

THE SHIFTING PROMINENCE OF EMOTIONS IN THE MORAL PHILOSOPHY OF THOMAS AQUINAS

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Abstract. In this article, I claim that emotions, as we understand the term today, have a more prominent role in the moral life described by Thomas Aquinas than has been traditionally thought. First, clarity is needed about what exactly the emotions are in Aquinas. Second, clarity is needed about true virtue: specifically, about the relationship of acquired virtue to infused, supernatural virtues. Given a fuller understanding of both these things, I claim that emotions are not only auxiliary to the life of flourishing, specifically with regard to moral motivation and morally relevant knowledge. In fact, at the highest stage of moral development, emotions have a more prominent role than at lower stages. Pointing this out helps us to resist over-intellectualizing interpretations of Aquinas's moral philosophy.

Keywords: Thomas Aquinas, emotion, passions, virtue, empathy, second-personal knowledge, theological virtues, Gifts of the Holy Spirit, moral motivation, moral knowledge.

Introduction

Summarizing the consensus of contemporary commentators on Thomas Aquinas, Paul Gondreau says that Aquinas's account of the relationship between emotions and ethics “falls between the two extremes we see frequently proposed in the history of philosophical thought, the one excluding emotion from moral action and the other identifying emotion with moral duty as such.”¹ The next issue to investigate is *where* between these two extremes Aquinas falls. Upon a cursory glance, it appears that Aquinas only affords emotions auxiliary roles. For Aquinas, the life of human (and, thus, moral) flourishing is lived in accord with reason. After all, the intellect is the faculty able to discover and understand relevant principles of natural law, and employ them in discursive reasoning. Human actions are morally evaluable insofar as humans possess a will, which Aquinas understands as the intellectual appetite and, as such, responsive to deliverances of the intellect.

¹ Paul Gondreau, *The Passions and the Moral Life: Appreciating the Originality of Aquinas*, “The Thomist” (71) 2007, p. 419–450, qt. on 421. Cf. also Judith Barad, *Aquinas on the Role of Emotion in Moral Judgment and Activity*, “The Thomist” (55.3) July 1991: p. 397–403; here, she sees the two extremes as being represented by Immanuel Kant and David Hume, respectively.

One morally fails insofar as one ends up (freely) willing something that deviates from what reason would discern as truly good. Whatever is essential to moral action seems to be covered by the work of reason itself; the only remaining work seems to be non-essential *per se*. Thus, moral development entails further development of intellect primarily – if not exclusively – and, perhaps, the marginalization of emotion.

To investigate this more thoroughly, however, one first needs to consider just what elements in Aquinas’s moral psychology correspond to emotions (at least, as we understand the extension of the term ‘emotion’ today). Also, in order to understand the roles such things could play in the moral life, one needs to understand the full context of Aquinas’s picture of the truly moral life, which he describes in his extensive thought on virtue. Upon such an investigation, I claim that Aquinas affords emotions more of a role in the moral life than has been recognized. Specifically, I claim that, as one progresses across stages of moral development Aquinas describes, emotions can have a more – not less – prominent place in the life of true human flourishing, with regard to both moral motivation and morally relevant knowledge.

Aquinas on “Emotion”

First, let us consider the extent of Aquinas’s account of emotions – again, as we understand the concept ‘emotion’ today. I adopt the following broad characterization of ‘emotion’: emotions are intuitively identifiable and familiar responses to stimuli that are at least apparently intentional, at least apparently evaluative, and typically consciously experienced, or felt; further, they have the ability to affect subsequent thought and behavior with motivational force that may be independent from, and even contrary to, processes of rational thought.²

Aquinas describes phenomena such as love, joy, and anger, which we regard as emotions nowadays, as *passiones animae* (passions of the soul).³ *Passiones* are movements of one’s sensitive appetite, which is moved upon being presented

² Cf., the following: Aaron Ben-Ze’ev, *The Thing Called Emotion*, [in:] *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010, p. 41–61, particularly 47; Ronald de Sousa, *Emotion*, [in:] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2010, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotion/>; Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2001, particularly p. 27–30; Robert C. Roberts, *What an Emotion is: A Sketch*, “The Philosophical Review” (97.2) 1988, p. 183–209, particularly 183–185.

³ There are several Latin terms (*passio / passiones, affectus* (sing. & pl.), *instinctus*) that I leave untranslated here for two reasons: first, to precisely identify the concepts in Aquinas to which I am referring; second, to prevent anything implied in the English cognates of such terms but is not present in the thought of Aquinas to be imported into the meaning of the term.

something via one's sensory apprehension. A human's powers of sensory apprehension include both external senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing) and internal senses (the cogitative power (*vis cogitativa*), the common sense (*sensus communis*), the imagination (*phantasia* or *imaginatio*), the memorative power (*vis memorativa*)). Aquinas takes these internal senses to perform functions in the process of cognition that external senses alone cannot perform, such as unifying various strands of content of sensory perceptions (common sense) and giving this unified content a positive or negative valence in some way (cogitative power).⁴ He describes eleven distinct kinds of *passiones*, each corresponding to a different kind of movement of the sensitive appetite: love, hatred, desire, aversion, delight, pain, hope, despair, fear, daring, and anger.

Each of the eleven kinds of movements of sensory appetite corresponds directly to a different kind of sensory apprehension, which are differentiated by several basic constituent perceptions. First, the relevant apprehensions come to have either a negative or a positive valence.⁵ This valence is assigned by the cogitative power based on whether or not what is apprehended is seen as suitable or unsuitable for either pleasure or usefulness to further certain basic desires. Following Aristotle, Aquinas distinguishes three aspects of goodness that can be apprehended in general: the befitting, or virtuous, good (*bonum honestum*), the pleasant good (*delectabile*), and the useful good (*utile*).⁶ *Passiones* are said to be direct responses to a thing apprehended as it is seen in its pleasant or useful aspect – *not* in its befitting aspect; this is true by definition. For Aquinas, sensory apprehension alone is sufficient to apprehend both the pleasant good and the useful good of any thing. He observes that even non-human animals, which are said to lack intellect but have sensory powers, exhibit behaviors that indicate they apprehend and subsequently react to such goods.⁷ Further, any thing, good or bad, is considered either

⁴ Cf., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, 2nd ed., Benziger Brothers, New York 1947, I, q. 78. In this paper, quotations from Aquinas in English are taken from this translation unless otherwise noted.

⁵ I hesitate to say that the apprehension must be seen as bad or good only because that might imply a kind of judgment that involves more cognitive work than is employed as yet for Aquinas. It is true, however, that a certain kind of goodness is apprehended via the work of the cogitative power.

