the final conclusion.

2. The Relevance of the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work for the Broader Field of Virtue Ethics

Perhaps the idea of Wojtyła/John Paul II contributing to the field of virtue ethics sounds a bit strange to some. After all, as stated earlier, Wojtyła/John Paul II is not a virtue ethicist in the strict sense. Furthermore, at numerous places, chapter three indicated that the Polish philosopher and Pope actually lacks a comprehensive presentation of certain aspects of discussed elements of virtue ethics. For example, it showed that Wojtyła/John Paul II does not explicitly discuss the traditional doctrine of the mean of virtue. The references to this important aspect of good moral habit are scarce and difficult to find. Although it can be inferred from different texts that Wojtyła/John Paul II believes moral virtues to preserve the mean, the systematic treatment of this aspect of virtue is simply inadequate.

Similarly, in the case of practical reasoning, prudence receives some attention in the thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II. However, it is but a small piece of what Aristotle and St. Thomas envisions the role of prudence to be in moral life. This observation is confirmed by Wojtyła/John Paul II's treatment (or lack thereof) of the unifying function of prudence as best exemplified by the traditional doctrine of the unity of virtues. The Polish philosopher and Pope clearly espouses Aristotle's and Aquinas's position on this point, namely, that the virtues are unified and that possession of one virtue implies possession of all of them, but fails to share his own reasons for accepting the unity thesis. Of course, there is a difference between accepting something as a valid moral category and providing a comprehensive and detailed explanation for it. Although Wojtyła/John Paul II does not always find it necessary to expound on particular elements of virtue ethics, he clearly accepts and follows much of the traditional virtue theory as espoused by Aristotle and St. Thomas. However, can someone who lacks the systematic treatment of the key elements of virtue ethics actually contribute to its growth? Can Wojtyła/John Paul II, who is not a virtue ethicist in a strict sense, bring anything new to the broader field of virtue ethics?

If he can, and the purpose of this section is to show that he does, then his contribution is not to be found within the realm of already existing dilemmas marking traditional virtue theory. To explain what is meant by this, one needs to recall some of the issues which were briefly mentioned in chapter two.

In the section devoted to happiness, it was noted that both Aristotle and St. Thomas refuse to identify happiness with external goods.¹³⁹ Happiness consists primarily in the life of virtue.¹⁴⁰ However, unlike the Stoics, Aristotle also recognizes the importance of external goods, such as health or pleasure which when lost can “cramp and spoil” happiness.¹⁴¹ However, if happiness is said to consist in living a virtuous life, then how can external goods deprive one of the blissful state? An inherent tension marks the Aristotelian account of happiness and has been a subject of much debate within the scholarly circles.¹⁴² Wojtyła/John Paul II largely follows Aristotle on this point. He too refuses to identify happiness with external goods or pleasure without necessarily thinking that these are evil and thus reprehensible for the ideal of moral life.¹⁴³ In fact, at one point John Paul II seems to fully embrace the Aristotelian position in saying that there are some people, the poor and marginalized, who deprived of essential goods cannot realize their basic human vocation to happiness.¹⁴⁴ However, Wojtyła/John Paul II, even if aware of the inherent tension marking the Aristotelian account, never offers any constructive solution to it; in fact, he does not even identify it to be an issue.

Similarly, while discussing the nature of virtue, many authors wonder how is it logically possible to hold that virtue, understood as a moral habit, introduces the kind of facility and ease that

¹³⁹ Cf. *NE* 1098b-1099b10; *ST* I-II 1-8.

¹⁴⁰ Cf. *NE* 1098a16-18.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *NE* 1100b22-30.

¹⁴² For a good overview, see Julia Annas, “Aristotle on virtue and happiness,” in *Aristotle’s Ethics: Critical Essays*, ed. Nancy Sherman, (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1999), 43-46.

¹⁴³ Cf. Wojtyła, “Wartości,” in *Aby Chrystus*, 161; *CA*, 36; *VS*, 63.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. *SRS* 28.

makes the performance of a given action practically effortless, while at the same time holding that the created disposition does not become a mere automatism deprived of deliberation and choice characteristic of moral agency.¹⁴⁵ Wojtyła/John Paul II clearly adopts the basic definition of virtue as a good moral habit.¹⁴⁶ From many descriptions of individual virtues, it is also possible to infer that Wojtyła/John Paul II fundamentally agrees with St. Thomas that habits are stable dispositions of the will, leading to praiseworthy activity that is performed with ease and joy.¹⁴⁷ Again, however, neither as a young professor nor as a Pope, Wojtyła/John Paul II ever attends to the apparent tension that marks the Thomistic account of habit.

Finally, many scholars point to the difficulties pertaining to the Thomistic typology of acquired and infused virtues. One of the controversies, for instance, focuses on the question of how infused virtues relate to their acquired counterparts.¹⁴⁸ According to St. Thomas, infused moral virtue does not guarantee the ease and facility characteristic of the acquired moral virtue.¹⁴⁹ The example Thomas uses is that of the person with an addiction. According to Aquinas, the person with an addiction can possess an infused virtue of temperance, for example, by going to confession and receiving Holy Communion. The person receives grace through the power of the sacrament, but can still struggle to refrain from addictive behavior (as for instance, in the case of an alcoholic who after leaving the confessional still experiences an urge to have a drink).¹⁵⁰ This conclusion is problematic on Aquinas's own terms; for if infused moral virtues are really habits, how can they lack

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Servais Pinckaers, "Virtue Is Not a Habit" *Cross Currents* 12 (1962), 67; Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 50; Sarah Broadie, *Ethics with Aristotle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 252; John Henry McDowell, "Some issues in Aristotle's Moral Psychology," in John Henry McDowell, *Mind, Value, and Reality* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1998), 23-24.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. *LE*, 9.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. Wojtyła, "Human Nature as the Basis of Ethical Formation," in *Person and Community*, 95; *LR*, 169; *TOB*, 128:1; John Paul II, General audience, October 20, 1999, no. 3.

¹⁴⁸ For a good overview of the controversy, see Lombardo, 133. See also Renee Mirkes, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Moral Virtue and Its Significance for Theories of Facility," *The Thomist* 61 (1997): 189-218; John Harvey, "The Nature of the Infused Moral Virtues," *Catholic Theological Society of America Proceedings* 10 (1955): 172-21.

¹⁴⁹ *ST I-II*, 65.3.2.

¹⁵⁰ *ST III*, 89.1.

the facility or ease characteristic of habits? The tension remains unresolved in Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings as well. The Polish philosopher and Pope espouses the Thomistic typology of acquired and infused virtues but does not offer any substantial account of how the two sets of virtues coexist within the person.¹⁵¹

In short, locating Wojtyła/John Paul II's potential contribution within the domain of an already established discourse concerning the inherent issues marking the traditional virtue theory is destined to be a failure. Wojtyła/John Paul II's contribution, if any, must pertain to the elements that are in a sense "external" to the primary discourse, or which – to put it differently – transcend what Aristotle and Thomas already said about virtues. Seen in this light, Wojtyła/John Paul II has a much to offer to contemporary virtue ethics. First, he can be said to introduce new and relevant virtues. Second, he expands on already existing virtues. Third, he creates a point of contact between virtue ethics and other philosophical systems, such as personalism or phenomenology, making virtue ethics capable of becoming an even more appealing system of ethics. The next section will briefly comment on each of these contributions.

2.1. *Introducing New Virtues*

2.1.1. *Solidarity*

Certainly, it was not Wojtyła or John Paul II who first came up with the idea of solidarity. If one were to consider ecclesial circles only, then the concept dates back to the social encyclical of Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus*, in which the Pope referred to "the law of solidarity and charity" as a response to the totalitarian regimes threatening the unity of the human family.¹⁵² The concept was

¹⁵¹ Cf. *SRS* 38 & 40.

¹⁵² Although some might say that the *idea* of solidarity has been already expressed by Pius XI in his *Quadragesimo Anno*. Cf. Pius XII, *Summi Pontificatus*, no. 35. Official Latin text: AAS 31 (1939), 413-453. English translation available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_20101939_summi-pontificatus.html [accessed December 17, 2016].

further developed by John XXIII, and gained even more prominence in the writings of Paul VI, most notably in his encyclical letter *Populorum Progressio*.¹⁵³ Wojtyła/John Paul II's main contribution, then, was not of creating a new moral category but of providing a better understanding of an already established concept. In this, John Paul II was unique because for the first time in history, solidarity was redefined to mean a moral habit.

The Holy Father's preference to treat solidarity in terms of virtue was for many a novelty; a genuine contribution to the Church's social teaching. After John Paul II first spoke of the virtue of solidarity, Marciano Vidal commented that "in a shining universe of virtues, a new star has appeared."¹⁵⁴ In one of her articles, Bilgrien wrote that the "new virtue" was needed because as opposed to duty or attitude, the virtue of solidarity not only helps a person to do the right thing but also "helps the person to become good."¹⁵⁵ It is thus even more surprising that the Pope's designation of solidarity as a moral virtue has never been recognized as a part of his contribution to the field of virtue ethics.

