

Tristitia et Dolor: Does Aquinas Have a Robust Understanding of Depression?

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AFTER YEARS of introducing students and colleagues to Aquinas's teachings concerning the emotional life of man, I am still surprised by the complaint that his views concerning human affectivity appear static and dry, bereft of the very life that seems essential to this human experience. The root of this complaint is often found in their reaction to Thomas's scholasticism, particularly as it is characterized by an exacting method and heavy use of Aristotelian language and logic.¹ His style, admittedly, is not that of an Augustine, as these people often point out, especially when they compare the description that Augustine offers concerning the depths of his pain and sorrow experienced in the first eight books of his *Confessions*, with questions 35 through 39 of the *prima secundae* of Thomas's *Summa theologiae*, wherein he offers what appears to them a logically cold description of *dolor* and *tristitia*. Appearances aside, I argue that Aquinas's treatment of pain and sorrow, especially when seen within the broader context of his treatise concerning the emotions and the ethical life of man, betrays an understanding of sorrow every bit as rich as that which Augustine describes, and is far from being static and unrepresentative of the phenomenon itself. In this paper, I will offer a detailed explanation of how Aquinas understands sorrow, and arrive at the conclusion that he does in fact offer a robust view of it, akin to what most people today would recognize as depression. We

¹ This view is one generated by ignorance of the scholastic method itself, its purpose, how foreign it appears to readers of our time, and the natural barriers to interpretation and understanding it presents. These are nicely eliminated by Thomas F. O'Meara, OP's *Thomas Aquinas: Theologian* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), especially chapters 1 and 2.

shall see that the depth of his treatment lies in the fact that he does not view sorrow solely as a material event proper to the body. Instead, he understands it as a specifically human experience, one intimately tied to man's nature, destiny, and happiness.

Although Thomas defines our emotions as the varied manifestations of sensitive appetite,² nonetheless we must understand this in reference to the being that experiences these phenomena.³ The emotional life, then, is indicative of a person's comportment to the things, people, and situations of his daily life, and this in a personal, intimate, and immediate way.⁴ Emotions arise from sensitive appetite only insofar as its proper object is present to it that is nothing other than some sensible thing that has been evaluated as suitable or not for the one sensing it. It is this that is central to Thomas's understanding of the emotions as personal statements, so to speak, of a person's standing with respect to those things that he, as an individual, considers to be good for himself. The primary concern in emotion is not the fact that something is good in itself; such a consideration is secondary to the presentation to the sensitive appetite of its proper object, and is proper only to the intellectual appetite, the will.⁵ Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the human experience of emotion is not restricted to the sensitive appetite and its movements. The appetitive and thus emotional experience of the human person includes both the natural and, especially, the intellectual appetites. Consequently, any discussion concerning the sensitive appetite as the seat, as it were, of the emotions must also consider that sensitive appetite takes place within a being imbued by reason which fact enriches the human person's sensitive appetitive experience, helping it to extend to many more things than is possible for sensitive appetite alone, as well as deepening any emotional experience that finds its genesis and development therein.⁶ At the very least, these points must be kept in mind as one reads any treatment by Aquinas on a particular emotion.⁷

² See the initial questions concerning emotion (*passio*) in general in *Summa Theologiae* I–II, qq. 22–25. Much of what is developed in this paragraph draws upon these four questions.

³ For it is not the sensitive appetite that experiences emotion, but rather the person by means of his sensitive appetite. See *ST* I, q. 77, and F. Copleston, *Aquinas* (London: Penguin, 1955), 163ff.

⁴ For this point, see S. Loughlin, "The Complexity of *timor* in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*," in *Fear and Its Representations in the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Belgium: Brepols, 2002), 1–16.

⁵ See *ST* I, q. 80, a. 2, and I, q. 82.

⁶ This point is drawn out in detail in Loughlin, "The Complexity of *timor*."

⁷ There are many works that offer summaries of Aquinas's views concerning the emotions. A few of these are E. D'Arcy, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae*,

When we approach Aquinas's treatment of sorrow, there is an initial difficulty, namely, that he uses two words throughout his treatment of this emotion in the *Summa theologiae* I–II, questions 35–39, to explain the phenomenon, namely, *dolor* (pain) and *tristitia* (sorrow).⁸ Thus, we must be careful to note the differences between the two notions.⁹ Pain is something that begins with a wound to the body and is completed in our apprehension of it, that is, with the recognition that the integrity of our body has been compromised. In this experience, one should note that, strictly speaking, there is very little of our humanity involved; reason, will, and the evaluation necessary for sensitive appetite, play no meaningful role in pain. There is simply one's awareness of, or attention to, the body's condition. Sorrow, on the other hand, *begins* with our cognition that is then evaluated by us, by means of our cogitative power, and completed in the activities of both the sensitive appetite and the body. Thus, for sorrow to arise, there must first be the evaluation that some person, thing, or situation is unsuitable to our well-being, and that this person, thing, or situation is present to us now, afflicting us with the very evil that we at first hated, from which we tried to separate ourselves, feared its advent, fought valiantly to prevent, but in the end were unsuccessful. From this arises the sensitive appetitive movement Thomas calls sorrow, as well as those common physiological reactions typically associated with it.¹⁰

What, then, is the relation between sorrow and pain? Given his focus upon the human experience of sorrow, Aquinas states that we are to see

vol. 19, *The Emotions* (1a2ae. 22–30), trans. Eric D'Arcy (Oxford: Blackfriars, 1967), xix–xxxii; Simon Kemp, "Emotion and Will," in *Medieval Psychology* (New York: Greenwood, 1990), 77–88; Henri Dominique Noble, "Passions," in *Dictionnaire de théologie Catholique*, vol. 11 (Paris: Librairie Letouzey et Ané, 1932), 2211–41; É. Gilson, *Le Thomisme: Introduction à la philosophie de saint Thomas D'Aquin*, 6th ed. (Paris: 1965), 335–51; and idem, *Moral Values and the Moral Life: The Ethical Theory of Saint Thomas Aquinas* (St. Louis: Herder, 1931), 91–133; Juvenal Lalor, "The Passions," in *The Summa Theologica of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 3 (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948), 3220–35; and Robert E. Brennan, *Thomistic Psychology: A Philosophical Analysis of the Nature of Man* (New York: MacMillan, 1960), 131–68.

⁸ I will use these translations consistently throughout this paper.

⁹ Care is highly recommended in light of the fact that it is not a common practice for Thomas to use synonyms in his descriptions of things; he is very precise in his use of language, and this for the sake of revealing what is the truth of the matter at hand. Consider his comments in the *proemium* to the *Summa theologiae*. See Journet Kahn, *A Thomistic Theory of Emotion* (Ph.D. diss., University of Notre Dame, 1956), 28–57, for an extensive treatment of the distinction between a *passio corporalis* and a *passio animalis/animae* as exemplified here in the distinction between pain and sorrow.

