A Dark Universal:

Towards a Thomistic Theory of Evil

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Abstract of Thesis

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There has been a recent revival of philosophical interest in the nature of evil. Some philosophers have argued that evil is not a useful moral concept and ought be retired. Other philosophers think that evil is a category with a legitimate place in moral philosophy, and cannot simply be eliminated without cost. These thinkers have come up with various understandings of what evil is and what talk of evil is good for. In this thesis, I elucidate and defend the theory of evil of the medieval philosopher, Thomas Aquinas. This project has two main parts. In the first, I discuss Aquinas' belief that evil is to be understood as the privation of goodness. I argue that a main weakness of recent defenses of the privation theory of evil stems from a neglect of the intricate metaphysical framework in which Aquinas embedded his moral philosophy. I argue that the theory is plausible when interpreted in this context. In the second part, I examine the Guise of the Good thesis, which holds that every action is done for the sake of some real or perceived good. I argue that this thesis, which is significant to Aquinas' understanding of evil, also escapes common objections and is plausible when understood in the context of Aquinas' metaphysics.

I, Robert Michael Snell, submit this work to Macquarie University in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Master of Research. I certify that I have not submitted this work to any other university or institution for a higher degree.

Introduction

Motivation for Thesis

There has been a growing philosophical interest in the concept of evil in recent years.[1] Many different aspects of the concept have been considered. Is evil a useful moral category, or ought it be retired?[2] Is the relationship between evil acts and mere wrongdoings primarily qualitative or quantitative?[3] Is evil first and foremost a description of persons' characters or of their actions?[4]

In this thesis, I explore the theory of evil expounded by the great medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas. Although Aquinas' (2003) book *On Evil* was a standard text on the subject for several centuries in the western tradition,[5] his thought (referred to throughout as 'Thomism') has received far less attention from contemporary philosophers of evil. Of course, explicitly Thomistic philosophers have engaged Aquinas on the subject, but they have typically failed to engage with non-Thomistic philosophers of evil.[6] This has resulted in there being a divide between mainstream philosophy of evil, which largely ignores Aquinas, and its Thomistic counterpart, which largely ignores the mainstream work on evil.

This is a cause for concern both for Thomists and non-Thomists. For Thomists, because it means that their philosophy will have little impact on broader

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[1] See, for example, Arendt, 2006; Calder, 2009; Card, 2002; Cole, 2006; Kekes, 2005; Morton, 2004; Neiman, 2003; and Russell, 2014.
[2] Among the many defenders of the category are McGinn, 1997 and Garrard, 2002. Among its detractors are Cole, 2006 and Held, 2001.
[3] For the former, see Morton, 2004, de Wijze, 2002 and Calder, 2013. For the latter see Russell, 2007.
[4] For the former, see Haybron, 2002a, p. 280; Singer, 2004, p. 190. For the latter, see Russell, 2014, pp. 31-4; Card, 2002, p. 21.
[5] Kent, 2007.
[6] Davies, 2011a; and Hanink, 2013, for instance, do not interact at all with non-Thomistic philosophers of evil.

philosophy. For non-Thomists, because it means that they are losing the benefits of inter-traditional dialogue. Other traditions are always useful, even if we find them fundamentally mistaken, for they ask different questions and utilize different philosophical methods. These can cause us to question our own presupposed questions and methods, which may have otherwise been accepted without reflection. Even if we decide at the end that our tradition is superior, we will at least now know *why* it is superior. Interaction with other traditions also reveals to us areas of thought that we have overly neglected, and thus reveals how we can expand our own tradition to be more thorough and comprehensive. Thomists need only consider the major contributions of prior Thomists who synthesized Thomism with other traditions to see this point. Particularly notable is the generation of Thomistic phenomenology by Edith Stein (2000) and Bernard Lonergan (1957), let alone the fact that Aquinas' own philosophical project was largely an attempt to synthesize the Christian theology of his own tradition with Aristotelian philosophy. [7]

My project is an attempt to demonstrate the value of such inter-traditional work in some small way with respect to the philosophy of evil. My central contention is that Aquinas' theory of evil is plausible and, when considered in the context of his broader philosophy, can overcome some of the core objections most often raised against it. While arguing this, the benefits of the inter-traditional approach should become clear. For instance, there is an important intuition discussed by mainstream philosophers of evil which is left unexamined in the Thomistic work on the topic, namely that there seems to be a qualitative distinction between evil, and mere wrongdoings.[8] I will suggest a possible way for Thomists to make sense of this intuition, and thus have a slightly more comprehensive account of evil. On the other side, there are some intuitions which are commonly had about evil by mainstream philosophers that, I will argue, can be illumined by

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[7] For a discussion of how Aquinas built upon Aristotle's philosophy, see Owens, 1993.

[8] This is slightly complicated by the fact that Thomists seem to refer to a broader category with the word 'evil' than mainstream philosophers of evil do, as will be discussed later on. The intuition that evils in the narrower sense are qualitatively distinct from lesser wrongdoings can be found in Morton, 2004 and Calder, 2013.

interpreting them through the lens of Thomistic philosophy. For instance, the intuition that evil is necessarily, or at least almost always, incomprehensible..[9]

In this work, I shall be focusing on two different aspects of the Thomistic understanding of evil, with an emphasis on how they fit within Aquinas' broader metaphysical framework. To begin with, in chapter one, I examine Aquinas' understanding of evil as the privation of goodness. I situate this understanding heavily within the context of Aquinas' metaphysics. I examine the work of two comparatively recent defenders of the privation theory of evil (Anglin and Goetz, 1982), and argue that one of the main weaknesses of their defense has been their neglect of this metaphysical context, which is key to understanding why several objections to the privation theory are mistaken.

Following Edward Feser (2014), I take the Aristotelian distinction between act and potency to be the organizing theme of Aquinas' metaphysics. The metaphysics is morally relevant, I will argue, due to the Thomistic doctrine known as the convertibility of the transcendentals, the idea that 'being' and 'goodness' are in fact just different ways of conceptualising the same reality.[10] This chapter also includes a discussion of the role of metaphysics within moral philosophy, and explains why the Thomistic tradition has placed such a high emphasis on metaphysics and comparatively little on ethical intuitions.

In the second chapter, I examine the Thomistic understanding of the Guise of the Good, the principle that all evils are done for the sake of some real or perceived good. I will argue that this idea is cogent, and that (since it is at base a metaphysical truism) it shows how the aforementioned metaphysics can have real life psychological implications. This further demonstrates the merits of the Thomistic approach towards philosophy as a whole, and to moral psychology in particular.

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[9] This is found in Morton, 2004, p. 14; Neiman, 2003, p. 303, and Singer, p. 196.
[10] For discussion of this principle see Stump & Kretzmann, 1991 and Oderberg, 2014a.

There are two primary objections to the Guise of the Good principle that are discussed here. Firstly, there is an intuition that a rational agent could act for a reason he does not actually believe to be a good one (as defended by Velleman, 1992). Secondly, there is a charge that the principle presents an over-intellectualised account of human action (a variant of this objection is raised by Saemi, 2014). I argue that we must distinguish between at least three different versions of the Guise of the Good principle, and that the objections arise as a result of conflating them together. Firstly, there is a metaphysical version which applies to all causation. Secondly, there is a teleological version which applies to the function of our desires and other practical states. Thirdly, there is a psychological version which applies to the objects of human desires.

Secular and Religious Conceptions of Evil

One might think that it is overly neglectful not to treat the differences between evil as a secular concept and as a supernatural one in a work such as this. Some theorists hold that evil is fundamentally a supernatural concept, inextricably tied up with ideas of demons and para-human monsters like vampires (e.g. Cole, 2006). Other philosophers (such as Eve Garrard, 2002) have responded that though the word 'evil' does sometimes point to a supernatural concept, there is also an independent moral concept of evil which is in the domain of secular philosophers. How Aquinas would fit into such discussions would be an interesting inquiry. It would be tempting to simply say that Aquinas' idea of evil is thoroughly philosophical and is grounded in the nature of being itself and not in dated beliefs about devils and the like. Indeed, contemporary Thomistic philosophers will devote virtually no attention to such topics. However this would be too quick. In his primary work on evil, *De Malo*, Aquinas spends quite a reasonable amount of space talking about supernatural matters usually ignored by modern philosophers (Aquinas, 2003). He asks questions such as whether the Devil induces humans to sin by interior persuasion (pp. 154-7), whether every sin is suggested by the Devil (pp. 157-8), whether the first movements of the

sense appetites of unbelievers are sins (pp. 300-302), whether demons know the future (pp. 482-90), and whether demons can move physical objects (pp. 500-503).

Although contemporary Thomists usually do not provide reasons for neglecting these questions (for instance, Feser, 2009 does not mention them at all), it is plausible to suppose that the neglect is in part explained by embarrassment. Demonology exemplifies the kind of reason why it can seem hard to take Aquinas seriously in the modern age. It is easy to think of the medievals as perhaps intelligent, but as too wedded to ancient superstitions to be seriously engaged with. Understandably, Thomists thus wish to downplay the aspects of Aquinas that sound primitive in order to make him more attractive to modern academics. Relatedly, though the existence of God has a long tradition of rigorous defense,[11] the existence of other supernatural entities does not.

Whatever the reason Thomists tend to ignore the supernaturalist aspects of Aquinas, it seems that they are in fact doing a disservice to Thomism by their neglect. If Thomists are successful in drawing mainstream philosophers back to Aquinas, these readers will be met with a rude shock when they first open the *Summa* and find that there is supernaturalism amongst Aquinas' broader philosophy.

So whether or not we feel the need to ask such supernaturalist questions ourselves, surely it would be valuable to at least understand how such issues fit into Aquinas broader philosophical views of evil. In addition, these kinds of issues may well provoke very interesting questions that might otherwise be ignored. For instance, consider how it could be possible for the devil to fall. The devil had sufficient knowledge to know that his fall was wrong and that it would bring about his own despair. He could not have been poisoned by his environment (since it was perfect). So why would the devil fall?[12] This case

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[11] See Anscombe & Geach, 1961, Garrigou-Lagrange, 1934 and Kretzmann, 1997.
[12] For an interesting medieval treatise on this topic, see Anselm of Canterbury, 1998.

seems to raise interesting questions about moral psychology for philosophers regardless of their religious beliefs. Indeed, the case of Satan is already a standard one in discussions about the Guise of the Good principle, to be covered in chapter 2.

This seems to be a good case, but nonetheless my own project will largely not delve into the difference between evil as a religious and as a secular concept. Although such an inquiry would no doubt be interesting, it is beyond the scope of this project, which is to defend two of the key tenets of the Thomistic theory of evil. Neither the metaphysics of evil as privation nor the Guise of the Good requires the existence or non-existence of demons. As such, lengthy discussion of such issues would only obfuscate the main point of my thesis, and is thus best left out.

Situation of Thesis within Relevant Literature

Every piece of philosophy is written from a certain perspective and within the context of a specific body of literature. This is important to be aware of at the outset of a project, and especially so when the project is intended to connect two different bodies of literature. Am I doing this project from the perspective of the non-Thomistic debates about evil, where Aquinas will be drawn in to contribute to the debates as they currently are? Or as a Thomist reaching out into the broader philosophical world, trying to make sense of the non-Thomistic literature by reference to established Thomistic categories of thought?

Neither approach quite fits the purpose of this project. I will argue that the Thomistic tradition can benefit the broader philosophy of evil not just by contributing to the same debates, but by displaying a different way of doing philosophy of evil. This does not read the Thomistic tradition simply where it

deals with the more controversial issues in mainstream philosophy of evil. For instance, the metaphysical grounding of evil is not a major area of discussion in the contemporary evil literature, but it is an area that the Thomistic tradition has devoted a large amount of work towards.

Instead, I will be focusing on the Thomistic concept of evil, but I will be testing it by seeing whether it can stand as a plausible theory of evil within the context of the mainstream philosophy of evil. So where the Thomistic theory contradicts findings from non-Thomistic literature, I will examine whether the reasoning behind the non-Thomistic position is strong enough to undermine the Thomistic position on that point.

In any case, it would be prudent to provide a brief survey of both bodies of literature on the philosophy of evil. That way we will have an idea of what the two traditions being drawn together actually are. Rather than only going into a couple of texts from either tradition, I will focus on representing the contours of both bodies of literature. This inevitably means that I will not be exploring the details of each text, but rather focusing on its place in the literature as a whole. The details will be fleshed out where appropriate in the body of the project.