⁶ Cf., *ibidem*, I, q. 5, a. 6. These translations in English come from Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2009, 47. He refers back to Miner (2009), 16-19, in which he quotes Aquinas (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C.I. Litzinger, O.P. (2 vols.), Henry Regnery Co., Chicago 1964, bk. I lec. 5, §58-59.

⁷ For example, Aquinas writes, "[...] in the sensitive appetite there is a certain appetitive power which regards something as suitable ... because it is *useful* to the animal for self-defense." (*Summa...*, I, q. 81, a. 2, ad 2, *emphasis added*.) Cf. also *ibidem*, I, q. 82, a. 5, resp. Specifically, the distinction between the pleasant good and the useful good grounds Aquinas's distinction between the concupiscible and irascible powers in the sensitive appetite.

in terms of its proximity to the subject or generically speaking (i.e., not with respect to proximity). In terms of proximity, a thing can be seen either as advancing to (or retreating from) the subject or persistently present to the subject. So, for example, any token instance of the *passio* of love is a direct appetitive response to an apprehension with a positive valence, relative to its causing pleasure, irrespective of proximity. Another example: any token instance of the *passio* of pain is a direct appetitive response to an apprehension with a negative valence, relative to its causing pleasure, where what is apprehended is persistently present. Certain things with a negative valence are also evaluated according to their persistence, either in terms of duration or in terms of depth of effect. Certain predictions, likely based on rough comparisons with memories of similar events, are made with regard to the ease with which this negatively valenced thing can be cleared from one's cognitive space.

Importantly, these apprehensions are irreducibly subjective. This much is evident for the apprehensions that take proximity into account, since proximity is predicated only relative to a subject. In general, Aquinas thinks sensory powers are strictly enmeshed in the particular matter of an individual subject. Such powers are not immaterial of themselves, since only powers that apprehend things from a universal or absolute aspect are immaterial of themselves. Deliverances of sensory powers, then, are always particularized and indexed to the subject in whose matter alone they come about. Hence, *passiones* are direct responses to irreducibly subjective apprehensions; for example, he says, the *passio* of love "does not go beyond the particular good of the one loving."⁸ Thus, by definition, no *passio* can be a direct response to the befitting (virtuous, true, objective) good of some thing.

Some scholars have treated the *passiones* as if they are the only elements in Aquinas's psychology that we would call 'emotions'.⁹ I think there are several reasons, however, to resist a hasty identification of *passiones* and emotions.¹⁰ For one, it is actually anachronistic to ascribe an account of "emotion" to Aquinas *per se*. The term 'emotion' does not appear in earnest in the philosophical and psycholog-

⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Nicomachean...*, bk. VIII, lec. 5, §1603 (*emphasis added*).

⁹ For example, Simo Knuuttila writes, "I use the terms 'passion' and 'emotion' without intending any important difference in meaning." (Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004, p. 3). Diana Fritz Cates writes, "I analyze as emotions what Aquinas calls passions ... which are mediated by the body and do involve a 'commotion of the soul'." Diana Fritz Cates, *Aquinas on the Passions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, D.C. 2009, p. 8-9; (*emphasis original*.)

¹⁰ I borrow the term 'hasty identification' from Nicholas Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 2011.

ical literature until well after Aquinas's time.¹¹ Some trace the original usage of the term back to Hume, others to Descartes. Thomas Dixon notes that, by the 1850s, there was a "wholesale change in established [psychological] vocabulary ... such that those engaged in theoretical discussions about phenomena including hope, fear, love, [etc.] ... almost invariably referred to 'the emotions'."¹² Eventually, Dixon claims, "the category of 'emotions' had *subsumed* [the categories of] 'passions', 'affections', and 'sentiments' in the vocabularies of the majority of English-language psychological theorists."¹³ 'Emotion', then, became a sort of catch-all concept that could refer to a number of different kinds of phenomena – including, but not limited to, *passiones*. The phenomena in the term's extension may come from a number of diverse, albeit related, sources.¹⁴ Historical considerations do not *prove* that the terms 'passio' and 'emotion' range over different sets of phenomena. They do, however, indicate that caution is advisable before simply equating Aquinas's *passiones* with what we regard as emotions today.

More to the point, Aquinas describes phenomena such as love, desire, and joy, among others not as *passiones*, but as *affectus* (affections) of the will. While Aquinas devotes an extended portion of the *Summa* to talk about the *passiones*, his remarks about the *affectus* of the will are more scattered. To understand more about these phenomena takes some searching. A brief, but central, passage occurs in a question in the *Summa theologiae* concerning the attribution of love and joy to God. If God is *impassible*, as is traditionally thought, God cannot have *passiones* such as love and joy. To understand the attribution of such things to God, he writes:

When love and joy and the like are ascribed to God or the angels, or to man in respect of his intellectual appetite, they signify simple acts of the will having like ef-

¹¹ Certain translations of the *Summa* do contain the word 'emotion', including the translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province. In this translation, 'emotion' is most often a translation of the Latin 'affectio', which in most other places is translated as the cognate 'affection'.

¹² Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2003, p. 4.

¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 98 (*emphasis original*). Cf. also Amy M. Schmitter, *17th and 18th Century Theories of the Emotions*, [in:] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2006, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/emotions-17th18th/>.

¹⁴ Perhaps it is for this reason that defining the term 'emotion' has become a very messy business. Amèlie Rorty expresses skepticism about finding such a definition as she claims that "emotions do not form a natural class." Amèlie Rorty, *Introduction*, [in:] *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amèlie Rorty, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA 1980, p. 1–8, qt. on 1.

fects, but without [*passio*]. [O]rdinary human speech is wont to ascribe to them also these *passiones* by name, because ... their acts bear a certain resemblance to ours.¹⁵

He also makes reference to *affectus* in his theological writings, such as his Biblical commentaries.¹⁶ *Affectus* of the will are movements of the *rational* appetite, or will, upon something being presented to it by the powers of rational apprehension, or the intellect. The rational appetite is moved by the intellect's apprehension of some thing as good according to "the universal notion of good," not its tendency to provide one with pleasure or its utility.¹⁷ As noted above, only the intellect can consider goodness under this universal aspect. In his analysis, Aquinas describes the rational appetite as having various kinds of functions and movements; each function has a place in a certain logical order. *Affectus* are the rational appetite's initial movements upon being presented with a fully formed intellectual apprehension.