¹⁰ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 1–2.

pain as something that, in addition to its bodily experience, extends in a generic fashion to sensitive and intellectual appetite. Thus, pain comes to be described as that emotion that arises when an evil of some kind presently afflicts our person. Pain, in this sense, becomes the genus associated with this phenomenon. Its species are *interior* and *exterior pain*, the principle of division being the kinds of apprehensions required for each, namely, the external senses for the latter and the interior cognitive powers of our sensitive and rational aspect for the former. The latter retains the name of the genus, while the former—broadening the generic notion by reason of the extensiveness that is brought to the experience by both sensitive and intellectual comprehension, and extending our concern beyond the present to include matters concerning the past and the future (Thomas mentions repentance and anxiety in this regard)¹¹ and to the possible objects of sorrow¹²—is renamed accordingly to sorrow.¹³ Nonetheless, it must be noted that given the unity of the human person, pain in its restricted sense (external pain) can still bring about a movement of our sensitive appetite, that is, of sorrow, but this only in an indirect way insofar as the pain that arises is repugnant to sensitive appetite through being repugnant to the body itself.¹⁴ Thus, I may be pained by an arthritic condition *and* sorrowed by the fact that I have arthritis or at the fact that I contributed to it by an inappropriate lifestyle or at the betrayal of my body as a consequence of the fallen condition of mankind.¹⁵ In such situations, our sorrow regards the things of external pain in both cause and apprehension, while external pain in itself cannot.

¹¹ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 2, obj. 2, and its reply.

¹² *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 2, ad 3.

¹³ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 2. This practice of renaming a passion, a power, or an activity to illustrate how it has been qualified by its presence in a being imbued by reason is common practice in the tradition out of which Aquinas works. For example, with respect to the sensitive cognitive powers of memory and evaluation, both are renamed as they appear in the rational soul, namely, to reminiscence and cogitation. They remain the same generically speaking, but now have become so enriched by their participation in the life of reason that a new name is appropriate. For the enrichment of memory in general, see Frances A. Yates, *The Art of Memory* (London: Pimlico, 1966); Aristotle, *Aristotle on Memory*, trans. Richard Sorabji (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1972); and Mary Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). For the enrichment of evaluation, see *ST* I, q. 78, a. 4; and George Klubertanz, *The Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), 128–57.

¹⁴ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 7.

¹⁵ The latter sorrow is nicely described by Augustine in books XIII and XIV of *De civitate Dei*.

Thus, Aquinas agrees with what Augustine says, namely, that the “*sadness of the heart is every wound*, because even the pains of outward wounds are included under the interior sorrows of the heart.”¹⁶

The renaming of the properly human experience of pain to sorrow carries with it the implicit recognition that given its breadth with respect to time and object, it is a far more intense and debilitating experience than exterior pain, specifically as sorrow is related to our humanity. A sign of this lies in the fact that sorrow, besides being specific to the human experience, descriptive of a certain aspect of man’s sensitive appetitive life, and something that can intensify whatever bodily pain he might have, gives rise to the situation that there have been many good people throughout history, and even to this day, who have willingly endured pain for the sake of avoiding sorrow, and that this very pain, insofar as it was not repugnant to interior appetite, became “in a manner pleasant and agreeable by way of inward joy.”¹⁷ Thus, we have read of the saints and of other heroic men and women who were willing to suffer pain, even death, to avoid the sorrow associated with, say, abandoning the practice of philosophy (Socrates), or denying their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (St. Stephen and the early Christian martyrs), or undertaking a lie so as to save their own skin (St. Thomas More). Although such people suffered gravely, nonetheless they rejoiced in the fact that by their suffering, they, at the very least, did not violate those things that they considered to be more valuable than their own lives, and that, if in fact committed, would have been the occasion of a sorrow unknown to them up to that point. In a lesser way, we know of men and women who are willing to sacrifice their health, mental peace, financial stability, the pleasures of the bed, the bottle, and food, and other such things for the sake of higher goods, and who, in their suffering, find a certain satisfaction, even pleasure, as their suffering contributes to the realization and enjoyment of the good they seek.¹⁸ If such people

¹⁶ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 7. “‘Omnis plaga tristitia cordis est,’ quia etiam dolores exteriorum plagarum sub interiori cordis tristitia comprehenduntur.”

¹⁷ *ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 7. “Fit quodammodo delectabilis et iucundus interiori gaudio.”

¹⁸ Much of what is suggested here can be found in a close reading of the arguments and events of Plato’s *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*, together with the Socratic dictum that the unexamined life is not worth living. Epistemologically, Thomas also offers a reason for the depths of our sorrow: “Inward pain is not caused by the apprehended likeness of a thing: for a man is not inwardly pained by the apprehended likeness itself, but by the thing which the likeness represents. And this thing is all the more perfectly apprehended by means of its likeness, as this likeness is more immaterial and abstract. Consequently inward pain is per se greater as being caused by a greater evil, for as much as evil is better known by an inward apprehension” (*ST* I–II, q. 35, a. 7, ad 2). Thus, the all-too-common

are willing to endure even the pains associated with torture and death so as to avoid sorrow, one wonders at the effect that sorrow has upon one's very body and person.

The varied kinds of sorrow and their effects describe this well and demonstrate the specifically human dimension that is found in the experience of this emotion. First, Aquinas and his contemporaries were interested in four kinds. They derived from the works of St. John Damascene, who himself was heavily influenced by the writings of Nemesius.¹⁹ Sorrow for another's evil considered, however, as one's own in some fashion describes the experience of pity (*miser cordia*). Thus, we sorrow greatly for the troubles that our friends face without this evil being directly our own, but considered, because of the bonds of friendship, nonetheless to be ours.²⁰ Then there is the experience of envy (*invidia*). Here, we have someone experiencing sorrow for something that is neither evil nor his own. Instead, he envies another in the face of the other's good fortune whose good fortune, however, is considered as an evil to him; the other enjoys some good that the envious person does not and in the face of this envy, wishes that the other be deprived of it or that he himself attain that very good which the other enjoys and, thus, eliminate, so to speak, the advantage the other has over him.²¹ Third, there is a sorrow we experi-

sorrow that threatens to overwhelm the scholar or, more dangerously, the person of innate genius who beholds the evils of this life is a way normally not available to the general person, and this, without the scholar's training.

¹⁹ John Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, ed. E. M. Buytaert, trans. Burgundio of Pisa (Louvain and Paderborn: 1955). See vi–xx for a brief biography, history, and the importance of this work. See also Constantine N. Tsirpanlis, *The Anthropology of Saint John of Damascus* (Athens: 1969), 5–20; E. Gilson, *History of Christian Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1955), 91–92; O. Lottin, “La psychologie de l’acte humain chez saint Jean Damascène et les théologiens du XIII^e siècle occidental,” in *Psychologie et morale aux XII^e and XIII^e siècles*, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Gembloux: J. Duculot, 1957), 393–424; and St. John of Damascus, *Writings—The Fathers of the Church: A New Translation*, trans. Frederic H. Chase Jr. (New York: 1958), v–xviii, xxxii–xxxv. Némésius D’Émése, *De natura hominis*, ed. G. Verbeke and J. R. Moncho, trans. Burgundio de Pise (Leiden: Brill, 1975). See Chase in Damascus, *Writings*, xxxii–xxxv; and Buytaert in Damascene, *De fide orthodoxa*, which outlines in detail the exact borrowings from Nemesius.