Literature in Contemporary Philosophy of Evil

The modern revival of interest in the concept of evil began with Hanna Arendt's attempts to understand the horrors of Nazi Germany. What was done at concentration camps such as Auschwitz or Birkenau was so horrific and incomprehensible that ordinary moral categories did not seem adequate. In her book *The Origins of Totalitarianism* Arendt termed it radical evil.[13] What made them radically evil for Arendt was not that they were places of extreme hate, but

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[13] For instance, Arendt, 1951, p. 591-2. As Arendt notes in the passage, 'radical evil' is a concept drawn from Immanuel Kant. For a discussion of both Arendt's and Kant's thoughts on radical evil, see Bernstein, 2002.

rather extreme indifference. The murdered victims were not viewed as persons, or even as tools. They were viewed as being without any meaning or value whatsoever, as totally superfluous.[14] In Arendt's analysis, the reason the victims were stripped of their individuality, freedom, and lives was a kind of pride. The totalitarian state expressed its unbridled power by treating people as if they were useless objects.[15]

Later on, Arendt dealt with the place of individuals' actions in such crimes in her report on the trial of Adolf Eichmann (Arendt, 2006). Eichmann was an atrocious war criminal, but he did not seem to Arendt to be an atrocious human being. Eichmann, in stark contrast to the totalitarian state Arendt had already written about, was not driven by a desire to be as a god over humanity. He just did not seem to have thought very deeply about the gravity of his actions (Arendt, 2006, pp. 287-8). Eichmann could do evil acts, but he did not seem to have evil motivations for them. Arendt referred to this as the banality of evil.[16]

This distinction, between the evil of actions and that of one's character, has remained an important distinction in contemporary philosophy of evil. Often, philosophers will begin with either a theory of evil action or of evil character, and then will try to ground the other concept in the one they started with. For instance, Luke Russell (2014) begins with evil actions, and then defines an evil character as one that has a disposition towards those actions (when in the

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[14] 'What radical evil is I don't know, but it seems to me it somehow has to do with the following phenomenon: making human beings as human beings superfluous... And all this in turn arises from -- or, better, goes along with – the delusion of the omnipotence ... of an individual man.' (Arendt, quoted in Birmingham, 2003, p. 84). For a full-length treatment of the significance of this superfluousness, see van Hattem, 2005.

[15] Arendt, 1951, pp. 565-6

[16] The phrase is featured as prominently as the subtitle of the book. Some critics have suggested that Arendt's analysis of Eichmann was flawed and that he only pretended to be banal whilst on trial (Rosenbaum, 2009). There have also been debates as to how the banality of evil relates to radical evil for Arendt. See Bernstein (2002) for a complementary reading, and Villa (1999) for an incompatibilist reading.

appropriate circumstances).[17] By contrast, Daniel Haybron thinks that evil actions could be grounded in evil character if we take the acts to be manifestations of perverted moral sensibilities (Haybron, 2002a, p. 280).[18]

Another point of debate between philosophers of evil is the relationship between evil and wrongdoing. Is the difference merely a quantitative one,[19] such that evil actions are just very, very wrong, or are they qualitatively distinct? Much of the debate hinges upon what precisely we mean by 'qualitatively distinct'. Eve Garrard (2002) thinks that it means that evil acts have an extra quality which mere wrongdoings do not have. Hillel Steiner (2002) takes this view but specifies that the quality in question is pleasure at the wrongdoing in question. Todd Calder (2013) takes the distinction to mean that evil acts are qualitatively distinct from mere wrongdoings provided there is an essential property of evil acts that is not essential to mere wrongdoings. Stephen de Wijze (2002), by contrast, takes it to mean that evil acts are phenomenologically distinct from merely wrongful acts.

Since the variety of definitions provided simply show the different things philosophers mean when they themselves talk about there being a qualitative distinction, it does not make too much sense to argue in favour of one definition as opposed to another. More important would be to figure out which of the proposed qualitative distinctions have significant implications and intuitive support.

A related area of dispute is the relationship between evil action and motivation. It is common to hold that in order for an act to be evil, in needs to be motivated in a certain way. Steiner (2002), for instance, holds that the motivation ought be pleasure at the wrongful act. By contrast, Morton (2004, p. 57) thinks that evils are the result of a lack of the psychological barriers which usually inhibit us from

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[17] Other theorists beginning with accounts of evil action would be Calder, 2002, p. 56; Card, 2002, p. 21; and Morton, 2004 p. 66.
[18] Not as many theorists begin with evil personhood, but those that do include Singer, 2004; and Barry, 2013.
[19] As defended by Russell, 2007.

causing each other significant harm. Some theorists, however, do not give motivations an important role in rendering an action evil. Card (2002, p. 9) does not think it proper to give motivations too much weight, since that would place too much of an emphasis on the perpetrator, and not enough on the suffering of the victim. Russell (2014, pp. 176-95) does not think that specific kinds of motivations are necessary for an action to be evil, but allows for the possibility that evil feelings may contribute towards evil personhood if they are unrepudiated.

 The relationship between harm and evil action is an important one on a number of accounts. Some hold that harm is necessary for an action to be evil.[20] Several alleged counter-examples have been proposed in response to this idea. For instance, Eve Garrard (2002) raises the case of a sadistic voyeur who enjoys seeing suffering caused by another. Daniel Haybron (2002b) makes the case even harder by stipulating that the voyeur be a quadriplegic, and so is not responsible for failing to prevent the suffering. In response to these kinds of concerns, Russell argues that evil acts need not actually cause significant harm, but just need to be connected to harm in the right way.[21]

The privation theory of evil is not just defended by Thomists, and some other philosophers have defended and critiqued it in recent years.[22] As such, before turning to the Thomistic literature on evil, I will say something about how the privation theory of evil fares in mainstream philosophy of evil. A fairly recent paper on the privation theory concludes not merely that there are some problems with it that need to be dealt with, but rather that '[t]he privation theory of evil should be put to rest' (Calder, 2007, p. 379). Since the first chapter is devoted to the privation theory, I will not respond to the criticisms of it in depth here, but I will outline the criticisms briefly.

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[20] Card, 2002; Kekes, 2005.
[21] Where 'right way' is understood broadly enough that it includes actually causing the harm, being intended to cause the harm, it being foreseeable that it could cause the harm, or appreciation for the harm, Russell, 2014, pp. 62-3.
[22] Its most notable defenders are Anglin & Goetz (1982), and its most notable critic is Calder (2007).

Todd Calder has been the primary contemporary philosopher of evil to interact with the privation theory in recent years, and there have been few privation theorists who have returned the favour.[23] Calder (2007) has three primary objections against the privation theory. Firstly, there are paradigmatic cases of evils which do not seem to be privations. Secondly, there is no reason to conceive of evil as the privation of goodness as opposed to goodness being the privation of evil. Thirdly, there is no positive reason to accept the privation theory.

Calder's first objection is perhaps the easiest one to predict, and is the only one to which Calder could find recent responses. As such, I will say a little bit more about the first objection here, but will not develop the others yet.[24] Pain is an evil, and yet phenomenologically it does not seem to be merely a lack of pleasure or of anything else. Pain's reality, though bad, seems positive in nature. Similarly, a malicious attacker does not seem to be merely lacking kindness and good will. Her stabbing attacks are not simply failed attempts at loving hugs, but are positively mean spirited and bad. Of course, privation theorists have responded to this argument before. Calder bases much of his discussion on the responses of two of the more recent defenders of the privation theory, Bill Anglin and Stewart Goetz. Anglin and Goetz (1982) respond that the qualia of pain is not an evil, but that what grounds this qualia ontologically is a privation of function, which is an evil. Calder points out that there is no reason to accept that the qualia of pain is not an evil of itself. If given the choice between having your paralyzed hand numbed or in agony, you would choose the former, and for good reason. Similarly, Anglin and Goetz (1982) state that moral evils are simply a failure of duties, but Calder (2007) points out that the anger or malice which animates a violent attack does not seem to be a mere lack of anything, but to be incredibly active in and of itself. In chapter 1, I will argue that Calder's objections fail because they do not adequately take into account the metaphysical context of Aquinas' theory of evil.

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[23] As previously noted, its main defenders have been Anglin & Goetz (1982).
[24] All of these objections receive fuller attention in chapter 1.

Thomistic Literature on Evil

I have ordered the works included here under three categories: those examining evil in the context of the Problem of Evil for religious belief (POE); Thomistic defenses of the privation theory as a theory of evil; and examinations of the place of evil within Thomistic Metaphysics more broadly.

Problem of Evil

A large proportion of the secondary Thomistic literature on evil consists of attempts to understand the problem of evil. Aquinas' own response to the problem was very brief and undetailed, leaving later Thomists much room to figure out how a fuller treatment should be attempted.[25]

Amongst the most influential recent works on the problem of evil have been those of Jacques Maritain. Firstly in Marquette University's Aquinas Lecture (published 1942), and secondly in his book *God and the Permission of Evil* (English trans., 1966). Maritain's concern in both works was to answer the question of how (moral) evil could first arise in a good world, and why God would permit it to arise. It might seem unusual that moral evil could occur in a good world, since presumably God would only have created beings who would naturally do good, and would not place his creatures in circumstances where they were likely to fall. So the first instance of moral evil would be that of a good

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[25] The classic treatment of the problem of evil in Aquinas' works is in his discussion of the existence of God in the *Summa Theologiae* (Aquinas, 1920, p. 13)*.* This treatment is only two paragraphs long. Brian Davies comments that Aquinas 'never offers a stand-alone discussion of what contemporary philosophers have come to call the problem of evil. He has no book or essay on it.'(Davies, 2011a, p. 6). It should be noted, however, that Aquinas did write a full-length commentary on the book of Job, which is about understanding evil in light of the providence of God (Aquinas, 1989). However this book has often been overlooked in recent Thomistic works on the POE (Davies, 2011a, for example).

creature responding to a good world. But this is paradoxical, since presumably a good person in good circumstances would not commit evil. Maritain's response is based on a Thomistic doctrine known as The Guise of the Good, to be developed in chapter two. The idea is that we do evil things because in the moment they seem good, and we do them for the sake of this perceived goodness. So one can never be motivated towards some action by evil as such, but rather by an incomplete appreciation of goodness. Maritain argues that even the most virtuous person in the best possible circumstances could choose a lower good over a higher one, simply by focusing too intently on the lower good, for the sake of its goodness.

Maritain's work has received a fair amount of attention, such as in James Hanink's edited volume *Aquinas & Maritain on Evil* (2013). It contains both appreciation and critique of Maritain on a number of points. For instance, John F. Morris examines the interaction between Maritain's model of how morally wrong decisions are made and the classical Doctrine of Double Effect.[26] He argues that Maritain's model provides a good framework within which the Doctrine can be understood. Andrew Jaspers applies Maritain's model to the case of lying, and argues that it grounds the controversial Thomistic view that lying is always wrong.[27] An example of a more critical response would be the chapter by John X. Knasas.[28] Knasas argues that Maritain is inconsistent in his treatment of the incommensurable value of human persons. Maritain was critical of cold theodicies which defended God's permission of evil as simply a part of the greater good of the universe (e.g. Leibniz). Rather, Maritain holds, persons cannot be treated as merely parts of the whole universe but as whole ends in themselves. Knasas argues that this is inconsistent with Maritain's view that it was in no way necessary that human persons be created, but rather that their creation is merely fitting. For Knasas, Maritain is right to complain of cold theodicies, but that does not entail that persons be viewed as whole ends in the way that Maritain presumes. Rather, what's important is the ground of human

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[26] 'Why Must We Not Do Evil?: Avoiding vs. Allowing the Principle of Double Effect', in Hanink, 2013, pp. 249-71.
[27] 'The Evil of Lying: A Case in Thomistic Realism', in Hanink, 2013, pp. 283-92.
[28] 'Maritain and the Cry of Rachel', in Hanink, 2013, pp. 91-102.

dignity, which is found in a person's relationship to Being itself (that is to say, God). Knasas develops his view further in an influential later book, *Aquinas and the Cry of Rachel* (2013b), where he brings Aquinas and Maritain into discussion with literary figures, including Albert Camus and Fyodor Dostoevsky.

Another important attempt to treat the POE without descending into cold theodicies is Eleonore Stump's (2010) book *Wandering in Darkness.* Stump's book is a massive study which brings together Aquinas' theory of evil with his writings on love, and argues that evil can only be understood within the context of the narrative of one's life. Stump (like Maritain and Knasas) is not interested in simply demonstrating that evil does not disprove the existence of God. Stump rather tries to provide a philosophy of suffering robust and deep enough to help a reader actually face suffering, and to grow in wisdom from her experience of it. The most important thing to note about it here is its practical application of a Thomistic theory of evil, as it demonstrates the relevance of such a theory to a variety of other areas in moral psychology, philosophy of religion, and ethics.