Perhaps the reason behind this neglect has to do with similarities between solidarity and the traditional virtue of justice. After all, both virtues concern the good of the community and the good of its members. Solely based on this reading, the virtue of solidarity would be but a modern reiteration of the traditional virtue of justice, (as articulated, for instance, in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas) and Wojtyła/John Paul II's contribution to the field of virtue ethics would be, indeed, minimal. However, the Polish philosopher and Pope was well acquainted with the traditional

¹⁵³ For a good overview of the historical development of the concept of solidarity see Janusz Salamon, *Solidarity Beyond Borders: Ethics in a Globalizing World* (London, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

¹⁵⁴ As quoted in Marie Vianney Bilgrien, "Solidarity—The Newest Virtue" *Signs of Time*, vol. 10, no. 3 (1997), 82. See also Fred Kammer, *Faith, Works, Wonders: An Insider's Guide to Catholic Charities* (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 177; Maciej Zieba, *The Surprising Pope: Understanding the Thought of John Paul II* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 69; Charles Curran, Kenneth Himes, and Thomas Shannon, "Commentary on *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (On Social Concern)," in *Modern Catholic Social Teaching: Commentaries and Interpretations*, ed. Kenneth R. Himes and Lisa Sowle Cahill (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2005), 430.

¹⁵⁵ Bilgrien, "Solidarity — The Newest Virtue," 82.

virtue of justice.¹⁵⁶ He knew what the virtue of justice entails, and yet he called for the new virtue: a similar yet distinct virtue of solidarity. Based on this analysis, Wojtyła/John Paul II's contribution to the field of virtue ethics would be more than noteworthy.

The above remarks invite a more detailed inquiry into the nature of Wojtyła/John Paul II's concept of solidarity in light of the traditional account of the virtue of justice. This section will list the main differences between the two virtues, however, the analysis will rest mainly on secondary sources, as Wojtyła/John Paul II himself never clarifies the relationship between the virtue of solidarity and the virtue of justice nor explains his motivation behind introducing the new virtue.

First, for some authors, such as Bilgrien, solidarity goes beyond the mere practice of justice in that it addresses more adequately the social concerns of the modern world.¹⁵⁷ According to Bilgrien, solidarity is the virtue at work in a world, which recognizes relationship to such an extent that it has a new name for it, "interdependence."¹⁵⁸ People in today's world are more connected and more dependent on one another than ever before: in the age of instantaneous communication, global trade, ecological crisis, and international threats, such as terrorism, new challenges arise, often no longer pertaining to individuals alone, but groups, if not entire nations. For Bilgrien, this is precisely what distinguishes the traditional virtue of justice from the virtue of solidarity:

One aspect of how solidarity differs from justice is that not only are the relationships between individual persons, but more often than not they are relationships between groups of people, or blocs of nations. Aquinas treats the responsibility of the whole community to the individual needs of the person, but says little about large groups relating to large groups.¹⁵⁹

In this light, the virtue of solidarity differs from justice primarily in scope. While the Thomistic virtue of justice regulates the relationship between individuals in that each is expected to give to the other what is due and thus contribute to the building of the common good, John Paul II

¹⁵⁶ Cf. General Audience (8 November 1978).

¹⁵⁷ Bilgrien, *Solidarity: A Principle, an Attitude, a Duty?*, 203.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 202. Cf. *SRS*, 26.

¹⁵⁹ Bilgrien, *Solidarity: A Principle, an Attitude, a Duty?*, 203. Cf. *SRS*, 20.

takes the same line of thought but applies it to nations. For instance, wealthier nations are expected to offer assistance to those countries which are less developed:

Interdependence must be transformed into solidarity [...] Surmounting every type of imperialism and determination to preserve their own hegemony, the stronger and richer nations must have a sense of moral responsibility for the other nations, so that a real international system may be established which will rest on the foundation of the equality of all peoples and on the necessary respect for their legitimate differences. The economically weaker countries, or those still at subsistence level, must be enabled, with the assistance of other peoples and of the international community, to make a contribution of their own to the common good with their treasures of humanity and culture, which otherwise would be lost forever.¹⁶⁰

To reinforce her claim, Bilgrien observes that while justice is too used to describe the international relationships, the word solidarity is better suited to describe situations like the Solidarity movement in Poland, the fall of the Berlin wall, or the funeral of Archbishop Romero.¹⁶¹

Second, according to other authors, like Tenamwenye or Dorr, solidarity exceeds the works of justice by adding aspects of care and empathy to it.¹⁶² On this reading, solidarity transcends the negative role of justice, which is to ensure that the fundamental rights of people are not being violated. According to Dorr, “solidarity is not just a matter of fulfilling the obligations of strict justice. It presupposes that but goes beyond it by including generosity, care for others, even a warm friendliness.”¹⁶³ John Paul II points to this aspect of solidarity most explicitly when he discusses the Christian character of solidarity:

...solidarity seeks to go beyond itself, to take on the specifically Christian dimension of total gratuity, forgiveness and reconciliation. One's neighbor is then not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else, but becomes the living image of God the Father, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the Holy Spirit.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁰ SRŚ, 39.

¹⁶¹ Bilgrien, *Solidarity: A Principle, an Attitude, a Duty?*, 204.

¹⁶² John Apolinari Tenamwenye, *Christian Solidarity in the Teaching of John Paul II: The Case of the Local Church of Tanzania* (Rome: Pontificia Università lateranense, 2005), 60; Donald Dorr, “Solidarity and Integral Human Development” in *The Logic of Solidarity: Commentaries on John Paul II's Encyclical "On Social Concern,"* ed. Gregory Baum and Robert Elsberg (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1989), 52.

¹⁶³ Dorr, 52.

¹⁶⁴ SRŚ, 40.

It is at least theoretically possible for someone to perform singular acts of justice, that is to give others what is their due, without being caring at the same time. Solidarity, on the other hand, requires that the acts of justice be done compassionately. Empathy and mercy are in a sense *inscribed* in the nature of solidarity, even if it is treated exclusively as a human moral virtue.¹⁶⁵ This is different from justice exercised *with* empathy or mercy. Even if it is granted that for St. Thomas, who espouses the unity thesis, a truly just person is also kind and compassionate, justice alone is focused on giving others what is their due – nothing less, nothing more. Solidarity, on the other hand, already contains within itself the demand for empathy. It does not need other virtues to provide a caring response to the personhood of a fellow human being. For John Paul II, the nature of solidarity is not exhausted in one's commitment to the common good, but in being responsible for one another and expressing special concern for the weak and the poor:

The outstanding virtue of the working men and women of Malta should be solidarity: a commitment to the common good; a rejection of selfishness and irresponsibility. We must become responsible for one another. What are needed are concrete acts of solidarity: between employers and employees, between working men and women themselves, with special sensitivity for the poor and the defenceless.¹⁶⁶

Compared to justice, solidarity is thus a more personalist virtue, which has a different, albeit not entirely different, orientation.

Finally, an interesting argument for the distinctiveness of virtue of solidarity has been proposed by Clark in her recent book, *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and*

¹⁶⁵ For John Paul II, already human virtue of solidarity enables the person to perceive others as “neighbors,” which implies at least basic human empathy for a fellow human being: “Solidarity helps us to see the “other”-whether a person, people or nation-not just as some kind of instrument, with a work capacity and physical strength to be exploited at low cost and then discarded when no longer useful, but as our “neighbor,” a “helper” (cf. Gen 2:18-20), to be made a sharer, on a par with ourselves, in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God. Hence the importance of reawakening the religious awareness of individuals and peoples.” *SRS*, 39.

¹⁶⁶ “Address to the Workers of Malta at Saint Margherita Square, Cottonera” (Saturday, 26 May 1990), no. 6. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1990/may/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19900526_cottonera.html

the Praxis of Human Rights.¹⁶⁷ According to the author, solidarity is linked to the virtue of justice, however, unlike justice, solidarity, through participation, connects oneself and the other in a way that justice alone does not:

It is possible to advocate for human rights and practice respect for human rights in such a way as to meet the demands of justice without fulfilling the demands of solidarity. If the focus is entirely on the other, their rights, and helping them without investment of myself, my humanity, and my dignity, then the action fulfills justice, insofar as it is about rectifying an injustice and giving that which is due to another – their human rights. However, it does not fulfill solidarity.¹⁶⁸

For Clark, the virtue of solidarity is based on recognition that the denial of another's rights is also a denial of one's own rights. By participating in the universal common good and the virtue of solidarity, one is able to understand, in a real way, that the violation of someone's dignity is no longer an isolated act concerning "someone," but a living experience of one's own dignity being violated. While by practicing virtue of justice, the focus can be solely on "others," in solidarity the emphasis is always on "us," regardless of whether it is someone else or "I" who is experiencing an injustice. In this sense, solidarity differs from justice in that, besides reaching out to others, it actively engages one's self.

Although the above arguments are perhaps still insufficient to offer a definitive answer regarding the distinctive character of the virtue of solidarity, Wojtyła/John Paul II's treatment of solidarity as a moral and Christian virtue deserves to be treated with more appreciation and consideration among virtue ethicists today. For one, neither Aristotle nor Aquinas speak of the virtue of solidarity, and the traditional account of justice does not easily express what the new virtue of solidarity entails. And two, even if no definitive difference is found between the virtue of justice and the virtue of solidarity, John Paul II's contribution lies already in the fact that the scholars are forced to reexamine an already existing virtue of justice and consider the new and more adequate

¹⁶⁷ Meghan J Clark, *The Vision of Catholic Social Thought: The Virtue of Solidarity and the Praxis of Human Rights* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014).