²⁰ ST I–II, q. 35, a. 8. Consider also ST II–II, q. 30, a. 1–2. I will speak further of friendship below in relation to the effects and the alleviation of sorrow.

²¹ ST I–II, q. 35, a. 8. Examples of envy are unfortunately too commonplace to require an example here. As a side note, the creation of envy is at the heart of all advertising and is interesting (in relation to the description of envy) insofar as by presenting people in the ad with whom we have no personal connection, the only avenue to eliminate this sorrow is by leveling the playing field, so to speak, namely, to buy the very thing advertised. Thus, it is in the advertiser's best interest to know

ence that prevents our natural flight from an evil that afflicts us. Thomas calls this anxiety (*anxietas*) or perplexity (*angustia*). This sorrow is one that weighs upon the mind (*animus*) so as to make escape or flight seem impossible. Thus, we might experience a political situation at work that afflicts us, is progressing in its movement, seems out of our control, and allows for no escape. The presence of this evil to our minds under this description effectively robs us of our peace and sorrows us greatly, particularly as it excludes the possibility of flight; we simply have to see the entire situation through to its end. Finally, the situation could become so bad, and the anxiety so intense, that even our very limbs, speech, and other external activities are hindered in their natural operations, even, in some extreme cases, paralyzing them. This form of sorrow Aquinas calls torpor or sloth (*acedia*).²²

With respect to the effects of sorrow, we have the following: First, there is a lessened capacity to engage in those activities proper to our humanity, specifically the capacity to learn or, in extreme cases, to recall that which we had previously learned. The reason for this is that study requires an attention that pain and sorrow effectively rob insofar as their demands overwhelm us, drawing our attention away from all other considerations, and limiting our conscious direction or comportment to only those things that the pain or sorrow concern.²³ The examples of this are quite common: the experience of those who, in the grips of sorrow, fail to notice the most obvious of things, are absent-minded in their daily chores, are incapable of following the intricacies of a conversation, or who simply cannot follow anything requiring the attention or exertion

how to generate this envy and to identify the people whom he specifically wishes to experience this sorrow in the first place. For an extended commentary on this form of sorrow as it develops into a vice opposed to charity, see *ST II–II*, q. 36; for envy's relation to advertising, see Mark Kingwell, *In Pursuit of Happiness: Better Living from Plato to Prozac* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1998), 166–79.

²² Aquinas does not limit the experience of sorrow to just these four. This is evidenced by his reply to the second objection, where he speaks of repentance (*poenitentia*) as a form of sorrow associated with its proper object. He also mentions jealousy and indignation (*zelus et nemesis*), but only as they are related to envy (see *ST II–II*, q. 36, aa. 2, and 3). Thomas respects the traditional divisions concerning the eleven emotions of sensitive appetite as presented by St. John Damascene in his work *De fide orthodoxa*, but does not hesitate to delineate other species. Nonetheless, his concern is not to develop a catalogue of the emotions. Rather, he seeks to explain the general architecture of sensitive appetite so that he may write extensively, in the *secunda secundae*, about the virtues which perfect these, namely, the cardinal and theological virtues.

²³ *ST I–II*, q. 37, a. 1.

of the mind (the examples with respect to pain are even more obvious than these).²⁴

Next, there is what Thomas refers to as the oppression or weighing down (*aggravatio*) of one's person by sorrow. The use of *aggravatio* is here admittedly metaphorical, being more appropriately used to indicate a situation where, physically speaking, one is prevented from moving because of a heavy weight. Applying this to the experience of sorrow, the present evil is said to be like a weight that burdens the individual, preventing him from enjoying whatever it is he wants to enjoy. It impedes, as was said earlier, not just those activities proper to our very humanity, but also many and every other aspects of our person. So great can this sorrow be that it can confound or even paralyze not only one's body, but even one's very character and personality.²⁵ Finally, aligned with this experience is the fact that *aggravatio* gives rise to a limiting of one's contact with the external things and people of one's life, a sort of closing in on one's self, a withdrawal that may give rise to the situation wherein one is consumed, so to speak, by the very evil which afflicts. All hope is lost in such a situation, and one gives way to the depths of sorrow.²⁶

Clearly, then, sorrow and pain greatly weaken all that we do with respect to our humanity and the other aspects of our person, both animal and vegetative. Thomas notes that this weighing down especially afflicts the physiological aspect of our living. His explanation begins by noting that of all the emotions, sorrow and pain are directly and most powerfully opposed to the vital movement man experiences with respect to his very living, opposed both to this vital movement's generic description or qualitative aspect and to its measure or quantitative aspects. This vital movement arises out of man's nature and constitutes that most basic force driving man to seek whatever is conducive to his well-being on the vegetative, sensitive, and intellectual level. Thus, man is urged by his nature to

²⁴ Nonetheless, Thomas does qualify this point by noting that one must consider not only the strength of the pain or sorrow involved, but also the love that a person has for those activities that can be hindered by the demands of pain and sorrow. Consequently, the more that one loves study or, more generally, engagement in those activities proper to our humanity, the stronger is one's *intentio* with respect to these, and the less is it hindered in the activities concerning those things that one loves. The experience of pain or sorrow can even have a sharpening effect upon the intellect. For moderate pain prevents the mind from wandering insofar as one strongly attends to the means whereby one might be freed from sorrow. Nonetheless, when the pain or sorrow goes beyond a certain measure, it becomes either a hindrance or a preventative to reason and its activities.

²⁵ *ST* I-II, q. 37, a. 2

²⁶ *ST* I-II, q. 37, a. 2, ad 2 and 3.

seek out, obtain, and preserve the body's good, his own personal good, and, if properly educated, the good as such. Now, the fully ethical and happy person is one who has successfully brought his subjective desires and good in line with the objective demands made by his humanity and the purpose of his living. He has obtained the goods of fortune, body, and soul and has ordered them effectively both with regard to his nature and his end. These rightly and perfectly address his vital force or movement with respect to this force's nature and the measure of the goods that is appropriate to it. Now, exceeding right measure is a quantitative affair, but not one necessarily opposed to the qualitative aspect of man's nature and vital force. Thus, too much pleasure is opposed to right measure but not necessarily to the quality of man's nature, or more specifically, to his vital movement as human. If, however, the very course of man's nature is frustrated or hindered in seeking good, then this is repugnant to his very life, to his vital movement as human. Of all the emotions, sorrow most especially does this. The very nature of emotion is such that, being a phenomenon proper to sensitive appetite, one must also include the material changes that accompany emotion in one's understanding of it, and this as essential to the very experience itself.²⁷ Thus, in defining emotion, the bodily changes (*transmutationes*) are considered to be its material element, while the cognitive and, particularly, the evaluative are emotion's formal element.²⁸ Now, a general division can be made among the emotions by stating that although all of them may be experienced in excess, and thus improperly and immoderately, nonetheless, some of these will still be in conformity with the quality of the vital movement of our humanity, while others will not. We have already seen the former in connection with pleasure, and this can also be extended to love and desire. Thus, for example, we might say that immoderate love being in conformity with the direction and quality of our vital movement hurts it only indirectly through its excess. However, with respect to the latter, emotions like hatred, aversion, sorrow, fear, and despair are repugnant directly to the very nature and quality of our vital movement, as well as

²⁷ See *ST* I, q. 78, a. 1; and I-II, q. 22.