The final work on the POE to be mentioned here is Brian Davies' (2011) book *Thomas Aquinas on God and Evil*. Davies provides an unusual theodicy which purports to show that God, even if he does allow evil for reasons that we would deem wrong, cannot be held to be morally at fault. It is especially relevant for the purpose of this project because of how Davies grounds his theodicy in the metaphysical underpinnings of Thomistic moral theory. Davies observes that, for Aquinas, ethical obligations are dependent upon one's nature. An act is good if it perfects you as the sort of thing that you are.[29] So, a lion may be perfected as a lion by eating a human being, whereas humans would not be perfected as human beings for engaging in the same activity. God, however, has no nature to be perfected.[30] He is the very principle of existence and of perfection itself, and as a result cannot be further perfected, or fall away from his perfection.[31] Therefore God cannot (Davies argues) have any moral obligations whatsoever. All things

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[29] Davies, 2011a, pp. 29-37.
[30] Davies, 2011a, pp. 39-45.
[31] Davies, 2011a, pp. 51-62.

are permissible for God, since he has no limits on his being, and these limitations ground the nature of one's moral obligations.[32] Davies' argument is interesting, but seems to suffer from the objections of the likes of Stump (above) against cold theodicies. As Davies himself concedes, if his argument is successful, it is successful only in defending the abstract God of the philosophers, and not the God defended in mainstream religious traditions. I do not argue either in favour of or against Davies' position, but his discussion of the metaphysical grounding of morality overlaps significantly with the content on the metaphysics of evil in chapter 1.

Defenses of the Thomistic Theory of Evil

The works in this category are simply elucidations and defenses of different aspects of the Thomistic theory of evil. Firstly, there are treatments of the Guise of the Good principle, and secondly, there are defenses of a privatory understanding of evil.

The aforementioned Guise of the Good is a principle which has received particular attention recently, as for instance by David Oderberg (2015), who argues that the Guise of the Good is entailed by a privatory theory of evil, such that if one accepts the basic thrust of Aquinas' view of evil then he must also accept the Guise principle. He also argues that accepting the privation theory of evil would solve several potential problems with the Guise principle. One of these problems is that it certainly seems as though we can direct ourselves toward something bad (otherwise morally vicious activity would be inexplicable). Oderberg (2015) argues that if one accepts the privation theory then when someone is motivationally directed towards something bad, they are also directed towards the good that the bad is a privation of. As such, one can never be solely directed towards the bad, which makes the Guise seem quite likely. Another way of connecting evil with the Guise principle is discussed by

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[32] Davies, 2011a, pp. 65-78.

Edward Feser (2015). Feser discusses the principle in light of the scholastic idea that goodness and being are convertible with each other, and that in light of this the Guise of the Good is just good metaphysics. Of course the idea that there is convertibility between being and goodness is not a common one amongst contemporary philosophers,[33] so Feser spends most of his treatment defending it. This principle will also be a key part of the Thomistic theory of evil as I elucidate it in chapter 1.

Another piece worth mentioning is Oderberg's (2014b) paper, *The Metaphysics of Privation*. Since Thomists hold that evil is a privation, a lack of a good that ought to be present, it is important for the notion of privations to be a coherent one. Oderberg discusses what the truthmakers of propositions about privations could be. It is a good example of the interaction between neo-scholastic philosophy and the analytic tradition. Of course, one could include a number of other essays on different aspects of the Thomistic understanding of evil, but the works included here should provide a representative sample.[34]

One final work in this category to be noted is Herbert McCabe's (2010) book *God and Evil in the Theology of Thomas Aquinas*. McCabe's book is interesting for its treatment of issues such as what it means for evil to be caused, and for his elucidation of the distinction (from Aquinas, originally) between evil suffered and evil done. Evil suffered refers to something falling short of its nature in some way, and is not of itself a moral issue. (Evil suffered is not restricted to humans, or even to living beings. Even a flame 'suffers' in this attenuated sense when it is extinguished). Evil done, on the other hand, has to do with the agential causing of the evil which is suffered. This is important because some theorists, such as Davies (2011), rely upon this distinction without adequately discussing or defending it.

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[33] See Oderberg, 2014a, for a fuller discussion of this principle.
[34] For others, see Reichberg, 2002; MaGrath, 1953; DeLetter, 1954; Dedek, 1979 and Doolan, 1999.

Evil in Thomistic Metaphysics

Although some work in this category has already been mentioned in previous sections it is worth noting two significant works which treat evil as simply a part of the broader scholastic metaphysical project.

Firstly, Scott MacDonald (1991) has an impressive edited collection of essays on the nature of goodness in scholastic philosophy. Significant attention is given to the convertibility of goodness and being, as well as to whether one can speak of whole possible worlds being good or evil (the respective authors answer no). A particularly relevant essay is that of Jorge Gracia,[35] on the problem of allegedly positive evils. Since the Thomist is committed to the view that all evil is by definition a privation of some good, it would be extremely problematic if some evil were found which did not seem to be privatory. Gracia considers possible counterexamples, such as pain, which seem to be inherently negative. Gracia argues that such phenomena are not in themselves bad, but gain their badness from some privatory evil with which they are associated. So in the case of pain, it is not the pain itself that is bad, but rather what the pain signifies. If one experiences pain without such a cause, say due to a neural disorder, then the disorder is where the badness lies, as opposed to the pain as such. This argument could be supplemented helpfully by the relevant sections of Stump's aforementioned work on suffering, where she provides alleged examples of good (and even possibly pleasant) pains (Stump, 2010, pp. 5-6). This line of inquiry is a useful one in defending the privation theory against Calder's (2007) first objection, which I respond to in chapter 1.

The other work to be mentioned is Mary DeCoursey's (1948) book *The Theory of Evil in the Metaphysics of St. Thomas Aquinas and its Contemporary Significance*. DeCoursey initially frames her work within the context of the evils of the two world wars, but the work is one of fairly technical metaphysics throughout. It is a systematic summary of Aquinas' theory of evil, and has many interesting aspects;

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[35] 'Evil and the Transcendentality of Goodness: Suarez's Solution to the Problem of Positive Evils', in McDonald, 1991, pp. 151-177.

in particular her analyses of why the infliction of evil suffered can be justified in the context of punishment, as well as her examination of what it means to treat evil as a cause, since it does not (strictly speaking) exist. DeCoursey's book is particularly relevant for the present project since it is (to my knowledge) the only full-length treatment of the metaphysics undergirding Aquinas' theory of evil written since the Second World War.

Outline of Thesis

As previously stated, the goal of this project is to defend Aquinas' theory of evil in the context both of Thomistic philosophy and of contemporary philosophy of evil. I am defending two key tenets of the Thomistic theory with a chapter each: the first chapter is on the understanding of evil as a privation of goodness, and the second is on the Guise of the Good.

The first chapter has three main sections. Firstly, I will lay out the basic metaphysics which serves as the background to the Thomistic theory of evil. This discussion treats the scholastic distinction between actuality and potentiality, and then proceeds to the distinction between form and matter. The second section is a discussion of the idea that links the metaphysics to moral philosophy, the convertibility of being and goodness. This is done by examining how goodness is taken by Thomists to refer to how well something instantiates its form, which is also the principle by which things have their being. The third section is a discussion of the scope of evil. It treats concerns about how the Thomistic theory of evil can meaningfully interact with other theories of evil, since the Thomistic category of evil is so much broader than that of contemporary theories of evil.

In the second chapter I elucidate and defend three different versions of the Guise of the Good. The first version is a basic metaphysical principle that applies to all causation and simply states that every change is directed towards the good of the

effect. The second version states that the practical states which motivate action are teleologically directed towards the good of the organism as a whole. The third version of the Guise of the Good states that every human action is motivated by some good acting as the material object of one's practical states.

In this chapter I also discuss Aquinas' view as to what the human good as a whole looks like. This is necessary because it is this good that is aimed at by the second version of the Guise of the Good, and also because if evil is a privation of human nature it is fitting that we should know what the good is that we approach as we avoid evil. This section includes a discussion of beatitude and of moral virtue, since these are the core aspects of the human good for Aquinas.

Following this I address two objections made against the Guise of the Good, and argue that the three-tiered formulation of the Guise principle I propose can satisfactorily answer the charges. Finally, I speculate as to how a Thomist could develop a theory of evil in the narrow sense, and thus enter into dialogue more easily with non-Thomistic philosophical frameworks about evil.

At the end I conclude that the Thomistic theory of evil has several theoretical virtues as a theory of evil, such as its integration into broader metaphysical and moral psychological frameworks. I also conclude that both the tenets of the Thomistic theory that I discuss here are plausible, and escape standard objections leveled at them.

Chapter 1: Metaphysics and Evil as Privation

The Thomistic theory of evil can be concisely summed up in one phrase: evil is the privation of goodness. Of course, understanding precisely what this means and what it entails takes somewhat longer. In this chapter I will focus primarily on the metaphysics which undergirds this understanding of evil. The key metaphysical concepts to be discussed are the distinction between act and potency, the distinction between form and matter, and the convertibility between being and goodness. I am placing so much emphasis on this metaphysical context because, as I will argue, the metaphysics is required in order to properly understand the Thomistic theory. It is only within this metaphysical context that we can understand why a number of objections to the Thomistic theory are unsuccessful. Before turning to the metaphysics, however, it is necessary to briefly discuss the different concepts we refer to with the word 'evil' and how the Thomist might approach each of them.

Different Concepts of Evil

According to Paul Formosa (2013, pp. 236-7) the word 'evil' can plausibly be used to refer to three different concepts. Firstly, it could be used to refer to anything that is bad. For instance, we might call a tsunami an evil event due to its bad consequences for people. Secondly, the word can be used to describe any act that is morally wrong, such as gambling. Thirdly, the word 'evil' is often reserved for those actions or character traits whose moral depravity goes beyond being merely wrong. In this category are included the actions of sadistic serial killers and the atrocities of Nazi concentration camps. Contemporary philosophers of evil are interested in this final concept.[36] The Thomistic theory of evil is an

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[36] E.g. Card, 2002, p. 5; Formosa, 2013, pp. 235-6; Russell, 2014, p. 19, and de Wijze, 2002, p. 213.

account of the first concept of evil.[37] Anything can count as an evil for the Thomist, as long as it is a privation of some good.

This might seem to be a problem. If the Thomistic theory of evil is an account of an entirely different concept to that of contemporary philosophers of evil, it is difficult to see why the Thomistic theory should be treated in the context of them. Surely it is just a different kind of theory that will not interact with the contemporary theories of evil in the narrower sense.

Although the Thomistic theory of evil is broader than contemporary philosophies of evil, I do not think that this provides insurmountable problems. The reason for this is that the Thomistic theory does not have to be *merely* an account of evil in the broadest sense, but has the conceptual resources to provide accounts of evil in narrower senses too. Within the account of evil as anything that is bad, Aquinas deals with specifically moral wrongdoing and how moral vices are instances of privations.[38] Thus Aquinas also has a theory of evil in the second sense. In chapter 2, I will argue that it is possible to construct a Thomistic theory of evil in the third, narrowest sense. Therefore, although the Thomistic theory of evil is a broader one than those of contemporary philosophers of evil, it can have meaningful interaction with these theories. As a result of this, it makes sense to discuss the Thomistic theory within the context of modern philosophy of evil. Indeed, since evil in the narrowest sense must be a subset of the two broader senses of evil,[39] all theories of evil in the narrow sense, if they are to be comprehensive, must have something to say about how the different senses of evil relate to each other.

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[37] For instance, Aquinas, 1920, p. 250; Davies, 2011, p. 36, and Oderberg, 2014b.
[38] Aquinas, 2003, pp. 317-434.
[39] This assumes that all evils are wrong and that all wrongs are bad. These are relatively uncontroversial, but may face some objection (see Calder, 2013).

Two Key Distinctions

Here we will explore two core distinctions which undergird the entire project of Thomistic metaphysics, the Aristotelian distinctions between act and potency, and between form and matter. These distinctions arose when Aristotle was dealing with the works of Parmenides and of Heraclitus.

Parmenides thought that change is impossible (Frederick Copleston, 2003, p. 48). It is an old metaphysical principle that nothing can arise when there is nothing to give rise to it. However it seemed to Parmenides that change would require something to come from nothing. After all, the new state of affairs that the change brought about could not have been contained in what was already there, or the new state of affairs would already have obtained.