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

ways of addressing the modern reality of interdependence. For those who accept solidarity as a distinct virtue, John Paul II's contribution to the field of virtue ethics remains obvious, for those who do not, his idea should be valued at least for the two reasons stated above.

2.1.2. *Industriousness*

The other “new virtue” of papal origin is the virtue of industriousness that was already discussed in chapter three. Like solidarity, industriousness is not a new concept. John Paul II was also not the first author to refer to it in terms of virtue. Commentators point to authors like Nietzsche or Hume who already debated the value of the *virtue* of industriousness in their works.¹⁶⁹ For example, for Nietzsche industriousness was a *harmful* virtue to the individual, as through it the citizens were being used for the benefit of the society,¹⁷⁰ while for Hume it was something *desirable* on account of “its advantages, in the acquisition of power and riches, or in raising what we call a fortune in the world.”¹⁷¹ However, industriousness was not always treated as a virtue; most notably, it was not a virtue for Aristotle or Aquinas, while for other Christian thinkers, it served primarily as a countermeasure to laziness.¹⁷² Hence, it is this dissertation's contention that it is in this specific context, of Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue ethics, that John Paul II can be said to introduce the “new virtue” of industriousness. Of course, in order to prove the case one will need to argue for the distinctiveness of the virtue of industriousness and set it apart from its already existing counterparts.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Christine Swanton, *The virtue ethics of Hume and Nietzsche* (Malden, MA : Wiley Blackwell, 2015), 174; Elizabeth Schmidt Radcliffe, *A Companion to Hume* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2008), 251.

¹⁷⁰ David B. Allison, *Reading the New Nietzsche: The Birth of Tragedy, the Gay Science, Thus Spoke Zarathustra, and On the Genealogy of Morals* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 194.

¹⁷¹ Radcliffe, 251.

¹⁷² According to Tabachnick, the virtue of industriousness was valuable to Christian thinkers, specifically in light of its opposing vice – laziness, but it was not the highest of virtues: “On the face of it, the praise of industriousness and dispraise of idleness sounds in accord with both elements of the Great Tradition, Christianity and the pagan classics. But to make industriousness the ground of virtue in the absence of other virtues takes what for the tradition was regarded as a comparatively low virtue and elevates it into one of the highest. The Christian and classical traditions did not approve of laziness. But they did not praise industriousness to any great degree either, and certainly not as the basis of political order and unity.” David Tabachnick and Toivo Koivukoski, *Enduring Empire: Ancient Lessons for Global Politics* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 167.

Aristotle does not discuss the virtue of industriousness. As one author said, for Aristotle, “industriousness and reliability are not virtues in their own right.”¹⁷³ In fact, the more one reads about his approach to work, the more one realizes that for the Stagirite, labor is inferior to the life of contemplation and virtue:

...it follows, that in the best-governed states, where the citizens are really men of intrinsic and not relative goodness, none of them should be permitted to exercise any mechanic employment or follow merchandise, as being ignoble and destructive to virtue; neither should they be husbandmen, that they may be at leisure to improve in virtue and perform the duty they owe to the state.¹⁷⁴

For Aristotle, mere idleness is, of course, a vice, but if cultivated properly it becomes *leisure* (*scholē*), which is helpful for the practice of contemplative life: “idleness is acceptable to the extent that it provides us with the opportunity to pursue those civic and philosophic ends that are the surest source of friendship and unity among humans in the *polis*.”¹⁷⁵ The story is different for those who work *for a living*, that is, for those who do not have time for leisure. Aristotle argues that they are incapable of acquiring the fullest citizen virtues.¹⁷⁶ The citizens, who are overworked, having no time to study or contemplate, are wasting their time and energy. Thus, leisure could be argued to be a moderate state between two extremes: idleness on the one hand and overworking on the other. The work itself, however, is seen fundamentally as a *hindrance* to the life of happiness.

This conclusion is foreign to Wojtyła/John Paul II’s understanding of human labor. For the Pope people who *have to* work, for instance, to sustain their families, are still capable of becoming better human beings. In fact, they become virtuous by the very activity of *working*, which not only provides for their daily needs but also contributes to their growth as human persons. Therefore,

¹⁷³ Dorothea Frede, “A swarm of virtues: on the unity and completeness of Aristotle’s scheme of character-virtues,” in Mi-Kyoung Lee, *Strategies of Argument: Essays in Ancient Ethics, Epistemology, and Logic* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, USA, 2014), 102.

¹⁷⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle: A Treatise on Government*, trans. William Ellis (Auckland, New Zealand: Floating Press, 2009), 342.

¹⁷⁵ Waller Newell, “Machiavelli’s Model of a Liberal Empire: the Evolution of Rome,” in *Enduring Empire: Ancient Lessons for Global Politics*, ed. David Tabachnick and Toivo Koivukoski (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 167.

¹⁷⁶ *Politics*, 1278a20-7.

while it could be argued that Aristotle offers some account of a moderate approach to work, there is a great gap between his view and the view of John Paul II: while for the former hard work appears fundamentally as a hindrance to virtue, for the latter it is an opportunity to exercise it.

Moving on to consider the writings of St. Thomas, one finds that the virtue of industriousness is also largely absent from the work of the medieval theologian. Despite the efforts of some authors to include industriousness among the Thomistic virtues, Aquinas himself never identifies industriousness as a virtue.¹⁷⁷ The closest to industriousness is perhaps carefulness, which St. Thomas says is opposed to idleness,¹⁷⁸ or solicitude, which is opposed to negligence.¹⁷⁹ The first, carefulness, is mentioned only briefly on the occasion of Aquinas's discussion of fear to denote the cause of good counsel in light of "slight fear."¹⁸⁰ The second, solicitude, deserves attention, as it appears to be the most compatible virtue with the virtue of industriousness in the Thomistic corpus.

Solicitude (*solicitudinis*), according to Aquinas, denotes "an earnest endeavor to obtain something."¹⁸¹ This endeavor can concern both spiritual and temporal matters. For the sake of brevity, the analysis will set aside Aquinas's discussion of solicitude as a part of prudence on account of making judgments about the future.¹⁸² The relevant passage to the present question comes from question 55 of the II-II, article 6. In it, Thomas inquires whether it is unlawful to be solicitous about temporal things. In his response he says that solicitude about temporal things may be unlawful in the following three scenarios: 1) on the part of the object of solicitude, that is, if one *seeks temporal things*

¹⁷⁷ One example of an author who mentions industriousness as a Thomistic virtue is Philippa Foot. According to her, both Aristotle and Aquinas define virtues in terms of correctives to passions so that without the latter the former does not exist, such as in case of courage which could not be exercised unless in face of fear. Applying this definition of virtue as a corrective, Foot says that "there is, for instance, the virtue of industriousness only because idleness is a temptation." While I agree that virtues are correctives, and I am also willing to accept that St. Thomas *would* consider industriousness as a virtue, I cannot find enough textual evidence to grant that industriousness is treated as a moral virtue by Aquinas himself. Cf. Philippa Foot, "Virtues and vices" in *Virtue Ethics*, ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 170.

¹⁷⁸ *ST* II-II, 35.2.3.

¹⁷⁹ *ST* II-II, 54.2.

¹⁸⁰ *ST* I-II, 44.2.2.

¹⁸¹ *ST* II-II, 55.6.

¹⁸² *ST* II-II, 55.7.2.

as an end, 2) through too much earnestness in endeavoring to obtain temporal things, the result being that a man is *drawn away from spiritual things* which ought to be the chief object of his search, and 3) through over much fear, when, to wit, a man *fears to lack necessary things* if he does what he ought to do. In conclusion, Thomas quotes the words of Christ as contained in the Gospel of Matthew, to argue that “we should be solicitous most of all about spiritual goods, hoping that temporal goods also may be granted us according to our needs.”¹⁸³

Much of what Aquinas says about solicitude in reference to temporal things could be found in the papal description of the virtue of industriousness. Certainly, both Thomas and John Paul II would agree on the primacy of spiritual ends over the temporal ones. In fact, if one were to understand the dignity of a worker as a spiritual end, then Aquinas is on the same page with John Paul II: the spiritual well-being of a person who works supersedes the temporal produce of his labor. Solicitude, diligence, industriousness – a determined and intentional human effort to engage in the production of temporal goods – would not be unlawful as long as one does not seek “temporal things as an end” or is “drawn away from spiritual things which ought to be the chief object of his search.”¹⁸⁴

While Thomistic solicitude might be compatible with the virtue of industriousness there are at least two reasons in favor of the distinctiveness of the account of this papal virtue. First, solicitude is *not* a virtue in the Thomistic sense; in fact, at one point Aquinas openly states that solicitude is something that belongs to *every* virtue, not just one in particular:

Diligence seems to be the same as solicitude, because the more we love (*diligimus*) a thing the more solicitous are we about it. Hence diligence, no less than solicitude, is required for every virtue, in so far as due acts of reason are requisite for every virtue.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸³ *ST* II-II, 55.6. Emphasis mine.