There are indications that Aquinas would take *affectus* to be emotions in the sense we understand the term 'emotion'. For example, when Aquinas compares spiritual and intellectual pleasures (i.e., *affectus*) with bodily and sensible pleasures, he does not claim that these two are completely different in kind.¹⁸ While he says the movements of the sensitive appetite are more vehement, he also says, "bodily pleasures, by reason of their succeeding griefs ... are felt the *more* [*magis sentitur*]," than spiritual or intellectual pleasures.¹⁹ He does not say that intellectual pleasures are *not* felt, or sensed, at all. Also, when describing spiritual joy in his commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians, he directly compares bodily, or "worldly" joy, to spiritual joy in a way that treats these two as if they are on a continuum, rather than being incomparable. For example, he writes, "[spiritual joy] should be moderate and not flooded with pleasures, as happens in worldly joy."²⁰ Such similarities have been picked up by several contemporary scholars of Aquinas.

¹⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 22, a. 3, ad 3. Whether or not God has *emotions* is another matter that I will refrain from addressing in any detail here. For an insightful study on the way in which the *passio* / *affectus* distinction bears on this question, see Anastasia Philippa Scrutton, *Thinking Through Feeling: God, Emotion, and Passibility*, Continuum, New York 2011.

¹⁶ For example, he talks about intellectual joy in Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Philipenses lectura* (Commentary on St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians), trans. F.R. Larcher, O.P., Magi Books, Albany, NY 1969, available at <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/SSPhilippians.htm>, §4-1.

¹⁷ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 13, a. 4, ad 1.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 31, a. 5.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 31, a. 5, resp. (*emphasis added*).

²⁰ Thomas Aquinas, *Super...*, §4-1.

nas as well.²¹ Given this, I think it is plausible to say that *affectus* of the will at least can be manifested as consciously experienced emotions, as we understand the term ‘emotion’ today. Thus, in order to completely understand the role of emotions in the ethics of Aquinas, then, we have to consider the roles that the sensitive and rational appetites might play.

Aquinas on True Virtue and Stages of Moral Development

For Aquinas, humans become good insofar as they “attain the mode of reason,” since reason is a power particular to humans and the “rule and measure” of all operations within a human being.²² Virtues help humans attain this mode. According to Aquinas, a virtue is, in part, “a good quality of the mind by which we live righteously of which we cannot make bad use.”²³ These qualities help to refine the operations of the powers within a human’s soul, thus resulting in morally excellent action.

Among the central moral virtues Aquinas describes are Aristotle’s cardinal virtues: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice. Giuseppe Butera writes, “The cardinal virtues ... enable ... virtuous [people] to do *and to feel* what they ought consistently and reliably, even in the most trying of circumstances ... by perfecting the different powers of the soul.”²⁴ For Aristotle, as well as Aquinas, these cardinal virtues cause a human to tend towards good as determined by reason and can be obtained through continual practice, called habituation. Aquinas claims that the cardinal virtues are “directed to the good which is defined according to the rule of human reason;” as such, he claims that these virtues “can be

²¹ For example, Peter King calls these *affectus*, “dispassionate passions.” (Peter King, *Dispassionate Passions*, [in:] *Emotion and Cognitive Life in Medieval and Early Modern Philosophy*, eds. Lisa Shapiro and Martin Pickave, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2012, p. 9–31. Robert Miner writes, “There is some correspondence between Aquinas’ use of *affectiones* and ‘emotions’ in contemporary parlance.” Miner, *op. cit.*, p. 35 (fn. 6). Susan James writes, “... [*affectus*] resemble [*passiones*] except that they are somewhat calmer. ... There is some sense in which intellectual love, for example, *feels* different from passionate love; but ... the phenomenological difference between them may easily evade us.” Susan James, *Passion and Action: The Emotions in Seventeenth-Century Philosophy*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1997, p. 61–62. Carlo Leget writes, “... the common sense account of ‘emotion’ is closest to Aquinas’s concept of *affectus* in the broad sense – comprising the movements in the intellectual and sensitive part of the appetitive faculties.” Carlo Leget, *Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on the Emotions*, “Theological Studies” (64) 2003, p. 558–581, qt. on 574.

²² Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Virtutibus (Disputed Questions on the Virtues)*, trans. Ralph McInerney, St. Augustine’s Press, South Bend, IN 1999, available at <http://www.josephkenny.joyeurs.com/CDtexts/QDdeVirtutibus.htm>, q. 1, a. 13, resp.

²³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I–II, q. 55, a. 4, resp.

²⁴ Giuseppe Butera, *On Reason’s Control of the Passions in Aquinas’s Theory of Temperance*, “Mediaeval Studies” (68) 2006, p. 133–160, qt. on 133.

caused by human acts" – that is, by habituation.²⁵ Discussing the cardinal virtues, however, invites some confusion in Aquinas. Departing from Aristotle, he claims that there are also more excellent kinds of virtues. Referring to a work by Macrobius, Aquinas claims that virtue comes in four degrees, the lower three of which humans can come to have. Acquired cardinal virtues are at the lowest level. Aquinas calls them "social" virtues, since "it is by reason of them that man behaves himself well in the conduct of human affairs."²⁶ Put another way, they aim at what is best as it can be determined by human reasoning alone; further, humans can acquire these excellences on their own. These are the virtues by which humans attain the mean determined by human reason in specifically human affairs. This, however, is not the whole story.

The ultimate aim of virtue is to dispose one well towards one's *ultimate* end, which is happiness. For Aquinas, unlike Aristotle, this ultimate end is beyond the natural grasp of a human being.²⁷ According to Aquinas, "there is a twofold good of man, one which is proportioned to his nature, another which exceeds the capacity of his nature."²⁸ The acquired cardinal virtues help one to be a good citizen of "the earthly city," and the good of being an excellent human in this earthly city is within the capacity of a human's nature. Aquinas claims, however, that any human "is also a participant in the heavenly city."²⁹ The good of being an excellent human in the heavenly city is *not* within human capacity because it consists in something *supernatural*: namely, the contemplation of God in the Beatific Vision. It is in the good of this heavenly city that ultimate human happiness resides. While this is only available as such in an afterlife, it can be enjoyed to a certain degree on earth; as such, this sets a different endpoint to human virtue.³⁰ To attain to this ultimate happiness at all, one needs perfections that cannot come about simply from individual or communal effort alone, since it exceeds any human's nature;

²⁵ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 63, a. 2, resp.

²⁶ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 61, a. 5, resp.

²⁷ Richard Kraut summarizes Aristotle's view: "Aristotle believes that his own life and that of his philosophical friends was the best available to a human being. He compares it to the life of a god: god thinks without interruption and endlessly, and a philosopher enjoys something similar for a limited period of time." Richard Kraut, "Aristotle's Ethics" in *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2010, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/>. Further, there is no afterlife involved for Aristotle. Cf., Tad Brennan, "Immortality in Ancient Philosophy," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. E. Craig, Routledge, London 2002, available at <http://www.rep.routledge.com/article/A133SECT3>.

²⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones...*, q. 1, a. 10, resp.