However it seems fairly obvious that change is not impossible, and does in fact occur frequently. Aristotle thought that the failure of Parmenides was in his assumption that existence is binary, that things either exist or do not exist (Copleston, 2003, p. 311). Aristotle postulated a state in between, that of potency, or potentiality (see book delta of *The Metaphysics* (Aristotle, 2007)). Parmenides was wrong about change because the new state of affairs could exist in a sense even before it was brought about by a change. It would not have to have *actually* existed, but could have *potentially* existed. For an example, if I have a match and a match box in an appropriate environment (say, a classroom), but have yet to strike the match, the flame does not yet actually exist. However it would be true to say that the flame potentially exists in the room in a way that a flying monkey (for instance) does not. A flying monkey may be metaphysically possible, but it does not potentially exist within the room (assuming that the classroom was a typical one). If I light the match, then the potential flame has become an actual flame, or to put it another way, it has been actualized. Of course, if the room were a vacuum then there would not potentially be a flame within it. From this we can see that not only are potencies (i.e. potentials) in between being and non-being, but that potencies in a sense reside within the

causal systems which can actualize them (for a full length defence of this thesis, see Pruss, 2011).

Several important principles flow from this, such as that potency is predicated upon actuality (or 'act', as it is technically called). Potencies are real, and their reality is grounded in things which actually exist. In addition, since change just is the actualization of some potential, changes can only be brought about by what actually exists. Finally, this distinction serves to ground metaphysical possibility. The difference between what is metaphysically possible and what is metaphysically impossible is simply that the former could in principle be actualized whereas the latter could not be (Feser, 2014, pp. 141-2). Now we come to the second core distinction, that between form and matter, which arose in response to Heraclitus.

Heraclitus is said to have thought that there is only constant change, with nothing remaining stable underneath (Copleston, 2003, p. 39).[40] We all observe change in everyday life, though some things appear to be unchanging and stable. However, even things that seem very constant and permanent, such as rivers or human bodies, are in fact always changing. No bit of the river stays still and no cell in the human body is not replaced.

Aristotle thought that Heraclitus' error was the assumption that things could only have lasting identities if their physical matter remained the same (Feser, 2014, pp. 162-3). Aristotle argued that there was a distinction between a thing's matter and its form. This is easily seen in Heraclitus' own example of a river.[41] Although the matter of the river is in constant flux, there is obviously a set body of water which is undergoing the change. Similarly, a human body may change over time but that need not entail that humans do not in fact exist. What makes something the thing that it is is not the matter of which it is made but the general form which the matter is an instance of. Of course, since there can be more than

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[40] It has been alleged that this is not in fact representative of Heraclitus' actual beliefs, but is merely his philosophy as interpreted by Plato and then by Aristotle (e.g. Kahn, 1979). See Tarán, 1990 for a defense of Plato and Aristotle's reading.
[41] Fragment T4, in Waterfield, 2000, p. 41.

one human being, the form of humanity can be instantiated in many different bodies of matter at once.[42]

This raises the question of how the distinctive identity of individuals is grounded. After all, one can conceive of two identical twins that are exactly the same with respect to their form, but they are nonetheless distinct human beings. Even if they have exactly the same physical properties (hair colour, placement of freckles, etc) they would be different people. Since it cannot be their form, what makes them distinct human beings just is the particular matter of which they are composed. Therefore matter is understood to be the principle of individuation[43]. By contrast one could roughly define a form as that aspect of a thing by virtue of which it is what it is. For example, if a glass ball is spherical then we could say that it has the form of sphericity. This form would be grounded in the shape of the ball. It also has the form of being glass, which it has by virtue of its chemical composition.

This brings us to an important point, namely that something can have multiple forms at once. Since I am an animal I have the form of animality, but I am also a particular kind of animal, namely a human. Therefore in addition to having the general form of animality, I also instantiate the more specific form of humanity. There are many other specific forms which I instantiate as well, such as those of being brown-haired and having hazel eyes. Obviously I could cease to be an instance of some of these forms without ceasing to be me, such as the latter two. However were some change to occur such that I would cease to be a human, I would cease to exist, though my matter may still exist[44]. This shows that not all forms are essential for the perseverance of a thing's identity, though some are.

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[42] By 'form of humanity', I simply mean whatever principle it is by virtue of which a human is a human.

[43] This is the classical interpretation of Aristotle, which Aquinas and later Thomists adopt (e.g. Aquinas, 1998, p. 37; Feser, 2014, p. 198-9), though some have since disputed it (e.g. Charlton, 1972; Regis, 1976).

[44] It might be objected that if personal identity is grounded in psychological continuity then I might not cease to exist provided my psychology survived in some way. To avoid this debate we could simply reword the point by saying that the substance that I am would cease to exist.

The reason why I could lose having brown hair and still be the same thing that I was before is that my having brown hair is not essential to me being the thing that I am. The thing that I am is a human. Having brown hair is simply one way that a human can instantiate a very small aspect of being human. (Since having hair is of only peripheral importance to being human). By contrast, my humanity seems to be essential for being the thing that I am. This brings us to the distinction between substantial forms and accidental forms. Substantial forms are the most basic forms, dealing with the sort of thing one is in its most general sense. Accidental forms are subordinate to substantial forms, and are not essential for a thing's continued existence. To give an example, the substance of a red apple is an apple. It is not to be red. We can see this because without the apple there would be nothing left to be red. To put it another way, it is the substance of a thing that unites all its other forms together. The redness, roundness, and hardness of the apple are only united together by being properties of the apple itself. The form of appleness is thus the substantial form, whereas the other properties mentioned are merely accidental.[45]

Convertibility of Being and Goodness

Although the previous section may have seemed far removed from morality, the two distinctions that were discussed form the conceptual bedrock of Thomistic ethics. The two distinctions become morally relevant with regard to Thomistic doctrine known as the convertibility of being and goodness (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 23-25). Although counter-intuitive at first, Aquinas argues that being and goodness ultimately refer to the same aspect of things, though he holds that they are nonetheless conceptually distinct from each other. At first glance, this idea seems ridiculous. Surely Aquinas cannot mean that every being is good. We would not ordinarily think that Hitler was good, but he was surely a being.

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[45] A lot more could be said here. For discussions on the substantial-accidental distinction, see Feser, 2014, 164-71; Oderberg, 2007, pp. 65-71, and Stump, 2006.

In order to understand the principle, we must first understand what is meant by 'goodness' in this context. David Oderberg uses the example of a drawn triangle (2014a, p. 347). If we saw a triangle which had been drawn onto a log, we might well observe 'that's a good triangle'. We do not mean to say that the triangle has positive consequences (though it might), but rather what we mean is that it is a good example of a triangle, or to put it into more Thomistic language, that it instantiates the form of triangularity well. We mean that it is an enclosed two dimensional shape with three straight sides. Obviously it does not perfectly instantiate what it means to be a triangle, since any physical shape will have imperfections, but that does not mean that it is not a triangle at all. It may not be a perfect triangle, but it is still a triangle, and it might be a comparatively good one at that. By contrast, a triangle with jagged edges and curved corners would be a far worse triangle. This is the sense of goodness which we are talking about.

Goodness, so understood, simply has to do with how well something instantiates its form. That is to say, an x is a good x insofar as it instantiates its x-ness. Since things have multiple forms, this means that they can be good in one respect and bad in another. Someone can be a good speaker of English and a horrible architect. An orange can be a good fruit and a bad sphere with no contradiction.

This kind of goodness is held to be convertible with being due to the way that the concepts of actuality and form relate to each other. As previously noted, something's matter can undergo changes which compromise the identity of the thing itself. Say my body is severely damaged such that I die. Though the matter which composed me still exists, the matter no longer composes me. Although the matter is still there, my being has been severely compromised, to say the least. Similarly, if a tree is incinerated, the tree is gone, though its matter may still exist in ashes and smoke. These are drastic examples of the convertibility between being and goodness. As something instantiates its form less and less well, so it can be said to decrease in its very being, even if none of its matter has been annihilated.

Obviously this sense of goodness is not the moral sense, but Thomists view the moral sense of goodness to be a species of this broader understanding of goodness. Goodness becomes a moral issue when free will comes into the picture. Human beings are free, which (for a Thomist) is to say that they are capable of guiding their action in accordance with reason (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 417-21). Non-human animals are held to be guided by natural inclinations alone. These natural inclinations, such as desire for food and sex, are what make animals seek their own good. (Where their good is just for them to instantiate their form well). Being well fed is good for an animal, so the animal is naturally inclined towards its fulfillment. However cats do not guide their actions out of a knowledge of what it means to be a cat. This is where humans are different from other animals. Humans are not only guided by these kinds of natural inclinations and appetites, but also by an appetite directed towards truth itself (Aquinas, 1920, p. 703). This allows humans to act in accordance with reasoned deliberation about what it is to be a good human. As a result of this, humans become responsible for their own good in a way that other animals are not. If a cat acts in a way that damages its nature, we do not blame the cat as such, but we would perhaps regret the inclinations which the cat acted from. By contrast, if a properly functioning human acts unwisely then we might blame him for it. After all, as a rational animal he ought to have known better.

Here a possible objection could be raised. One might object to the assertion that humans are as such more rational than other animals, and that these animals act from instinct alone. There is a wealth of data which demonstrates the intellectual capacities of animals. For instance, Joseph Call (2006) records how apes appear to be able to reason by exclusion. That is to say, that they can reason that if either P or Q is true, and Q is not true, then P must be true. In light of experimental evidence of this, it seems extremely naïve to suggest that animals are simply driven by natural inclinations such as hunger.

In response to the first point, it is worth noting that Thomists do not hold that other animals lack the capacity for intellectual processes. Indeed, Aquinas is explicit on this point (Aquinas, 1920, p.351-2). The rational activity required for

free will is not simply the ability to be logical or clever, but the ability to guide one's actions in accordance with knowledge of the good (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 417-21). In addition, Aquinas does not have a primarily biological definition of 'human'. When he uses the term he is not simply referring to homo sapiens. Rather, following Aristotle, he understands 'human' to just mean a rational animal (for instance, Aquinas, 1920, p.365). As a result of this, should evidence arise that other animals do in fact have the ability to guide their actions out of knowledge of the good, then Thomists are free to accept this and ascribe moral responsibility to them. They would be 'humans' in the technical sense being used, if not in the common biological sense. (For an example of this kind of Thomistic argument, see Oderberg, 2014c). It is important to note that knowledge of the form of humanity is not restricted to knowledge of the physical conditions for human flourishing, but also to the virtues. To be a good human is not just to be adept at finding food and sex, but to be honest, loving, generous, etc. How the virtues contribute to human flourishing is treated at greater length in chapter 2.

This is the context required to properly understand what it means for moral evil to be the privation of goodness. It does not just mean that to be evil is to fall short of right action, though that is true. If evil is a privation of goodness then moral evil is fundamentally irrational. It is a refusal to act in accordance with reason. But it is also irrational in a far deeper way. To act evilly is to corrupt one's very identity, and to become less human. Evil is thus inherently self destructive. This follows straight from the prior metaphysics. If, through my actions, I become increasingly evil, I instantiate the form of humanity less and less well. Since I have being only insofar as I instantiate this form (since my humanity is essential to who I am), my fall into evil is also a degradation of my own being. From this it is clear that, all other things being equal, people who are morally evil are in a sense less real as human beings than they would have been had they been morally exemplary. This entails that nothing can be purely evil, since that would entail that it had no being at all, and thus would not exist.

This may seem quite counterintuitive. What does it mean to say that people who are evil are 'less real' as a result of being evil? Hitler was evil, and yet was tragically real. In order to alleviate misunderstandings we must recall that, on the Thomistic view, how much being something has does not depend on how much matter it has (to put it crudely). When a tree is burned down, all the physical stuff is still there, but it does not compose a tree anymore. The ash and branches that used to be parts of the tree no longer contribute towards the tree as a whole. So evil people need not physically fade away in some ghost like manner in order to be less real. Rather, they are less real because humanity is not well instantiated in them, and they only exist as humans insofar as they instantiate humanity. Of course, they may still be quite real as an animal, provided they sustain their animal nature by appropriate nourishment and the like, but their very humanity is corrupted.[46]

Evil and Privation

Privation is not the same as mere absence. Humans may lack tails, but that is not a privation, since humans ought not have tails (to revert back to the common biological usage of 'human'). Rather, a privation is a lack of something that ought to have been present (Oderberg, 2014b). The 'ought' here has to do with the nature of the thing that has the lack. Classic examples of privations are physical ailments such as blindness, the amputation of limbs, and cavities in a tooth. A cavity is not something that positively exists, but is a lack of what ought to be there were the tooth to be properly functioning.

This yields several interesting questions. For instance, how do privations stand in causal relations? We have already seen that, for the Thomist, only what

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[46] I will not engage in debates about the nature of personal identity here, save to say that this would entail that if personal identity requires the persistence of one's humanity, then acting evilly would corrupt the actor's personal identity as well. For a Thomistic account of personal identity, see Stump, 1996.

actually exists can cause anything. But it seems as though privations can cause things in some sense. The cause for my toothache is the cavity in my tooth. Jack missed the ball because he was blind. To shift to moral privation, we might be tempted to say that the reason why a sadistic murderer murdered his victims was because he was evil. As Luke Russell (2009) has argued, even if such explanations are incomplete or could be rephrased so as to avoid the word 'evil', we can still be saying something meaningful and useful when we explain actions by appeal to an evil character. We can only explain why the perpetrator did the evil act and not someone else by appeal to something about the perpetrator that sets him apart. His evilness, whatever that is, must feature in the causal history of the evil act. This seems to be impossible if evil is merely a privation, and thus lacks causal powers.