¹⁸⁴ *ST* II-II, 55.6.

¹⁸⁵ *ST* II-II, 54.1.1.

However, the virtue of industriousness is not a part of every virtuous action; hence, the two, solicitude and industriousness are distinct.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, even if Aquinas's solicitude were granted a status of a virtue, it would account for only a "portion" of John Paul II's virtue of industriousness. Notice that for Thomas solicitude ensures that an agent, in his pursuit of temporal things, would never lose focus of spiritual ends so that the temporal needs are subordinated to the things of spiritual value. However, he says nothing about the fact that the very pursuit of the temporal things can be meritorious to an agent. Putting it in the context of human labor, solicitude would guarantee that the worker never puts the product of his labor above the spiritual well-being of himself or others, but it could not account for the personal growth, the very becoming of a better person, through the exercise of work. Accordingly, even if solicitude is not fundamentally incompatible with the virtue of industriousness, it lacks the important characteristic of the personalistic value of work. The papal virtue of industriousness better addresses the reality of man at work, and for that reason, it should be recognized as a distinct virtue.

2.2. Expanding the Meaning of Already Existing Virtues

The second contribution of Wojtyła/John Paul II to the field of virtue ethics concerns the way he expands the meaning of already existing virtues. This contribution can be observed most readily in his discussion of the virtue of chastity, but also in the less known virtue of penance.

2.2.1. Chastity

According to St. Thomas, the virtue of chastity is one of the subjective parts of temperance. In its operation, chastity is responsible for moderating one's pleasures associated with sexual

activity.¹⁸⁶ It disposes a person to “make moderate use of bodily members in accordance with the judgment of his reason and the choice of his will.”¹⁸⁷ The virtue of chastity is essential for a virtuous and happy life because of the strength of sexual desires, which compared to other urges of man, “are in greater need of chastisement and restraint.”¹⁸⁸ Aquinas writes that venereal pleasures are “more impetuous” and “more oppressive” than, for instance, the “pleasures of the palate.”¹⁸⁹ They can cloud the mind and make one indifferent to the spiritual goods.¹⁹⁰ If the person continues to consent to them, then the concupiscence of carnal pleasures “will wax very strong, as in the case of a child left to his own will.”¹⁹¹

However, it would be a mistake to see the virtue of chastity merely as a mechanism of repression of a person’s sexual energy. In his commentary on Aquinas’s virtue of temperance, Stephen Pope argues that “the virtue of chastity is not to be confused with avoiding all sexual pleasures through what would now be described as neurotic psychological aversion.”¹⁹² In fact, the person who feels frustrated or sad on account of his sexual abstinence cannot be said to possess the genuine virtue of chastity, but only of continence.¹⁹³ Similarly, Aquinas does not praise a person who avoids sex because he is simply, as he says, “insensible as a country bumpkin.”¹⁹⁴ The true virtue of

¹⁸⁶ Cf. *ST* II-II 151.1-4. Strictly speaking, the virtue of chastity on Aquinas’ terms refers to the moderation of sexual actions, which is to be distinguished (albeit not disjointed) from the work of the virtue of purity. According to Thomas, purity concerns “the signs” of chastity, such as, impure looks, kisses, and touches. Aquinas notes that purity and chastity are often used interchangeably. However, in their proper order, purity is directed to chastity and pertains more to external signs leading up to sexual intercourse. Cf. *ST* II-II 151.4.

¹⁸⁷ Cf. *ST* II-II, 151.1.1.

¹⁸⁸ Cf. *ST* II-II, 151. 3.2.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁰ *ST* II-II 153.5.

¹⁹¹ *ST* II-II 151.2.2.

¹⁹² Pope, *Ethics of Aquinas*, 45.

¹⁹³ Cf. *ST* II-II 155.4. Aquinas explains the difference between the temperate and continent person, as follows: “...the good of reason flourishes more in the temperate man than in the continent man, because in the former even the sensitive appetite is obedient to reason, being tamed by reason so to speak, whereas in the continent man the sensitive appetite strongly resists reason by its evil desires.” *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Pope, 45 and *ST* II-II 152.2.

chastity brings joy and tranquility to the person, who being naturally inclined to follow the impulses of his sensitive appetite, refrains to do so by means of will and reason.¹⁹⁵

In chapter three, it was mentioned that Wojtyła/John Paul II develops his own understanding of the virtue of chastity. In *Love and Responsibility*, he redefines the traditional Thomistic definition of chastity, shifting its emphasis from being an “efficient regulator” over one’s sexual urge to being an even more efficient way of affirming the value of another person in reference to his sexuality and sexual activity.¹⁹⁶ However, by doing so, Wojtyła/John Paul II does not deny the validity of St. Thomas’s teaching on chastity. In *Love and Responsibility*, Wojtyła echoes the traditional account of the virtue of chastity, when he says that “whoever is not self-controlled and moderate is not chaste,”¹⁹⁷ and that “no-one is likely to deny that this theory of virtue [i.e., Aquinas’s account of chastity] is profoundly realistic.”¹⁹⁸

For John Paul II, too, chastity can never be stripped of its fundamental, Thomistic understanding. To become a gift of self to another is to first come into full possession of oneself, which requires moderation in the sphere of one’s sexual desire:

If conjugal chastity (and chastity in general) manifests itself at first as an ability to resist the concupiscence of the flesh, it subsequently reveals itself as a singular ability to perceive, love, and realize those meanings of the “language of the body” that remain completely unknown to concupiscence itself and progressively enrich the spousal dialogue of the couple by purifying, deepening, and at the same time simplifying it.¹⁹⁹

For the Holy Father, the role of conjugal chastity is *both* to protect the dignity of sexual act in relation to its potentially procreative meaning, *and* to safeguard the importance and dignity proper to the conjugal act “inasmuch it expresses interpersonal union.”²⁰⁰ The traditional meaning of the virtue

¹⁹⁵ Cf. *ST* II-II 141.2.2. Aquinas later adds that “although beauty is becoming to every virtue, it is ascribed to temperance, by way of excellence.” Cf. 141.2.3.

¹⁹⁶ “The essence of chastity consists in quickness to affirm the value of the person in every situation, and in raising to the personal level all reactions to the value of the ‘body and sex’.” *LR*, 171.

¹⁹⁷ *LR*, 196.

¹⁹⁸ *LR*, 169.

¹⁹⁹ *TOB*, 128:3.

²⁰⁰ *TOB*, 128:6. Original emphasis.

chastity is not defeated, but enriched by the Pope's personalistic anthropology. This meaning is best exemplified by the Holy Father's discussion of conjugal spirituality in *Theology of the Body*, where he insists that the virtue of chastity "does not impoverish 'affective manifestations' but, on the contrary, it makes them spiritually more intense and thus enriches them."²⁰¹ According to John Paul II, the virtue of chastity is not only limited to offering resistance to the concupiscence of the flesh, but through this resistance it "*opens itself to the deeper and more mature values* that are part of the spousal meaning of the body in its femininity and masculinity, as well as to the authentic freedom of the gift in the reciprocal relationship of the persons."²⁰²

2.2.2. Penance

When people refer to penance today they rarely mean it as a virtue: it is either an occasional sorrow for sins, a religious practice aimed at reparation for sin, or a liturgical action oriented at a public or private confession of one's sins. However, for St. Thomas, penance is before all else a virtue:

Penance, considered as a passion, is not a virtue, as stated above, and it is thus that it is accompanied by a bodily alteration. On the other hand, it is a virtue, according as it includes a right choice on the part of the will.²⁰³

The "right choice" on the part of the will is, of course, grieving over one's sins. However, grieving alone is not enough; according to Aquinas, a truly penitent man "assumes a moderated grief for his past sins, with the intention of removing them."²⁰⁴ Because the virtue of penance seeks to make amends for one's sins it is particularly praiseworthy and consequently a special virtue.²⁰⁵ It is also

²⁰¹ *TOB*, 128:3.

²⁰² *TOB*, 128:2. Original emphasis.

²⁰³ *ST III*, 85.1.2. Aquinas distinguishes between penance as a sacramental action and penance as an act of will or, if it becomes habituated, the virtue of penance. Although the two are distinct, the sacrament of penance requires from the penitent to exercise the virtue of penance (or at least perform an act of penance) if the sins are to be forgiven. Cf. *ST III*, 86.2.

²⁰⁴ *ST III*, 85.1.

²⁰⁵ *ST III*, 85.2.

properly a species of justice, as it assumes that the penitent person will compensate for the evil he has committed:

...penance is a special virtue not merely because it sorrows for evil done (since charity would suffice for that), but also because the penitent grieves for the sin he has committed, inasmuch as it is an offense against God, and purposes to amend. Now amendment for an offense committed against anyone is not made by merely ceasing to offend, but it is necessary to make some kind of compensation [...] which belongs to the matter of justice. [...] Wherefore it is evident that penance, as a virtue, is a part of justice.²⁰⁶

In short, in the Thomistic sense, virtue of penance is focused on (1) admitting one's wrongs and (2) making proper restitutions to God and one's neighbor.

