# Dietrich von Hildebrand and St. Thomas Aquinas on Goodness and Happiness

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DIETRICH VON Hildebrand's *Christian Ethics* is filled by a note of deep and stirring pathos directed against an account of the good and of happiness which appears to be, in Hildebrand's mind, Thomistic. It is the pathos of a personalist philosopher who experiences the Thomistic account as a naturalistic or cosmological reductionism from which the human person and its authentic subjectivity must be liberated.

Hildebrand does not explicitly attribute the account to St. Thomas. In all explicit references to St. Thomas, he mentions only points of agreement and never criticizes St. Thomas by name. Yet, the terms in which Hildebrand himself expresses the view he criticizes are in part those used by St. Thomas. Hildebrand does seem to have some kind of Thomism in mind, a Thomism that borrows central categories from Kant, above all in conceiving *appetitus* along the lines of Kant's "inclinations" *(Neigungen)* as prior to the good; a Thomism, moreover, which is influenced by the vitalistic biology of Hans Driesch, above all in the use of "entelechy" as the central explanatory category.[1] I will refer to the Thomism Hildebrand describes as

[1] It does not seem unlikely that Hildebrand actually encountered such a form of Thomism at the University of Munich or later in the United States, though some misunderstandings may have been involved as well. The early Twentieth Century saw combinations of St. Thomas with a wide range of contemporary philosophical views, Cartesian mechanism, Kantian transcendental critique, Hegelian dialectic, Heideggerian being, etc. Drieschian Thomism would not be entirely surprising in this scenario. Since Hildebrand does not reference the authors he has in mind, research would need to establish their precise identity. The use of Driesch's concept of "entelechy" is the most immediately revealing sign to be looked for in such research.

Entelechial Thomism. The position of St. Thomas himself is quite different from Entelechial Thomism. Indeed, it would be a catastrophic misinterpretation to attribute Entelechial Thomism to St. Thomas. It is with good reason that Hildebrand himself refrains from doing so.

Hildebrand frames the issue between himself and Entelechial Thomism in terms of a contrast between person and nature. The Entelechial-Thomistic view, this is his central charge, locks the human person in an immanent dynamism of appetites or urges rooted in human nature. It fails to grasp the most decisive feature of the human *person as person*, namely, self-transcendence.

> The capacity to transcend himself is one of man's deepest characteristics. So long as we consider his activities as *the mere unfolding of his entelechy, determined by his nature, or as immanent manifestations of principles proper to his nature,* we fail to grasp the most decisive feature of his character as a person. Man cannot be understood if we interpret all his activities as manifestations of an *automatic striving for self-perfection*. So long as we are confined to this pattern, so long as we see man differing from other beings only by the fact that their objective teleological tendency assumes in him a character of consciousness, we overlook the real nature of *man as a person*. It is not an immanent movement, unconscious or conscious, which is man's typical mark. Certainly this also is to be found in man's nature, in the physiological sphere as well as in the psychical. *But the specifically personal character of man as a subject manifests itself in his capacity to transcend himself.* . . . In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation.[2]

## Hildebrand on Entelechial-Thomistic Nature and *Appetitus*

The Entelechial-Thomistic concept of *appetitus*, Hildebrand claims, refers to an urge which is the reason or determining factor *(principium)* of the goodness of an object—that goodness in turn being the *principiatum*, something determined by the urge. Hildebrand partly agrees with this account.

> Many objects assume a character of importance because of their suitability to appease an urge or an appetite in us. Water becomes important for the thirsty person; though he looked with indifference at the water so long as he was not thirsty, it suddenly assumes a character of importance because of his thirst. . . . The object which is able to appease an urge or an appetite, so long as this urge or appetite is not appeased,

[2] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Christian Ethics* (New York: David McKay, 1953), 218 and 20, emphasis added.

> presents itself to us either as something merely subjectively satisfying or as an objective good for the person. . . . The importance of the object is clearly something secondary; it is a *means of appeasement*. Its suitability is important only because the urge and appetite exists; as soon as the urge or appetite disappears, the object loses its importance and falls, so far as our experience is concerned, to the level of the indifferent.[3]

The Entelechial-Thomistic account of human nature and the corresponding account of the good is based on such urges or appetites.[4] Each being is endowed with its own "entelechy," a blueprint of what that being is supposed to be in accord with its nature, together with an inner drive that impels the being toward realizing its own blueprint. Hildebrand seems to connect this sense of "entelechy" with the Greek etymology of the word: ἐντελέχεια from ἐν (in), τέλος (end) and ἔχειν (to have), that is, having the end within. The end, which is the full actuality of the nature, is already in some sense within the being, when that being is still imperfect. It is already within, both in the sense of a blueprint and in the sense of an inner active principle that realizes this blueprint. Acorns unfold and mature into oak trees; lions develop from zygotes into cubs and from cubs into adult animals that do what lions naturally tend to do: hunt, reproduce, clean themselves, sleep, and so on.

Given a particular inclination or *appetitus* toward the end dictated by a thing's entelechy, some objects outside the being turn out to be suitable to serve that end. They help in the unfolding of the entelechy. A cat plays with a ball of wool twine. Its interest in the ball depends on the urge or appetite to unfold its own entelechy as it exercises and sharpens its motor reflexes. The ball is important *for* the cat because the cat happens to have this particular entelechy. For a snail the ball does not have this importance, because the entelechy of a snail does not unfold by the same activities. The entelechy is the *principium*, the importance of the ball the *principiatum*. In itself, the ball is indifferent. It remains indifferent for the snail and *becomes* important *for* the cat without, for all that, having any importance or goodness *in itself*.

Human nature has its own entelechy and its own corresponding tendencies or urges, following the general cosmological pattern set by subhuman nature. The very word *appetitus* shows that vegetative and sensitive patterns of tendencies or urges are what determine St. Thomas's understanding.

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[3] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 39.

[4] For texts on which the following summary is based, see Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 100–2, 85–8, 218–26.

> Every view that sees love as an *appetitus*, an urge *(Drang)*, and sees in it an analogy in the spiritual realm to drives *(Triebe)* like thirst in the bodily sphere completely misunderstands the nature of love. . . . There are postures *(Haltungen)* in man that are anchored in the subject; their actualization can be explained by the disposition and needs of man. Thirst is an example in the bodily sphere, the drive *(Drang)* to unfold one's talent is an example in the spiritual realm, and the need for social contact in the psychological. These needs play a great role in our lives. What is characteristic of them is that they are not engendered *(erzeugt)* by the object and its importance, but come to be spontaneously. They search, as it were, for an object that is able to appease *(stillen)* this need.[5]

The only difference between human beings and subrational living beings in the Entelechial-Thomistic account is that the unconscious or only semiconscious urges of the subrational become fully conscious in human beings. To the degree in which something is helpful in appeasing the urges of human nature, in furthering the full actualization of human nature, it becomes important *for* human beings. Virtue is good, not good *in itself*, but good *for us* because it corresponds to our nature as a means for fully actualizing it. God is good, not good *in himself*, but good *for us* because he corresponds to our nature as a means for fully actualizing it. In themselves, virtue and God are indifferent. They are desirable *for us*, because they serve our entelechial striving.

Hildebrand makes three important observations that specify further how he understands the Entelechial-Thomistic account of the good as the desirable *for* human beings on the basis of natural *appetitus*. They are at the same time the main starting points of his critique of the Entelechial-Thomistic account.

First, the Entelechial-Thomistic account explains goodness in terms of merely factual features of nature, in terms of "a mere neutral relation between some object and the actualization of our nature . . . a mere factuality."[6] It is an explanation based on a "neutral final cause."[7] Such a neutral final cause leaves open the question why it should be pursued: "every final cause calls for a 'why' as long as we have not grasped its value," that is, its goodness in itself.[8] For this reason, the Entelechial-Thomistic account of goodness fails in respect to what is supposed to be its greatest strength as a *teleological* account, namely, understanding the *telos*, the end of a being as the definitive explanation, the cause of causes.

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[5] Dietrich von Hildebrand, *Das Wesen der Liebe* (Regensburg: Josef Habbel, 1971), 49.
[6] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 102.
[7] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.
[8] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.

> If it is said that something is good because of its suitability to lead to the fulfillment of our entelechy what else can this mean but that everything which we call good, everything to which we attribute an importance-in-itself, has in reality only a secondary importance *as a means for the one value which matters*: the entelechy of our person? Would this attempt really replace the notion of value by suitability; would it dissolve our notion of value into a mere neutral relation between some object and the actualization of our nature? Rather, would it not tacitly presuppose the notion of value in man's entelechy as well as in the fact that the entelechy should be fully unfolded? Is it not obvious that this attempt at reduction is in reality only a postponement of the problem; that is to say, a tacit presupposition of the value in that which is at the basis of this relation?[9]

Second, the Entelechial-Thomistic account bypasses the rational center of the person and submits the person to subpersonal and blind natural forces.

> In speaking of that love which manifests itself in the fact that every fibre of our person longs for the beloved, or that his presence is as indispensable as the air we breathe, we still speak of a value response which is clearly distinguished from any urge. Here as in any real love, the intrinsic beauty and nobility of the beloved is the creative source of our love, the principle of its engendering; while in every urge this movement has its source in our own nature and its needs. . . . There is in the one case a blind force *a tergo* [from behind]; in the other, a spiritual attitude, rooted in a clear awareness of the value of the object.[10]

Third and most important, the relation between the entelechy of a being and its full actualization in the Entelechial-Thomistic account can be called "immanent" in the sense that the unfolding of the entelechy of a being brings nothing new, except precisely the full actualization of its own nature, the fullness of being of which that nature is capable. Everything contained in a mature oak tree is contained as an active potential in the acorn. Every perfection of a mature lion is present as a power for growth and perfection in the cub. It only needs to be unfolded. If something outside the being is used for full actualization, as the ball is used by the cat, no genuine self-transcendence occurs, since in such a use an outside being is "a mere means for self-perfection."[11] Human beings invariably desire self-perfection. They order everything else, including

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[9] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 101–2, emphasis added.
[10] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 224–5.
[11] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 222.

God, to themselves as something that can serve their prior and immanent interest in their own self-perfection.

> The difference between an appetite or urge (the tendency, for example, to develop a talent, to release spiritual energies) and a value response clearly reveals the essential immanence of the first and the transcendence of the second. There is an essential and decisive difference between a priest for whom preaching is the realization of oratorical talent, an occasion to unfold this gift, and a priest for whom preaching is motivated by the desire to spread the word of God and to serve the eternal welfare of his brethren. We constantly make this distinction either for others or for ourselves. There is a yawning abyss between the nurse who ministers to us with care because she wants to appease her motherly instincts and the nurse who surrounds us with all possible attention and care because of her love of neighbor and her real sympathy for our suffering and needs. . . . In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation.[12]

**Hildebrand's Overarching Concern: St. Augustine's Two Loves**

Hildebrand's account of Entelechial Thomism becomes more fully intelligible when one understands it against the background of his own overarching concerns. He sees the fundamental difference between morally good persons and morally bad persons in the choice between the "two different points of view, the two directions of life analyzed by St. Augustine in *The City of God* (XIV, 3)."[13] In the text referred to by Hildebrand, St. Augustine writes,

> It is in fact not by the possession of flesh, which the devil does not have, but by living according to himself, that is, according to man, that man has become similar to the devil. For also the devil willed to live according to himself when he did not stand in the truth, so that he spoke the lie, not from God, but from himself, who is not only a liar, but also the father of lying.[14]

A little later in Book Fourteen, St. Augustine expresses the same contrast between two directions of life in terms of two loves.

> Two loves have built the two cities: love of self to the contempt of God the earthly city; love of God to the contempt of self the heavenly.[15]

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12 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 220.
13 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 45.
14 St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* XIV.3, PL 41.406–7.
15 St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* XIV.28, PL 41.436.

In developing the theme of the two directions of life, Hildebrand focuses above all on the alternative between a life lived for the sake of subjective satisfaction and a life of self-transcending love for the good in itself which he calls "value."