There is another objection to privations that runs along similar lines, namely that propositions about privations lack truthmakers (this objection is usefully discussed in Oderberg, 2014b). The proposition that the cat is on the mat is made true by the cat actually being on the mat. The proposition's truth is grounded in the way things actually are. By contrast, a proposition about a privation could not be made true by the way things are, since it is not about the way things are, but the way that they are not. When I ascribe evil to someone, I am not simply listing one of his properties. If I were, then on Thomistic metaphysics there would be a form of evil. A sort of dark universal, instantiated in particular people or actions.

I suggest that both objections can be answered in the same way. Jacques Maritain discusses the causality of evil in his book *God and the Permission of Evil* (1966). Maritain argues that evil cannot stand in causal relations as such, but that it is nonetheless useful to talk about evil as if it did. Ultimately these explanations are actually grounded in positive realities, but these realities are so complicated that we simplify them by treating evil as if it were a causal factor.

As an analogy, consider a headache caused by dehydration. Dehydration is a privation, and we might naturally speak of it as having effects. When I am

dehydrated there is less water in my blood, which means that my blood will not flow as well, which results in less oxygen being delivered to the brain, which results in pain. The lack of water itself does not cause anything, but it means that several things are not caused. It means that my blood will not be as voluminous, since the presence of more water is what causes the blood to have the volume that it does. This means that it will not flow as well to the brain, since the higher volume of the blood is one of the causes for the blood being able to flow well to the brain. This in turn means that less oxygen will be delivered to the brain, since the blood flowing well to the brain is a cause for sufficient oxygen being delivered to the brain. All of the causal work is being done by positive realities, but the privation means that not all of the normal causal work could be done. In this way privations do not cause anything per se, but the incomplete causal system they are a privation of will itself be privative. As a result the causal system will itself produce privative effects. Although there is no privative causation as such, there may be a vacuum of causation which can be traced in the same way that causation can be. Since we lack an appropriate language for describing this causative vacuum, we naturally use the ordinary language of causation instead. This seems to be a plausible way to understand the apparent causation of privations.

It must be noted, though, that in the context of Thomistic metaphysics a privation need not always be a lack of matter. An evil is a privation of something's nature, which is to say a falling away from the thing's form. Something can be privated by having an absence of matter (as in a cavity) or by having an overabundance of matter (such as a tumour). What matters is how well the thing instantiates its form.

The same fundamental point can be raised to answer the question about the truthmakers for privationary propositions. Strictly speaking privations do not exist, and propositions concerning them can be interpreted to be simplified accounts of what is really the case. This might seem to be dangerous for a theory of evil, since it seems to make evil just a simplified way of talking about things. However for the Thomist this is in a sense true. Although we might talk about

someone being evil, what we are saying is that there is a moral privation in the way he acted or willed. This privatory talk is really a way of discussing what positively accounts for the problematic behavior we might observe. Thomists believe that, fundamentally, all evil is done for the sake of some good.[47] This principle, known as the Guise of the Good, will be the subject of chapter 2. As such, I will not discuss it here save to say that Thomists believe that all evil action and inclinations can be grounded in solely positive realities. Since the whole picture of these positive realities does not correspond to the form of humanity, however, we can still justly speak of a person as being evil, since they are objectively at variance with their form. Thus the Thomist can still have an objective theory of evil even if talk about evil is a simplified way of talking about the nature of positive realities.

In a somewhat similar vein, Todd Calder (2007) objects to the essentially negative way that privation theorists view evil. He argues that we ought not interpret evil as privatory, since a number of paradigmatic cases of evils cannot be explained this way. For instance, he gives the example of pain. Pain is an evil (in the broad sense), and yet phenomenologically it does not seem to be merely a lack of pleasure or anything else. Its reality, though bad, seems positive. Similarly, a malicious attacker does not seem to be merely lacking kindness and good will. Her stabbing attacks are not simply failed attempts at loving hugs, but are positively mean spirited and bad. Of course, privation theorists have responded to this argument before. Calder bases much of his discussion on the responses of two of the more recent defenders of the privation theory, Bill Anglin and Stewart Goetz. Anglin and Goetz (1982) responded that the qualia of pain is not an evil, but that what grounds this qualia ontologically is a privation of function, which is an evil. Calder points out that there is no reason to accept that the qualia of pain is not an evil of itself. If given the choice between having your paralyzed hand numbed or in agony, you would choose the former, and for good reason. Similarly, Anglin and Goetz (1982) state that moral evils are simply a failure of duties, but Calder (2007) points out that the anger or malice which

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[47] See for instance Feser, 2015, and Oderberg, 2015.

animates a violent attack does not seem to be a mere lack of anything, but to be incredibly active in and of itself.

These appear plausible at first, but neither upon further consideration seems conclusive. It is certainly true that pain typically feels bad, but it does not follow that pain is intrinsically an evil.[48] Pain, plausibly, is typically a perception of a privation of function.[49] Since the privation of proper function is evil, it is appropriate that the natural experience of its badness be unpleasant. Calder (2007, p. 374) holds that pain can be instrumentally good (since it can lead to lessened injury) but that it is intrinsically evil. His reason for the latter is simply that pain is unpleasant, even in situations where it does not have positive consequences. However this inference does not work if we view pain not merely as a mechanism to prevent injury but as a perception of the state of our bodies. It is fitting that we seem to experience an evil whilst feeling pain, since pain just is our experience of an evil. Even if in a specific circumstance our pain did not have other positive effects, it could still be good in that through it we learn how our bodies are, and that is what pain is for.

Calder's objection to viewing moral evils as privations also seems to miss the mark, at least when dealing with Aquinas. Since evils are not mere absences but deviations from something's nature, the fact that anger seems to be positive phenomenologically is irrelevant. What matters is whether there is any good that these evils are a privation of. Aquinas thinks that anger is a perversion of justice, which is a virtue. In response to an injustice we typically have a sense that the injustice needs to be righted, perhaps by a proportional negative act done to the perpetrator. Aquinas thinks that unjustified anger is really just an irrational sense of injustice, and a desire to right it (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 778-784). Aquinas categorises all the classical vices as perversions of virtues. He thus seems to have ready responses to Calder's objection if rephrased for different vices.

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[48] See Stump, 2010, pp. 5-6 for some alleged examples of pains that are not bad.
[49] For such an account of pain, see Tye, 1997.

Calder (2007) does, however, raise another objection to the privation theory of evil which interacts with some of what has already been touched on. He argues that one could construct a parallel theory which makes goodness the privation of evil, as opposed to the other way around. Since such a model would be just as plausible as the standard privation theory, there is no reason for accepting the privation theory of evil as opposed to the privation theory of goodness. The obvious response is that goodness is linked to being in a way that evil is not, and so goodness simply could not be the privation of evil. Calder preempts this, however, and stipulates that in the parallel model evil is linked to being as goodness was classically linked to it.

Within the context of Thomistic metaphysics, he would be suggesting that there be a convertibility between evil and being, instead of goodness and being. It seems, however, that this is in fact highly problematic. For goodness to be convertible with being is to say that something fully becoming the sort of thing that it is is good for it. Therefore, were evil convertible with being, something instantiating its nature would be an evil for it. My continued bodily existence would be bad for me, instead of good, and the needless destruction of myself would be a good for me. This is far less plausible than the classical privation theory which holds that existence is a good for what exists, and needless destruction an evil.

Calder might respond that I am misinterpreting him. He does not wish to swap goods with evils, but rather to make goods ontologically dependent upon evils. Health could be defined as the lack of disease, and the like. However if the reverse privation theory is really to parallel the standard privation theory metaphysically, and links being to evil, then it would in fact swap goods with evils. In Thomistic metaphysics there is not simply a random assigning of goodness to being. The two are linked by an Aristotelian theory of forms. Indeed, for the Thomist, to speak of some state of affairs as being good for someone *just is* to describe how the state affects the person's instantiation of her form. Since something only exists insofar as it is what it is, and a form is just the principle by virtue of which a thing is what it is, goodness and evil cannot simply have their

relations swapped. You could swap the words around, and call needless destruction good and the fulfillment of something's nature as evil, but this would be to merely swap the meanings of the words. As such, Calder's objection does not seem successful.

Now we turn to what sorts of privations are thought of as evil in the Thomistic understanding. In *De Malo*, Aquinas makes the distinction between evil and moral wrongdoings (Aquinas, 2003, p.97-8). Evil is taken to be the general category of which moral wrongdoing is a species. Evil simply is any privation of something's nature. This includes moral privations but also non-moral privations. In the passage, Aquinas gives the example of a man with a deformed leg. The deformed leg is an evil, but it is not an evil for which the man is responsible, so it is not a moral evil. Indeed, there can be evils which do not affect persons at all. For instance, the dehydrated nature of a plant is an evil for the plant since it is a privation of its nature. Also, Thomists hold that the same thing can be simultaneously good and evil in different respects (Davies, 2011). For instance, a lion's eating of a gazelle is an evil for the gazelle, but a good for the lion. What makes an evil a specifically *moral* evil is that it is an evil which was freely chosen, in line with the previous discussion of reason and free will.

One might have concerns that the Thomistic theory of evil is set apart from other theories of evil by its motivation. Calder (2007), for instance, alleges that one of the major motivations for the privation theory of evil is that it is alleged to help explain the problem of evil for religious belief. Calder argues that it in fact does not help and so one of its main motivations is mistaken. He takes this as further reason to reject the privation theory as a theory of evil.

Calder gets the idea that the privation theory is motivated by theodicy primarily from Augustine. Augustine (1977, p. 48) argued that since evil was merely a lack God could not be viewed as having caused it, since lacks are not strictly speaking caused (as there is nothing in a lack *to be* caused). Evil was thus, for Augustine, ultimately irrational. The reason we cannot understand why evil exists is

because there is no reason to understand.[50] Calder (2007, pp. 376-7) points out that this is woefully inadequate to be a theodicy. Amongst other things, God could still presumably have prevented the evil or terminated it, so there would still have to be some reason as to why God allows evil, even if he does not strictly cause it. Furthermore, contemporary theodicies typically do not require a privation theory of evil in order to work[51].

I am sympathetic with Calder's reservations about the theodicy in question, but it does not seem plausible that the privation theory of evil, at least within a Thomistic framework, is motivated by theodicy. If you accept the background metaphysics then the privation theory just will be the most natural theory of evil to choose. If one accepts Aquinas' views of forms and of the convertibility of being and goodness, then he will already have a place in his worldview for privations of human nature, and if he accepts Aquinas' views on free will then he will see how these privations can be morally significant. From just these you can glean the essence of the Thomistic theory of evil as privation, whilst at no point referring to theodicy. This suggests that Calder, at least when it comes to Thomism, is mistaken about the motivations of privation theorists of evil. As a result, his criticisms of Augustine's theodicy do not provide a cogent argument against the privation theory of evil, at least not as understood by Thomists.

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[50] For a fuller discussion of Augustine's views on evil and theodicy, see Evans, 1982.
[51] E.g. Davies, 2011; Plantinga, 2003; Stump, 2010

Chapter 2: The Guise of the Good

The Guise of the Good is an essential principle in the Thomistic understanding of human action, though it has also been influential outside the bounds of Thomism, being defended by the likes of Joseph Raz (2010) and Amir Saemi (2014), and drawing criticism most notably from J. David Velleman (1992). These thinkers either defend or critique the Guise for primarily psychological reasons, but they do not pay much attention to the scholastic context of the principle as it was classically conceived. In this chapter I argue that there are at least three different principles which could properly be called the Guise of the Good, and that typical objections to the Guise principle rely upon equivocating between these principles. The first version of the Guise of the Good I discuss is a metaphysical one which states that every change is necessarily directed towards the good of the effect. The second version of the principle states that each human action is motivated by the belief that the action in question is good. The third version of the principle states that the practical attitudes and actions of an actor are teleologically directed towards bringing about the good.

To begin with, I briefly survey the place the Guise of the Good principle holds in Aquinas' thought, with an emphasis on the underlying metaphysics, and situate it within the broader context of his views of beatitude, virtue and vice. Following this I discuss the psychological plausibility of the Guise principle, and how it can resolve a possible objection to the privation theory of evil. Finally, I suggest a Thomistic account of evil in the narrow sense, wherein the distinctive phenomenology of evil is understood as the perception that a specific evil is positive in nature as opposed to privatory.