John Paul II follows Aquinas on these points. Like St. Thomas, he treats penance as a virtue,²⁰⁷ and writes that the practice of prayer and penance "overflows into contrition for sin and gives rise to a firm resolve to love God even as he has first loved us."²⁰⁸ The purpose of penance is to "overcome evil, which under different forms lies dormant in man" and "to strengthen goodness both in man himself and in his relationships with others and especially with God."²⁰⁹ However, in his writings the Pope seems to expand on the traditional meaning of the virtue of penance so as to include other elements of spiritual discipline. For instance, in the address to the bishops of India, he writes that the practice of the virtue of penance includes "discipline, mortification, self-sacrifice and generosity towards others."²¹⁰ In *Pastores dabo vobis*, John Paul II points to the virtue of penance as an indispensable element in the spiritual life of priests, describing it as multi-dimensional virtue:

In a culture which - through renewed and more subtle forms of self justification- runs the fatal risk of losing the "sense of sin" and, as a result, the consoling joy of the plea for forgiveness (cf. Ps. 51:14) and of meeting God who is "rich in mercy" (Eph. 2:4), it is vital to

²⁰⁶ *ST* III, 85.3.

²⁰⁷ Although, not exclusively. Like St. Thomas, John Paul II points to two ways of understanding of penance, as a sacrament, and as a virtue. Cf. *RH*, 20.

²⁰⁸ "Address to the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of Tanzania on their 'Ad Limina' Visit" (Monday, 26 October 1992), no. 3. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1992/october/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19921026_tanzania-ad-limina.html [accessed December 17, 2016].

²⁰⁹ *SD*, 12.

²¹⁰ "Address to the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference of India on their 'Ad Limina' Visit" (28 August 1995), no. 4. https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1995/august/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19950828_india-ad-limina.html [accessed December 18, 2016].

educate future priests to have the virtue of penance, which the Church wisely nourishes in her celebrations and in the seasons of the liturgical year, and which finds its fullness in the sacrament of reconciliation. From it flow the sense of asceticism and interior discipline, a spirit of sacrifice and self-denial, the acceptance of hard work and of the cross.²¹¹

Like the virtue of solidarity, the virtue of penance seeks to go beyond the principle of justice. The truly penitent person is not called only to repent for sins and make amends to God and neighbor in fulfillment of the demands of justice, but to become a generous and self-giving person altogether. In *Reconciliatio et penitentie*, the Pope writes that through the practice of virtue of penance, “one’s whole existence becomes penitential, that is to say, *directed toward a continuous striving for what is better*.”²¹² He explains that penance denotes “a continual effort to rise from the things of here below to the things of above, where Christ is.”²¹³ It is an act of will, which besides being focused on grieving over one’s sins and rendering others what is due to them on account of committed evils, is an attempt to become a more Christ-like person: to “put off the old man and put on the new.”²¹⁴

The virtue of penance is thus yet another example of a virtue the traditional meaning of which is being expanded. While fundamentally agreeing with Thomas, John Paul II interprets the virtue of penance in a more positive light: as an ability to become a better person altogether, not just giving others what is their due on account of committed sins. In this light, the papal virtue of penance is more connected to charity than it is to justice.²¹⁵

2.3. *Creating a Point of Contact between Virtue Ethics and Other Philosophical Systems*

The last and perhaps the most important contribution of Wojtyła/John Paul II to modern virtue ethics is that he creates a point of contact between traditional Aristotelian-Thomistic virtue

²¹¹ *PDV*, 48.

²¹² *RP*, 4. Emphasis mine.

²¹³ *Ibid*.

²¹⁴ *Ibid*.

²¹⁵ Which is also true for St. Thomas. However, while for Aquinas charity is the source of penance which in turn leads to acts of justice, for John Paul II, the virtue of penance is both inspired by charity and pursues ends more proper to charity than justice. Cf. *ST* III, 85.2.1.

theory and contemporary philosophical systems, such as personalism or phenomenology. This section of the study will argue that Wojtyła/John Paul II's openness to other philosophical trends allows him to arrive at even more comprehensive and appealing system of virtues. To explain what is meant by this, the following section will briefly examine the two most common objections to virtue ethics, and then show how personalism and phenomenology may strengthen an already existing response to critics.

2.3.1. Virtue Ethics as Non-Action Guiding

The most common criticism against virtue ethics is that it does not provide specific norms for acting. According to Louden, due to the very nature of virtues, there is a very limited amount of advice on moral quandaries. The guiding principle for acting is to do what the virtuous would do, but "it is not always easy to fathom what the hypothetical moral exemplar would do were he in our shoes."²¹⁶ Furthermore, Louden notes that if one asks the virtuous person to provide reasons for his behavior, "the answer – if one is offered – might not be very enlightening."²¹⁷

Of course, virtue ethicists addressed the criticism. According to Hursthouse, scholars like Louden make an implicit assumption that the only good moral system is the one in which an agent is provided with a set of direct imperatives specifying the course of action. Accordingly, "if the virtuous agent can only be specified as an agent disposed to act in accordance with moral rules, as some have assumed, then virtue ethics collapses back into deontology and is no rival to it."²¹⁸ It is also simply untrue that virtue ethics does not offer any more action-guiding principles other than "do what the virtuous person would do." For Hursthouse, rules employing the virtues and vices ("v-

²¹⁶ Robert B. Louden, "On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics" *American Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 21, no. 3 (Jul., 1984), 229.

²¹⁷ Ibid. For a good overview of "the action-guiding objection" and other common objections to virtue ethics, see David Salomon, "Internal Objections to Virtue Ethics," *Midwest Studies of Philosophy* 13 (1988): 428-41.

²¹⁸ Rosalind Hursthouse, "Normative Virtue Ethics," in Stephen L. Darwall, *Virtue Ethics* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub, 2003), 647.

rules”) can function as a reliable guide to moral acting; for not only does each virtue generate a prescription – act honestly, charitably, or justly – but each vice generate prohibition – do not act dishonestly, uncharitably, unjustly.²¹⁹ There is a lot of specific content in exhortations such as to avoid being ungrateful, revengeful or intolerant. Just because v-rules are couched in terms of concepts, which are ‘evaluative’ in some sense, does not mean that these rules are useless for moral acting, at least no less than many of the rules present in deontological or utilitarian systems.²²⁰

Leaving the debate aside, it seems that Wojtyła/John Paul II’s personalism, which has been shown to be compatible with virtue ethics, can also help to better address the present objection. Introducing concepts such as personalistic norm, an inherent dignity of a person, or the inviolability of human life can add specific content to as what counts as the virtuous act. If, for instance, the critics of the virtue theory claim that virtue theory is not problem-oriented and therefore speaks of rules and principles only in derivative manner,²²¹ then the insight gained from personalism can help in discovering of the objective values that effectively inform one’s virtuous choice. To give an example, a virtuous person knows that a just thing to do is to give others what is their due. However, it might be less clear for him what it means to be just in a specific context of embryonic research. The virtue of justice does not yet produce a concrete prohibition stating that killing of embryos is wrong. However, if one’s anthropology is informed by personalism, which states that every person, regardless of their biological, mental, or physical state, possesses an inherent value, then one’s virtue of justice does in fact provide an agent with a specific norm for acting. Namely, it is just to give to an embryo what is due to him, i.e., the right to life. Of course, personalism will not always serve as a basis for providing positive rules for action. However, it is this section’s contention that virtue ethics informed by personalistic values will be at least able to specify concrete negative

²¹⁹ Ibid., 648.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Louden, 230.

rules as to what counts as a virtuous or vicious action. For example, one might not know exactly what the friendship with someone entails, but a true friend will know that using someone as means to obtain one's own benefits is against one's dignity, and thus also against the true virtue of friendship.

While certainly more research needs to be done on the potential of blending personalism and virtue ethics, Wojtyła/John Paul II appears to be the first one to utilize the personalistic agenda for the benefit of a virtue theory, which turns out to be even more appealing as a moral system.

2.3.2. *Virtue Ethics as Self-Centered*

The second most commonly raised objection to virtue ethics is its excessive focus on the character of an agent. The objection holds that it is simply selfish to regard an action morally praiseworthy based on its contribution to the agent's happiness. Morality requires that one is kind and good for the sake of others not solely for one's own benefit. For instance, according to Hurka, "virtue ethics presupposes an egoistic theory of normative reasons whereby all a person's reasons for action derive from his flourishing."²²² On this reading, even acts of caring or justice towards others are fundamentally selfish as people's reasons and motivations for virtuous acting "derive ultimately from their own flourishing."²²³

Again, virtue ethicists have responded to the objection at numerous times. For Annas, achieving one's final goal, happiness, is never egoistic as it necessarily involves respecting and furthering the good of others. One cannot be truly virtuous *unless* one goes beyond himself. In fact, if one's compassion is motivated by a selfish desire even if it be a desire to be happy, then such an act would not be called virtuous. Thus, Annas explains that there is a distinction between being self-centered in content and in form:

²²² Tomas Hurka, *Virtue, Vice, and Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 232.

²²³ Ibid.