²⁹ *Ibidem*, q. 1, a. 9, resp. (This reference extends to the previous quotation as well.)

³⁰ Cf., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 3, a. 8, resp.

such habits must be infused by a higher power. That higher power is God. Hence, Aquinas's full definition of virtue, adopted from Augustine, concludes with the phrase "which God works in us, without us."³¹ Through infused habits, a human becomes "perfected in operations ordered to the end of eternal life."³² Aquinas describes two kinds of infused virtues. First, each of the Aristotelian cardinal virtues has an infused counterpart. These kinds of virtues are found in those "who are on their way and tending towards the Divine similitude," but are not there yet; they are called "perfecting" virtues.³³ They refine human acts in human contexts so they become measured by a standard higher than unaided human reason would determine. Second, there are different virtues for the humans who have already attained the good that is in God in a manner suitable to their life on earth or in heaven. They have "perfect" infused virtues, such as the theological virtues (faith, hope, and charity) and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.³⁴

One runs the risk of error and misunderstanding if one divorces Aquinas's ethics from their theological context, focusing only on the descriptions of Aristotelian acquired virtues given, when considering genuine moral development in Aquinas. For one, according to the full definition of 'virtue' that Aquinas adopts, Aristotelian acquired virtues are only virtues in a certain sense; they are not characterized by the phrase, "which God works in us, without us." Just as such things are only partially virtues, so too is one's moral development and excellence partial at that point. Also, the end that such virtues can properly attain falls short of what Aquinas defines as the ultimate human end. Since talk of development in this context entails understanding where one stands in relation to some end, the life of acquired virtue cannot fitfully be described as the *last* word on moral development. It isn't suited by itself to the last end. To be fair, it is also false to say that the life of infused virtue employs standards of goodness that are completely incomparable to the intermediate human ends at work in natural virtue. As Denis Bradley writes,

Aquinas does not negate the moral value or continued presence of mere human virtue ... Rather, ... he sees merely human virtues as always able to be subsumed into the supernatural moral order established by the theological virtues of faith,

³¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, q. 55 a. 4, ad 1. Augustine's definition is found in his *De libero arbitrio* ii, 19. Aquinas claims that acquired virtues fit this definition *except* for the final clause.

³² Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones...*, q. 1, a. 10, resp.

³³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 61, a. 5, resp.

³⁴ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 61, a. 5, resp. The highest virtues here are called the "exemplar" virtues, which Aquinas takes to exist only in the mind of God.

hope, and charity. Thus subsumption is possible because the real goods, which are objects of the humanly acquired moral virtues, are already intrinsically subordinated *in the order of being* to a transcendent or supernatural good.³⁵

Even when given an end acquired only in respect of infused virtue, it is not a category mistake to regard humanly acquired goodness as “good” and apportioned in some way to what is good unqualifiedly. To arrive at an accurate picture of true moral development in any respect, then, we must consider the general effects of both the acquired and the infused virtues on the deliverances of our faculties. Because the perfections that these sets of virtues deliver are related to each other as if on a kind of continuum, it is appropriate to say there are stages of development in the truly moral life and talk about the state of human faculties at each stage. Such stages proceed from lacking any virtues whatsoever, to possessing acquired virtues, to possessing infused virtues.

Emotions and their Roles in the Stages of Moral Development

Acquired virtues, again, help a human’s powers be perfected so that they are well ordered according to the determinations of intellect. As far as *passiones* go, Aquinas explicitly claims that experiencing them is compatible with a life of this kind of virtue.³⁶ The operations of sensitive appetite are morally evaluable only insofar as the sensitive appetite participates in reason and the movements are voluntary, Aquinas says; and both criteria are fulfilled.

Sensory appetites are said to participate in reason “according as they are moved by reason.”³⁷ He writes, “since the sensitive appetite can obey reason, ... it belongs to the perfection of moral or human good that the *passiones* themselves also should be controlled by reason.”³⁸ Reason exercises control on the *passiones* by operating on the interior senses, not the sensitive appetite itself. Aquinas writes, “the sensitive appetite can be moved by the ... reason ... through the medium of the particular imagination.”³⁹ The (particular) imagination is the inner sense where sensible forms and “pictures,” for lack of a better term, of states of affairs are generated and stored; here is where the apprehension of senses is finally

³⁵ Denis J.M. Bradley, *Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas’s Moral Science*, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 1997, p. 19–20 (*emphasis original*).

³⁶ Cf., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 59, a. 2 and a. 4.

³⁷ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 56, a. 4, resp. (*emphasis added*).

³⁸ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 24, a. 3, resp. (*emphasis added*). Here, he also references *ST* I-II q. 17 a. 7.

³⁹ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 30, a. 3, ad 3.

pieced together before the sensitive appetite is moved.⁴⁰ Reason can an existing image or cobble together a new image in this space. This alteration occurs primarily in virtue of the effect that particular intellectual judgments have on the valences assigned to particular apprehensions by the cogitative power. He writes,

[...] in man the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by this particular reason [i.e., the cogitative power]. But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason, [since] in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions. ... Anyone can experience this in himself: for by applying certain universal considerations, anger or fear or the like may be modified or excited.⁴¹

Taking account of modifications to the valences, an image formed in the imagination is then presented to the sensitive appetite; and, as appropriate, a *passio* arises.⁴² Aquinas regards this kind of alteration as a movement of *choice*, which occurs because “a human, by the judgment of his reason, chooses to be affected by a *passio* in order to work more promptly with the co-operation of the sensitive appetite.”⁴³ Indeed, just because *passiones* are able to come about on account of this kind of work of reason, or be checked by reason in this way, they are taken to be “voluntary.”⁴⁴

Thus, a general effect of one’s growth in acquired virtue – particularly, temperance and fortitude – is that *passiones* will tend to be controlled or have been

⁴⁰ Cf., *ibidem*, I, q. 78, a. 4, resp.; cf. also Thomas Aquinas, *Quaestiones Disputatae de Anima (Disputed Questions on the Soul)*, trans. John Patrick Rowan, B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis and London 1949, available at <http://dhspriority.org/thomas/QDdeAnima.htm>, a. 13, resp.

Also, by ‘picture’, I do not mean a static thing that captures a single moment in time; rather, I mean a dynamic representation of a state of affairs in the world. By claiming that we are talking about a representation of states of affairs in the world, I am *not* saying that Aquinas is not a direct realist of some sort – that is, I am not saying that Aquinas denies that we have direct access to extramental reality. The extraction of sensible species and the reconstitution of this via the interior senses is merely the *means* by which one cognizes the external world directly. For a brief treatment of this, see Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas*, Routledge, London and New York 2003, p. 245–246, as well as endnotes 2–5 on 526–527.

⁴¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I, q. 81, a. 3, resp.