This concentration on the two loves may explain a feature of Hildebrand's account of goodness that is otherwise difficult to understand. The fundamental "datum" from which Hildebrand proceeds is not "good" and its contrary "bad" or "evil," but something more abstract than these for which he uses the technical term "importance."

> The character which enables an object to become the source of an affective response or to motivate our will shall be termed by us "importance." Fully aware that "importance" is often used in another sense, we shall here use this term technically as connoting that property of a being which gives it the character of a *bonum* or *malum*; in short, importance is here used as the antithesis to neutrality or indifference.[16]

It would be strange to say that the primary datum in the moral sphere are "important" people rather than good persons and vicious persons, or, in the case of food, important food rather than good food and bad food. The reason Hildebrand chooses "importance" as a point of departure appears to be that he is interested in St. Augustine's two positions of the self that are found equally in relation to good and bad.

One can observe these two positions in the first distinction Hildebrand makes between "categories of importance," namely the distinction between something merely "subjectively important" and something "important in itself" quite apart from any relation to the subject. As an example of the former Hildebrand takes a compliment, to some degree undeserved, that gives us a purely subjective satisfaction.

> We are fully conscious that the compliment possesses a character of importance only insofar as it gives us pleasure. Its importance is solely drawn from its relation to our pleasure—as soon as the compliment is divorced from our pleasure, it sinks back into the anonymity of the neutral and indifferent.[17]

As an example of the important in itself Hildebrand takes a generous act in which someone gravely injured forgives the guilty person.

> This again strikes us as distinguishable from the neutral activity of a man dressing himself or lighting a cigarette. Indeed, the act of generous

[16] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 24.
[17] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 34.

> forgiveness shines forth with the mark of importance, with the mark of something noble and precious. It moves us and engenders our admiration. We are not only aware that this act occurs, but that it is *better* that it occurs, *better* that the man acted in this way rather than in another. We are conscious that this act is something which *ought* to *be*, something important.[18]

John Crosby, who follows Hildebrand closely, chooses as his first example for the important in itself the scene in the *Brothers Karamazov* in which Zosima brutally strikes his servant and only later realizes the intrinsic moral evil of his action, a realization that eventually leads to his conversion.[19] In this example, it is *worse* that the act occurred; the act is something that ought *not* to be. Yet the main point to be illustrated is the same: The importance in question does not depend on the pleasure or pain of the subject, but stands in itself. Hildebrand reserves the words "value" and "disvalue" in a technical sense for the important in itself.[20]

In addition to value and the subjectively satisfying, there is a third category of importance, Hildebrand argues, which he calls "objective good for the person." When he introduces this category, he gives the example of gratitude for being freed by someone from prison. When I am grateful to the person who freed me, I consider my freedom as a good *for me*. I do not look on it only in its intrinsic value, but in its being *in my interest*.[21] This category, Hildebrand argues in detail in his great monograph on love, is very important in love between persons: to be interested in what is objectively good for the other is one of the essential marks of love.[22]

Hildebrand lists four main marks that distinguish "value" from "the merely subjectively satisfying."

1. Both the subjectively satisfying and value involve pleasure and delight. Yet pleasure and delight differ essentially in the two cases. The delight in a value presupposes an awareness that the value does not depend on the delight it gives us, but vice versa. The value is the *principium*, the origin or determining factor of our delight, while the subjectively satisfying is the *principiatum*, it originates in, and is determined by, subjective satisfaction.

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[18] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 34.

[19] See John Crosby, "The Idea of Value and the Reform of the Traditional Metaphysics of Bonum," *Aletheia* 1 (1977): 231–327, 248–9.

[20] See Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 35.

[21] See Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 49–51.

[22] Hildebrand, *Wesen der Liebe,* 199–240.

> This happiness is thus something secondary, notwithstanding the fact that it is an essential mark of the values to be able to bestow delight on us: we even *should* take delight in them. The value is here the *principium* (the determining) and our happiness the *principiatum* (the determined), whereas in the case of the subjectively satisfying good our pleasure is the *principium* and the importance of the agreeable or satisfying of the object, the *principiatum*.[23]

One can clearly see St. Augustine's two loves in this contrast formulated in terms of *principium* and *principiatum*. In the love of self, the self's pleasure is the *principium* of importance. The importance of the object is the *principiatum*. In the love of value for its own sake, corresponding to the love of God, the importance of the object is the *principium* and the delight we take in it the *principiatum*.

Hildebrand goes on to explain the larger picture of a life based on attachment to the subjectively satisfying versus a life based on response to values. The explanation further clarifies what he means by value.

> Self-centered happiness at length wears itself out and ends in boredom and emptiness. The constant enjoyment of the merely subjectively satisfying finally throws us back upon our limitedness, imprisoning us within ourselves. In contrast, our engagement with a value elevates us, liberates us from self-centeredness, reposes us in a transcendent order which is independent of us, of our moods, of our dispositions. This blissful experience presupposes a participation in the intrinsically important; it implies a *harmony* which is given forth by the intrinsically good, the essentially noble alone; and it displays to us a *brightness* which is "consubstantial" (congenial) with the intrinsic beauty and splendor of the value. In this priceless contact with the intrinsically and autonomously important, the important in itself, it is the object which shelters and embraces our spirit.[24]

2. Value confronts the person with a *claim or call*. It is not left up to our momentary mood whether we give a value its due. A value imposes on us the obligation to give an appropriate response. The subjectively satisfying, by contrast, has no such claim on us. "We all know how ridiculous it would be for someone to say that he submitted to the obligation of playing bridge, and overcame the temptation to assist a sick person."[25]

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[23] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 37–8.
[24] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 37–8.
[25] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 38.

3. The call of a value has a *specific quality* which Hildebrand finds clearly expressed in the *Confessions* where St. Augustine describes how he began to be freed from his excessive attachment to sexual pleasure.

> The austere beauty of Continence . . . was revealed, serene and indeed merry but not debauched, honorably soliciting me to come to her.[26]

The subjectively satisfying does not have such a freeing power. "The attraction of the subjectively satisfying . . . lulls us into a state where we yield to instinct; it tends to dethrone our free spiritual center."[27]

4. The *responses* which we give as persons to the call of value and to the lure of the subjectively satisfying differ as well.

> We clearly see that in the first case our response has the character of an abandoning of our ourselves, a transcending of the boundaries of our self-centeredness, a submission of some sort. Interest in the subjectively satisfying reveals, on the contrary, a self-confinement, a relating of the object to ourselves, using it for our own self-centered satisfaction.[28]

Hildebrand's understanding of the Augustinian distinction between two loves and his own division of the good in accord with it, articulated in terms of *principium* and *principiatum*, is the essential background on which his reading of Entelechial Thomism can be understood. His reading is very clearly shaped by the question of *principium* and *principiatum* in accord with St. Augustine's distinction between two loves. The question Hildebrand asks contains an implicit alternative: Either *the self* is the principle to which all good is related, or *God together with the whole world of values* is the principle. The answer he hears from this form of Thomism is: the self is the *principium*. Hildebrand does not mention the main context in which St. Thomas himself, following St. Augustine, does discuss the contrast between the two loves, namely, the common good (more on this point in the conclusion).

When one approaches St. Thomas with this question and its implicit exclusive alternative, and reads what he has to say about the natural *appetitus* toward self-perfection present in all things, it is not entirely implausible that one would find precisely Entelechial Thomism. Just as, in Hildebrand's own view (and here he differs from St. Thomas), the urge of the self is the principle of goodness in sensitive appetites such as hunger or thirst, so the urge of the self for self-perfection is the princi-

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[26] St. Augustine, *Confessions,* VIII.11.27, quoted in Hildebrand, Ethics, 38, footnote 2.
[27] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 38.
[28] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 39.

ple or measure of goodness in the rational appetite. After all, St. Thomas does say,

> Everything seeks its own perfection as its own good.[29]
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> Everything seeks its own perfection as its own end.[30]
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> Just as every thing seeks its own perfection, so also the intellectual nature naturally seeks to be blessed.[31]
>
> Since everything seeks its own perfection, anyone seeks as his ultimate end that which he seeks as a perfect good that is perfective of his own self.[32]

There is no third option in the way St. Augustine formulates the alternative in the *City of God*: love of self to the contempt of God—love of God to the contempt of self. In this particular text, St. Augustine mentions only an evil love of self and a salutary contempt of self. And yet, there clearly is a third option, namely the love of self which appears in the commandment, "Love your neighbor as yourself." The right love of self is not something to be left behind or replaced by contempt of self. St. Augustine himself clarifies this point a little earlier in the *City of God*.

> In order that man might know how to love himself, an end has been set to which he is to refer all that he does, in order to be blessed. For the one who loves himself wants nothing else than to be blessed. This end is to cling to God (Psa 72, 28). If he knows already how to love himself, when he is commanded to love his neighbor as himself, what else is he commanded than to commend loving God to his neighbor as far as he can? This is the worship of God, this is true religion, this is right piety, this is the service owed to God alone.[33]

In St. Thomas, the understanding of "nature," *"appetitus,"* and "self-perfection" does escape the dichotomy between defective love of self and praiseworthy contempt of self in precisely this way. It is impossible to imagine a view more deeply opposed to St. Thomas than the Entelechial Thomism Hildebrand combats. According to St. Thomas, the cause of all causes is the end, and the reason why the end is the cause of causes is its goodness. In Entelechial Thomism, the cause of causes is in each case the nature of each thing in its merely factual entelechy, its potential and power to unfold itself. One could almost say, the cause of causes is—matter. All form and every end is ordered to matter.

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[29] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, ch.37.2.
[30] St. Thomas, *De Caelo,* II.4.5.
[31] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 26, a. 2 c.
[32] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 5 c.
[33] St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* X.3, PL 41.281.

It is a cosmic enormity, and, let us be clear on this point, a Satanic curvature over my own person, if I order all things including God to myself and measure them by their usefulness in serving the only thing I desire, namely, the immanent unfolding of my entelechy. If I only think this, while in fact I live differently, that is better. Still, it is an enormous error. Hildebrand's stirring pathos directed against Entelechial Thomism seems to have its roots here, and with good justification.

## St. Thomas's Definition of the Good in General

Hildebrand makes an excellent point in the first of his three arguments against the Entelechial Thomism he describes. The Entelechial-Thomistic account, he says, explains goodness in terms of merely factual features of nature, in terms of "a mere neutral relation between some object and the actualization of our nature . . . a mere factuality."[34] It is, as he reads it, an explanation based on a "neutral final cause."[35] Goodness only arises secondarily as a *principiatum* in an object inasmuch as it happens to serve this tendency, which is the *principium*. Hildebrand is quite right to insist that such an account is not a teleological account at all. It lacks what teleology needs above all, namely, *telos*. It lacks the end as a true cause, because (as Hildebrand rightly says), ". . . every final cause calls for a 'why' as long as we have not grasped its value," that is, its goodness in itself.[36]

St. Thomas agrees with this affirmation of the priority of goodness over being an end and an object of *appetitus*.

> Nothing tends to something as to an end except inasmuch as that very same (end) is good. Therefore, it is the good as good that is the end.[37]

In the objective order of things, "good" is prior to "end." Something is desirable as an end because it is good, not good because it happens to be desirable as an end for a particular entelechy. "Desirable as an end" is an account of the good in terms of its proper effect. The point of reference for the good is not a neutral entelechy. The converse is true. The nature of all beings is designed in such a way that it *follows* the good and needs to be explained in terms of the *prior good*. The good is the *principium*, the nature and its *appetitus* the *principiatum*. St. Thomas's teaching on this point is the most direct and radical opposite of the Entelechial Thomism Hildebrand describes.

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[34] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 102.
[35] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.
[36] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 105.
[37] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* III, ch. 17 §2.