...all virtues are dispositions to do the right thing, where this is established in ways that are independent of my own interest. Thus the fact I am at my own final end makes ancient ethics formally agent-centered or self-centered but does not make it self-centered in content.²²⁴

Now, as one considers the possible contribution of phenomenology to the present discussion, it appears that phenomenological analysis points in a similar direction, namely, that one's desire for happiness necessarily involves consideration for the good of others. This is clearly seen in Wojtyła/John Paul II's discussion of the concept of participation, according to which one cannot properly fulfill himself as a person unless he does so by acting with others.²²⁵ Wojtyła explains that the reality of participation is manifested most visibly in a community, in which the members pursue the common good by acting together in solidarity.²²⁶ While acting for the sake of common good, persons choose what others choose and often because of what others choose. At the same time, they choose the common good for their own good and as the end of their own striving.²²⁷ What this observation means is that, by acting together with others, man actualizes himself as a person, but the immediate intention behind his actions is to pursue the common good. The person who acts in solidarity with others does not act out of selfish reasons, in a sense "using" others to become a better person, but acts for the good of others, which only *then* brings him the self-fulfillment proper to his actions.

Furthermore, in the discussion of participation, Wojtyła observes that participation is inherently incompatible with any type of individualism. In *Osoba i czyn*, he writes that individualism limits participation in that "it isolates the person from others by conceiving him solely as an

²²⁴ Annas, *The Morality of Happiness*, 223. A good overview of the debate between Hurka and Annas over the claim of self-centeredness of virtue ethics can be found in Yong Huang, *Why Be Moral?: Learning from the Neo-Confucian Cheng Brothers* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014), 92-98.

²²⁵ *OiC*, 335.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 343.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 345.

individual who concentrates on himself and on his own good.”²²⁸ As a result, “the good of the individual is treated as if it were opposed or in contradiction to other individuals and their good.”²²⁹ If one’s motivation behind acting with others was fundamentally selfish, as the critics of virtue theory maintain, then a person would have to consider his own good as more important than the good of others. However, this is exactly what Wojtyła wishes to deny: true participation is impossible to attain if the good of others is being diminished or opposed. One cannot be said to participate authentically in the life of a community while at the same time despising the needs of its other members.

This is why Wojtyła/John Paul II believes that the only proper attitude of the community is solidarity, which, as he writes in *Osoba i czyn*, “adequately conditions and initiates participation.”²³⁰ Hardly, if ever, the virtue of solidarity is presented as a virtue focused on oneself. Quite the contrary, for the Pope solidarity arises from the basic fact that “we are all really responsible for all”²³¹ and must therefore be committed to the good of all and to the good of each individual. Solidarity is fundamentally *unselfish*: it helps one to see the “other” – whether a person, people or nation – not merely as an instrument to achieve one’s individual good (even if that be happiness), but as a neighbor and a sharer in the banquet of life to which all are equally invited by God.²³²

How does the above discussion of solidarity inform the argument of the present section? First, from the beginning, Wojtyła/John Paul II’s virtue of solidarity was heavily influenced by phenomenology. It will not be an exaggeration to say that the “new” virtue of solidarity was a result of Wojtyła’s phenomenological analysis of the human person, more specifically, of the reality of participation. This already proves the point that virtue ethics can greatly benefit from the insight of

²²⁸ *OiC*, 339.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*

²³⁰ *OiC*, 352.

²³¹ *SRS*, 38.

²³² *SRS*, 39.

phenomenology. Perhaps the second point is more important, however. Namely, that the phenomenological analysis of the reality of participation, which led to the later formulation of the virtue of solidarity, constitutes a concrete example of how virtue ethics is fundamentally *not* self-centered. As shown above, solidarity is a virtuous response to the reality of the human person, who by his nature, cannot be happy *unless* with others. By making better use of phenomenological method, virtue ethics can more effectively respond to its critics who insist that a virtue-centered approach to morality must be fundamentally selfish.

In conclusion, the third contribution of Wojtyła/John Paul II into the broader field of virtue ethics lies precisely in showing how other methods of philosophical inquiry, such as personalism or phenomenology, can further inform and enrich a virtue-oriented approach to ethics. Based on Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings alone, one can say that the insight gained from other schools can be helpful in responding to the two most common objections to virtue ethics, i.e., its alleged non-guiding character and its inherent self-centeredness.

3. The Relevance of the Elements of Virtue Ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's Work for the Renewal of Moral Theology

The last task for this chapter will be to assess the significance of the presence of virtue ethics' elements in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work for the wider renewal of moral theology. In order to do so, this section will give a short overview of the historical context in which the renewal of moral theology came about, and second, it will examine whether Wojtyła/John Paul II's interest in virtue theory should be considered a part of this renewal.

3.1. *The Return to Virtue*

In *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, Pinckaers observes that one can point to two main periods in the history of morality: the first dominated by the question of happiness and the second by the question of obligation.²³³ According to the Belgian theologian, the change occurred with the “explosion” of nominalism, most notably under the influence of William Ockham:

Ockham was the first to propose the moral theory of obligation, we may say. Up to his time the primary moral question had been that of happiness and the search for it, among philosophers as well as the Fathers of the church and theologians... Although outwardly he adopted all the traditional ideas and doctrines, Ockham reinterpreted them and transformed them profoundly, basing them on the central idea of obligation, which he substituted for that of happiness and virtue.²³⁴

For Ockham, God was first and foremost the God of omnipotence. The divine freedom was an absolute freedom; it governed the moral law and all the laws of creation. If God willed it, he could change the law at any moment, even if it meant making people miserable and unhappy. Hatred of one's neighbor, theft, or adultery could become good and meritorious, if God commanded them. Now, in contrast to divine freedom was human freedom, which although unlimited in reference to one's will, remained in a state of constant dependency on the divine law. For Ockham, it was precisely in fulfilling the obligation of God's law that one could truly encounter the Divine. The very core of morality was determined by one's observance of the law; to do good meant to carry out one's obligations while to do evil meant to act in contrary manner.²³⁵

The consequences, or as Pinckaers prefers to say the “after-shocks,” of the new way of looking at morality were gruesome: freedom was separated from nature, law, and grace; moral doctrine was divorced from mysticism; reason was severed from faith; and the individual was separated from society.²³⁶ Through the further developments of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

²³³ Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian ethics*, 19.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, 251.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 246-249.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*, 242.

in areas such as dialectic and logic, the moral discourse became gradually dominated by a technical, codifiable, and rule-oriented approach to morality, eventually reaching its peak in the manualist tradition of the seventeenth century that persisted to the modern day.²³⁷ It was not until the last few decades that a conscious effort has been made to return to the “morality of happiness,” primarily through the rediscovery of the thought of St. Thomas, most notably his virtue theory, and the ultimate source of Christian morality, the Sacred Scriptures.²³⁸

While the renewal of ethics cannot be simply contained in a modern attempt to rehabilitate virtue, it is this work’s contention and the contention of many other contemporary moral theologians that the resurgence of virtue-oriented approach to morality is one of the most significant elements in the process. In an excellent review essay, Cloutier and Mattison argue that “it is safe to say today [...] that virtue once again plays a prominent role in Catholic moral theology.”²³⁹ Pointing to the key contemporary ethicists, such as, Hauerwas, MacIntyre, Pinckaers, Annas, Porter, Rhonheimer, and others, the authors make a convincing argument that the return to virtues features prominently in today’s effort to renew the field of ethics.²⁴⁰ They insist that “the revival of virtue is not a ‘nostalgia project,’ not an attempt to ‘go back,’ but a rather constructive proposal that moves

²³⁷ Ibid., 254-280.

²³⁸ Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian ethics*, 298.

²³⁹ David Cloutier and William C. Mattison III, “The Resurgence of Virtue in Recent Moral Theology,” *Journal of Moral Theology*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2014), 228.

²⁴⁰ Although other interpretations can be offered, it seems to me that the modern effort to revisit virtue-oriented approach to ethics constitutes a direct response to Ockham’s nominalism and subsequent decline of moral philosophy in general. By emphasizing teleological version of practical reasoning, virtue ethics challenges the whole paradigm of the moral life implied by deontological or consequentialist ethics. The following authors are listed by Cloutier and Mattison as being the main representatives of the modern renewal of virtue-ethics: Stanley Hauerwas, *Character and the Christian Life* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1975); Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988) and *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984); Pinckaers, *Sources of Christian Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1995); Julia Annas, *Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); Jean Porter, *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005); Martin Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011); Daniel Westberg, *Right Practical Reason: Aristotle, Action, and Prudence in Aquinas* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); John Bowlin, *Contingency and Fortune in Aquinas’s Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Michael Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005); Jennifer Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

forward by correcting contemporary problems in moral theology.”²⁴¹ It is a concrete step towards “the perfection of moral theology” as envisioned by the Second Vatican Council.²⁴²

3.2. *The Forgotten Contribution of Wojtyła/John Paul II*

Interestingly, even though Wojtyła/John Paul II has been commonly considered to take an active part in fulfilling of the Council’s call for renewal, most notably through the writing of moral encyclicals *Veritatis Splendor* and *Evangelium Vitae*,²⁴³ the contribution of the Polish philosopher and Pope has rarely, if ever, been linked to the contemporary attempt to rehabilitate virtue.²⁴⁴ For most authors, Wojtyła/John Paul II’s main contribution lies in introducing personalistic language to the Church’s teachings (most notably in areas of sexual and social ethics), and in reconnecting moral theology with Sacred Scriptures.²⁴⁵

However, this seems insufficient in light of the findings of the present project and Wojtyła/John Paul II’s own statements pertaining to the future trajectory of moral theology. While it is perhaps true that the treatment of virtue ethics elements by the Polish philosopher and Pope at times lacks the depth and systematization proper to the modern discourse surrounding virtue ethics, Wojtyła/John Paul II definitely *favors* the effort of contemporary scholars to renew moral theology by means of virtue. Nowhere is this favoring of the virtue-centered approach to ethics more succinctly expressed than in *Fides et Ratio*, where John Paul II explains that ethics must be firmly rooted in metaphysics of the good, which implies virtues:

In order to fulfill its mission, moral theology must turn to a philosophical ethics which looks to the truth of the good, to an ethics which is neither subjectivist nor utilitarian. Such an

²⁴¹ Cloutier and Mattison, 231.