²⁸ See *ST* I, q. 20, a. 1, ad 2: "in passionibus sensitivi appetitus, est considerare aliquid quasi materiale, scilicet corporalem transmutationem; et aliquid quasi formale, quod est ex parte appetitus. Sicut in ira, ut dicitur in *I De anima*, materiale est accensio sanguinis circa cor, vel aliquid huiusmodi; formale vero, appetitus vindictae." See also *ST* I, q. 75, a. 3, ad 3; I-II, q. 22, a. 2, ad 3; I-II, q. 37, a. 4; and I-II, q. 44, a. 1: "in passionibus animae est sicut formale ipse motus appetitivae potentiae, sicut autem materiale transmutatio corporalis: quorum unum alteri proportionatur. Unde secundum similitudinem et rationem appetitivi motus, sequitur corporalis transmutatio."

indirectly hurting it through excess. Thomas mentions fear and despair particularly as doing great damage in this regard, but sorrow most of all since it “weighs down the soul by reason of a present evil which makes a stronger impression than future evil” (with which fear and despair deal).²⁹ Thus, sorrow is the most damaging of all the emotions, as it effects all that has been described above, and leads eventually to the hindrance, the shutting down, the paralysis, and even the consumption, so to speak, of one’s life on the psychological, physiological, intellectual, moral, and even the spiritual level.³⁰

What, then, are the causes of sorrow? From the preceding, it should be clear that its cause is evil, present, either really or cognitively, to an individual as it afflicts him, an evil that he previously hated, from which he tried to distance himself, but that he did not successfully accomplish. Now, since love is the foundation of our affectivity, giving rise to all the other emotions,³¹ one could say perhaps it is the absence of good that causes sorrow. However this may be (and indeed we can easily imagine

²⁹ *ST I–II*, q. 37, a. 4. “Passiones autem quae important motum appetitus cum fuga vel retractione quadam, repugnant vitali motioni non solum secundum quantitatem, sed etiam secundum speciem motus, et ideo simpliciter nocent: sicut timor et desperatio, et prae omnibus tristitia quae aggravat animum ex malo praesenti, cuius est fortior impressio quam futuri.”

³⁰ *ST I–II*, q. 37, a. 4. But what of anger and fear? Are they not more harmful than sorrow insofar as they can drive one to madness, and thus deprive one of one’s highest good, namely, reason itself (obj. 3)? Aquinas answers: “A lesser cause suffices to hinder the use of reason, than to destroy life: since we observe that many ailments deprive one of the use of reason, before depriving one of life. Nevertheless fear and anger cause very great harm to the body, by reason of the sorrow which they imply, and which arises from the absence of the thing desired.” In essence, Aquinas points to the complex relations that exist among the emotions, and that in the case of anger and fear, there is the concomitant experience of sorrow that these two emotions carry with them by their very nature, anger, insofar as one reacts against the evil which has visited one (every act of anger proceeds out of the experience of sorrow, that some evil is present and afflicts one, and that one has decided to rise up against it in anger and by so doing, hope to defeat it, see *ST I–II*, q. 46–8), and fear, insofar as one experiences the future real evil to come right now in a cognitive way (every act of fear recognizes the presence of evil to one cognitively speaking, and that fear bespeaks one’s concern that this evil approaches, threatens, that it may actually come and settle in one’s life. Thus, one fears the rising tide of intolerance against Christians insofar as one is cognitively exposed now to this evil yet to come. Thus, every fear arises out of a cognitively induced sorrow, see *ST I–II*, qq. 41–44; and Loughlin, “The Complexity of *timor*”). He continues: “Moreover, sorrow too sometimes deprives man of the use of reason: as may be seen in those who through sorrow become a prey to melancholy or madness.”

³¹ See *ST I–II*, q. 27, a. 4.

the sorrow that arises from considering the absence of virtue in the world, of good politicians, of justice, or the like), the absence of good is at best secondary to and derivative of the experience of sorrow. For, properly speaking, the presence of evil is far more immediate and efficacious than good's absence insofar as the presence of an evil has a far greater impact in the experience of sorrow itself than does the reasoned consideration upon, or the imagination of, a missing good. Thus, sorrow will be far more greatly experienced in the face of injustice than in considering or imagining the lack of justice.³² Nonetheless, since all emotion derives from love, our sorrows are intimately bound up with the quality of our loves and our desires. For example, if our love is set upon virtue and we desire it greatly to be realized among our co-workers, friends, relatives, citizens, and so on, then our sorrow inevitably addresses the lack of it among these people. Furthermore, when we see that the desire we have for a particular good, in this example, virtue among our fellows, is far from ever being realized, our desire can also become the occasion for sorrow, namely, over the delay of our desired good for them. And in those rare instances where, desiring, for example, to see a friend progress in the way of virtue, who instead takes up a particular vice, or even betrays the love that you share with him, sorrow again is occasioned, this time by the good's entire removal, that good which we so desired, in which we now have lost all hope.³³ We also experience sorrow concerning the desires that we have for our own happiness and the perfection of our nature; so great is the desire for such, and yet how daunting is the task in acquiring and rightly ordering the goods of fortune, the body, and the soul, particularly in light of the fact that there is much concerning our happiness that is out of our direct control. If hope is maintained throughout, then our desire for these things gives us pleasure. But, as soon as hope is lost, then our pleasure turns to sorrow.³⁴ In essence, though, the primary cause of sorrow is simply evil, present to our lives, afflicting us, and overpowering us by its superior force. Thomas notes that there is a distinct danger in the fact that it is a superior force, in that, being so great, it might transform our initial resistance or repugnance to it into its own image, effectively eliminating the discord between the person and the evil, and producing instead a harmony between the two. In a word, this person now becomes what he hated, avoided, and sorrowed over previously. The sorrow has stopped, but at a great price. Thus, the familiar stories of those who, in the face of great difficulty occasioning great

³² *ST* I-II, q. 36, a. 1.

³³ *ST* I-II, q. 36, a. 2.

³⁴ *ST* I-II, q. 36, aa. 2-3.

harm, finally consent and give way to the stronger force, allowing it to consume them and leave them at peace.³⁵

Although this last point is rather dour, it need not be. For we can just as easily imagine one who, subjected to sorrow over the years, now faces the situation where it can be eliminated through the overpowering force of goodness in his life.³⁶ Now, there are several ways by which sorrow can be overcome and mitigated. Aquinas discusses pleasure (q. 35, aa. 3–6; and q. 38, a. 1), tears (q. 38, a. 2), the sympathy or compassion of one's friends (q. 38, a. 3), the contemplation of truth (q. 38, a. 4), and finally the application of sleep and baths (q. 38, a. 5).