⁴² Cf., Butera, *op. cit.*. Cf., also, Giuseppe Butera, *Thomas Aquinas and Cognitive Therapy: An Exploration of the Promise of Thomistic Psychology*, [in:] “Philosophy, Psychiatry, & Psychology” (17.4) 2010, p. 347–366.

⁴³ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 24, a. 3, ad 1. In this case, what Aquinas calls consequent *passiones* result, as opposed to antecedent *passiones*. While antecedent *passiones* occur prior to a judgment of reason, consequent *passiones* occur after a judgment of reason. Further, Aquinas claims that only consequent *passiones* contribute to the goodness of a particular action. (Cf., also, *ibidem*, I-II, q. 17, a. 7, ad 2.)

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 24, a. 1, resp.

sanctioned by reason, *ceteris paribus*. As such, *passiones* in their own right will tend to be more properly proportioned responses to the pleasant good and useful good, respectively, as compared to the befitting good apprehended by reason. For example, if the cogitative power's determination of valence turns out to be proper, then the intellectually derived conclusion will tend to reinforce this; if the cogitative power turns out to be improper, the intellectual conclusion will help crowd out the improper valence. This effect will be imperfect for various reasons, but still more pronounced given the possession of virtue. Aquinas also thinks the resultant *passio* helps one come to follow the determinations of reason more readily. After all, he writes that part of the function of virtue is "to make [one's powers] execute the commands of reason by exercising their proper acts."⁴⁵ Correspondingly, as Aquinas notes, acquired virtues ensure that a person "uses [the *passiones*] in moderation," particularly when they [*passiones*] are commanded.⁴⁶ If every part of a human pulls in a certain direction, then moving in that direction becomes easier; virtue helps to ensure that *passiones* do not pull in a direction opposed to reason – or, at least, not as hard.

This indicates that the *passiones* have an auxiliary role in moral motivation and little role to play in moral deliberation. Given the way that Aquinas describes the intellect's operation on the sensitive powers, the object of those powers is not changed even when one comes to possess acquired virtue. So *passiones*, in their own right, still are not responsive to the befitting good itself even given virtue. They cannot, in their own right, be indications of any kind of knowledge of befitting goods. Because *passiones* are responsive to pleasure and utility, which are wholly subjective matters, the effect of acquired virtue must be to cause what is judged as good in the befitting sense to seem more pleasing and pressing to the subject – or, at least, to cause the opposite to seem less pleasing and pressing to the subject. This is accomplished by marshaling one's interests in (morally acceptable) self-regarding pleasures that pull in the same direction – or dulling the edge of contrary *passio* and its accompanying valence by crowding it out.

As for the *affectus* of the will, matters are not as easy to see, since Aquinas has no extended treatment of these phenomena. At a glance, it appears that the cardinal virtues would have little effect on them anyway. *Affectus* are internal acts of the will; by definition, they are the results of the will's immediate inclination towards the good, or away from the evil, of some object or state of affairs as de-

⁴⁵ Ibidem, I-II, q. 59, a. 5, resp.

⁴⁶ Ibidem, I-II, q. 69, a. 3, resp. (*emphasis added*).

terminated by reason.⁴⁷ Given this and the goal of virtue being to ensure the rule of reason itself, it looks like the will is working fine enough just by design. Aquinas says as much: "Now the proper nature of a power is seen in its relation to its object. Since, therefore, ... the object of the will is the good of reason proportionate to the will, in respect of this the will does not need a virtue perfecting it."⁴⁸ He qualifies this, however, by saying, "But if man's will is confronted with a good that exceeds its [natural] capacity, ... such as the good of *one's neighbor*, then does the will need virtue. And therefore such virtues as those which direct man's affections ... to his neighbor are subjected in the will."⁴⁹ This indicates that the will is already designed to respond well to what reason determines is good for an individual alone. One needs no help in being (virtuously) egoistic. It takes virtue, however, for one to act consistently when what reason determines is "directed to some extrinsic good," such as what is good to and for others or the common good.⁵⁰ This virtue is justice, the habit by which one has "the perpetual and constant will to render to each one his right," as that "right" is determined by reason.⁵¹ It is the virtue on account of which we will tend to follow through on conclusions about our moral obligations to others and to the common good.

Aquinas is not forthright about saying what particular acts of the rational appetite are affected by this virtue. In general, he says, "the first mover, among the powers of the soul, to the *doing* of an act is the will."⁵² This movement of will occurs when the will is set into motion by a full intellectual apprehension of something judged to be good; this initial movement is an *affectus*.⁵³ Any genuine act of justice, then, presupposes this inclination towards some good that goes beyond mere individual interest.⁵⁴ Since possessing the virtue is an indispensable condition for genuine acts of justice, it follows that, when one possesses the virtue, one

⁴⁷ Aquinas notes that "the good [that is] understood is the proportionate object of the will;" as such, he continues, "the goodness of the will depends on reason." Ibidem, I-II, q. 19, a. 3, resp.

⁴⁸ Ibidem, I-II, q. 56, a. 6, resp.

⁴⁹ Ibidem, I-II, q. 56, a. 6, resp. (*emphasis added*).

⁵⁰ Ibidem, I-II, q. 56, a. 6, ad 3.

⁵¹ Ibidem, II-II, q. 58, a. 1, obj. 1.

⁵² Ibidem, I-II, q. 17, a. 1, resp. (*emphasis added*).

⁵³ Aquinas writes that the intellect moves the will here with respect to "the determination of the act [of the will], which the act derives from the object ... since the good itself is apprehended under a special aspect as contained in the universal true." Ibidem, I-II, q. 9, a. 1, ad 3.

⁵⁴ I say "genuine" to differentiate these from acts that turn out to be just in terms of their material consequences, yet are not motivated by knowledge or consideration of justice. Such cases exist, Aquinas admits: "Sometimes a person performs the exterior act of a virtue without having the virtue." Ibidem, II-II, q. 123, a. 1, ad 2.

will tend to have the unique kinds of *affectus* that accompany genuine acts of justice, *ceteris paribus*. Given that *affectus* can be manifested as consciously experienced emotions, one effect of possessing the virtue of justice is that such *affectus* may be manifested as emotions in one; whereas before such emotions were not at all prominent, if even existent. With the virtue of justice, emotions associated with the specific *affectus* of justice will tend to become more prominent, *ceteris paribus*. Because *affectus* are responsive to the befitting good, one's emotions could be responses to the reality of a situation apprehended by reason beyond the ways in which that situation impinges on one's own pleasure. One could be said to experience genuine joy that, say, a war is over and peace is attained in a place, irrespective of how that affects one's own desires, interests, and subjective perceptions. Similarly, one could experience genuine sadness and anger at the plight of the marginalized and unjustly persecuted in a society consequent upon an intellectual realization of their situation.