### *St. Thomas's Definition of the Good*

This priority of the good over *appetitus* is clear in the manner in which St. Thomas understands Aristotle's definition of the good in the very first sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

> Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice, seems to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that which all desire.[38]

Aristotle does not begin immediately with the good, but with art, inquiry, action, and choice, apparently because action and choice constitute the specific subject of ethics. Action and choice aim at some good. Good is related to them as a cause to its effect, in fact, as the cause that most fully explains action and choice. If I ask someone, "Why are you doing this?," the most definitive answer is, "My aim is this and that good?" Why? "Because it is good." That is the final answer. The good is the cause of causes.

The second part of Aristotle's sentence inverts the first part. Because all action and choice is caused by the good, one can describe the good as that which is the cause of the desire of all things. "That which all desire" is a definition of the good in terms of its effect. Instead of "desire" one can also say "love" since desire is the form love takes when the good is still absent. The good is that which all love.

Why does Aristotle only offer a definition of the good through an effect? He *could not* do otherwise, even if he attempted to. "Good" is utterly first. There are no prior causes or principles by which it can be made known. Just as there cannot be a definition of "being" in terms of anything prior, because being is prior to all other notions and implied in them, so there cannot be a definition of "good" from any causes because good is first.

> Regarding this (i.e., Aristotle's definition of the good as the desirable) one should keep in mind that the good is numbered among first things, so much so that according to the Platonists the good is prior to being. In fact, however, the good is convertible with being. First things cannot be made known by anything prior to them, but are made known by what comes later, as causes are made known by their proper effects. Since the good in its own character *(proprie)* has the power to move *appetitus*, the good is described through the movement of *appetitus*, just as in general a moving power is made known through movement. This is why he (Aristotle) says that philosophers have rightly said, "Good is that which all desire."[39]

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[38] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* I.1, 1094a.1–3.

[39] St. Thomas, *Ethic.,* I.1.9. One can translate "appetunt" also as desire or love.

In Entelechial Thomism, what is first is not the good, but the entelechy in its *appetitus* to unfold. The good can be defined in terms of a prior cause, the entelechy and its *appetitus*. According to St. Thomas, the definition of the good as the *appetible* is a definition a posteriori, a definition of something first in terms of a revealing effect that comes after it, namely, love.

There is an alternate way in which St. Thomas formulates the definition of the good. "The good is what is perfective of another in the manner of end . . . *perfectivum alterius per modum finis*."[40]

> According to its own *ratio*, the good is a cause in the manner of a final cause. One can see this from the fact that the good is what all desire. That to which the *appetitus* tends is the end. Therefore, the good is according to its own ratio a cause in the manner of the end.[41]

In the natural order of things, "good" is prior to "end" rather than the other way around. Something can reasonably be taken as an end because it is good. The reason for its goodness is not that it is an end. This fundamental point is clear in an argument St. Thomas gives for the thesis that all things are ordered to God.

> Nothing tends to something as to an end except inasmuch as that very same (end) is good. Therefore, the good inasmuch as it is good is the end. Therefore, that which is the highest good is most of all the end of all. But there is only one highest good, which is God, as was shown in Book I. Therefore all things are ordered—as to the end—to one good which is God.[42]

Particularly the second part of this text shows the objective priority of "good" over "end." The goodness of God comes absolutely first. This goodness is the reason why all things are rightly ordered to it as to an end. God is not first the end of some immanent entelechy in a merely factual manner to be thereby also constituted as good.[43]

If *"appetible"* (loveable) is a definition of the good taken from its effect, is it the definition from the most proper effect? Are there other effects of

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[40] St. Thomas, *De veritate,* XXI.1 c.

[41] St. Thomas, *Metaphys.,* I.11.9.

[42] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* III, ch. 17 §2.

[43] See Lawrence Dewan, OP, "St. Thomas and the Causality of God's Goodness," *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 34 (1978): 291–304. Dewan explains, in particular, how St. Thomas's argument for the goodness of God from the fact that God is the end of all creatures (*ST* I, q. 6, a. 1), is an argument from effect to cause. The intrinsic goodness of God is the reason for all natures and their inclinations.

the good by which the good could be equally well defined? Honor is an effect of the good and might be proposed as a reasonable candidate. In fact, as I will show in the next section, "honorable" is the aspect St. Thomas uses to distinguish "good" in the most proper sense of the word from two derivative senses of "good," namely, the pleasing and the useful good.[44] The *bonum honestum* is the cause of honor in the sense of being worthy of honor. In this manner, honor is an effect that can serve to make the *bonum honestum* better known. Not only the good, however, is honorable, but so is beauty and any excellence. Honor is not, then, the proper effect of good.

Understanding is another effect of the good. In fact, in the order of causality, good is the first principle of intelligibility. In the order of intelligibility, simply speaking, "being" comes before "true" and "good" as the first object of understanding. Yet in the order of the intelligibility of causes as causes, "good" is first. Whenever there are causes, the good is the cause of them all. It is the cause of causes. The manner in which good illumines the understanding is a highly revealing effect of the good. Yet intelligibility belongs not only to "good" but also to "being." "Intelligible," therefore, is too universal to be the proper effect of good as good. Still, both effects, honor and understanding, do throw much light on the good. The good is that which all love. The good is the cause of love—this is most characteristic of it.

This understanding of the definition of "good" as a definition of a cause in terms of its effect makes sense in the overall framework of St. Thomas's philosophy and theology. The origin of creation, St. Thomas argues again and again, lies in the goodness of God. Since he loves his own goodness, God wills to manifest and communicate it by creating beings that reflect or attain his goodness in various ways. The natures and natural inclinations of creatures are designed for this goal, ordered to this goal. The inner reason for the natural tendency of plants to unfold, as that tendency actually operates, is the attainment of likeness with God. Why? Because such a likeness is good. Why? Because God is in himself good. This order is most clearly present in intellectual creatures. The inner reason for the inclination of the will to the good, a reason that can be observed at work in the actual motivation of a good person, is the ordering of the person to the highest likeness with God which lies in knowing and loving. Why is this likeness good? Because God is good. Since human beings have a rational nature, they are not only destined to be *like* God, a feature they share to some degree with other beings, but they can

[44] See St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145.

attain something infinitely greater than mere likeness. They are *capax dei*, they can attain God as he is in himself. Why is this attainment of God good? Because God is in himself good.

### *A Reading of the Definition according to Entelechial Thomism*

Crosby offers a different account of St. Thomas's definition of the good, one that would seem to fit with Entelechial Thomism, though Crosby shares Hildebrand's caution and does not attribute the crucial theses of this Entelechial Thomism (namely, Driesch's understanding of "entelechy" and Kant's understanding of inclinations) to St. Thomas. Crosby argues that in St. Thomas's account, the good adds a relation to some *appetitus*, to some striving for self-perfection.

> Thomas teaches that good adds a certain relation between being and another thing: "A thing is called a being inasmuch as it is considered absolutely, but good . . . in relation to other things (secundum respectum ad alia)" (q. XXI, a. 5). and the relation which makes up the idea of good is the relation of a being to some appetitus, that is, to the striving in a being for its own perfection: "Good expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power" (D.Q.T., q. I, a. 1). Though "good" and "being" are not synonyms, it seems that "good" and "being as *appetible*" are.[45]

Does Crosby hold that the relation *appetible (loveable)* is merely grounded in the good, as one must hold if *appetible (loveable)* is a definition of the good from its effect? Or does he hold that *appetitus* is prior and offers the reason for the goodness of a being?

> Other transcendentals such as *res* and *unum* are "in themselves," "absolute," "non-relational"; but in this they are precisely distinguished from *bonum* and *verum*, each of which consists in a certain *respectum ad alia*. It is not just that *bonum* by its nature grounds a certain relation of an *appetitus* to itself; *bonum* partly *consists in* this relation. Thus for Thomas a thing cannot be "good in itself" in the same sense of "in itself" in which a thing has being *(ens)* in itself.[46]

It appears from this reading that the relation *appetible* is the reason why something is good rather than the other way around. Crosby is explicit: It is not just that the good *grounds* the relation *appetible*. The good *consists* of a being inasmuch as that being has taken on this relation. *Appetitus,* it would appear, comes first. Crosby does not interpret this point in the sense

[45] Crosby, "Idea of Value," 238.
[46] Crosby, "Idea of Value," 238.

of Entelechial Thomism, but one might do so as follows. Given a certain entelechy and its corresponding *appetitus*, certain things take on importance to the degree in which they serve the appeasement of this *appetitus*.

### *"Appetible" as a One-Sided Relation*

A way of showing negatively that the relation *appetible* cannot be that which is added to being to constitute being as good is to note that, according to St. Thomas, this relation is strictly—nothing. If the good as good consisted in the relation *appetible*, "good" would be merely an extrinsic denomination brought to a being from an *appetitus*. When he introduces the way in which the notion "good" adds to the notion "being," St. Thomas writes,

> In a third way something is added to another only according to reason, namely, when something belongs to the very *ratio* of one thing while not belonging to the *ratio* of the other, which, however, *is nothing in the nature of things,* but only in the mind. . . .[47]

"Nothing in the nature of things." The status of the relation *appetible* is strictly and absolutely this: *nothing in the nature of things*. A little later in the body of the same article, St. Thomas explains what he means when he says, "Something belongs to the very *ratio* of one thing while not belonging to the *ratio* of the other." Some relations are asymmetrical in their reality, he says. For example, human knowledge is utterly dependent on being. In its own constitutive nature it contains a relation to being. The relation to being is part of the very *ratio* of what knowledge is in itself. Knowledge cannot stand on its own without this relation to being. The relation is intrinsic to knowledge and for this reason it is a real relation. The converse is not true. Being does not have the same intrinsic relation to human knowledge. It does not depend in its very *ratio* on human knowledge, but stands entirely and fully on its own prior to that relation. It is similar in the case of the good. In its own constitutive nature, love contains a relation to the good. The good, on the other hand, is not constituted by a relation to love. Granted, inasmuch as goodness involves being a kind of cause, the cause of all causes, a reference to its proper effect is necessary when one conceives it. Yet, to put it in Aristotle's terms, a relation to the effect is present in the good, not because the good is related to the effect but because the effect is related to the good.

In the *Summa*, St. Thomas uses the striking example of an animal placed next to a column to illustrate this asymmetrical kind of relation.

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[47] St. Thomas, *De veritate,* XXI.1 c, emphasis added.

> Sometimes relation is a thing of nature in one of the extremes, and a mere thing of reason in the other. . . . In knowledge and sensation, there is a real relation, inasmuch as they are ordered to knowing and sensing a thing, but the things themselves considered in themselves are outside this order. This is why no relation really exists in them to knowing and sensing, but only according to reason, inasmuch as the mind takes them as the ends of the relations of knowledge and sensation. This is why Aristotle says that they are not called relative inasmuch as they refer to something else, but because other things refer to them. In a similar way, "on the right" is said about a column only inasmuch as it is placed on the right in relation to an animal, whence this kind of relation does not exist in a real way in the column, but in the animal.[48]

If the animal were perfectly round, with eyes, ears, noses, legs, and tails equally distributed over its spherical surface, one would not be able to say whether the column was on its right, except by introducing the point of view of an observer who has a right and a left.

The relation *appetible* is something brought to the good from the outside, just as "to the column's left" is an exterior denomination of the column, not something intrinsic to it. On this level, the two relations are alike. The good differs from the example of the column, because the relation *appetible* (loveable) is founded or grounded in the good. The good itself, inasmuch as it is the good, is the reason for *appetibility*. For this reason, "appetible" reveals much about the good. "To the left of the column," by contrast, is grounded only in the animal, not at all in the column and so it says nothing about the column. Being capable of awakening love is essentially connected with the good, in the sense that good would be eliminated as good if, per impossibile, it were not in principle capable of awakening love in a person who apprehends it. The relation "appetible" grows out of the good and is in this way "fundamentally" intrinsic to it, while not being a formal cause "formally" intrinsic to the good, as Cajetan says (see below). The opposite is true of love: the good enters into the formal cause of love. "What" love is depends on the good, not the other way around.