In general, any and all pleasure softens the experience of sorrow. For pleasure can be described as a repose (*quies*) of the appetite in a suitable good, while sorrow can be seen as a sort of appetitive weariness (*fatigatio*) or sickness (*aegritudine*) in the face of an unsuitable evil. Thus, the analogy: As repose is opposed to weariness with respect to the body, so too are pleasure and sorrow opposed with respect to the sensitive appetite. And just as the body is relieved by any and all rest, so too is sorrow mitigated by any and all pleasure.³⁷ Nonetheless, care must be taken here to examine what is the cause of one's sorrow, and not to treat of sorrow simply by means of anything pleasurable; the effects of sorrow are not to be mistaken for its cause. Throughout his discussion of sorrow, Thomas is careful to note that a degree of sorrow can in fact be considered good, particularly as it causes one to take note of, perhaps, a character flaw to which one would not normally have attended were it not for the presence of sorrow in one's life directly caused by and, thus, pointing to this

³⁵ ST I–II, q. 36, a. 4, and replies to the objections. This is appropriately rendered in the film concerning St. Thomas More, *A Man for All Seasons*, with respect to those who refused to stand against the injustice perpetrated by King Henry VIII, especially Richard Rich who betrays Thomas More for a political position.

³⁶ This is a popular theme in literature that is beautifully exemplified in the character of Colin in the children's book *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

³⁷ ST I–II, q. 38, a. 1. As a side note, in his reply to obj. 3, Thomas considers the situations where one took pleasure in the things of a particular friendship which now have become the cause of sorrow with the friend's death. Indeed, Aquinas admits, we have two opposed movements, one to pleasure with respect to the things that were shared in common, and the other to the sorrow occasioned by the fact that the friend is no longer here to enjoy these things with us. However, the stronger movement of pleasure, in the end, will prevail "since the perception of the present moves more strongly than the memory of the past, and since love of self is more persistent than love of another." Thus, with respect to the mitigation of sorrow, pleasure, being the stronger movement, is very important in bringing the person around, as they say. See also ST I–II, q. 35, a. 6.

defect in the first place. In the wider context of the Christian's faith, the pain and sorrow of this life can help in guiding him to attend to those things that keep him from a fuller relationship with God, or even from attaining to his heavenly homeland.³⁸ Consequently, some pains and sorrows are to be endured insofar as they have either a redemptive or restorative quality, and the use of pleasurable things as mitigating agents must have this consideration in mind from the start. Only the reflective man does this, one who has a deeper awareness of his humanity, and the purpose of his living. In the absence of such considerations, the non-reflective grasp at any pleasure to relieve their suffering, treating the symptoms instead of their cause.³⁹

Tears, and other outward expressions of sorrow, can also soften the impact of sorrow. For they have the effect of turning the *intentio* of one's person to outward concerns and considerations, of dispersing one's attention to these, rather than allowing it to concentrate upon the evil that is present, thus causing the sufferer to turn inward upon himself and feed the closing, weighting, and consuming effects of sorrow as noted previously.⁴⁰ But if the expression of sorrow is not moderated, then it loses its efficacy, and only serves to deepen one's sorrow. Thus, just as it is with pleasure, so too with one's tears, one must seek the true cause of one's sorrow and not indulge in those things that initially ameliorate its effects.⁴¹

Our friends, and the communities in which we find ourselves, are very potent forces in the mitigation of our sorrow, particularly as they, in feeling our pain with us, are perceived by us who suffer to share the burden that weighs us down and thus lighten our load and, by consequence, our sorrow too.⁴² More to the point, however, is that when our friends share our suffering, we experience, in a very direct and real fashion, their love for us. This, indeed, gives us much pleasure. Since pleasure softens our sorrow, then friends condoling with us soften our sorrow directly. Although it may

³⁸ See Aquinas's *Sermon 7 (Beata gens)*. Consider Loughlin, "The Complexity of *timor*," for a discussion along the same lines with respect to fear.

³⁹ *ST I-II*, q. 35, a. 3, and replies to the objections. It is very common in the face of great sorrows to indulge excessively in the pleasures of the flesh, particularly those connected with alcohol. The danger of this, however, is highlighted in Thomas's discussion of sloth below.

⁴⁰ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 2.

⁴¹ *ST I-II*, q. 38, a. 2, ad 2. Indeed it is a common experience that tears can be taken too far, and that once immoderately experienced, can in fact defeat their mitigating qualities and, in some cases, can even deepen one's sorrow.

⁴² It is interesting to note that although Thomas considers such language as metaphorical, it nonetheless endures to this day as a description of the chief effect of sorrow, as well as the images surrounding it concerning its alleviation.

be the case that we might be pained to see our friends affected by our own sorrow, nonetheless, the witness of their love is by far the greater experience and, consequently, overcomes any pain we might experience because of their condolence.⁴³

Given our rational nature, it comes as no surprise that Thomas considers the contemplation of truth itself to be a strong factor in the mitigation of sorrow. Our very nature is properly characterized by the capacity to reason and to choose freely, and this capacity touches upon every other aspect of our living, both sensitive and vegetative. Since our rationality is the highest aspect of our being, engagement in this, in all aspects of our living, constitutes the very perfection of our nature, and thus is vital to our happiness. Consequently, the highest pleasure we can engage in with respect to our humanity is that one connected with the search for wisdom, particularly as experienced by philosophers, theologians, and Christians, generally considered.⁴⁴ Since pleasure mitigates sorrow, this greatest of pleasures will most effectively drive out whatever sorrow we may suffer. And so, as Thomas states, "In the midst of tribulations, men rejoice in the contemplation of divine things and of future beatitude,"⁴⁵ as is recounted throughout Scripture, and in the lives and even the martyrdom of the saints. This pleasure, being so great and perfective of our being, "overflows"⁴⁶ into the other aspects of our person, even, in some cases, to the level of the senses. Thus, we have the stories of the saints who, in great pain under torture, had their suffering greatly mitigated, and even, in some cases, eliminated, by their contemplation of divine things. One should note, however, that such a state is possible either as these people have directly received this gift from God or, more commonly, as they have actively engaged themselves in the life of contemplation, have thirsted for this knowledge, and have habituated their entire beings and living to this pursuit. In general, though, the contemplation of truth can affect a great uplifting of the spirit and effectively counter, to varying degrees, the weighting effect of sorrow.⁴⁷

⁴³ ST I-II, q. 38, a. 3.

⁴⁴ See ST I-II, q. 3.

⁴⁵ ST I-II, q. 38, a. 4. "Homines ex contemplatione divina et futurae beatitudinis, in tribulationibus gaudent."

⁴⁶ ST I-II, q. 38, a. 4, ad 3: "in viribus animae fit *redundantia* a superiori ad inferius. Et secundum hoc, delectatio contemplationis, quae est in superiori parte, *redundat* ad mitigandum etiam dolorem qui est in sensu." Aquinas understandably uses this language in keeping with his view of the unity of the human person, namely, that all aspects of the person are for the sake of the whole which itself works for the sake of his ultimate end, namely, happiness.

⁴⁷ ST I-II, q. 38, a. 4.