²⁴² John Paul II, *Optatam totius*, 16.

²⁴³ Spinello, 7.

²⁴⁴ Perhaps except for Cessario who argues that “what is taught in *Deus Caritas Est* as well as in certain magisterial texts of John Paul II, especially the 1993 encyclical letter *Veritatis Splendor* coheres with the classical Thomist virtue theory.” Cf. Cessario, *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics*, 153.

²⁴⁵ Cf. Jones, 86; Curran, *John Paul II and moral theology*, 66; Spinello, 7.

ethics implies and presupposes a philosophical anthropology and a metaphysics of the good. Drawing on this organic vision, linked necessarily to Christian holiness and to the practice of the human and supernatural virtues, moral theology will be able to tackle the various problems in its competence, such as peace, social justice, the family, the defense of life and the natural environment, in a more appropriate and effective way.²⁴⁶

John Paul II's favorable attitude towards an ethics of virtue is also present in *Veritatis Splendor*, which was written with perspective of fulfilling the Council's call for renewal of moral theology.²⁴⁷ By placing happiness at the source of moral reflection and shifting the perspective from the "third-person" to the "acting person," John Paul II takes an active part in the process of recovery of virtue, even if there is a relatively scarce attention given to virtues themselves. If for the Holy Father the essence of Christian morality lies in imitating Christ, and human beings perfect themselves through free and rational actions, then virtues, even if implicitly, are the proximate means of achieving moral excellence. It is precisely this orientation, which favors "the first-person perspective" over "the third-person perspective" that sets John Paul II apart from other deontological and consequentialist theories and inclines him to favor a virtue and character-centered vision of morality.

It is therefore accurate to say that the contribution of the Polish philosopher and Pope to the wider renewal of moral theology has not yet been fully exhausted. While scholars often praise Wojtyła/John Paul II for his use of personalism and Sacred Scriptures in addressing moral issues, they have failed to acknowledge Wojtyła/John Paul II's taking active part in the process of reintroduction of the theme of virtues, which, as argued above, appears to be the most promising venue for renewing moral theology today.

²⁴⁶ FR, 98.

²⁴⁷ Cf. VS, 7.

Conclusion

In summary, acknowledging the presence of the elements of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's writings has significant implications to the way moral theology of the Polish philosopher and Pope is conceived and studied today. This chapter has shown that the moral wisdom of Wojtyła/John Paul II has not yet been fully appreciated, and pointed out the ways in which his commitment to virtue-centered approach to ethics should inform our understanding of his moral thought.

First, and foremost, this chapter argued that greater attention should be given to the essential role of virtues in Wojtyła/John Paul II's own work. The moral theology of the Polish philosopher and Pope is often characterized as phenomenological, personalistic, or even overly legalistic, but rarely, if ever, is the significant role of virtues is considered as a part of these characterizations. This state of affairs is unfortunate given that for Wojtyła/John Paul II, (1) the process of integration of person in action cannot happen except through the work of virtues, (2) the value and dignity of the human person is best protected and encouraged by virtues, and (3) an alleged legalism is overcome by the commitment to happiness and virtuous life.

Second, this chapter has shown that Wojtyła/John Paul II's own understanding of virtues should be at least acknowledged as a potential contribution to the broader field of virtue ethics. While it is true that the Polish philosopher and Pope does not engage in many of the technical discussions characteristic of contemporary research on virtue, he does bring new ideas to the table: (1) Wojtyła/John Paul II introduces new virtues, such as the virtue of solidarity and the virtue of industriousness, (2) he significantly expands the meaning of already existing virtues, for instance, the virtue of chastity and the virtue of penance, and (3) he creates the point of contact between virtue ethics and other philosophical schools of thought, such as, phenomenology and personalism, which can greatly enrich the modern understanding of virtues.

Finally, this chapter indicated that by acknowledging the presence of the elements of virtue ethics in his thought, Wojtyła/John Paul II should be recognized as more fully participating in the renewal of moral theology as called for by the Second Vatican Council. Besides reconnecting moral theology with the Scriptures and introducing personalism to the Church's moral teachings, Wojtyła/John Paul II's contribution to the renewal of moral theology should also include his favorable attitude towards virtue ethics, which, according to many contemporary theologians, is the most promising way of fulfilling the Council's call.

General Conclusion

In his introduction to *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics*, Christopher Tollefsen wrote that “so great and so long is the list of John Paul's accomplishments that no end of books could, and no doubt one day will be written about his role in the Church, and in the world.”¹ Anyone who ever studied the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II is well aware of the breadth and complexity of his thought. It is thus probably accurate to say that it will take years before the ideas of the Polish philosopher and Pope are fully explored and appreciated. There are multiple areas within Wojtyła/John Paul II's scholarship that have not been extensively treated yet, and which can greatly contribute to a better understanding of moral issues of the present times. This study serves both as an example and as encouragement of the pursuit of these areas. By arguing for the presence of the key elements of virtue ethics in his writings, I have highlighted a lesser known aspect of Wojtyła/John Paul II's thought and explained the significance of associating virtue ethics with the thought of the Polish philosopher and Pope.

The study begun with exploring Wojtyła/John Paul II's commitment to the traditional philosophy as developed by St. Thomas Aquinas. It argued that the Polish philosopher and Pope never abandoned the Thomistic philosophy of being and assimilated much of Aquinas' thought into his own writings. The chronological survey of the first chapter showed how Wojtyła/John Paul II gradually embraced and deepened his understanding of the Thomistic philosophy and theology, albeit not always without criticism. One of the main concerns of the Polish philosopher and Pope was the minimal attention that St. Thomas offered to the person's subjectivity and the experience of the person in action. This concern, however, was more of an inspiration than a stumbling block for Wojtyła/John Paul II, who turned to other philosophical schools of thought, such as

¹ Christopher Tollefsen, *John Paul II's Contribution to Catholic Bioethics* (Norwell, MA: Springer, 2004), 1.

phenomenology and personalism, and provided a more accurate understanding of the reality of the human person. Determining the nature of Wojtyła/John Paul II's attitude towards Thomism was essential to the development of the overall argument of the present project. By showing the ongoing commitment of the Polish philosopher and Pope to the thought of St. Thomas, the study pointed to the possibility of finding the Thomistic elements of virtue ethics in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II.

The aim of the second chapter was to identify what constitutes the basic elements of virtue ethics by analyzing extensively the works of contemporary virtue ethicists who favor the traditional theory of virtue as developed by Aristotle and Aquinas. This chapter, too, was crucial for the overall argument intended by this project in that it provided the measuring tool for verifying whether one can speak accurately of virtue ethics being present and operative in the moral thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II. Without claiming the list to be exhaustive, I have pointed out five key elements that are characteristic of modern versions of virtue ethics developed along the lines of Aristotle's and Aquinas's thought. The list included the following five concepts: happiness, habit, prudence, emotions, and grace. Each of the five elements was shown to be crucial for building a coherent virtue theory, and was discussed in detail, with an emphasis on its relationship to the remaining elements (except for the last element, i.e., grace, which is distinctively a part of Christian virtue theory).

After establishing the plausibility of encountering virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work, and identifying the basic elements needed for building a coherent virtue ethics, the study proceeded to search for the above elements in the writings of the Polish philosopher and Pope. The analysis undertaken in the third chapter revealed that there is virtue ethics present and operative in the work of Wojtyła/John Paul II, even if, at times, it remained underdeveloped. This section of the study was the most detailed one. Claiming that Wojtyła/John Paul II often referred to virtues in his

writings required a thorough investigation of numerous and various works and publications spanning throughout Wojtyła/John Paul II's lifetime, including those, which were never translated into English. Furthermore, the analysis of the third chapter often consulted additional works of Wojtyła/John Paul II, which at first seemingly unrelated to the theme of virtues, turned out to be very useful in better understanding of Wojtyła/John Paul II's account of a given element of virtue ethics.