In *Summa* I, q. 5, a. 1, St. Thomas says, *"Ratio enim boni in hoc consistit, quod aliquid sit appetible."* The Benziger edition of the *Summa* translates, "The *essence* of goodness consists in this, that it is in some way desirable."[49] The text says, *"Ratio boni,"* not *"essentia boni."* In this context, *"ratio boni"* is more accurately translated as "*account* of the good" rather than "*essence* of the good." This reading of I, q. 5, a. 1 is confirmed by Cajetan's commentary on the text. Cajetan introduces, as often, another

[48] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 13, a. 7 c.
[49] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 5, a. 1.

distinction. He begins by formulating an objection. The word "good" expresses the *ratio* of the "appetible." But the good is called "appetible" not because it is related to *appetitus*, but because *appetitus* is related to it. Therefore the good is not in reality appetible. Appetibility is nothing. Cajetan gives two arguments for the proposition that the relation appetible does not exist as a real relation in the good.

> Proof of the minor premise: (1) Something is appetible because it is good, and not the other way around. (2) The good is the formal object of *appetitus*; and "appetible" is an extrinsic denomination taken from *appetitus*. . . .

The objection moves Cajetan to make a distinction which St. Thomas himself does not explicitly make.

> One can give two answers, according to two ways in which something can have the ratio of the appetible, namely, *formally* and *fundamentally*. (1) If "appetible" is taken *formally*, then the good is said to have the *ratio* of it, not as intrinsic, but as something it receives (extrinsically). (2) If, however, it is taken *fundamentally*, then the good can be said to have the *ratio* of the appetible intrinsically: for the good's own *ratio* is the foundation and proper cause of appetibility, as color is of visibility. Even though both glosses, taken in themselves, are true, and the first is taken from the beginning of *St. Thomas's Commentary on the Ethics*, nevertheless in the present context [i.e., *ST* I, q. 5, a. 1] the second is what St. Thomas means directly, because the question is about the good's own account.[50]

Cajetan's main point seems to be contained in the words "the good's own *ratio* is the foundation and proper cause of appetibility—*propria ratio boni est fundamentum et causa propria appetibilitatis*." That the good itself grounds the relation *appetible*, Cajetan thinks, is what St. Thomas intends to point out in *Summa* I, q. 5, a. 1 when he says "the good has the *ratio* of the appetible." He wants to focus on the good itself (which, as something first, cannot be defined by anything prior) and he does so by attending to the manner in which the good is the cause of love. If the order were inverted, if "good" were determined by some *appetitus* directed at it, then "good" would say precisely as much about being as "the column's left" does, namely—nothing. One might design a robot programmed to tighten a certain size of octagonal screws, equipped with sensors that detect such screws on any object it encounters. For this robot, the world is divided into the to-be-tightened and the not-to-be

[50] Cajetan, *Commentary on the Summa,* Leonine edition, ad locum I, q. 5, a. 1.

tightened. Octagonal shape is a real property of some beings, but "to-be-tightened" says nothing about them, only about the robot, whose entelechial programming happens to be directed to octagonal screws.

The underlying question addressed by Cajetan is sometimes put in the form, "Do we love something because it is good, or is it good because we love it?" In one way of understanding this question, the first option is necessarily true, even in an account like Entelechial Thomism that sees *appetitus* as prior to the goodness of things.[51] Even if the only reason something is desirable lies in its capacity to give us some pleasure, as seems to be the case, for example, in a dose of morphine, which does not seem to be a *bonum honestum* in any sense, it remains true that we love it because of its derivative goodness rather than the other way around. Even if appetibility were the essence of the good, the good would still in some sense precede and ground a given appetitus (taken as a noun); my love here and now for some particular good would be grounded in the already existing appetibility of the being. It is in a stronger sense that Aristotle and St. Thomas define the good as the cause of love, as will become clearer below in St. Thomas's account of *bonum honestum*. This stronger sense of causality is what Cajetan seems to have in mind when he says "the good's own *ratio* is the foundation and proper cause of appetibility, as color is of visibility." *Appetitus* is entirely a *principiatum* of the good rather than the other way around.

This point can be further clarified by observing a certain contrariety between goodness and truth. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas points out that truth is primarily in the mind ("true" applies primarily to statements in the mind that correspond to what is) while the good is primarily in things (we love them because they are good).[52] For this reason, "good" says much more about being than does "true." What it says is conceptually irreducible to "being." One cannot simply and mechanically juxtapose the notion of "being" and the notion "appetible" to make up the notion "good." Since the definition of "good" as "appetible" is a definition a posteriori, one must see the relation "appetible" as a relation that is deeply grounded in the good while not being formally constitutive of it, and that, therefore, reveals something of the greatest importance about being that is not explicit in the notion "being."

### *The Most Fundamental Objection*

In this perspective one can respond to what Crosby calls "the most radical, the most fundamental of our objections" against St. Thomas.[53] Crosby

[51] For this important point, see Crosby, "Idea of Value," 257–8.
[52] See esp. St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 16, a. 1–4.
[53] Crosby, "Idea of Value," 303.

understands Hildebrand's "value," that is, the good in itself, as a fundamental dimension of being comparable in weight to two other dimensions. The first of these is the *"inner unity, meaning, intelligibility"* of being which sets being off from the purely chaotic.[54] A second dimension of being is *"having real existence, . . . being fully real."*[55] Real existence adds significantly to the first dimension. An imagined person is intelligible, but is not real. It makes a big difference if someone merely imagined turns out to exist in real life.

> There is yet a third dimension of being, a third way in which a being can be opposed to nothingness: the dimension of having value *(des Wertvollseins)*. Its specific antithesis is neither the chaotic nor the [non-]substantial,[56] but the neutral. A thing is opposed to nothingness in a fundamentally new way when it is not only meaningful and not only fully real, but is also radiant with excellentia, and has the preciousness of value; when it not only is, but *ought to be*. . . . (T)he *excellentia* of a thing, its *dignitas*, gives the thing a "weight of being" which is altogether comparable to the "weight of being" which the thing has as really existing.[57]

When one compares Crosby's own position with his reading of St. Thomas, one can see a structural parallel. The relation *appetible* in St. Thomas's definition of the good, as Crosby reads it, corresponds to the distinct dimension of being called value inasmuch as both are, in their respective positions, that which constitutes the good as good. For this reason, the following objection is what Crosby calls "the most radical, the most fundamental of our objections."[58]

> If value represents a fundamental dimension of being, and one which is irreducible to real being, then it is impossible that value add nothing to real being except a certain relation to human striving. For this could never "amount to" a new dimension of being. . . . But if, as we have argued, valuable being is a *ratio* of being as fundamental as the *ratio* of real being, then it too is incomparably more than that being considered in relation to a possible *appetitus*. We conclude, then, that value makes a fundamental metaphysical "addition" to *ens*, an addition which is excluded by the Thomistic *bonum*; value represents a fundamental dimension of being which has gone unnoticed in Thomism.[59]

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54 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 296.

55 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 296.

56 The text has "substantial." A negative seems to be required. The contrast in the first dimension is meaningful/chaotic, the contrast in the second is substantial being/merely imaginary existence, etc.

57 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 296–7.

58 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 303.

59 Crosby, "Idea of Value," 303.

Indeed, if *appetitus* were first, as in Entelechial Thomism, and "good" were merely an extrinsic denomination imposed on being inasmuch as it happens to serve some pre-existing *appetitus*, then the bearing of "good" on being would be exactly like the bearing of "the column's left side" on the column—nothing. Using the term "good" would reveal nothing about being. Since, in fact, the good is first and the definition *appetible* is a definition in terms of proper effect, not in terms of formal cause, the notion "good" does reveal something momentous about being, something that the notion "being" does not by itself reveal. By its own intrinsic goodness, being has the power to move love. In the order of causality, which depends entirely on love, the intrinsic goodness of being is the cause of all causes. This is something momentous to know about being. It is something objectively contained in being, but not expressed by the notion "being," nor by the simple juxtaposition of "being" and "appetible." The notion "good" is indispensable. It brings the good news of the intrinsic goodness of being.[60]

[60] This common ground between Hildebrand and St. Thomas, important as it is, cannot entirely close the gap between their positions on the metaphysical status of goodness. There is a remaining difference which is deeply rooted in Hildebrand's phenomenological premises. St. Thomas sees the main difference between Plato and Aristotle in Plato's choosing as the point of departure of philosophy, not real being, but the "intelligible accounts" *(rationes intelligibiles)* formed by the mind. Aristotle, according to St. Thomas, takes his point of departure quite deliberately in sensible things, which are the first instance of real being for us human knowers (*Disputed Question on Spiritual Creatures,* a. 3, corpus). Aristotle is ever careful to take into account that the reception of sensible things in our mind follows the mode of the recipient. Our mind breaks up the unity of sensible things into various aspects that are distinct in the mind, but remain one in reality, e.g. the distinction between the aspect of genus and species. One does not find a similar corrective move in Plato with the result that the multiplicity of aspects in our mind is projected too quickly into things. And so Plato posits, for example, a distinct objectively existing idea of a genus and of its species, and correspondingly a distinct substance of the human body over against the soul, two substances in relation to each other, one corresponding to the genus, the other to the specific difference. Phenomenology is similar to Plato's position as St. Thomas understands it, because it takes its point of departure, not in real being, but in "the given" which corresponds closely to the Platonic *"rationes intellibiles."* "The given" pinpoints the objects of knowledge *as they are given in the mind*. Hildebrand's and Crosby's rejection of the Aristotelian and Thomistic convertibility of being and goodness seems to be an instance of this divergence at the very roots of philosophy. Invariably, Phenomenologists bring the charge of reductionism against the Thomistic approach. In the present case, they bring the charge that St. Thomas reduces the good to being. The response that good and being differ *secundum rationem* only, but are one *in re* does not make sense on strict phenomenological premises. "The given" in the case of "being" differs from "the given" in the case of "good." The claim that being and good are one *secundum rem* inevitably

## St. Thomas's Definition of the Honorable Good in Particular

The reading of St. Thomas's definition of the good proposed above is confirmed by his understanding of the honorable good *(bonum honestum)*, which he considers the primary sense of "good." Aristotle proposes a threefold division of the good which St. Thomas adopts as his own: ". . . there are three objects of choice and three of avoidance, the noble [*to kalon:* alternate translations: the beautiful, the good], the useful, and the pleasing, and their contraries, the shameful, the injurious, and the painful."[61] The term "good," St. Thomas holds, is used analogously in these three cases, just as "healthy" is said analogously of the animal, the weather and the animal's urine. The animal alone is healthy in the primary sense. The weather is healthy in the sense of being conducive to the animal's health. Urine is healthy in the sense of being a sign of the animal's health. In the three senses of good, the prime analogate is the *bonum honestum* (Aristotle's *kalon*). The pleasing good is good as the resting of love in some *bonum honestum*. The useful good is good as bringing about some *bonum honestum*.[62] Since the *bonum honestum* is good in the first sense of good, since it is the prime analogate on which the other two senses depend, understanding it is the key to understanding all the forms of goodness. St. Thomas dedicates an entire question of the *Summa* to explaining what *"honestum"* means in the phrase *"bonum honestum."* This question *"De Honestate"* is not a well-known text. For reasons that will become apparent below, it is found in a seemingly obscure place, in a question of the *Secunda Secundae's* account of temperance (II–II, q. 145).

The opening issue in the first article of this question is whether the *honestum* is the same as virtue. The very first objection sounds like Entelechial Thomism.

> It seems that the honorable is not identical with virtue. For, Cicero says in his Rhetoric, that the honorable is what is sought for its own sake.

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appears on phenomenological premises as reducing one irreducible given to another. The counter-charge on the basis of a fundamentally realist philosophy is that the phenomenological premises when joined with a realist metaphysics (which Hildebrand adopted contrary to Husserl and Scheler) leads to an erroneous multiplication of entities (in the present case the multiplication of the "dimensions" of meaning, existence and goodness, each of which really adds something to the others) and to a consequent loss of the contours and unity of real being.

61 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* II.3, 1104b.30–32. See St. Thomas's commentary ad locum.