Finally, the mitigation of sorrow by means of sleep and baths. Given that sorrow is properly a human phenomenon and, thus, something proper to our soul, one would think that sleep and baths are rather pointless, addressing the body alone. Furthermore, they interfere with the effectiveness of the previously discussed mitigating factors, particularly the contemplation of truth. Finally, even though sorrow has a very specific bodily involvement in its realization, sleep and baths affect other aspects of one's body not connected with sorrow (tired eyes, sore back, tired aching limbs, and the like).⁴⁸ This article, and the objections with which it concerns itself, are important insofar as Thomas considers mitigating factors of sorrow from a material perspective; the article is clearly not just about sleep and baths. Consequently, the article's question could be put in more modern terms, namely, whether intervention at the bodily level can effectively mitigate sorrow.

In his response, Thomas reminds us of his discussion in the *Summa theologiae* I–II, question 37, article 4, that sorrow, by its very nature, is directly opposed to the vital force and life of the body itself. Thus, in a very general way, whatever restores the body to its right and natural condition is opposed to sorrow and, thus, mitigates it. Now, if sleep and baths, or any other intervention directed at the materiality of our person, can effectively protect, reinforce, or even rectify the health of the body, then such can mitigate the effects of sorrow not only with respect to their material manifestation, but to some degree the experience of it with respect to the soul, insofar as these material interventions cause pleasure, a proven mitigating factor with respect to sorrow. In a broader perspective, then, in addition to sleep and baths, one might add exercise, good clean air, pure water, a good diet, therapeutic massages, and varied forms of entertainment to the list, anything that addresses the body and helps it with the demands placed upon it by the experience of sorrow. Finally, there are whatever medications available that effect a balancing, in Thomas's terms, of the humors, or, in our language, of the chemistry and biological processes involved in our affectivity.⁴⁹ Such medications, of course, were not available in Thomas's day. Thus, any intervention at the material level had to be one that indirectly addressed the problem. Most effective, it seems, would be sleep and baths, insofar as they have an obvious restorative effect upon the body, but

⁴⁸ See *ST* I–II, q. 38, a. 5, obj. 1–3.

⁴⁹ For a general discussion concerning Thomas's medical knowledge and the role it plays in his thought, see Mark Jordan, "Medicine and Natural Philosophy in Aquinas," in *Miscellanea Mediaevalia Veröffentlichungen des Thomas-Instituts der Universität zu Köln*, vol. 19, *Thomas Von Aquin—Werk und Wirkung im Licht neuerer Forschungen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1988), 233–46.

also as they disperse the *intentio* of our person to things other than the present evil, sleep most effectively of the two.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, the overall tenor of the article suggests that if there were a way to address the specific bodily changes involved in sorrow, then this would be the better way to proceed, rather than depend upon the indirect means offered by Thomas's time. The medications of our time are said to do just this. Whether this is the case, the fact still remains that Thomas would consider a drug targeting the very center of the body's involvement in sorrow as a particularly strong mitigating factor of sorrow's effects, but still as something which addresses only the symptoms, and not sorrow's underlying causes. The remedy for sorrow, in Aquinas's view, is not a material one. Rather, it is one that must address importantly our very humanity, both in itself and in relation to the way by which we perfect this through our living.

We see this most clearly in how Aquinas treats the morality of sorrow, and of sloth, a species of sorrow he discusses at length in the *Summa theologiae* II-II, question 35, as it develops into a vice contrary to charity. With respect to the first, one might ask why Thomas would consider the morality of sorrow in this context. For the series of questions concerning sorrow have gone from its nature, to its causes, effects, and finally to its mitigating forces. Question 39 thus seems somewhat out of place in this psychological context. I do not think it sufficient to say that Thomas treats the morality of sorrow because of the broader moral purposes of the *prima secundae*, the part of the *Summa theologiae* in which this discussion of sorrow takes place. Such an answer would only give rise to the question "then what is a psychological treatment of sorrow, and of the emotions as such, doing in the *prima secundae*?" The better answer lies in the fact that Thomas does not consider sorrow, or any of the emotions, as events properly and primarily treated of by the medical arts. As we have seen, sorrow is not of the body. Nor is it to be identified with its associated physical manifestations, or with the effects that result from these. Pain, taken in its proper sense as described above, is the concern of the medical arts. Sorrow, on the other hand, addresses the person with respect to his humanity insofar as he, through sensitive appetite, seeks to escape from the presence of some evil in his life. Consequently, the means whereby sorrow is best addressed is to try to ameliorate the initial effects of sorrow, but this for the purpose of getting past the symptoms to the underlying causes of it. In this respect, Thomas considers a moral approach as that which most appropriately addresses sorrow at its very

⁵⁰ However, one might consider baths in the larger context of the practice of sending people suffering from depressive disorders to a health spa, or to natural springs, something still practiced today.

roots, and hopes to eliminate it, and not just soften the blow as the mitigating agents seek to accomplish. It is with this in mind that we can understand why such a question appears in the midst of psychological considerations, and further, why such questions pepper the entire treatise of the emotions. Sorrow must be considered primarily as something that afflicts us with respect to our very humanity, and not something to be restricted to our body or material condition alone.⁵¹

And so, considered in itself, all sorrow is evil in its very nature as it is deleterious to the body, the sensitive appetite, a person's peace, character, and the vital energy that animates his being. However, within the context of a person's living, sorrow can exhibit a goodness. First, it is good that, in the presence of something evil, we experience sorrow. So, if one were not brought to sorrow concerning the moral condition of the majority of politicians, particularly those who profess that they are Catholics but do not act in accordance with the teachings of the Church in the discharge of their duties as politicians, then this would reflect badly upon one's character, since the lack of sorrow in this case would indicate that one has judged that such a situation is not an evil and that it is quite appropriate to establish a divide between one's moral and religious views and the running of one's country.⁵² In this light, Thomas affirms that it is a sign of one's own goodness that one is sorrowed by that which is evil, that it is a good thing that we are shamed, for example, by the base acts that we have

⁵¹ The latter is very much characteristic of modern approaches to the phenomenon, and fits nicely with a Cartesian and/or materialist view of the human person (the one, identifying the body as the source of all emotion, the other, seeing the human person as nothing other than his body). Nonetheless, Aquinas cannot be read in either way with respect to his views concerning human nature. For a detailed account of these issues, as well as an intelligent recounting of Thomas's view concerning the human person, see chapter 6 of Eleonore Stumpf, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), which is a re-working of a paper titled "Non-Cartesian Substance Dualism and Materialism without Reductionism," *Faith and Philosophy* 12 (1995): 505–31.