The virtue of justice also could be said to enhance interpersonal connections between humans insofar as possessing the virtue of justice tends to cause true goods with respect to others to be more salient in one's own mind.⁵⁵ If so, then this enhanced connection may involve the unique *affectus* of the will that accompany the virtue of justice. Specifically, if certain kinds of essentially other-directed emotions are deemed as integral to genuine interpersonal relationships at which justice aims, then it is probable that such emotions will be *affectus*. Empathetic emotions may be among such emotions, and Aquinas seems to allow for the possibility of empathy.⁵⁶ Empathy entails a kind of sharing of mental states between two individuals that is direct and intuitive. It can be differentiated from other similar phenomena like sympathy and compassion, which seem not to entail the same depth of sharing of mental states.⁵⁷ Insofar as one comes to share another's mental states, including ones that accompany (and cause) *passiones* or *affectus* in the other, one may also come to share *emotions* with them. The emotion that the empathizer experiences does *not* impinge on the empathizer's own pleasure or pain in the same way it does for the other; in empathy, it is the *other's* pain that the empathizer

⁵⁵ Further, Aquinas writes, "When equality exists, the work of justice is done. For that reason equality is the goal of justice and the starting point of [true] friendship." Thomas Aquinas, *Nicomachean...*, bk. VIII, lec. 7, §1632.

⁵⁶ Cf., Stephen Chanderbhan, *Does Empathy Have Any Place in Aquinas's Account of Justice?*, "Philosophia" (41.2) 2013, p. 273–288.

⁵⁷ Cf., Tania Singer and Claus Lamm, *The Social Neuroscience of Empathy*, [in:] *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, Vol. 1156: The Year in Cognitive Neuroscience 2009, p. 81–96; cf., also, Amy Coplan, *Will the Real Empathy Please Stand Up? A Case for a Narrow Conceptualization*, "The Southern Journal of Philosophy" 49 (Spindel Supplement) 2011, p. 40–65.

feels, not *his or her own*. Given this, it strains interpretation to say the empathizer experiences a *passio*, strictly speaking.⁵⁸ Insofar as such an emotion is a response to a kind of knowledge, I think it is plausible to say empathetic emotions would be *affectus*.

The cumulative effect of possessing acquired virtue on humans' emotional life, then, is that the emotions that one has will tend to be more accurate reactions to genuine goodness. If they are *passiones*, they will tend not to be out of proportion as compared to the actual goodness of a thing. While *passiones* in their own right still are not responses to the true goodness of a thing, *affectus* are; and these will be more prominent in their own right, particularly the ones associated with justice. Consequently, the emotions that are stronger will tend to be the more trustworthy guides to action, while emotions that need to be tamped down will tend not to appear so compelling. Still, the roles that these emotions have are still auxiliary to moral deliberation and action. *Passiones* of themselves do not track morally relevant properties; it just happens that they tend to be more trustworthy guides to action than they would be were a person to lack virtue. And even though *affectus* can be reactive to propositions regarding morally relevant goodness and possibly be empathetic emotions, the primary thrust of justice is to act in ways that are prescribed by intellect: namely, *that* true goodness extends beyond oneself and *that* one has certain obligations to others and to the common good. Justice in this sense does not require such *affectus* except insofar as they help motivate just actions. Similar remarks could be made about empathetic *affectus*, though such emotions do play a slightly different role. It seems that such emotions capture a kind of intuitive knowledge of another's mental states in a way that propositional knowledge cannot. These emotions serve as a vehicle of a unique kind of knowledge entailed by genuine empathy, where empathy tends to be cultivated with the virtue of justice – albeit such emotions are morally auxiliary, at this stage.

As noted above, the acquired virtues are not the only perfecting habits Aquinas describes. Aquinas talks about two sets of divinely infused virtues: the infused cardinal virtues and the supernatural virtues, such as the theological virtues and Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The infused cardinal virtues are extensions of their acquired analogues; the effects they have on the *passiones* and *affectus* are ba-

⁵⁸ A qualification: as noted above, intellect and will can operate on the powers of sensory apprehension to end up producing a *passio*. It may be the case that this is what happens for empathetic *passio*. I contend that *passio* are irreducibly subjective, however; and, as such, no *passio* can truly capture the idea that it is *another's pain* that I am feeling. Were empathetic emotions to be *passiones*, I think it would undercut the kind of sharing that seems to be entailed by empathy. I grant, however, that this needs to be considered more carefully.

sically extensions of the effects of their acquired counterparts. By this kind of virtue, a person's preferences with respect to earthly things are ordered well so that the subsequent reactions of his or her appetites will be proportioned to his or her ultimate end. It is worth noting, however, that, because of this divine help and the infinite gulf between earthly goodness and heavenly goodness, Aquinas claims that the perfecting virtues ultimately "uproot" the *passiones*. The social virtues (i.e., the acquired cardinal virtues), on the other hand, merely "moderate" them.⁵⁹ That is, at a higher level of moral development than that of acquired virtue, *passiones* are said to be eradicated in one, by and large. Nevertheless, I still claim that emotions have a significant role to play in the moral life at these highest reaches of development. To evaluate this claim, let us look consider Aquinas's thought on the theological virtues (specifically, charity (*caritas*)) and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Aquinas describes the theological virtue of charity as a sort of "friendship of man for God ... founded on some kind of communication."⁶⁰ He follows Aristotle by conceiving of friendship as a kind of habit or disposition, since we can describe a typical human friendship as one's being *disposed* to interact favorably with a friend even when that friend is not present. Part of the nature of friendship for Aquinas is that friends tend to share a certain bond, or union; he writes that it is "proper to friends" to be "of one mind in what they will and what they do not will."⁶¹ In other words, communication and understanding between friends seems to be deeper and, in a sense, easier than communication between those who are not friends. Accordingly, Aquinas claims that charity is a disposition whereby we tend to be *united* to God.⁶² Further, this virtue primarily consists in God, in the person of the Holy Spirit, coming to dwell *within* a person; for example, Aquinas characterizes charity as one's "participation" of the Holy Spirit.⁶³ This union of charity is real, not metaphorical. In some sense, two minds and wills exist within in the one person with the virtue of charity: one's own mind and will and those of God. Nevertheless, while God and the person with the virtue of charity are united,

⁵⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 61, a. 5, ad 2. Here, he cites Plotinus, who himself was quoted in Macrobius's commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, II-II, q. 23, a. 1, resp.

⁶¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Super Epistolam B. Pauli ad Philemonem lectura (Commentary on the Epistle of Paul to Philemon)*, trans. by Ralph McInerny, Penguin, New York 1998, Prologue; available at <http://josephkenny.joyeurs.com/CDtexts/SSPhilemon.htm>.