62 See St. Thomas, *Ethic.,* VIII.2.2, *ST* I, q. 5, a. 6, obj. 3.

> Now, virtue is not sought for its own sake, but for the sake of happiness, for the Philosopher says in the Ethics that happiness is the reward of virtue and the end. Therefore the honorable is not the same as virtue.[63]

Before considering the response to this objection, it is good to examine the body of the article in which St. Thomas takes as his starting point the definition of the honorable proposed by Isidore of Seville. He quotes only the last clause of Isidore's definition. The full definition reads, "*Honestus:* that which is such as to have no share in disgracefulness. For, what is *honestas* if not an enduring honor, that is, a state of honor, as it were?"[64] St. Thomas understands the *state* of honor not as honor actually given, but as being *worthy* of honor. He therefore reformulates the definition: "It seems that something is called *honestum* for this reason, that it is worthy of honor *(honore dignum)*."[65]

On the basis of this definition of the honorable, St. Thomas constructs the following argument for the identity between the honorable and virtue. Honor is owed *(debetur)* to excellence *(excellentia)*. The excellence of a human being has most to do with virtue because virtue is, in Aristotle's definition, "the disposition of the perfect for the best." The virtue St. Thomas has in mind is clearly moral virtue in a broad sense that includes charity, not intellectual virtue. Only moral virtue, he holds, can be called virtue without qualification.[66] The conclusion: "And therefore the honorable, properly speaking, is taken back to the same thing with virtue."[67]

The response to the first objection further clarifies the meaning of "honorable."

> As the Philosopher says in Ethics I, of things that are sought because of themselves, some are sought only because of themselves and never because of something else, such as happiness, which is the ultimate end. others are sought both because of themselves, inasmuch as they have some aspect of goodness in themselves, even if no other good comes to us through them. Nevertheless, they can be sought also because of something else, inasmuch as they lead us to a more perfect good. In this way virtues must be sought because of themselves. This is why Cicero says, "There is something which attracts us by its own power and draws us by its own dignity," such as virtue, truth and knowledge. And this is enough for the account of *honestum*.

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63 St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1, obj. 1. "(Happiness is) . . . the reward and end of virtue." Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* I.9, 1099b.16–17.

64 Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiarum sive Originum libri XX,* X.116.

65 St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1 c.

66 See St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 56, a. 3 c.

67 St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1 c.

Particularly the formulation "by its own power it attracts us, by its own dignity it draws us" shows that Cicero is thinking of an intrinsic good, though there is clearly also a reference to the person *for* whom virtue becomes a good: "attracts, *allicit*" and "draws, *trahit*." Yet precisely in these references to the attracted person, it is clear that the principle of goodness lies in the virtue, not outside it, for example, in the pleasure or joy one derives from virtue.

I will return to the question of virtue as a means for happiness. At this point it is enough to note that a means for St. Thomas is not simply a thing that causes another without itself participating in the goodness of the end, as medicine is a means for health. Knowing the first stanza of a poem is a means for knowing the whole poem, a means which nevertheless shares in the goodness of the end, even if only incompletely. In a similar way, virtue is an essential part of human goodness, so essential that there cannot be human good without it. Yet it is not the *whole* human good. In its incompleteness it cannot escape being a means.

The identification of *bonum honestum* with virtue in particular should not, of course, be understood as excluding goods that are less than virtue, such as health, or goods that are higher, such as God. What is lower than virtue deserves the name *honestum* mainly as ordered to virtue (here St. Thomas gives the examples of power and wealth); what is higher than virtue (above all God) deserves honor more, but it is further from our experience. And so virtue carries the name *honestum* as its very own name.

In the second article, St. Thomas uses Denys the Areopagite's account of beauty as a middle term to argue from the identity between *honestum* and virtue to the identity between *honestum* and *decorum*. Denys writes,

> The super-substantial beautiful is called beauty because from itself it gives to all beings, to each in its own way, a share in beauty, as the cause of the harmony and splendor of all things. . . .

In his commentary on this passage, St. Thomas focuses on two concepts: harmony (εὐαρμοστία) and splendor (ἀγλαΐα). These two, he argues, constitute the specific "face" of beauty, both in the order of bodily appearance, where due proportion of parts and splendor of color are aspects of beauty, and in the spiritual order where spiritual brightness or splendor together with due proportion makes for beauty.[68]

On the basis of this account of beauty he offers the following argument for his conclusion.

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[68] St. Thomas, *De div. nom.,* IV.5.339.

> Spiritual beauty consists in this that a person's conduct, i.e., his action, is well proportioned according to the spiritual splendor of reason. This is part of the account of the honorable, which we identified with virtue, since virtue moderates all human things according to reason. And so the honorable is the same as spiritual beauty. This is why Augustine says, "By nobility or honorableness I mean intelligible beauty, which we properly say is spiritual." And after this he adds, "There are many beautiful visible things which are less properly called honorable."[69]

The first objection of the second article is interesting because it correlates the *honestum* with *appetitus*. Quoting Cicero, St. Thomas says, "*honestum est quod per se appetitur* (the honorable is what is sought for itself.)" The beautiful by contrast, is not described as the object of *appetitus*, but as that whose very appearance pleases. St. Thomas's response does not deny this difference between the terms "good" and "beautiful," but nevertheless draws a connection between them.

> The object that moves the appetite is the good when it is known. Now, we receive as fitting and good that which appears beautiful in the very knowledge of it. And so Denys says, "To everyone the beautiful and good are lovable." For this reason the honorable is itself made desirable inasmuch as it has spiritual beauty. Cicero also says, "You see the form and the face, as it were, of the honorable. If it itself were seen by the eyes, it would stir up amazing loves, as Plato says, of wisdom."[70]

All three modes of goodness—the honorable, the pleasing, and the useful—St. Thomas claims in the third article, are found together in virtue, but they are nevertheless distinct as interconnected aspects of virtue. St. Thomas's starting point is a summary definition of *honestum*, gleaned from the preceding articles: "Something is called honorable, as we said, inasmuch as it has a certain beauty from the ordering of reason."[71] Virtue, which has this beauty, is suited to the nature of man, since man is rational and thus able to recognize beauty and delight in it. For this reason, virtue naturally gives pleasure to man. Virtue is also useful, because the honorable good found in it is related to a more comprehensive honorable good, to happiness, as a part is related to the whole. St. Thomas concludes,

> According to this argument, the honorable, the useful and the pleasing are one in subject but differ in aspect. For (virtue) is called honorable inasmuch as it has a certain excellence worthy of honor because of spir-

[69] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 2. c.
[70] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 2, ad 1.
[71] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 3 c.

> itual beauty; pleasing inasmuch as it quiets the appetite; and useful inasmuch as it is referred to something else.[72]

The fourth and last article of the question *De honestate* is clearly the point of arrival of the whole *quaestio*. It shows why this extremely important teaching on a question so central to St. Thomas's entire account of the good is located in such a seemingly obscure place, the questions on the virtue of temperance. St. Thomas seems to have had a particular love for temperance, and within temperance for purity, as a virtue of compelling beauty. If St. Francis had a preferential love for poverty, St. Thomas had one for purity. And so he advances the thesis that *honestas* is part of temperance in the sense of attaching *particularly* to this one virtue. To see St. Thomas's complete understanding of purity, one must also consider what he says about the religious vow of chastity, as an aspect of the holocaust of love which defines religious life.[73] "Religious life . . . is a kind of whole burnt offering (holocaust) by which someone totally offers himself and all things that are his to God." Clearly, here we are in contact with the heart of St. Thomas's own sanctity translated into thought.

To conclude, St. Thomas's definition of the good and his account of *bonum honestum* show clearly that he sees the good as radically the cause of *appetitus*, not as dependent on *appetitus*. This point is the most fundamental point to be made in distinguishing Entelechial Thomism from St. Thomas's own view. To put the point in Hildebrand's terms, the good according to St. Thomas is the *principium*, and *appetitus* is radically the *principiatum*.

St. Thomas's account of the "honorable good" converges on a deep level with Hildebrand's account of value. Let us return to the four marks by which Hildebrand distinguishes value from the merely subjectively satisfying.

1. In the case of value, according to Hildebrand, the pleasure and happiness we feel flows from the value, the value is the *principium*, the pleasure or happiness the *principiatum*. According to St. Thomas, "Things are called pleasing in a restricted way when they have no other reason for desirability than pleasure, even though at times they are harmful and shameful. . . . They are called honorable when they have in themselves a reason for being desired."[74] Hildebrand quotes this text and comments, "St. Thomas clearly distinguishes the delectability resulting from a value and delectability resulting from the

[72] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 4 c.

[73] See St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 186, a. 4, *Contra Gentiles,* III, chs. 130–136, *De Perfectione Vitae Spiritualis,* VIII, *Super Ioannem,* on Jerome's prologue.

[74] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 5, a. 6, ad 2.

merely subjectively satisfying, although he does not use the concept of value."[75] Via Cicero, St. Thomas quotes a passage from Plato in a text already presented above.

> . . . the honorable is itself made desirable inasmuch as it has spiritual beauty. Cicero also says, "You see the form and the face, as it were, of the honorable. If it itself were seen by the eyes, it would stir up amazing loves, as Plato says, of wisdom."[76]

This is an abbreviated quote. The full text (Phaedrus 250c–d) which St. Thomas brings to bear on the honorable good reads.

> Now beauty, as we have said, shone bright among these visions, and in this world below we apprehend it through the clearest of our senses, clear and resplendent. For sight is the keenest mode of perception through the body. Wisdom, indeed, we cannot see by it—how passionate had our desire been for her, if she had granted us so clear an image of herself to gaze upon—nor any other of those beloved objects, except only beauty. For beauty alone this has been ordained, to be most manifest to sense and most lovely of them all.

2. According to Hildebrand, value confronts the person with a *claim* or *call*. It is not left up to our momentary mood whether we give a value its due. A value imposes on us the obligation to give an appropriate response. The manner in which St. Thomas modifies Isidore's definition of "honestum" goes in the same direction. "It seems that something is called honorable *(honestum)* for this reason, that it is worthy of honor *(honore dignum)*. Honor is due to excellence *(excellentiae debetur)*."[77] A similar point holds for delight, as is clear in St. Thomas's account of delight as a necessary consequence of happiness (see below).

3. Hildebrand finds the quality of the call of value well expressed by St. Augustine's statement, "The austere beauty of Continence . . . was revealed, serene and indeed merry but not debauched, honorably soliciting me to come to her."[78] St. Thomas has a strong sensitivity for the beauty of purity, though his love for it is freer than St. Augustine's since he never felt the anguish of being enslaved to sexual passion.

4. In our response to value, according to Hildebrand, we abandon ourselves and transcend the boundaries of our self-centeredness,

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[75] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 37, note 2.
[76] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 145, a. 2, ad 1.
[77] St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 145, a. 1, c.
[78] St. Augustine, *Confessions,* VIII.11.27, quoted in Hildebrand, Ethics, 38, footnote 2.

while absorption in subjective satisfaction confines us to ourselves. This transcendence is particularly clear in St. Thomas's understanding of charity and of God as a common good (see the conclusion of this essay below).

Hildebrand's distinctive strength lies in being exceptionally alive to values in all their qualitative diversity, and exceptionally alive to the wealth of responses called forth by them in the person. He develops a deep personalist understanding of human subjectivity, in many respects parallel to that of Karol Wojtyla, particularly in the area of love between man and woman.

## Nature and Appetitus in St. Thomas

### *The Origin and Meaning of "Entelechy"*

Entelechial Thomism uses the concept of "entelechy" to assert an immanent natural dynamism that "has its end already contained in itself" and only needs to unfold it. This position immanentizes St. Thomas's teleology across the board and psychologizes it in the case of human nature as experienced appeasement. Such an understanding of "entelechy" cannot be derived either from Aristotle or from St. Thomas. For Aristotle, entelechy simply means act as opposed to potency. The Thomism sketched by Hildebrand seems to be based on Hans Driesch rather than on Aristotle or St. Thomas. It is Driesch, not Aristotle or St. Thomas, who has a concept of entelechy as merely factual tendency devoid of any true *telos*.