Finally, the last chapter argued that acknowledging the presence of the key elements of virtue ethics in the writings of the Polish philosopher and Pope bears much significance not only on the way we think of Wojtyła/John Paul II's own moral system, but also on the way his writings could further enrich the understanding of the discipline of moral theology today. By bringing attention to virtues in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work, the study argued that the wisdom of the Polish philosopher and Pope had not yet been fully appreciated. The theme of virtues must be better explored and analyzed, particularly by scholars who specialize in the thought of Wojtyła/John Paul II. The work also argued that connecting virtues with the person of Wojtyła/John Paul II, a figure of such influence and deep appreciation for other trends of philosophical inquiry, creates unique opportunities for other scholars who might have not engaged extensively the thought of the Polish philosopher and Pope in their research. For example, by showing that the Wojtyła/John Paul II introduced new virtues or expanded the meaning of the traditional virtues, the study pointed out the new and exciting ways in which the contemporary virtue ethicists may reinvigorate the moral reflection in some areas of their work.

The textual evidence provided in this work effectively demonstrated that there is virtue ethics present and operative in the work of Wojtyła/John Paul II. This does not mean, however, that all five elements of virtue ethics are treated with equal attention and depth by the Polish philosopher and Pope. The analysis of the third chapter showed that Wojtyła/John Paul II's

treatment of some of the elements of virtue ethics (or its aspects) remains at times underdeveloped. For example, Wojtyła/John Paul II spends a considerable amount of time discussing the idea of happiness and its relevance to the Christian view of morality, but fails to explain in detail how the virtue of prudence affects one's pursuit of a happy life. Another example of an underdeveloped concept is the Pope's explicit affirmation of the unity thesis and his insistence that the possession of one virtue implies the possession of all the others. Unfortunately, nowhere in his writings does Wojtyła/John Paul II substantiate the unity claim, nor does he explain reasons behind his own acceptance of it. The Polish philosopher and Pope could also provide a more robust account of habit and be much clearer on the relationship between the acquired and infused virtues.

In general, most of what Wojtyła/John Paul II has to say about virtue coheres with the thought of Aristotle and St. Thomas. The similarities are most readily observed in Wojtyła/John Paul II's description of happiness, which is defined both as the desire of every human person to actualize one's being (imperfect happiness) and the communion with God in the afterlife (perfect happiness); his discussion of habit, which largely follows the Thomistic account of *habitus*; his understanding of practical reasoning, which, although at certain points underdeveloped, bears the marks of Aristotle's *phronesis*; and the concept of theological virtues, which immediately calls to mind Thomas's account of theological virtues from the *Summa*.

The most original parts of Wojtyła/John Paul II's virtue theory concern those instances in which the traditional understanding of a particular concept or idea is informed by his personalism and/or phenomenology. For instance, the Polish philosopher and Pope proposes his own understanding of emotions, in which virtues feature prominently as an integral part of the process of integration of the person in action. Another example is Wojtyła/John Paul II's understanding of moral virtue, which at its essence is not defined strictly in the traditional sense, as aiming at that

what is intermediate, but at what safeguards and promotes the dignity of the human person. This is clearly seen in Wojtyła/John Paul II's account of the virtues of chastity and solidarity.

In terms of the limitations of the present project, these certainly pertain to the content of the first and the second chapter. Although much attention was given in the first chapter to reflect most adequately Wojtyła/John Paul II's commitment to the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, the works consulted certainly represent only a portion of literature relevant to the subject matter. For example, Wojtyła's doctoral work on the virtue of faith in the writings of St. John of the Cross had been mentioned but not treated systematically, even though the young priest from Kraków explicitly used Thomistic categories to analyze St. John's understanding of faith. The study also refrained from analyzing Wojtyła's other major work, *Sources of the Renewal*, which contained ideas of the young bishop for the implementation of the Council's reforms, many of which fundamentally cohered with the doctrine of St. Thomas Aquinas. Certainly many other references present in the papal works and addresses of John Paul II were omitted.

The limitations of this project can also be observed in the analysis undertaken in the second chapter. Some commentators may be disappointed with the way the material of the second section was treated. For example, most of the primary references were taken from Aristotle's and St. Thomas's major works, specifically *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Summa Theologiae*. These works are, of course, reliable sources but they certainly do not exhaust everything Aristotle and Aquinas have to say on particular element of virtue ethics. In the similar vein, only a small portion of the secondary literature was consulted in the second chapter. A certain preference was given to some authors over the others, and only a select number of debates concerning the specific element of virtue ethics were discussed. For example, in the treatment of emotions, the study argued that Aristotle and Aquinas hold a fundamentally positive view towards passions, but did not explain how they arise in a person or what is Aristotle's and Aquinas's categorization of them. The work also lacks any substantial

discussion of the role of gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in the section devoted to grace and virtues. The goal of the present study, however, was not to provide an exhaustive and systematic treatment of each of the elements of virtue ethics, but only to identify their main characteristics needed for conducting an effective analysis in chapter three.

Besides arguing for the presence of the elements of virtue ethics in Wojtyła/John Paul II's work, the present study raised important questions for future research. First, there are some parts of the teachings of Wojtyła/John Paul II which remain unclear. For example, in his analysis of fulfillment in *Osoba i Czyn*, Wojtyła speaks of happiness (*szczęście*) and felicity (*szczęśliwość*). While I suggested that the difference between the two might lie in the scope of happiness (the former referring to man's happiness in general, and the latter to the fulfillment in action), a more systematic study of the two concepts has not been done. Are the two terms synonymous? Or, is felicity a part of happiness? It would be interesting to see if Wojtyła uses the term felicity in his earlier writings, and determine its relation to other concepts, such as virtue and grace.

Another important question concerns the virtue of solidarity. On the one hand, the virtue of solidarity appears to be the new and independent virtue. On the other hand, in its description, the virtue of solidarity bears much resemblance to the traditional virtue of justice. Both are moral virtues and both address the common good of the society and its members. But John Paul II was well-acquainted with the virtue of justice, so why would he introduce the *new* virtue of solidarity if he thought that virtue of solidarity is but a modern version of the traditional virtue of justice? And if the virtue of solidarity was really an independent virtue, how would one categorize it within the greater scheme of virtues? Would the virtue of solidarity be considered the fifth cardinal virtue?

Continuing reflection on the virtue of solidarity, Wojtyła/John Paul II is also unclear on the relationship between acquired and infused virtues. On the one hand, the virtue of solidarity is presented as an acquired virtue attainable by all men. On the other hand, it appears to be a

specifically Christian virtue achieved with the help of God's grace. The Polish philosopher and Pope does not offer a direct answer as to how the acquired virtues and infused virtues relate to one another in the same agent. However, as the present study exemplifies it, not everything that Wojtyła/John Paul II's holds to be true can be found clearly articulated in his writings. A more thorough examination, involving critical comparison between acquired and infused virtues, could lead to a more decisive conclusion in this particular area of Wojtyła/John Paul II's thought.

The present project also encouraged a more multidisciplinary approach to the study of Wojtyła/John Paul II's work. For instance, chapter four showed how virtue ethics can potentially benefit from looking into other schools of philosophical inquiry, such as phenomenology or personalism. The argument was focused on the two most common criticisms raised against virtue ethics, but there are other ways in which phenomenological personalism of Wojtyła/John Paul II could prove useful in developing modern ethics. One good example is the notion of experience. Wojtyła/John Paul II's phenomenological personalism could be used to enrich the traditional account of virtue ethics, which often assumes a Thomistic view of person's subjectivity without lapsing into modern notions of subjectivism, as exemplified by some authors today.² This way of approaching virtue ethics would guarantee the balance between one's experience of moral action and the objective moral value of it.

In conclusion, this study made a strong case for the presence of virtue ethics in the writings of Wojtyła/John Paul II. Virtues and the key concepts of virtue ethics were shown to be essential to the Polish philosopher and Pope in his attempt to build a comprehensive system of ethics, sensitive to the needs and challenges of the modern world. This dissertation addressed many of the less known elements of Wojtyła/John Paul II's thought. It organized and systematized his own

² For an example of ethical reflection which lapses into ethical subjectivism while also employing the elements of virtue ethics, see: Margaret Farley R.S.M.'s, *Just Love: A Framework for Christian Sexual Ethics* (New York: Conituum , 2008) and Todd Salzman and Michael Lawler, *The Sexual Person: Toward a Renewed Catholic Anthropology* (Washington, DC: Georgetown, 2008).

treatment of virtues, and highlighted the significance of bringing virtue ethics into conversation with the moral wisdom of the Polish philosopher and Pope. It is this work's contention that without such concepts as happiness, habit, practical reasoning, emotions, and grace, Wojtyła/John Paul II's overall moral theory would be seriously deficient.

Still, the Polish philosopher and Pope should be recognized for his commitment to the traditional virtue theory as developed by Aristotle and Aquinas *with* simultaneous appreciation for his own originality and invention in adjusting the thought of his predecessors to the contemporary challenges characterizing moral discourse today. Seen in this light, Wojtyła/John Paul II's contribution to the field of virtue ethics and ethics in general is even more substantial than previously recognized. Pope Benedict once said that he considers it his essential and personal mission "not so much to produce many new documents but to see to it that [John Paul II's] documents are assimilated, because they are a very rich treasure, the authentic interpretation of Vatican II."³ It was with the same mindset that this study was approached – sharing Pope Benedict's hope that many others will come forward to draw further from the wisdom of the great saint from Poland.

³ Benedict XVI, as quoted in Gerald O'Collins and Michael A. Hayes, *The Legacy of John Paul II* (London, NY: Burns & Oates, 2008), xiii.

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