⁵² Recall, though, what was said earlier concerning the overtaking of one by the very evil that has afflicted one and has effected such a change in one's view of the suitable and the good that now such a one is no longer sorrowed by these matters. In this regard, consider, for example, a person who, having been criticized both explicitly and implicitly for holding that there should be an intimate relation between a politician's personal moral stances and the discharge of his public duties, might be overcome by the ferocity of both the attack and the sorrow that results, and gives over to the argument, and thus stops experiencing his former sorrow, and in fact begins to take pleasure in his new position. Such a person has been overcome by the very evil that has afflicted him, and been consumed and formed in its image. The lack of sorrow is indicative of this, a bad thing, as Thomas has just argued.

committed, that we feel the sorrow attached to guilt for the injustices that we have visited upon others, and so on.⁵³ For in the experience of sorrow, we not only indicate that there is goodness within us with respect to the very sorrow itself, but also that there is now an opportunity for rectification of that situation which brought about the sorrow in the first place. In this regard, then, sorrow is not only a good thing, it is also something quite fitting to our nature as moral beings, that is, as beings who are directed, by our humanity, to the acquiring of those goods perfective of this humanity as such (*bonum honestum*). Sorrow experienced indicates both the perception that something is evil, as well as its rejection. However, it only becomes a fitting good insofar as one's reason and will are rectified by that which is true and good respectively. In other words, in the virtuous whose minds are informed, as Pieper puts it, by "the truth of all things" and whose wills have been so trained to seek good and detest evil readily so as to eliminate the latter from their lives, sorrow becomes a powerfully suitable experience in the ridding of this evil as such.⁵⁴ In this regard, sorrow becomes a useful good (*bonum utile*), in that we seek not only to avoid the experience of sorrow in the first place and all of its deleterious effects noted previously, but also insofar as it helps us avoid things which are evil in themselves, or those which can be easily abused.⁵⁵ Finally, given the importance of sorrow in this regard, one is not to consider it, or even pain, as the greatest of evils. For it would be worse, (1) not to consider something as evil that really was; (2) not to reject it as evil when discovered to be so; and (3) to be separated from that which is truly good.⁵⁶

With respect, secondly, to the vice of sloth (*acedia*), we have an example of how sorrow, if not attended to by a mind rectified by truth and wisdom and a will by goodness and justice, can deform the very heart, mind, and, ultimately, the character and soul of a person. In brief, then, sloth begins as a sorrow that is so burdensome to the mind that one so oppressed is strongly disinclined to activity. As was said earlier, the evil situation from which one suffers becomes so bad, and the anxiety so intense, that even one's limbs, speech, and other activities are hindered in their operations, even to the point of paralysis. The vice, however, is something far more insidious. One becomes so weary of activity that this even extends to the doing of good deeds, particularly those of a spiritual

⁵³ ST I-II, q. 39, a. 1.

⁵⁴ ST I-II, q. 39, a. 2. See also Josef Pieper, *Living the Truth* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), the first essay titled "The Truth of All Things."

⁵⁵ ST I-II, q. 39, a. 3.

⁵⁶ ST I-II, q. 39, a. 4.

nature.⁵⁷ In this respect, Thomas describes *acedia* as a vice that has at its core the rejection of spiritual goods, particularly of the divine good itself.⁵⁸ It despises spiritual goods for many reasons; they are difficult, burdensome to the body, hinder the body's comfort, pleasure, and repose. However, the central reason is far graver than these. At the heart of *acedia* lies, as Pieper so well describes it, a

deliberate turning away from, an actual fleeing from God. Man flees from God because God has exalted human nature to a higher, a divine, state of being and has thereby enjoined on man a higher standard of obligation. *Acedia* is, in the last analysis, a "*detestatio boni divini*" (*De malo*, 8, 1), with the monstrous result that, upon reflection, man expressly wishes that God had not ennobled him but had "left him in peace" (*ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 3). . . Sloth is man's joyless, ill-tempered, and narrow-mindedly self-seeking rejection of the nobility of the children of God with all the obligations it entails. . . Man will not be what God wants him to be.⁵⁹

Such a vice is to be considered a capital fault insofar as it destroys the spiritual life, particularly as this destruction is brought about by one's consent "in the abhorrence, horror, and detestation of the divine good."⁶⁰ In the grips of this vice, sloth deforms one's character to such an extent that it gives rise to malice, spite, timidity, despair, a sluggish indifference concerning the commandments, and the wandering of the mind to illicit matters.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 1.

⁵⁸ *ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 2.

⁵⁹ Josef Pieper, *Faith, Hope, and Love* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), 119–20. Furthermore, he likens *acedia* to an "anxious vertigo that befalls the human individual when he becomes aware of the height to which God has raised him. One who is trapped in *acedia* has neither the courage nor the will to be as great as he really is. He would prefer to be less great in order thus to avoid the obligation of greatness. *Acedia* is a perverted humility; it will not accept supernatural goods because they are, by their very nature, linked to a claim on him who receives them. Something similar exists in the sphere of mental health and illness. The psychiatrist frequently observes that, while a neurotic individual may have a superficial will to be restored to health, in actuality he fears more than anything else the demands that are made, as a matter of course, on one who is well" (119).

⁶⁰ *ST II-II*, q. 35, a. 3. "Quandoque vero pertingit usque ad rationem, quae consentit in fugam, et horrorem, et detestationem boni divini."

⁶¹ "Malitia, rancor, pusillanimitas, desperatio, torpor circa praecepta, evagatio mentis circa illicita" (*ST II-II*, q. 36, a. 4, ad 2). See Aquinas's response to this objection for a detailed description of this vice as it plays itself out in the life of one given over to it. In short, from the experience of sorrow, one shuns whatever causes it and passes over to that which gives pleasure. Thus, those who sorrow over spiritual matters pass to the pleasures of the flesh (wandering of the mind to illicit

The robustness of Thomas's views concerning sorrow is evident. He examines not only the general nature of *tristitia*, but offers detailed descriptions concerning that with which it deals, its different manifestations, the effects that it has upon one's entire person, the ways by which it might be effectively mitigated, and implicit views concerning the proper means to be used in its eradication, and this, not in an absolute way, that is, with a view only to the elimination of one's sorrow, but relative to the individual with respect to his nature, destiny, and happiness; some sorrow is good insofar as it has both a redemptive quality (in relation to the Christian's experience of it) or, at the very least, a restorative quality with respect to one's character and moral being.

When one examines not just sorrow, but any of the eleven basic emotions, one will find this peculiarly moral aspect, peculiar, that is, to modern ears. For we do not commonly associate or conduct the treatment of our affective state in moral terms, but rather proceed in medical ones, seeing our affectivity as a manifestation of our materiality, and thus as something which must be treated in this way, namely, by way of medication. Even those areas of psychiatry and psychology which treat of the cognitive contributions to the affective life regard these as yet further means whereby one's materiality may be addressed. In short, cognitive approaches to therapy are considered effective only insofar as they affect the material or the bodily. Now, this is understandable when one considers what are the implicit views held today concerning human nature. For the most part, people, even the learned outside the fields of philosophy and theology, do not hold well-articulated views concerning the nature of the human person. On the one hand, there are the varied forms of eliminative or non-eliminative psychological materialism (the default position for many of those in the sciences or who are secularly minded)

matters). Such a man avoids the end of the spiritual life (despair), as well as the difficult means whereby it is attained (timidity). He displays no care for justice (sluggish indifference concerning the commandments), is indignant with and struggles against good men who lead others to spiritual goods (spite), and even detests these spiritual goods themselves (malice). The response to objection 3 adds bitterness (*amaritudo*) to spite as the latter's effect, idleness and drowsiness (*otiositas et somnolentia*) to laziness, and uneasiness of mind, curiosity, verbosity, restlessness of body, and instability (*importunitas mentis, curiositas, verbositas, inquietudo corporis, instabilitas*) to the wandering of the mind to illicit matters. One should also consider Josef Pieper's description of these *filiae acediae*, "the companions and peers" of sloth, found on pages 120–22 of *Faith, Hope, and Love*. Finally, the reader may want to consider an article from the Summer 2004 edition of the journal *Communio* (vol. 31) which deals with the nature of *acedia* in detail, namely, Jean-Charles Nault's "Acedia: Enemy of Spiritual Joy," 236–58.