Hans Driesch (1867–1941) developed the concept of entelechy to refer to an inner organizing power or perfective principle that brings living beings to maturity from within.[79] Aristotle's own understanding of the term is quite different. Aristotle seems to have invented the word *entelecheia* (it is not found before him and rarely after him apart from his commentators) on the basis of the adjective *enteles*, which means perfect. He uses it in a sense close to *energeia*, both terms being usually translated as "act (Latin: *actus*)." "Matter is potency, form is entelechy."[80] It is in this sense that the word appears in the definition of the soul: "The soul is the first entelechy of a natural body having life in it potentially."[81] Aristotle's ancient commentators confirm this reading of entelechy as act. According to Arius Didymus (1st century B.C.), "(Aristotle) said that these principles

[79] See Hans Driesch, *Philosophie des Organischen,* 4th revised ed. (Leipzig: Quelle und Meyer, 1928). especially the long section on entelechy, 283–395. English translation: *The Science & Philosophy of the Organism* (London,: A. & C. Black, 1929).

[80] Aristotle, *De Anima,* 412a.9.

[81] Aristotle, *De Anima,* 412a.27.

were two in number, namely, matter and form. Form he also called entelechy and essence and substance (in the sense of the definition) and actuality."[82] The ancient dictionary *Suda* defines entelechy as "the perfection and the form of the underlying (matter)."[83] St. Thomas reads *entelecheia* in the same way. "[Aristotle] held that it (the soul) was the entelechy, that is, the act or perfection of a natural body."[84]

Driesch seems to have developed his own understanding of "entelechy" on the basis of Aristotle's definition of the soul. It is definitely a step, though an intelligible one, from viewing the soul as the form which accounts for the life of a living being to viewing that same form as an active principle that unfolds a living organism from within as a kind of efficient cause. The most important point to note is that in conformity with the rejection of the final cause widely shared by contemporary biology Driesch developed his account without reference to the causality of the good, that is, without the full Aristotelian teleology in which the good is the cause of causes. It is this absence of the good as true cause that turns up again in Entelechial Thomism as the disastrously ruinous first principle.

In addition to Driesch, Kant seems to play an important role in Entelechial Thomism. It is in Kant that one finds a consistently worked out account of the priority of appetites or inclinations *(Neigungen)*, conceived as mere accidental facts, over the goodness of things.

> All objects of inclinations have only a conditioned value, for if the inclinations and the needs based on them did not exist, their object would be without value.[85]

All inclinations, according to Kant, have this structure. They are the *principium* of the goodness of their object. Hildebrand himself partly follows Kant in describing sensitive appetites such as thirst, as the principle of the importance of their objects. St. Thomas's view is different.

### *Nature as the Order of the Divine Art*

If the good is prior to *appetites*, if it is truly the cause of all causes, then the natures of things and their *appetitus* cannot be described as Drieschian "merely factual tendencies."

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[82] Arius Didymus, *Physica* (fragmenta) III.1–3.3.
[83] *Suda,* Epsilon 1454.1.
[84] St. Thomas, *De spirit. creat.,* 2 c, cf. *Phys.,* III.2.3, *Gen. et corrupt.,* I.5.2.
[85] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* Akademieausgabe, 4.428.

> Nature is nothing else than the order of some art, namely the divine art, placed within things, by which things move to a definite end. [86]

God places the order of his art into his creation as the nature within things so that different things incline from within to their end. St. Thomas distinguishes three forms of *appetitus*, each one a reflection of the divine art. One of these three is the rational *appetitus*, rational in the sense of being based on knowledge. It can only incline toward a good *as known*. It cannot arise automatically, outside of the person's understanding of something as good. It arises only inasmuch as a person understands something as good. Entelechial Thomism interprets St. Thomas's concept of *appetitus* in general as a drive that arises within human beings from behind *(a tergo)* their free rational self without being engendered by a known good. According to St. Thomas, such being engendered by a rationally known good is precisely the specific difference of the *appetitus rationalis* in comparison with others. Here is how St. Thomas distinguishes the three kinds of *appetitus*:

> Since all things come forth from the divine will, all incline toward the good, but in different ways.
>
> Some incline toward the good only by a natural disposition, without knowledge, such as plants and inanimate bodies. And such an inclination toward the good is called natural *appetitus*.
>
> Some incline toward the good by some knowledge, yet not in such a way that they know the *ratio* of good itself, but they know some particular good, e.g., sensation, which knows what is sweet and white and anything of this kind. The inclination which follows this knowledge is called sensible *appetitus*.
>
> Some incline to the good with a knowledge by which they know the very *ratio* of good, which only the intellect can do. And these incline most perfectly to the good, not only as directed by another to the good like those that lack knowledge, nor only to a good in the particular like those in which there is only sense knowledge, but inclining, as it were, to the universal good itself. And this inclination is called will.[87]

It is clear according to this text that the rational appetite is an inclination that depends entirely on the good as understood. "[T]he understood good is the proper object of the will. . . ."[88] The rational appetite cannot begin to move in the way Entelechial Thomism claims it does, from behind, *a tergo*.

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[86] St. Thomas, *Physic.,* II.14.8.
[87] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 59, a. 1 c.
[88] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* I, ch. 81.3.

In St. Thomas's conception, the three orders of natures and the three modes of *appetitus* are *dependent on the good*, though in different ways. God conceives and creates them all on the basis of the prior end, which is his own goodness. To use Hildebrand's way of speaking, the good, which is God himself, is the *principium* of natures in God's creative art, and each nature, as the presence of the divine art in a created being, is in its own way a *principiatum* of the good, ordered to the good rather than the other way around. Everything exists to manifest the glory of God. In the Creator's intention, the glory of God cannot possibly be a mere means of bringing things to a purely immanent and private perfection.

In its threefold use, *"appetitus"* is an analogous notion. The prime analogate in terms of which the other two uses must be understood is the inclination of the will as a rational power, because only reason can know the good as such and incline toward it as good. The other two forms of *appetitus* involve inclinations to the good only inasmuch as they are ordered by reason. The key to understanding all forms of *appetitus* is therefore the movement of the rational *appetitus*, namely, love. According to Entelechial Thomism, lower appetites are the paradigmatic case of *appetitus*. This Thomism takes "some impersonal relationship as a pattern, thereby overlooking the essential personal character of the meaning of these terms" (i.e., terms like *desiderare*, etc).[89] Seifert understands *appetitus* in a similar manner.

> The thesis that the will is an *appetitus* seems to ignore the fact that the person can transcend nature in both discussed senses of "transcendence." For all *appetitus* seems essentially to be some *immanent* striving which simply proceeds from the inner principles of a nature and which only "happens" in man (and thus *appetitus* is the opposite of free self-determination). In addition, *appetitus* seems necessarily to lack the transcendence which is found in those acts of the will in which the person conforms himself to a good *"propter ipsum"* (for its own sake).[90]

Crosby finds that St. Thomas is under "the spell of certain cosmological analogies," which he takes to be present because the very word *appetitus* implies them: "the will is understood as a striving for perfection that has become fully conscious (hence the talk of *appetitus rationalis*, or rational appetite) . . . "[91] The exact opposite is the case. Far from considering

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[89] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 28.

[90] Josef Seifert, "Karol Cardinal Wojtyla (Pope John Paul II) as Philosopher and the Cracow/Lublin School of Philosophy," *Aletheia* 2 (1981): 130–99, here 170.

[91] John Crosby, *The Selfhood of the Human Person* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1996), 181.

cosmological analogies the point of departure, St. Thomas understands subrational "cosmological" tendencies, such as the growth of plants, as deriving from God's love of his own goodness, as an echo of God's decision to share this goodness in various ways. The prime analogate of *appetitus* is rational *appetitus* whose first and fundamental act is a rational love motivated by the good as good.

### *The End of All Natures*

In the present context it is helpful to consider some texts in which St. Thomas unfolds his understanding of nature and *appetitus* not only in terms of goodness but also in terms of beauty, since beauty is in some ways more akin to Hildebrand's "value."

> The multitude and distinction of things has been planned by the divine mind and has been set in things, in order that created things would represent the divine goodness in various ways and diverse beings would participate in it in different degrees, so that out of the order of diverse beings a certain beauty would arise in things, a beauty which commends the divine wisdom.[92]

St. Thomas spells out some details of this understanding in his commentary on Denys the Areopagite.

> Denys shows what the account of beauty consists in when he says that God gives beauty inasmuch as he is the cause of harmony and splendor (εὐαρμοστίας καὶ ἀγλαΐας) in all things. . . . Everything is called beautiful inasmuch as it has splendor of its kind, spiritual or bodily and inasmuch as it is made in due proportion.
>
> Denys then shows how God is the cause of splendor by adding that with a certain flash God sends into things a gift of his luminous ray, which is the fountain of all light. These gifts of the flashing divine ray should be understood as a share in likeness (with God). . . .
>
> He also explains the other part, namely, that God is the cause of harmony in things. There is a twofold harmony in things, the first according to the order of creatures to God and he touches this harmony when he says that God turns all things to himself as to the end . . . and for this reason the Greek word for beauty, κάλλος is related to the word for calling, ηαλέω.
>
> The second harmony is in things according to their order to each other. He touches this harmony when he says that God gathers all in all to the same. . . . And because all are found in all according to some order it follows that they are ordered to something one.[93]

[92] St. Thomas, *Compendium,* I.102 end.
[93] St. Thomas, *De div. nom.,* IV.5.339–40.

There is much in this text that deserves lingering over. I want to highlight only one point, namely, Denys's pun on κάλλος (beauty) and καλέω (to call). As St. Thomas interprets the pun, one effect of God's beauty is that through His creative act according to the paradigm of beauty, God harmonizes all things with Himself by calling all things toward Himself, by turning them and attuning them in their innermost nature to the end which is He Himself.

St. Thomas frequently turns to a passage from the Wisdom of Solomon according to which God's wisdom " . . . orders all things sweetly *(disponit omnia suaviter)*" (Wisdom 8:1) to the one ultimate end of each being and the whole universe, which is God's glory.

> God provides for natural creatures in such a way that he not only moves them to their natural acts, but also bestows on them certain forms and powers that are the principles of acts, in order that they might incline to such movements of themselves. And in this way the movements to which they are naturally moved by God become connatural and easy, as the Book of Wisdom says, he "orders all things sweetly." Much more, therefore, does he pour into those whom he moves to the attainment of a supernatural eternal good certain supernatural forms and qualities, in accord with which they are moved sweetly and promptly by him to the attainment of the eternal good.[94]

All harmony *among* creatures is gathered up by this call to one single end, which must therefore be an all-encompassing common good. If the wisdom and power of the creator is truly present in his creation, the diverse natures of his creatures must be suited most deeply to this overall harmony. Nature cannot be a principle opposed to the divine order and its all-encompassing common good of manifesting God's glory.

> Even by natural *appetitus* or love every particular being loves its own good because of the common good of the whole universe, which is God. This is why Denys says in his book *On the Divine Names* that God turns all things to the love of himself. Therefore, in the state of nature's wholeness, man referred his love of himself to the love of God as to the end, and likewise his love of all other things. And therefore he loved God more than himself and above all things. But in the state of corrupted nature, man fell short of this (love) with respect to the *appetitus* of his rational will. Due to the corruption of nature, (this *appetitus*) follows the private good unless it is healed by the grace of God.[95]

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[94] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 110, a. 2 c.
[95] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 109, a. 3 c.

The absolute primacy of God's infinite goodness, this must be reflected in every natural *appetitus* of every being inasmuch as it is truly *natural*. This primacy must be reflected in *all* natures, because the power and wisdom of the creator is truly present in all the natures he creates. The natural inclination of all natural beings cannot be immanent in the sense of not allowing them to transcend themselves to the good in itself. If nature is the order of the divine art placed within things by which things move to a definite end, then that end can only be the true end, namely, God himself, the glory of God's goodness. This must be the deepest and in this sense most immanent direction of nature. Nature remains most at unity with itself when it inclines in this direction. Nature does not need to be overcome or left behind to incline toward this authentic end.