⁶² Thomas Aquinas, II-II, q. 23, a. 3, resp.

⁶³ *Ibidem*, II-II, q. 24, a. 2, resp.

Aquinas says they remain distinct entities. The integrity and freedom of the person's own will is respected.⁶⁴

Several scholars have recently claimed that we can understand the interactions involved in relationship of charity better in light of contemporary thought on *second-personal experiences* and *second-personal relationships*. An experience is second-personal when one individual truly recognizes the other as a *person*, apt to see the other as a "you," not just "him," "her," or "it." Being in second-personal relationships involves an ability to engage in mind-reading. 'Mind-reading' is a philosophical term of art that describes humans' abilities to "attribute mental states to humans [and] ... explain the behavior of humans in terms of their possessing mental states" from within, apprehending them as if they were our own.⁶⁵ Our attributions of mental states to others follow from our understanding of the other *as other* from the inside, as it were. As far as what we can come to know through this, some of what one can mind-read is characterized in terms of non-propositional knowledge. For example, it is one thing to know *that* a person is sad; what is known there is a proposition. It is another thing, however, to know *the person's sadness*; in this case, the object of knowledge is *non-propositional*. Knowledge of this latter type is said to be available through mind-reading. This non-propositional knowledge is said to be integral to knowledge of persons; knowledge of a person *as such* could not consist in just knowledge of a set of propositions since persons are not mere sets of propositions.

If charity is aptly described as a second-personal kind of relationship, then one with charity may be said to have a habitual ability to read the mind of God, in some suitably qualified sense. Eleonore Stump explains this thought further:

For Aquinas, it is open to every human person to have a second personal connection with God and, because of this connection, it is possible for there to be as-it-were mind-reading or social cognition between a human person and God too. A human person can know ... something of God's mind in a direct and intuitive way that is in some respects like the mind-reading between human persons. On Aquinas's views, "... there is a special way [in which God is in a thing by essence, power, and presence] which is appropriate for a rational creature, in whom God is said to be as the thing known is in the knower and the beloved is in the lover."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ *Ibidem*, II-II, q. 23, a. 2.

⁶⁵ Ian Ravenscroft, *Folk Psychology as a Theory*, [in:] *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, 2010, available at <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/folkpsych-theory/>.

⁶⁶ Eleonore Stump, *The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions*, "Faith and Philosophy" (28.1) 2011, p. 29-43, qt. on 37-38. The quotation from Aquinas is from *Summa...*,

In this way, God is present to a person so He can communicate with and, subsequently, move that person, all without violating his or her identity or free will.⁶⁷ It is in having *this* disposition that full human excellence, which disposes one towards ultimate happiness, consists.

In addition to charity (and faith and hope, for that matter), Aquinas talks about yet another set of habits that are included among the “perfect” virtues: the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁶⁸ In general, he characterizes the Gifts as habits infused by God, by which one is disposed “to be moved by God” by following the promptings of the indwelling Holy Spirit.⁶⁹ There are seven Gifts: piety (*pietas*), fortitude (*fortitudo*), fear of the Lord (*timor Domini*), wisdom (*sapientia*), understanding (*intellectus*), counsel (*consilium*), and knowledge (*scientia*). Aquinas claims that each of the Gifts perfects operations of either the will or the intellect; further, he connects each Gift with a particular virtue (cardinal or theological) to help describe how a person with that specific Gift is disposed. So, just as virtues associated with particular faculties and operations will tend to facilitate one’s knowledge of truth and one’s execution of particular virtuous acts, the Gifts can be said to facilitate one’s knowledge of truth and execution of particular exemplary acts of perfect virtue.⁷⁰ In sum: through charity, one is granted access to the mind of God through the second-personal relationship one comes to have with God. In the context of this kind of relationship, one is simultaneously granted the Gifts. Through the Gifts, one is rendered receptive to what God sees and what God would urge one to do in particular situations, which is communicated to one in a second-personal (i.e., direct and intuitive) way.

Given the effect of infused cardinal virtue on *passiones* noted above, it should not surprise us that the *passiones* are largely – though not completely – si-

I, q. 43, a. 3, resp. For more on Stump’s views on second-personal relationships and the virtue of charity, cf., Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2010, especially ch. 4 and ch. 6. Cf., also, Andrew Pinsent, *The Second Person Perspective in Aquinas’s Ethics: Virtues and Gifts*, Routledge, New York 2012.

⁶⁷ Aquinas says, “But man is not an instrument [that has no faculty, or power, for its own action]; for he is so acted upon, by the Holy Ghost, that he also acts himself, in so far as he has a free-will.” *Summa...*, I-II, q. 68, a. 3, ad 2. Stump also notes that this notion of being moved by the Holy Spirit is *not* inconsistent with a human’s having free will in a robust sense (cf. Stump [2011], p. 32; there, she refers the reader to Ch. 13 – on grace and free will – of Stump [2003]).

⁶⁸ The theological virtue of charity is a *sine qua non* for the Gifts: without charity, one has none of the Gifts; with charity, one has all of the Gifts. Aquinas’s thought here is similar to Aristotle’s unity of the virtues thesis; he writes, “the gifts of the Holy Ghost are connected together in charity: so that whoever has charity has all the gifts of the Holy Ghost, none of which can one possess without charity.” Thomas Aquinas, *Summa...*, I-II, q. 68, a. 5, resp.

⁶⁹ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 68, a. 1, resp.

⁷⁰ For more on this, cf., Pinsent, *op. cit.*

lenced in one with these highest perfections. We see this in Aquinas's descriptions of the Fruits of the Holy Spirit and Beatitudes, all of which he takes to be systematically related to the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. In general, he writes,

From following the irascible *passiones* man is withdrawn – by a virtue, so that they are kept within the bounds appointed by the ruling of reason – and by a *gift*, in a more excellent manner, so that man, according to God's will, is altogether undisturbed by them ... From following the concupiscible *passiones*, man is withdrawn – by a virtue, so that man uses these *passiones* in moderation –and by *gift*, so that, if necessary, he casts them aside altogether ...⁷¹

Elsewhere, he writes that one with perfect virtue “forgets” the *passiones* – or, at least, the troublesome ones.⁷² He describes similar specific effects with respect to specific *passiones* when describing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit; there are virtually no troublesome *passiones* at all, and what good ones remain are almost vestigial.⁷³ In a person with higher perfections, *passiones* no longer hold even the auxiliary motivating role that they once had for the person with virtue. Such additional motivation is needless given the presence of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

This is not to say, however, that emotions are completely without a place here. As noted above, God is able to (and does) communicate with a person who has charity and the Gifts. Aquinas describes just how God moves a person who has the Gifts as follows:

[...] by [the Gifts] man is disposed to become amenable to the Divine inspiration ... Even the Philosopher says in the chapter *On Good Fortune* that for those who are moved by Divine *instinctus*, there is no need to take counsel according to human reason, but only to follow their inner *instinctus*, since they are moved by a principle higher than human reason.⁷⁴

For Aquinas, this inner *instinctus* is the vehicle through which God communicates with a person and, thus, moves them to act. According to Servais Pinckaers's count, Aquinas uses the term '*instinctus*' 298 times in his corpus. Fifty-one times it

⁷¹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, I-II, q. 69, a. 3, resp. (*emphasis added*).