More Metaphysics

I previously discussed how, for Thomists, goodness and being are convertible with each other, since something has being insofar as it is what it is, and is good insofar as it instantiates its form well. Thomists also think that something's causal powers are inextricably bound up with its form.[52] This is a fairly commonsensical principle. The sun has the causal ability to destroy earth, were the earth close enough to it. A domestic cat, however, lacks this ability. If asked why the cat lacks the ability to incinerate planets that get too close to it we would simply reply 'because it is a cat, and not a star'. It does not belong to catness to be able to incinerate planets, so cats lack the ability to do so. From this we can see that there is a close relationship between what something is (its form) and its causal powers.

Of course, the same is true for the thing being acted upon. If asked why the earth would be incinerated by close proximity to the sun while some other planet would not be incinerated at the same distance, we would need to make reference to the differences between the two planets (their density, size, heat capacity, etc.). Due to their natures (i.e. their forms) one had the potential, under those conditions, to be incinerated whereas the other did not. Thomists think that this link between causal powers and natures is due to the fact that causation is fundamentally about substances being perfected in accordance with their forms.[53]

Perhaps the most obvious thing about causation is that it is directional, from the cause to the effect. It is also axiomatic that the cause must actually exist in order to do any causing (Aquinas, 1920, p. 13). As the old adage goes, *ex nihilo nihil fit*, out of nothing nothing comes (Pruss, 2007). From these two principles it follows that causes are internally directed towards the actualization of their effects. Every causal interaction involves some potentiality being actualized. Since being

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[52] As stated by Coffey (1914, p. 366) and defended by Pruss (2013).
[53] I am referring specifically to efficient causation here. This idea is defended, for instance, by Feser (2014, pp. 88-100) and Oderberg (2014a).

and goodness are convertible with each other, the actualizing of an effect is also the bringing about of a good. Therefore, the disposition of a cause towards its effect is also a disposition towards some good. This constitutes a metaphysical version of the Guise of the Good principle. Obviously inanimate causes do not think about bringing about goods, but every causal interaction is directed towards some good nonetheless. This is the first out of the three versions of the Guise of the Good principle that I will be discussing.

It could be questioned whether this principle applies universally. If a house is burned down, then whatever burned it down seems to have destroyed the actuality of the house. If the effects of a causal interaction must be the actualization of some potential, then it does not seem right that causal interactions could destroy something actual. However this objection would be a misunderstanding. The principle is not that every causal interaction results in only increases of being (and thus of goodness). Rather, it is that the causal interaction itself *just is* the bringing about of some good, even if this good is mutually exclusive with some other good (Davies, 2011a). In this case, the smoke, heat, light, and ash are the goods effected, though the actualization of these specific goods is incompatible with the good of the house which served as fuel. It is perhaps a little counterintuitive to speak of the ash and smoke as 'goods' here, for we usually use the term to refer to things that are good for us. It must be kept in mind that 'good' here simply means conformity to something's form. The ash and smoke brought into existence here conform to their own forms, and thus have goodness which was brought about in the fire, even though we may not happen to find their goodness helpful.

The Guise of the Good principle as more commonly conceived, as a psychological thesis,[54] emerges when we consider the peculiarly human ways of acting. Aquinas discusses this when considering the nature of human fulfillment, and how humans are directed towards it. Aquinas, as previously discussed, defined humanity as the rational animal. Humans can master their actions through their reason and free acts of the will (Aquinas, 1920, p. 583). Through reason they can

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[54] E.g. Anscombe, 1957; Raz, 2010; Williams, 1979.

figure out what the good is, and with their will they can choose the good that they have identified. Of course, humans do not always act based upon some prior consideration of the good. For instance, a man may scratch his ear absentmindedly whilst otherwise engaged without thinking of his ear. Aquinas argues that these kinds of activities are not done by the man as a human specifically, since he is not utilizing his rational nature, but rather he is merely acting through his animal nature (Aquinas, 1920, p. 583-4). Of course the act of scratching is still aimed at a good metaphysically, but it is not aimed at one psychologically.

This helps us to understand the psychological version of the Guise of the Good principle that is present in Aquinas' thought. The psychological Guise principle only applies to acts and decisions which are made freely by the will, since they alone are distinctively human in nature (as opposed to acts which merely happen to be done by humans). Since in Aquinas' understanding the will is free only insofar as it is guided by reason, and the object of reason is the good, decisions and actions can only be considered human in nature if they are directed towards some good (Aquinas, 1920, p. 585). Thus, if one accepts Aquinas' understanding of human freedom, there is no choice but to accept this kind of psychological Guise of the Good principle.

More needs to be said here, however, regarding the reason why, for Aquinas, humans choose to pursue goods according to the psychological Guise principle. Ultimately it is the human's own good that is being desired and pursued (Aquinas, 1920, p. 614-5). Humans, like other animals, grow from small, underdeveloped creatures into mature ones. This is achieved through principles of growth internal to the organism, as well as by natural inclinations and desires, such as for food. The purpose of these desires is to incline animals towards conforming to the forms of their species. Humans however, being rational in nature, in addition to their natural desires have a 'rational appetite' (Aquinas, 1920, p. 584). The function of the rational appetite is to incline humans toward truth and the good. The intellect figures out what the true and good are, and the

rational appetite then desires and wills them as goods.[55] This directs humans towards the distinctively human goods, such as contemplation, developing the virtues, and worship. It thereby conforms the human more perfectly to the form of humanity and thus brings the human closer to beatitude (which, for Aquinas, is the deepest form of happiness and fulfillment).

It could be thought as a result of this that all humans, whether virtuous or vicious, can only act out of selfish motivations, as they are motivated by their own perfection and happiness. However this is not the case for the Thomist. Indeed, Aquinas takes the highest virtue to be charity, which involves willing the good of another for her own sake (Aquinas, 1920, p. 1263). If humans had to act simply for selfish reasons then this highest of virtues would be in principle unattainable for them. Rather, the virtuous person, who instantiates well the form of humanity, will think of others before himself. Though the reason *why* he experiences the desire to put others first is that love is an aspect of the form of humanity, and so his rational appetite inclines him to love. This does not detract from his loving character, but is rather a description of it.[56]

Beatitude

So far, the motivation given for acting morally has simply been that it is good for a person to be moral. The virtuous person instantiates well what it means to be human. We have also seen that for Aquinas everyone's actions are directed in some way towards that person's good. However, more needs to be said about the final end of human life and action in Aquinas' thought. To be a morally virtuous person is good for a human, but we have not seen what this good actually looks like yet. Aquinas calls this good *beatitudo*. Some older translations (e.g. Aquinas,

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[55] Ultimately, for Aquinas, the will actually is the rational appetite. For a further treatment of Aquinas' thought on the will and freedom, see Stump, 2003, pp. 277-306.
[56] This reading is suggested by Thomas Williams, 2011, p. 201-2, though other readings are possible, such as Jean Porter, 1990.

1920) render the word as 'happiness', which has the advantage of being a common word in modern English, and also has an inherent link to joy, which (as we shall see) is appropriate for Aquinas' concept. Unfortunately, 'happiness' has too subjective a meaning in contemporary usage, often being used to refer solely to emotional satisfaction or contentment.[57] For this reason, I will use 'beatitude' for *beatitudo* instead.

Beatitude has to do with the objective flourishing of a human being as such. Although the human being must have moral rectitude before achieving beatitude, beatitude does not consist solely in satisfying natural ethics for Aquinas.[58] He argues that humanity is completed, perfected, and reaches its fullness of joy only when united to God in contemplation and love (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 601-2). As previously discussed, Aquinas takes humanity to be the rational animal, the animal directed towards seeking truth and goodness. Since God, for Aquinas, is the ultimate explanation of all things, knowledge of him is the ultimate end and goal of the intellect. Similarly, God is Goodness itself, and as such humanity has an inherent inclination toward appreciating and desiring God, and can never be totally satisfied with anything less (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 601-2).[59] As a result, Aquinas thinks that everyone desires beatitude at least implicitly, for the desire for beatitude just consists in our desires to comprehend truth and to love goodness, which are the distinctively human inclinations.

Although beatitude is not itself emotional contentment or pleasure, Aquinas argues that it is invariably attended by delight nonetheless (Aquinas, 1920, p. 593). This may seem a little strange at first, since the delight seems to be in no way required for the fulfillment of the person. Having beatitude is of such objective worth that the delight by comparison looks trivial. However there is a plausible reason for delight attending beatitude. Emotional delight is the proper

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[57] For instance, Haybron, 2005; Sizer, 2010. Although it is true that some theorists still use 'happiness' in a sense close to Aquinas', such as Almeder, 2000.
[58] By 'natural ethics' here I simply mean ethics taken independently of any theological considerations.
[59] For a nice account of Aquinas' line of reasoning to this point, see Davies, 2011b.

response to the experience of goods generally, and so it is fitting that beatitude be accompanied by it as well, to emphasise the continuity between beatitude and lesser goods. In addition, the experience of delight may help the person to appreciate the enormous good that beatitude is, and could incline them towards giving appropriate thanksgiving for their state of being.

However, even though beatitude is a fundamentally theological concept, Aquinas is explicit that it requires ordinary moral rectitude as well (Aquinas, 1920, p. 604). This is because it belongs to moral rectitude to be properly oriented towards God. As we shall see later, Aquinas conceives of the natural moral virtues to be directed towards beatitude.

It may be worrying that the theological nature of beatitude, and thus of Aquinas' theory of action in general, seems to be in tension with the claim made in the introduction that the Thomistic theory of evil need not presuppose any theology. However in fact there is no tension, since privation theory of evil as such does not assume any theological position, and neither does the metaphysics which grounds it. This broader theory of human action provides important philosophical context for the Thomistic theory of evil, but if someone found it objectionable on theological grounds then they could still work out how the Thomistic theory of evil could fit into their own preferred theory of human action. Indeed, if so inclined one could even accept that humans can only be ultimately fulfilled in the contemplation of and love for Truth and Goodness, without assigning them religious significance.

Virtues

At this point it is fitting to have a discussion of virtue and vice in Aquinas' thought. This is the case for two reasons. Firstly, such a discussion is necessary in order to connect beatitude, the overall good of the human person, with the individual acts that are done under the Guise of the Good principle. Secondly, an

understanding of virtue and vice is necessary in order to understand how evil acts can be done, and how evil characters can be formed.

Aquinas' most comprehensive treatment of the virtues is found in, unsurprisingly, his *Disputed Questions on Virtue* (Aquinas, 2010).[60] Aquinas opens the work with a discussion of whether virtue is best understood as an act or as a habit. Aquinas concludes it to be the latter, since sleeping people can be virtuous even whilst not acting, and because being virtuous seems to be a property of people, and not of acts (Aquinas, 2010, p. 3).

In the same section, Aquinas elucidates the place of virtue within his broader philosophy. Virtue is the completion or perfection of some power of the human person. A power is completed insofar as its intrinsic end is satisfied (Aquinas, 2010, pp. 3-4). This is abstract, but easily understood in concrete terms. The intrinsic purpose of eating is the nutritional sustenance of the human person. Therefore someone is a virtuous eater insofar as she eats in such a way as to be appropriately physically sustained by food. Since, as already discussed, morality is limited to what the human is free to do, if she starves due to the scarcity of food it obviously does not demonstrate a lack in her virtue.

Interestingly, though we can act out of our habits without rational deliberation, Aquinas still holds the virtuous person to be responsible for habituated actions since the habits are formed by deliberate acts of the will (Aquinas, 2010, p. 4). Although habituated, our actions are free since we already did the requisite rational activity when forming the habit in the first place.

The virtues are not to be understood as completely separate from each other (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 860-1).[61] Rather, they are united because they are all

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[60] For general treatments of Aquinas' ethics, see Finnis, 1998; McInerney, 1997, and MacDonald & Stump (1998).
[61] The thesis that the virtues are united is a controversial one. It has been critiqued by Foot, 1983, Walker, 1989, and Flanagan, 1991, p. 33, amongst others. For an elaboration and defense of Aquinas' acceptance of the thesis, see Porter, 1993.

directed towards the good of the human person as a whole. The reason why we should be disciplined about how we eat is not simply that this helps keep us healthy, but that this health contributes towards our achievement of beatitude, which is our ultimate good. This also provides the key to how the different virtues interact with each other for Aquinas. Virtues can be considered lower or higher depending on how they contribute to beatitude (Aquinas, 2010, 124-5). Since beatitude is ultimately to be found in the love of God, charity (the virtue of love) is the highest virtue. The other virtues are ultimately subservient to charity, since it is charity that gives the other virtues their virtuous nature (Aquinas, 2010, pp. 113-4).