> The whole universe with its single parts is ordained to God as an end, inasmuch as by a certain imitation the divine goodness is represented in them to the glory of God. Still, rational creatures have God as the final end in a special way above this [imitation] since they can attain him by their operation, by knowing and loving.[96]

Yet even this higher mode of being ordered to God follows the same principle of the subordination of all things to the glory of God.

> The other cause [of predestination] is the final cause which is that we might praise and know the goodness of God. This cause is noted in the words, "In praise of the glory of his grace" (Eph 1,6).[97]

### *Nature or Fallen Nature?*

Hildebrand's understanding of the tendencies of our nature is quite different, at least in the context of his reading of Entelechial Thomism.

> If . . . we analyze the soul of man from the point of view of mere factual tendencies, and of the immanent logic in man's nature, we may indeed reach many valuable results, especially concerning the problems of "mental health," but we could never discover the norm which would enable us to distinguish the morally good from the morally evil. We could never see, for example, that selfishness is *contra naturam*; as a matter of fact, exactly the opposite is revealed by a study of the immanent tendencies in man's nature: there is a natural trend of self-affirmation and of striving for the subjectively satisfying. Why should it be more *secundum naturam* to be generous or just than to be avaricious or unjust? No analysis of merely factual tendencies, as of the immanent entelechial movements of the soul, could ever disclose to us that polygamy or even

[96] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 65, a. 2 c.
[97] St. Thomas, *Ephes.,* 1.1.

> debauchery or promiscuity is immoral, nor could it show us that purity or faithfulness is *secundum naturam*.[98]

In apparent agreement with Hildebrand, the *Imitation of Christ* has this to say about "nature" as opposed to "grace."

> Nature is greedy and receives more willingly than it gives. It loves its own and the private. Grace by contrast is pious and common. It avoids what belongs to the individual, is content with little and judges that giving is more blessed than receiving.[99]

Hildebrand and Thomas a Kempis must be speaking about fallen nature, not integral nature. Neither of them would agree with Luther, who sees nature as entirely corrupt.

> Man is by nature unable to want God to be God. Indeed, he himself wants to be God, and does not want God to be God. To love God above all things by nature is a fictitious term, a chimera . . . No act is done according to nature that is not an act of concupiscence against God.[100]

Luther's understanding of nature seems to turn up again in Kant's understanding of inclinations *(Neigungen)*.

> All inclinations *(Neigungen)* together—they may be brought into a tolerable system in which case their satisfaction is called "one's own happiness"—are self-seeking *(Selbstsucht, solipsismus)*. This self-seeking is either that of self-love, of a benevolence toward oneself that surpasses everything *(philautia)* or that of delight in oneself *(arrogantia)*.[101]
>
> The principle of one's own happiness, which some set up as the highest principle of morality, forms a curious contrast with the commandment (i.e., "Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself"). The commandment would have to be rephrased: Love yourself above all, and God as well as your neighbor for the sake of yourself.[102]

Entelechial Thomism seems to be based on such a Kantian understanding of *appetitus = Neigung = self-referential immanence of self-love*. No *appetitus*, no *Neigung* in this sense can be instilled by the creator's creative art in the

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98 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 185–86.

99 Thomas a Kempis, *De imitatione Christi,* 3.54.

100 Martin Luther, *Disputation against Scholastic Theology,* theses 17, 18 and 21; in Harold T. Grimm and H. T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works, Vol. 31: Career of the Reformer* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1957) 10.

101 Immanuel *Kant, Kritik der praktischen Vernunft, Akademieausgabe,* 5.73.

102 Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft,* 5.83.

nature of his creatures. It would be contrary to the objective purpose of the whole universe, which is God's glory.

Hildebrand *does* develop an authentic sense in which human nature is ordered to the good.

> Only if we liberate ourselves from a merely immanent conception of man and include in the nature of man his being destined to realize moral values, only then can we rightly say that all, at least all natural, morally good actions are *secundum naturam*. . . .If, therefore, the term *secundum naturam* is meant to include conformity with moral goodness, then it is based on a conception of nature which includes the relation between man and the world of moral values, as well as the fact that man is ordered to these values and their call.[103]

Yet Hildebrand hesitates to root such an ordination in the innermost *nature* of human beings, in the innermost *natural tendencies* of that nature. The possibility that at this core of nature one might get trapped in "immanent trends," like the Drieschian entelechies or Kantian *Neigungen*, is apparently too great a danger.

> Man's sensitivity to values is precisely the capacity to grasp things important in themselves, to be able to be affected by them, and to be motivated by them in his responses. It is precisely the capacity to *transcend* the frame of mere immanent trends. To interpret it as merely immanent because it belongs to man's nature is an error based on the equivocation of the term "rooted in man's nature"; and this leads to a contradiction which could be formulated: the *transcendence* of man is something *immanent* to man's nature.[104]

A contradiction! It depends on what exactly one means by "immanent to human nature." If "immanent trend" means that I use everything outside myself as a mere means for a self-perfection that has the point of reference or principle of goodness in myself alone, then it would be a contradiction to say "the transcendence of man is something immanent to man's nature." If "immanent" means "corresponding to the deepest level within the nature as that toward which the nature inclines from within," then it is not a contradiction to say that the perfection of my nature lies in transcendence. Why should one deny an immanent ordering to a transcendent good merely because the ordering is immanent? Is the deepest center of the nature of things, the presence of the divine art in them, to be cut off from all transcendent good in the manner of Kant's inclinations? "My own

[103] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 186–87.
[104] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 221.

perfection" is that for which I am most profoundly made, namely, that as part of a great whole of all material and spiritual creation God's glory becomes manifest in me, *ad majorem dei gloriam*. This is the common good of the universe and therefore the ultimate reason for every natural inclination. This is what everything seeks in seeking its own perfection. If this were not my own perfection, the creator would have failed to imprint his art in my innermost nature.

## Happiness

Does this reading of St. Thomas not overlook one important point, namely, his teaching that happiness is the final end? If happiness is the final end, how can one be truly motivated by any intrinsic good? How, in particular, can the glory of God be the final end? Does not the unavoidably self-referential nature of happiness reduce all the goodness that motivates me to something merely good *for me* in the sense of leading to my happiness? Does one not see here, at least, that St. Thomas fails to understand "good in itself" and locks the human person in an immanent striving? Hildebrand's objections again go back to Kant.

> The principle that we act for the sake of our own happiness is most reprehensible—not only because it is false and because experience contradicts the assumption that well-being *(Wohlbefinden)* is always determined by morally good action *(Wohlverhalten)*, not only because it contributes nothing to the foundations of morality since it is something altogether different to make a happy man and a good man, to make a man who is clever and sharp in pursuing his advantage and to make him virtuous—but because it gives motives *(Triebfedern)* to morality that undermine it and destroy its entire dignity *(Erhabenheit)* by placing the motives for virtue together with the motives for vice in a single category and simply teaches one to calculate the outcome more cleverly, thereby destroying the specific difference between them altogether. Moral feeling, this supposed special sense (though it is shallow to appeal to such a feeling . . .) is closer to morality and its dignity *(Würde)* inasmuch as it gives to virtue the honor of considering her the cause of delight and esteem and inasmuch as it does not tell her to her face that it is not her beauty, but only advantage *(Vortheil)*, that binds us to her.[105]

In the *Breve Cum alias ad apostolatus* (1699) against Archbishop Fénelon, the very first of Fénelon's errors is formulated as follows.

> There is a habitual state of the love of God which is pure charity, without any admixture of motives of one's own interest. . . . God is no

[105] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.442–3.

> longer loved for the sake of merit, nor for the sake of perfection, nor for the sake of the happiness that can be found in loving him.[106]

Despite his Kantian critique of St. Thomas, Hildebrand by no means agrees with Fénelon. He does not exclude the motive of happiness from the love of God. In fact, he gives a powerful argument *for* the absolutely essential role of happiness.

> The love for God is the value response *par excellence*, the most transcendent act of man and the most objective. There is, however, a new dimension of abandonment *(Hingabe)*, there is an even more personal commitment, if God is not only the absolute good in himself, but also the absolute good for us. It would be a grave error to think that the attitude toward God would be less abandoning *(hingebend)*, less value response, if God is also my absolute good, the source of blessedness *(Seligkeit)*. This would only be the case if one did not give first place to the value response to God's infinite holiness, glory and majesty, to total abandonment to God and his holy will, to a burning love for God's honor and glorification *(Verherrlichung)*. The response to God as the absolute objective good for me, which grows out of the response to God's infinite holiness and beauty, is as such an increase in a very definite direction. It is so great an interest in the infinite glory of God, that this glory becomes my blessedness. It is such a profound stirring of the soul by God's glory that it forms my own personal life down to its last root, that it becomes also most profoundly "subjective" due to his objective infinite beauty.[107]

This magnificent text shows that Hildebrand by no means excludes happiness, but develops a deep personalist understanding of subjectivity in connection with happiness as part of the creature's self-abandonment or gift of itself to God. The supreme expression of this self-abandonment is the glorification of God.

### *Two Senses of Happiness*

It would, however, be a mistake to seek a general reconciliation with St. Thomas on the question of happiness in this precise point as Hildebrand formulates it. One cannot turn the happiness Hildebrand is speaking about into a final end, not even when it is clear in the end that such happiness is an essential part of the creature's self-transcendence.

> Again, self-centered happiness alone can be directly intended. Authentic happiness, on the contrary, by its very nature cannot be the end of

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[106] Innocent XII, *Cum alias ad apostolatus,* 1, Denzinger-Schönmetzer, 2351.
[107] Hildebrand, *Wesen der Liebe,* 164.

> our actions, but it is definitely a gift bestowed on us when we abandon ourselves to a good endowed with a genuine value. Ultimate authentic happiness can only be the object of a general longing, but not the primary motive of our actions and desires. It presupposes precisely that we abandon ourselves to a good possessing a genuine value *for its own sake*.[108]

Hildebrand is completely correct here since he understands happiness not as the complete human good but as a particular good, namely, a pervasive state of delight.

> The delight and emotion which we experience in witnessing a noble action or in gazing at the beauty of a star-studded sky essentially presupposes the consciousness that the importance of the object is in no way dependent on the delight it may bestow on us. Indeed, this bliss arises from our confrontation with an object having an intrinsic importance. . . . Thus, this difference between the bliss emanating from the sheer existence of a value and the pleasure accruing from the subjectively satisfying is itself not a difference of degree, but a difference of kind: an essential difference. A life which consisted in a continuous stream of pleasures, as derived from what is merely subjectively satisfying, could never grant us one moment of that blissful happiness engendered by those objects possessing a value. The difference between the self-centered pleasure propounded by Aristippus as the only true good, and the happiness for which Socrates and Plato strived, is therefore not a difference of mere degree but of kind of essence.[109]

In this text, the concepts "happiness" and "bliss" gravitate toward the *bonum delectabile*, or more precisely, toward *delectatio* itself—toward pleasure, joy, and delight—particularly when these permeate one's life as a whole as an enduring affective state. Self-centered happiness consists in subjective satisfaction, such as bodily pleasure and the satisfaction of pride. Genuine happiness consists in a pervasive and encompassing experience of joy and delight effected in us by some value. Happiness could be defined as a spiritual affective state. It is superabundant in the sense of flowing from what is the principal good in question.

St. Thomas is emphatic that this is *precisely not* what he means by happiness. Delight, he argues, *is not* the essence of happiness, but, quite parallel to Hildebrand, something flowing from the good that is the essence of happiness.

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[108] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 309.
[109] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 36.