or some form of dualism (mostly those who have had some religious training or who have not taken on the various forms of skepticism common in learned circles).⁶² Both generally see the affective life as something restricted to the body or, importantly, centered upon the chemistry, genetics, and physiology involved in emotion. Again, a sign of this is the prevalent way in which emotional disorders are treated today, namely, by means of medication. Even when those within the fields of psychiatry and psychology recognize that medication is not enough, they are stymied with respect to alternative solutions, again, because they are, for the most part, incapable of escaping the models of human nature they have inherited, being children of Descartes and, thus, heir to a metaphysical tradition which makes it extremely difficult for them to conceive of views of human nature other than those of psychological monism and dualism.⁶³ Thomas, however, focuses *not* upon the soul or the body, but rather upon the human person himself who is comprised of these things. Consequently, given the centrality of the human person in his discussions concerning every and any psychological phenomenon, in our case the emotions, his main emphasis will be upon the person himself who experiences them, and this within the primary context of that in which one

⁶² For a basic discussion of these positions, plus that of psychological idealism, or phenomenism, see Richard Double, *Beginning Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 101–31.

⁶³ For a discussion of how this problem even plagues the philosophical and theological communities, see Stumpf, *Aquinas*, chapter 6. Take special note of the way by which she formulates an alternative view descriptive of Aquinas's model of human nature. Also, see Amélie O. Rorty, "Aristotle on the Metaphysical Status of *Pathe*," *Review of Metaphysics* 38 (March 1984): 521–46, for a discussion concerning a related problem, namely, that in the face of having lost the metaphysics of a prior age, one cannot fully or properly understand the terms and concepts inherited from them, terms and concepts that continue to exert a heavy influence upon how we currently conduct our discussions and understand the things with which they deal. Rorty discusses this point in light of the *pathe*, but what is developed here could easily be applied to other matters concerning the soul, human nature, and so on. It is rarely recognized how the language we use in many philosophical and theological debates was originally developed in ancient and medieval times, and that the notions this language signifies, the context in which we speak on certain issues, and the relations established between these notions and contexts, continue to be heavily influenced by a metaphysics that is quite distinct from the one in which we work and think today. A recovery of an understanding of the metaphysics from which these terms and concepts arose is the only way by which we can bring clarity to the confusion of debate today. To try to conduct the discussion within a metaphysics foreign to the genesis and development of these terms and concepts is to condemn oneself to the many impasses that we experience today in both philosophy and theology.

finds the fullness of one's humanity, that is, within the ethical context which has as its goal the acquisition and enjoyment of happiness. Within this context, the physiological, and the psychological both find their homes, and only in this context would it make sense to ask about the morality of the emotions, their goodness and badness, and whether the most damaging of them, namely, sorrow, can have any benefit to the human person himself and, thus, be something which one must endure and *not* eliminate by any and every means. Such an approach makes no sense within a metaphysic that centers itself upon the utter materiality of the human person and the lack of any transcendence to his being.

Sorrow is a specifically human experience made possible by the fact that we, in our animality, are not condemned to such, but rather enjoy our animality within a life completely imbued by reason. The length, the breadth, and the quality of our suffering are possible only insofar as reason encompasses and qualifies every other aspect of our being. It is because of my reason that I can go beyond my external pains and suffer in a new way, namely, internally without any *laesio* being present to the eye, and at any depth to which the evil that afflicts can take me. It is because of my rationality that I can take a phenomenon like sorrow and experience its species in relation to the varied difficulties of my life. It is because of my reason and will that I can alleviate my suffering by choosing the means whereby it can be mitigated by addressing its bodily manifestations or by engaging in specifically human endeavors so as to eradicate the evil present in my life and, thus, experience the relief that joy brings. Finally, it is because I am a being endowed with the capacity to determine myself in light of what I know that I can develop my sorrow and, through a series of misadventures, nurture it until it manifests whatever vice can be associated with it (in our example above through the vice of sloth).

Based, then, upon the description that Aquinas offers of sorrow, and the depths to which one may sink with respect to it, it is a fair thing to say that Aquinas does indeed articulate a robust notion of depression, one which speaks directly and intelligently to the human condition, to the real experience of it, and beyond it to the frightening depths to which it can plunge a person who is not careful to prevent the overwhelming and transforming effects that sorrow brings with it.⁶⁴ Nonetheless, Aquinas

⁶⁴ Consider the most common descriptions associated with depression: a loss of energy and interest in the things of daily life, especially with respect to the enjoyment that one used to take in things formerly pleasurable, including food and rest; great difficulties in concentration; an overwhelming experience of indecisiveness; a confusion of and slowness to one's thinking; an exaggerated affect; feelings of

might object to the way in which we have signified the phenomenon, saying that it is misnamed insofar as the naming of it is centers upon one of its chief effects (*aggravatio*), and not with respect to its essential notion, namely, the *cause* of this being weighed down by the real presence and affliction of evil. In this light, one can understand why Thomas would begin with the generic notion of pain, discern its species (internal and external), and then rename the properly human experience of pain so that one might better understand the notion to which the word points, rather than import the effects associated with pain into the discussion of the essence of the experience itself. Oddly enough, it is by avoiding this immediate importation that Aquinas puts a more human face upon the experience, concentrating not upon what we share with the other animals, but seeking out rather its particular manifestation in a rational being. Thus, the renaming of the phenomenon of internal pain suggests that its manifestation in a human life might require a different approach to that of external pain, that perhaps the medical arts need to be extended further to include the contributions that can be made by the philosopher and the theologian, specifically as these two arts are those which treat of the human person in their fullness, and this in relation to the richness of reality itself, and the purpose for which we live. Sorrow, then, and depression particularly, becomes for Aquinas a metaphysical, moral, and spiritual concern with respect to its genesis, progression, and termination, and not just simply an event of the body itself.⁶⁵ N V

worthlessness, even to the point of considering death and/or suicide. See the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* of the American Psychiatric Association under “depression” for descriptions of this kind.

⁶⁵ This is not to say that philosophers and theologians are blind to those situations where the underlying reason for an emotional disorder is simply a defect in one’s physiology, genetics, or chemical balances. Nor are they blind to the fact that a disorder, once experienced, can habituate the body to a specific way of feeling, and thus take on a life of its own. Such, they would say, would have to be judged on a case-by-case basis, requiring a diverse team of individuals working together to help alleviate the suffering of the individual in question by the means discovered to be most appropriate to the situation. Nonetheless, they would insist that the discussion, judgment, and treatment take place within the categories discussed throughout this article, that is, with an eye solidly fixed upon the nature of our affectivity in light of our very human nature, purpose, and happiness. Anything less does an extreme disservice to the one who suffers.