This may seem somewhat confusing given that it was previously said that what made a virtue virtuous was the fulfillment of the intrinsic end of a human faculty. One could be forgiven for asking frustratedly 'Well which is it, the intrinsic end of the act or its relation to beatitude through charity?' For Aquinas, both are true.[62] The natural end of eating is nutrition and health for all animals, but it is an area of *moral* concern for humans alone, because humans are directed towards loving God as their highest good in a way that the other animals are not. This direction towards beatitude reorients the natural goods of humans (food, sex, etc.) beyond the merely natural ends of these goods (health, reproduction, etc.) towards the higher good of the love of God (Aquinas, 2010, p. 114).

It may be objected that this view of virtue is far too mercenary. Are we really to hold that what gives meaning to all virtue is love of God? Is the reason why a mother ought to care for her children really that she wants to improve herself in charity? Even if she did do it in order to better love God she would not be helping God in any way, according to Aquinas' theology. God is already perfectly happy and lacks for nothing that she could give him (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 20-1). As such, if she did everything else for the sake of loving God it would seem to be her alone who would benefit. We would not ordinarily call this virtuous but instead an instance of selfish and narcissistic vice.

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[62] Ralph McInerney (1997) interpreted Aquinas as favouring the former disjunct, but see Jean Porter (2011) for a response.

In a later section of the *Disputed Questions on Virtue*, Aquinas deals with this objection. He considers the question of whether charity is a single virtue or several different virtues, and considers twelve arguments for the latter (Aquinas, 2010, pp. 117-9). All but one of these work by separating the love for God from the love for our fellow humans. For instance, we can only love insofar as we know the beloved, but of necessity we know our neighbours better than we know God (since his nature is ungraspable), and so it seems necessary that we love humans more than we love God. This is unacceptable, since it would make the attainment of true beatitude impossible, and surely God would not create us for an end which is unattainable. Therefore the argument concludes that we must love humans and God in fundamentally different senses (Aquinas, 2010, p. 118).

Upon examining these arguments, however, Aquinas concludes that charity is in fact a single virtue. He draws a distinction between the formal and material ends of human powers. For instance, the formal end of sight is colour or some such thing. The material end of sight is whatever is being seen, such as particular rocks or cats. Sight is a single power, even though it can have many different material ends. In the same way, we can love many different humans and God himself with the same power of love.

What is more, Aquinas elsewhere defines love as willing the good of another for their own sake (Aquinas, 1920, p. 115). It thus seems as though goodness is itself the formal end of love, although Aquinas does not explicitly state this. This is significant, because Aquinas understands God to be the unqualified act of existence itself, as pure Being (Aquinas, 1920, p. 21). As such, God is the act by which everything that exists, exists. In light of this, Aquinas can say that God is in all things, and in them most intimately (Aquinas, 1920, pp. 34-5).[63] Since being is convertible with goodness, it follows that God is the principle of goodness in everything that exists. Therefore, when humans love anything they are in fact loving God in the very same act. Loving God and loving fellow creatures are not

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[63] For a discussion of the significance of this see Robert Barron, 2008, pp. 85-92.

competitive with each other at all for Aquinas.[64] The mother does not need to love God first at the expense of loving her child for his own sake. Rather, when the mother loves him and wills his good she is also loving God, who is the very principle of Goodness which her son is participating in, and which she is willing for him. In the words of Aquinas, 'charity loves God in all our neighbors, since we love our neighbors by charity because God is in them or so that God might be in them.' (Aquinas, 2010, p. 120). Of course, this does not mean that everyone knows that they are loving God when they love their fellow human beings, but instead just that at a deep level they are in fact doing so, whether they intend to or not.

This is significant because it reveals how beatitude is related to virtuous action. The classical virtues such as justice, chastity, and honesty are ultimately about loving people, for Aquinas.[65] Since loving people is not a distinct act from loving God, and beatitude consists in perfectly loving God, it follows that beatitude is not a distinct end from loving people. This joint end is the perfection of the human being, and is the good to which all human actions *qua* human actions are formally directed.

The relationship between this theory of virtue and the Guise of the Good principle is fairly transparent at this point. The virtues themselves are teleologically directed towards the good of beatitude and loving others. Since this state is the perfection of the human form, the virtues are directed towards the perfection of the human person. When someone fails morally, this is the good that they are falling away from. However this raises an obvious question. It is clear how virtues are directed towards the good, but this has not explained the nature of vices and moral wrongdoing. How is the Guise principle supposed to apply to them?

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[64] For discussions of the implications of this idea, see Barron, 2015, pp. 17-30; Davies, 2011a.

[65] Aquinas argues that charity is the form of all the virtues, and that the virtues are distinct from one another simply because they have to do with loving people in different ways (Aquinas, 2010, pp. 111-17).

Disordered Wills

Aquinas argued that all moral wrongdoing was the result of some kind of ignorance of the good (Aquinas, 1920, p. 935). Since all human actions are meant to be directed towards that person's perfection and beatitude, a wrongful action or decision is thought by Aquinas to be the result of a perverted view of goodness. For instance, he observes that factors such as excessive alcohol or untamed passions often result in wrongdoing since they can distort how effectively we can reason about what is good for us (Aquinas, 1920, p. 936).

These cases are quite easy to understand. Harder are what Ashley Dressel (2014) refers to as willful wrongdoings, what Aquinas calls sins of malice (Aquinas, 1920, p. 941). The willful wrongdoer is one who does what she knows is morally wrong, and not simply due to some external factor such as alcohol. It seems as though willful wrongdoers could pose a significant challenge to the Guise of the Good as Aquinas conceives it, since deliberately doing what you know to be morally wrong necessarily damages you as a human being, and thus works against one's quest for beatitude, which Aquinas thinks we are all engaged in.

Though on reflection these cases too can be made sense of. For instance, someone who knows that a certain act is morally wrong but does not comprehend that doing what is morally wrong will damage his hopes for fulfillment and well-being. He knows that stealing televisions is wrong like most people do, but he sees that he would really enjoy the television in the neighbour's house, and so he steals it. At the time of stealing he does not believe that he will regret the decision or incur bad consequences from it. Such a person would pose no problem for Aquinas.

Even cases where someone does believe that immorality detracts from his well-being and acts wrongfully nonetheless could be explained in a similar fashion. It could be simply the case that he (mistakenly) judged the partial good gained by the wrongdoing more desirable than the goodness that was lost by virtue of the

immorality of the act (Aquinas, 1920, p. 941). For instance, I might gossip unfairly about a friend behind her back. I know that it is wrong and that I will feel guilty. I also know that by giving into the temptation this time I will make it easier to give in again next time. I know that in gossiping I make it more likely that I will care too much about being popular, and not enough about being a good friend. In short, I know that gossiping will be bad for me. Nonetheless it is possible that I do it anyway, motivated by the short-term social pleasures that gossiping provides. Although I am a rational animal, I can choose to ignore my reason, which tells me that gossiping is a bad idea, and choose instead a far lesser good because it seems more attractive at the time.

It could be objected that there does not have to be a mistake at all. Surely someone could know that an act was wrong and self-destructive and simply not care. Aquinas (1920, p. 941) distinguishes between the different psychological causes for willful wrongdoing. There is always an error, but the error can reside in different places. It can be in the intellect, where there is a mistake in our reasoning about what is good. It could also be a mistake in our will, however, which is what inclines us towards the good. The person who simply does not care that she is choosing the wrong thing is making a mistake with her will. The fact that she does not care but ought to demonstrates that her will is not functioning properly.

What becomes interesting at this point is how willful wrongdoers came to the mistaken judgment that they would be on average winning (in terms of happiness) by doing what they knew was wrong. It is not enough for there to be a mere intellectual mistake at the core, since plausibly we are not morally culpable for mere intellectual errors. Jacques Maritain (1966), based on his exegesis of Aquinas, argued that although wrongdoings are the result of mistaken intellectual judgments, these judgments were only possible based upon prior acts of the will. The will, as previously discussed, is an inclination towards the good. Maritain thought that, when presented with some good, the will is supposed to choose the higher good of beatitude, and then submit the good in question to the intellect, which reasons as to whether the good would contribute

positively towards beatitude. The intellect then presents its findings back to the will, which then either chooses the good in question or does not. This system of the intellect and will could break down, however, if the will simply chose a good it was presented with for its own sake, without first evaluating the good's relationship to beatitude at all.

Assuming this kind of model,[66] it is fairly easy to see how the wrongful act could develop into a sustained moral vice. Someone who has unwisely chosen a good uncritically does not at first realize that the good in question is detrimental to her beatitude, and repeats the choice. By the time she sees the folly of her choices a habit has already formed for choosing the lesser good, thereby making it difficult to reorder her will.

Objections to the Guise of the Good

Several concerns have been raised about whether the Guise of the Good plausibly applies to all human behaviour. I will interact with two standard criticisms here. The first is that the Guise provides an over-intellectualised account of action, at least as the thesis is often phrased. The second is an influential and obvious criticism raised by J. David Velleman (1992), that it certainly seems possible for a rational agent to act for a reason that he does not believe is good, or even one he believes is positively bad. Velleman considers the example of Milton's Satan, who does evil not because he thinks it good but because he knows it to be evil. Such a character certainly seems possible.

The kind of phrasing of the Guise that produces the over-intellectualisation objection can be found in the works of Joseph Raz. Raz (2010) defends the Guise of the Good where he understands the principle to mean that all intentional actions are done by agents who, at the time of doing the action, have a belief that

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[66] Which not all Thomists do. For critical discussion of Maritain's position see Hanink, 2013.

there is some good in the action, and this belief is a reason for doing the action in question.

Amir Saemi (2014) points out several apparent problems with such a view. I will mention two of them. Firstly, it renders the actions of small children and many others in society as unintentional. Children will often do things without being aware of any reason for doing them, but surely it does not follow that there are no reasons at all. Raz (2010) preempts this criticism by pointing out that people are not always conscious of their beliefs about value but they plausibly still have them, so perhaps young children are simply not aware of their beliefs? However even with this acknowledgment Raz cannot fully escape the objection, as he is quite explicit elsewhere that beliefs only act as reasons when the agent recognizes them as such (Raz, 2011). As such, the actions of children and others cease to be fully intentional for Raz.[67]

The second problem for Raz is that behaviours which humans share with non-human animals also cease to be intentional. Rats flee from sudden fire fairly instinctively and humans do too. Since he does not want to grant rats intentional action and since it is implausible that the same fairly instinctive behaviours can be intentional for some mammals (humans) but not others (rats), Raz (2010) concludes that instinctive human behaviours are non-intentional as well.

Saemi (2014) believes that these overly intellectual thresholds are not essential to the Guise of the Good if interpreted differently. Saemi separates the Guise into two broad possible principles, both of which aim at the good in slightly different ways. Firstly we can distinguish between the good being sought as a material object on the one hand, and a formal object on the other. That is to say, a representation of the good being sought could be the content of the agent's

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[67] One might well ask why this is a problem at all. Maybe small children just do not always act intentionally. An example given by Raz (2010) can clarify the problem. He considers a boy in a bath tub pretending to be a fish, and beating the water as a fish might. If asked why the child might not be able to answer, but it seems like there are intentional motivations in play.

desire or plan when she undertakes the action, or the good could be the function of the desire in question.

Saemi proposes understanding the Guise of the Good formally in order to escape problems of over-intellectualisation. He construes his formal version teleologically, so that the goods being sought do not need to be consciously conceived of at all by the agent, but rather they simply have to be the proper end of the function of the practical state in question. For Saemi (2014, p. 499), the Guise principle applies to non-human animals as well. Rats' running away from fire is not a mere reflex in a problematic way, since the avoidance of fire and continued bodily existence of the rat serves as the good which the practical state of the rat is directed towards.

Saemi's thoughts complement the Thomistic view of the Guise of the Good principle elucidated earlier in this chapter. The Thomist definitely does have a teleological understanding of the Guise. However the Thomist can have a far richer view of the principle since, as previously shown, the Guise principle is a metaphysical truism for Thomists. Every causal interaction necessarily involves the cause being teleologically directed towards its effect, and the effect is necessarily a good (in a broad sense) for the Thomist. At a higher level, animals' practical states can be teleologically directed toward the functions of their behaviours, as Saemi suggests. However, as previously discussed, Aquinas also holds to a psychological version of the Guise principle similar to Raz, wherein all behaviour which humans engage in *as humans*, by use of their rational faculties, has a material object. This layered understanding of the Guise of the Good escapes Raz's troubles as the behaviour of children is still intentional by virtue of the teleological second layer of the Guise principle. This understanding also deals with Velleman's concerns, since the person acting for a reason he does not see as a good would not be engaged in distinctively human rational activity (or, in the case of Milton's Satan, angelic activity). So although his behaviour might be inexplicable at the top, rational level, it would be explicable at the second level, which does not require actions to have conscious reasons that the agent values.