⁷² *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 61, a. 5, ad 2.

⁷³ For example, the Fruit of meekness curbs one's anger against one's neighbor. The Fruits of continence and chastity regard “internal desires” in general; he says, “chastity withdraws man from unlawful desires,” while continence withdraws one “from lawful desires.” *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 70, a. 3, resp.

⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, I-II, q. 68, a. 1, resp.

is used specifically in connection with the Holy Spirit; in general, it refers to something much like an immediate and action-prompting perception of something that even animals can have.⁷⁵ Studying Aquinas's uses of the term, Edward O'Connor remarks that an *instinctus* is something "by which cognitive beings [and only cognitive beings, capable of processing sense-data] are stirred to action;" further, the impetus provided by the *instinctus* occurs all at once and is not fragmented.⁷⁶

So understood, the *instinctus* involved with the Gifts at least *could* be an emotion, a felt evaluation of a state of affairs that prods one towards action. It is also worth noting that Aquinas describes the *instinctus* involved here as both "inner" relative to the one experiencing it and "Divine." Understanding the context in which this arises as involving a second-personal relationship, it is apt to say this *instinctus* would be the product of one's sharing (and, as such, reading) the mind of God, in a suitably qualified sense. In these cases, one is coming to share and understand relevant aspects of God's *knowledge* of a particular object or state of affairs in a direct and intuitive way. Specifically, one would be the sharing in God's *evaluation* of that object or state of affairs in the world, since it seems to spur one to act. Through this *instinctus*, one would come to know God's approval or disapproval of some thing (*not* just the proposition *that* God approves or disapproves of some thing) and, given this, be moved to act accordingly. Due to the sharing of minds that is characteristic of charity, as well as the complete, perfect, and non-discursive nature of God's knowledge, it is plausible to claim that knowledge of a specific evaluation by God shared in this context will turn out to be non-propositional. Given this, the *instinctus* turns out to be an emotion that specifically pertains to *knowledge* of goodness or badness – specifically, knowledge that God (a God with a will, yet lacking *passiones*, at that) has of some object or state of affairs.⁷⁷ Insofar as this *instinctus* can be cast as an emotion, it bears the marks of an *affectus*.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Pinckaers writes, "More than 50 instances entail man in his moral life, the motion of the will in the discernment of good and evil, and the relationship with law. About 15 refer to the demon's instinct, which is the cause of sin through temptation. There are more than 50 that imply animal instinct." Servais Pinckaers, *Morality and the Movement of the Holy Spirit*, trans. Craig Steven Titus, [in:] *The Pinckaers Reader: Renewing Thomistic Moral Theology*, ed. John Berkman and Craig Steven Titus, Catholic University of America Press, Washington, D.C. 2005, p. 385–395, qt. on 387.

⁷⁶ Edward C. O'Connor, Appendix 5: *Instinctus* and *Inspiratio*, [in:] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*, Vol. 24: The Gifts of the Spirit, ed. and trans. Edward O'Connor, Eyre and Spottiswoode, London 1973, p. 131–141, quotation on 137 (*emphasis added*).

⁷⁷ Cf. Thomas Ryan, *Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas*, "Theological Studies" (66) 2005, p. 49–68. This extended quotation is from page 60: "Because God is the object (a new horizon), there is a shift to a higher level of ... activity of the intellect, will, and the virtues so that, through the gifts, their mode of operation exceeds their natural boundaries, the limits of [human] reason. The graced person is enabled to operate in a suprarational mode, governed by

In this situation, the emotion's role is no longer auxiliary. On the contrary, this *affectus* is the paradigmatic way that shared knowledge of God's evaluation of some object or state of affairs is manifested in a human. As the irreplaceable vehicle of specific and *morally relevant knowledge* – of *Divine* knowledge, at that – emotions have a role at this level of moral development that outranks the auxiliary roles they tend to have at the lower level of moral development described above.⁷⁹

Conclusion

Were we to take the terms 'emotion' and '*passio*' as functionally equivalent, and were we to consider Aquinas's account of Aristotelian acquired virtue as the be-all, end-all of his thought on genuine moral development, we would conclude that emotions have a merely auxiliary role in the life of human flourishing. We would conclude that, while it would not be fitting for *passiones* to be eradicated completely in this life, their role in moral motivation and morally relevant knowledge is not indispensable as such. The deliverances of discursive reason would be prized above all, and not without good reason.

The case is not that simple, however, because an explanation that limits Aquinas's thought on emotions to just his account of *passiones* is very likely false. Further, an explanation does not take account of the broader, theological *telos* of Aquinas's picture of full human flourishing misses what Aquinas himself says is essential to a more accurate understanding of the end of the moral life. Pairing these insights together, I hope to have illustrated a few ways that Aquinas affords non-negligible roles for emotions in the moral life. In fact, I hope to have illustrated that emotions have an indispensable role to play in the life of ultimate flourishing, as it can be had in this life. It would be deeply flawed, then, to discount the deliverances of emotion and forsake its cultivation and development for the sake of attaining to the mode of reason. To do so would be to give an over-intellectualized interpretation of Aquinas's thought. For Aquinas, reason and emotion do not necessarily conflict; and ultimately, at reaches where the limitations of

divine instinct rather than by the calculative mode of reason. The person is moved to the third level of connaturality beyond that of the virtues.... It is described as an instinct, a "taste" for the things of God that draws one to perceive, choose, and respond in a manner that is "second nature," namely, as if it is natural and normal for us to know, feel, love, and act as God does."

⁷⁸ This is similar in some way to what may happen with an *affectus* that is an empathetic emotion, as noted above.

⁷⁹ In some sense, one could claim that these emotions are kinds of ethical intuitions. In recent literature, Sabine Roeser also describes a sort of ethical intuitionism in which emotions play a central role; her account differs vastly, however, from anything Aquinas might say. Cf., Sabine Roeser, *Moral Emotions and Intuitions*, Palgrave MacMillan, New York 2011.

unaided human reason are met, emotion may deliver truth for which reason alone reaches but cannot grasp.

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