It could be objected that the actions of Milton's Satan would not make sense even on this formal teleological level, since he is picking actions simply because they are evil, and there is no function being achieved by the evil actions. This objection would miss the point, however, since all that is required is that the processes which result in the evil acts be themselves teleologically directed towards some good. It is not required that every single act produced by the processes achieves this good.[68]

However even apart from a formal understanding of the Guise of the Good principle, it still seems as though Velleman's concern is unsuccessful. Milton's Satan is supposed to be acting for a reason he does not believe is good. However upon reflection this seems quite implausible. Satan would have to at least view his reason as a good enough reason for doing his evil action. If not then it is difficult to see in what sense his reason could meaningfully be interpreted as a motivation for his acting at all. If the reason were not sufficient to motivate his action then it would not be the reason for his action at all.

This could be objected to by a claim that I am equivocating on the word 'good'. Perhaps Velleman did not mean that Satan's reason was insufficient for motivation, but just that it would bring about long term suffering to Satan and was against his self interest, or something of the sort. However this is not enough. Milton's Satan may know that he is choosing despair, but that is entirely consistent with him choosing his despair for the sake of a perceived good. One can easily imagine Satan choosing it out of spite against God. By damning himself to hell he can frustrate God's love for him, because he knows that God would rather he live in happiness than despair. Satan could make this decision if he viewed frustrating God to be in itself a good for him. Perhaps he felt disrespected by God, had a sense of injustice as a result, and only wanted to restore justice by getting back at God. This would be a hopelessly disproportionate response, but justice is a good that can be aimed at. Indeed, what would the kind of Satan

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[68] The function of a watering can is to water plants, even if not all the water will land on them. In an analogous way, the intellect and will are directed towards the good even if they sometimes malfunction and do not achieve it.

Velleman describes actually look like? Without thinking of his actions as good for anything at all, there is no reason to ascribe him psychological intentionality in the first place.

It thus seems as though the Guise of the Good applies in different ways to different kinds of acts. In a deep metaphysical sense it applies to all change; in a formal way it applies to all actions done by an animal (and perhaps other living organisms); and in a rational deliberative way it applies to distinctively human acts. Understood in this way, the Guise appears to be an eminently plausible principle.

A Dilemma About Different Categories of Evil

At this point it is worth considering an objection to the Thomistic theory of evil which, I will suggest, can be answered in the context of the Guise of the Good principle. The problem is that it seems plausible that evil is a completely different moral category to lesser wrongdoings. Consider the sadistic work of a serial killer and then consider a small child stealing sweets. The latter is wrong, but it seems to be qualitatively distinct from the former. Perhaps the sadistic murder is still wrong, but it is not merely wrong. There seems to be something else present in such atrocities[69].

This intuition seems to be contrary to the Thomistic theory of evil. For the Thomist there is no qualitative distinction between the two cases, though obviously one is far worse than the other. Both are evils. As discussed in chapter 1, it is common for philosophers to distinguish between evil in a broad sense and

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[69] In the words of Stephen de Wijze, 'Evil, in a different way from merely wrongful actions, leaves behind a moral residue which, if it is possible to remove, requires a special ritual of purification. The horror, the disgust and incomprehension evoked by evil suggests a *qualitative* difference, something that distinguishes it from wrongful or even *very* wrongful acts.' (de Wijze, 2002, p. 213).

evil in the narrow sense.[70] Something is evil in the broad sense if it is bad for something or someone. Something is evil in the narrow sense if it has moral depravity of such gravity that we cannot merely describe it as wrong. The Thomistic theory thus far has not had a category for evil in the narrow sense. This may seem to be a powerful objection to the Thomistic theory. After all, if there are strong intuitions which suggest that there is a qualitative distinction here, then it is a mark against the Thomistic theory for not having such a distinction.[71]

Of course, as already seen the Thomistic theory can make sense of moral wrongdoing and makes sense of there being different gradations of moral wrongdoing. Acts can be more or less wrong depending on what they were intended to do, and character traits can be more or less wrong depending on how severely they are at variance with the human form. But it is difficult to see how evil in the narrow sense could be explained on Thomistic principles.

However, even if the intuition that there is a categorical distinction may not be able to be supported by the Thomistic theory of evil, the theory can still illuminate our moral experience on this point by explaining why we have this intuition. As this chapter has discussed at length, Thomists hold that every moral wrongdoing is done for the sake of some real or perceived good. Plausibly, the intuition that the two cases are qualitatively distinct is in fact a result of this. We can easily understand the good being sought after by the child stealing sweets. He is hungry, or just desires the pleasure he knows he would derive from eating the sweets. This is an easy motivation to empathise with. By contrast it is quite hard to empathise with the sadistic murderer and feel the attraction of the goods he seeks as he undergoes his grisly task. As a result the psychology behind such atrocities is largely opaque to us. We cannot imagine how such acts could ever seem good. If humans *qua* humans guide themselves according to the good, and

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[70] E.g. Calder, 2007; Russell 2014, p. 18.
[71] There are some philosophers who deny a qualitative distinction here, such as Russell, 2007. However Russell still draws a categorical distinction between evil in the narrow sense and mere wrongdoings, on the basis of the extremity of acts in question.

this murderer could not possibly be guided by a good, then the murderer looks more like an enigmatic monster than a human being. The Thomist could hold that the murderer is indeed aiming at some good, but that since we cannot comprehend what good it could be, we put him into a completely different category to the child. This account of the intuition explains both the apparent qualitative distinction between moral atrocities and mere wrongdoings, and also explains why it is common for the perpetrators of such acts to be viewed as inhuman monsters.[72]

Of course, this explanation only gets the Thomistic view off the hook if such atrocities are in fact guided by the perception of some good. It is easy to observe that there are many possible goods which could be motivating the sadistic murderer. For instance, such actions could be motivated by a desire for power. Power seems to be an instrumental good. It is good merely because it allows other goods to be achieved. When power is viewed as a good in its own right, however, then it makes sense that one might revel in his sense of power. You could imagine someone committing murder out of this desire to manifest his power over others. Such an act would ignore all sorts of other goods, such as the good of his victim's life, and the good of being a loving person, but these neglects are precisely what make the action so horribly wrong. There is a good being sought after, but the act is horrifically disproportionate to the good being sought. These possibilities are of course speculative (as they must be when dealing with a hypothetical case), but they suggest that it is not inconceivable for atrocities to be done for the sake of some good.

This response to the objection seems plausible, though as it stands it will not work. There are plenty of possible actions that we would be unable to find a

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[72] Incomprehensibility is often raised in conjunction with the narrow conception of evil. For instance, Singer felt able to define evil actions by the fact that they were 'so bad, so awful, so horrendous that no ordinary decent reasonable human being can conceive of himself (or herself) doing such a thing' (Marcus Singer, 2004, 196). It is a common enough idea that Russell included it in his list of intuitions that every theory of evil had to address (2014, p. 34). Aquinas' hero, Augustine, even thought that evil could not be understood at all because it was totally irrational (Augustine, 1977, p. 48).

reason for that we would not consider evil. A man who decides to eat every seventh piece of paper he finds would be odd, and his actions might seem incomprehensible, but he would not appear evil. Luke Russell observes that there are even cases which are disgusting, morally wrong, and incomprehensible which do not feel evil in the relevant sense. Russell (2014, p. 60) gives the example of a man who goes around a hospital licking the toes of infirm patients against their will. Aquinas does not explicitly deal with this problem, but I propose that there is in fact a way to further develop the previous response to understand the apparent qualitative distinctiveness of evil in this narrower sense that coheres well with a Thomistic philosophy of evil.

Whereas the Thomist holds that all human action (*qua* human action) is rational in nature, evil in the narrow sense has always seemed to be horrendously irrational. Whereas the Thomist holds that evil in the broad sense is necessarily negative, a sort of lack, evil in the narrow sense seems phenomenologically to be positively bad and abhorrent[73]. It is my suggestion that these are not tangential aspects of the narrow concept of evil, but are in fact at its core. The fact that an evil seems to be positively bad in its nature and not merely a privation *just is* what gives evil its peculiar phenomenological quality.

We can understand why someone might shout at a person who had cut him off in traffic not simply because we could imagine ourselves giving in to the same temptation on an extremely bad day. Rather, we understand how the instinctive sense of injustice the person felt at being cut off could be taken too far. Since we see that the bad desires and decisions do not need to have positive existence of themselves, but can be understood as perversions of justice and other goods, we do not see the wrongdoing as evil.

The same could not be said for the serial killer. We see the serial killer as evil not simply because we cannot imagine ourselves murdering people, but because the badness of the horrifying desires and decisions seems to be positive and not merely privatory. We cannot reduce the killer's horrifying motivations down to

[73] Adam Morton (2004, p. 13); Eve Garrard (2002, p. 321).

the things we already understand about human motivation. As a result, we seem to see something alien present in the horrific actions and in the person who willed them. We do not recognize their actions and motivations as human in nature, and so do not quite know how to place them. We just see something ugly and inhuman, and call it evil (in the narrow sense).

This idea can account for both the apparent irrationality of evil and the apparent qualitative distinctiveness of evil. It also makes sense of cases like the man who eats every seventh piece of paper, since his actions, though perhaps inscrutable, do not seem to be positively bad. It also fits well with the Thomistic theory. The Thomistic theory can explain why the appearance of positive evils is so disturbing. Positive evils (as opposed to privationary evils) are metaphysically incoherent for the Thomist, so it makes sense that they would seem incomprehensible. Of course, the Thomist could not say that positive evils actually exist, but it would make sense that as people fall further and further away from the form of humanity they would seem less capable of being empathized with and less comprehensible. As someone's actions become less comprehensible it would become harder to intuitively understand just what they are privations of. In addition, such an account would fit well with the Guise of the Good. If all human action is necessarily directed towards the good then it makes perfect sense on this view why evil seems monstrous and inhuman. Since the evil seems to be positively bad, it does not appear to be human in nature.

It can even make sense of cases like Russell's disgusting, wrong, incomprehensible acts that do not feel evil. The man who licks the toes of infirm hospital patients against their will does not seem evil because its badness does not seem positive in nature. If we saw someone doing this, we would think he had a mental illness and would view his actions and desires to be privations of proper cognitive functioning. However this would not be the case if we changed the scenario slightly such that we already knew the man to be someone intelligent with generally good social skills and a clear mind. If you picture him approaching his helpless victims whilst enjoying their revulsion and fear, knowing that they could do nothing to stop him, then it could feel evil.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have seen how the Thomistic metaphysics of privation from chapter 1 fits with Aquinas' broader moral philosophy. More specifically, we have seen a glimpse of what the form of humanity would look like, for Aquinas, were it perfected. We saw how evil action and character development could happen in the Thomistic theory, and how falling into evil can corrupt one's free will. We have seen how the Guise of the Good principle has at least three different versions which fit into a Thomistic moral theory, and how this three tiered principle escapes the objections typically raised against the Guise principle. Finally, we have seen how the Thomistic theory might be able to supply an account of evil in the narrow sense.

Final Remarks

In this project, I have sketched out a Thomistic theory of evil which covers three different concepts of evil: evil as any bad; evil as moral wrongdoing; and evil as extremely grave moral depravity. The theory incorporates material from both the Thomistic tradition and from contemporary philosophy of evil.

There are several advantages to the Thomistic theory as I presented it. Firstly, the incorporation of all three concepts of evil. Most theories of evil only focus on one concept. By focusing on all three, it is easier to view them in relation to one another and not as stand-alone ideas. Since we ought to want our theories to be well-integrated within our moral understanding, this interrelatedness is an advantage to a theory.

Secondly, and in a somewhat similar vein, it is an advantage of a theory for it to fit well with other areas of philosophy. The Thomistic theory achieves this in

several ways, but perhaps most notably with its incorporation of both metaphysics and moral psychology. Principles of moral psychology like the Guise of the Good have been defended by a variety of people in the past, but it fits incredibly naturally with the way that everything is directed towards its telos in Thomistic metaphysics. It provides an additional possible reason to be sympathetic with the Thomistic theory. If one already accepts the Guise of the Good, then the metaphysical support the principle can receive from the Thomistic theory could help explain what one already believes.

Thirdly, as seen earlier, the philosophical background material for the Thomistic theory helps provide the resources needed to defend the privation theory of evil against common objections. This could also yield a reason for some people to favour the Thomistic theory. If someone is attracted to a privation understanding of evil and sees that the metaphysics of the Thomistic theory might be able to disarm objections to the privation theory, they have some reason to prefer the Thomist's version of the privation theory to their own. For these reasons and others, the Thomistic theory is a promising account of evil that is worthy of further development.

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