> Since bodily pleasures are known to many, they have taken over the name delight, as Aristotle says in Ethics VII, even though there are more powerful joys. Nevertheless blessedness does not consist even in these.
>
> For in every thing, what belongs to its essence is distinct from what is some proper accident of it, as in man being a mortal rational animal is something other than being capable of laughter.
>
> One must keep in mind that every delight is a certain proper accident which follows blessedness or some part of blessedness. For someone takes delight when he has some good fitting for him, either in reality or in hope or at least in memory. The fitting good, if it is perfect, is man's blessedness. If it is imperfect, it is a certain participation in blessedness either near or distant or at least apparent. And so it is clear that not even the delight that follows the perfect good is the very essence of blessedness. It is something following the essence as an accident following the essence.[110]

St. Thomas does not assert that happiness in Hildebrand's sense is the final goal of human life. He explicitly asserts the opposite. Crosby's reading is closer to St. Thomas on this point than Hildebrand's. Speaking of "objective good for the person," Crosby writes,

> It seems that this kind of good was recognized in the Aristotelian tradition under the name of *eudaimonia*, or happiness understood as the all-encompassing well-being of the person. It is very close to the *bonum* of St. Thomas.[111]

All-encompassing well-being clearly includes more than simply joy and delight. Yet even Crosby's definition is not an accurate rendering of St. Thomas's meaning. In order to understand what St. Thomas means by "happiness" one must approach it from a different angle altogether, namely, from a general account of "end."

### *A General Account of End*

An important clarification of terms is necessary. When Hildebrand speaks about end, what he has typically in mind is the relation between instrumental means and end, for example, medicine as a means to health.[112] The means are typically efficient causes or imperfect beginnings that do not themselves contain the goodness of the end. Following Aristotle, St. Thomas understands the word "end" much more broadly, quite in general as "that for the sake of which." For example, truth is the end of

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[110] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 2, a. 6 c.

[111] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 199.

[112] See Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 221, last paragraph.

the activity of the mind. "The good of the intellect is the true, which is its end and perfection."[113] As Hildebrand uses "end," one could not call truth the end of thought in precisely this way. Some means-end relation or development would have to be involved. For example, in the Pythagorean theorem, one moves step-by-step to the conclusion that in a right-angled triangle the square on the side opposite the right angle equals the sum of the squares on the other two sides. The thoughts invested in the many steps are Hildebrandian means. The thought that rests in the conclusion is the end, as Hildebrand uses the term. According to Hildebrand, one could call truth an end only in this sense.

Even that perfect thought of the conclusion has an end in the way St. Thomas uses this term. The truth of the conclusion is the end of the thought that considers the conclusion. The thought whose end lies in this truth is here clearly not a means for an end, nor an earlier stage of development, but an act which attains an end. In fact, the end defines the very nature of the act.

This defining power of the end holds not only in the order of truth just considered, but also in the order of good. Human acts receive their specific nature from the proximate end which the agent intends.[114] When the act involves both an interior act of the will and an exterior act, the specific nature of the human act derives from the end as intended in the inner act of will.[115] To take an example that is one of Hildebrand's favorites, when I justly admire an excellent person, my act is defined as a human act of justice by what I intend, namely, both my voluntary act of admiration itself with its external expression and the justice that results from it as an objective state of affairs.

### *The Final End of Just Acts*

Every particular human act in this present life, whatever good may be contained in it, is a partial good. If I act now for the sake of justice by giving honor to a person I admire, my will cannot be restricted to that particular act and the particular justice it brings about. If I want to do what is just now, *precisely because it is just,* I necessarily have a more universal love for justice that goes beyond this particular act. otherwise I would not love this particular act *precisely because it is just*. I do what is just *now*, because I want to do it both today and tomorrow and in my whole life, whenever the occasion presents itself. Crosby expresses this point clearly when he speaks about "the transcendence that persons achieve by choosing a *life* of

[113] St. Thomas, *Sent.,* III.23.2.3C c, cf. *De veritate,* I.10 ad 4.
[114] See St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 6.
[115] See St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 18, a. 6.

value response and turning away from a *life* centered around the merely agreeable."[116] More is at stake in each act than simply this one act. A whole life is at stake and, in fact, even more than a whole life.

Doing what is just now is, therefore, *a means* for doing justice more universally. This is in no way to instrumentalize the particular act of justice for other beneficial purposes. When one compares a particular just act as a means in this sense with the end of a more comprehensive doing of justice, one can see that the means shares in the good of the end. In fact, the means is the very same good, namely, justice, but it is only *one particular participation* in the more universal good. Inasmuch as it is only a particular good, it is related to the greater whole as means to end. (Again, "means" has a wider sense here than it does in Hildebrand.)

In the light of this means-end relation, one can clarify an implication of the truth that a more universal love for justice is a necessary *condition* for loving a particular act of justice. I *must first* love the more encompassing end of justice for my whole life *if* I am to love the individual act of justice. The sense of "first" in this statement is not chronological, but refers to an order between prior and posterior ends. If I stopped loving the more universal end, I would stop loving every particular act as means, and I would stop acting justly in the particular. I must love the particular act precisely *as a means* if I am to love it at all. The particular act is *per se ordered to* a more ultimate end.

When I actually act, the series of more and less universal ends cannot contain only comparatives in which a less universal love simply points to a more universal love, which again points to a more universal love, and so forth indefinitely. The superlative is required: *most* universal, *most* encompassing. Unless I love doing justice in some final and definitive way, I cannot love justice and I am unable to perform any particular just act.

What, exactly, is this most encompassing end? If I say it is doing justice in my whole life, that is not enough, since my whole life from birth to death is a fragment. As a fragment, it is not a total and all-encompassing good, but itself a means. If I restricted my love for justice to the acts of justice I can perform in this life, I would have stopped loving justice. The most universal whole can remain rather indistinct in people's mind. It is nevertheless infallibly implicit when anyone acts justly and does so for the right reason, namely, that it is just.

What I have argued so far applies to all human beings, regardless of their views on whether there is a God. This point is important, if we now take a step with Hildebrand that clarifies the implications of the last end

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[116] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 186, emphasis added.

of justice. Hildebrand himself offers a convincing analysis of the relation between particular acts and the ultimate end of the moral life, although he still rejects the language of "means-end."

> Living for God, willing to conform to Him in every single situation, doing what is pleasing to him: this direction of life (expressed in Augustinian terms) does not at all imply that we consider a concrete moral value in a concrete situation to be related to God as a means to an end. On the contrary, every morally relevant value, in its relation to God (the Source of all goodness, the Infinite Goodness Itself), may be compared to a ray of the sun in its relation to the sun itself; it is a special reflection of God's infinite goodness. In willing what is good by its very nature (i.e., justice, purity, humility, veracity, and charity) we find in these values a reflection of the infinite justice, purity, and charity of God. In responding to their value, we do not consider them as means for attaining God. Rather, we conform to them for their own sake and thereby conform ultimately to God Himself, the Source of these values.[117]

What, exactly, is the means-end relation which Hildebrand considers and rejects in this text? He speaks first of relating a concrete moral act in a concrete situation as means to God as end. He then clarifies what he means when he adds, "In responding to their value, we do not consider them as means *for attaining* God" (emphasis added). This particular understanding of the means-end relation fits with Hildebrand's general tendency in speaking about means and end. When he raises the possibility that moral acts might be means, he conceives them as means inasmuch as they produce something distinct from themselves, namely, attaining God, perhaps in the form of a reward.

Let us leave aside this question of the reward, of eternal beatitude, for the moment, and focus on doing the just act because it is just. Hildebrand implicitly affirms another sort of means-end relation, provided one uses these terms as St. Thomas uses them. When I love a particular act of justice and perform it for the sake of justice, I implicitly love God and intend to live my *whole* life justly *before him*, not only before the particular demand of justice which I encounter in a particular moment. As Hildebrand says, I must conform to the particular demand of justice for its own sake, but in doing so I conform ultimately to God. My conformity to the particular demand of justice here and now is a means by which I tend toward a more encompassing good, namely, conformity to God in my life considered as a totality beyond the fragmentary character of my present life.

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117 Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 305.

To use a just act as a means for this last end is in no way to instrumentalize the act for something outside itself. It does not become a "mere means" because it itself contains the goodness of the end, even if only as a particular fragment. There is no contrast whatsoever between performing the particular act for the sake of justice and performing it for the sake of the last end of living a totality of life as a just life *in conspectu dei*. Quite on the contrary, in every particular act of justice, this last end is present as the true and ultimate reason why I do what I do, even if I do not clearly grasp this last end. Every just act is ordered through itself (per se) to this end.

### *Improper and Proper Self-Reference*

> When we love what is lovable and show respect for what is worthy of respect, we are acting for the sake of the value and not, or at least not in the same way, for the sake of our selfhood. . . . What a value calls for from me is not my self-affirmation performed with reference to the value, but rather the affirmation of the value for its own sake.[118]

Crosby's insistence on excluding inappropriate self-referential interest is entirely correct as far as it goes. More, however, needs to be said. There is a necessary self-referential element in a moral act which need not, and in fact *cannot*, be rejected. My intention in doing what is just cannot remain neutral: "A just action is objectively called for and should be performed." I must will *myself* to act justly. I must consider the just action *my end* and *my good*. This necessary self-referential aspect of every moral act must be understood both in terms of my nature and of myself as an individual person here and now. Justice is not a fitting good for a dog because a dog does not have reason and will. "A just action should be performed" does not address itself to dogs. Justice is specifically a perfection of a rational nature. Yet even this is not enough. I cannot merely say, "A just action is called for and should be performed by a rational being." In the end, if my thought about justice is to be a practical thought and issue into an act, I must see the moral act as fitting *for myself* in particular at a given moment. *Nota bene,* it is the just action itself and its inherent goodness that I must consider my good. In this scenario one cannot draw a contrast between Hildebrand's "value" and "objective good for the person." One cannot say, "If you do this just act because you consider justice *your good*, objectively good *for you*, you are just doing it for yourself. You are merely seeking your self-perfection."

Scheler reasons in this way against those who say moral goodness can be directly intended.

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[118] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 185.

> Whoever does not want to do good to his neighbor in such a way that his concern is the realization of the neighbor's good, but only uses the occasion for himself "being good" or "doing good" in this act—such a person is not good and does not truly do the good, but remains a kind of Pharisee who merely wants to look good in his own eyes.[119]

Scheler's claim is understandable as a way of resisting the opposite claim by Kant.

> The moral and thus categorical imperative . . . must abstract from any object, the object having no influence at all on the will, lest that practical reason be reduced to merely serving an interest foreign to it, in order that it may prove its own imperious dignity *(Ansehen)* as the highest law. For example, I must seek to make others happy not because their happiness is of interest to me (whether on the basis of inclination or some delight that influences me indirectly through my reason), but only because the maxim which excludes this happiness cannot be understood as a universal law within one and the same will.[120]

Kant reduces himself to the absurd in this statement. His formalism compels him to eliminate all motives of morality except the logical form of making one's maxim the universal norm for all wills. It then becomes a matter of indifference whether I am interested in the happiness of my neighbor at all. I do moral good without willing any good.

An example can show, however, that Scheler is not right either. In the climate of antagonism between the Orthodox Church and Greek Catholics in Romania, some Orthodox argue: "When the Communist regime began to persecute the Church, you Uniate priests abandoned your flock. You insisted on remaining loyal to the Pope and so you were put in prison. You were more interested in your own personal moral goodness than in the welfare of your flock. This is why we should keep your churches. The flock is ours." This piece of cynical sophistry protecting private power interests in the name of the common good shows an utter lack of understanding for moral goodness. If I consider a just act *my good*, precisely for the reason that it is just, then I am not ordering the just act to myself, but I am ordering myself to it and its demand.

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[119] Max Scheler, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik: Neuer Versuch der Grundlegung eines ethischen Personalismus,* 7th ed. (Bonn: Bouvier, 2000), 48. English translation: *Formalism in Ethics and Non-Formal Ethics of Values: A New Attempt toward the Foundation of an Ethical Personalism* (Evanston: Northwestern University, 1973), 27.

[120] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.441.

The self-referential quality which Crosby rightly rejects seems to be connected once again with the question of *principium* and *principiatum*. The preposition "for" in the phrase "good *for* me" seems to have two meanings that must be distinguished. "For" can be understood in the sense of ordering something to myself, ordering it to some personal interest which exists in me already before I hear the demand of justice, or which is at least distinct and independent from that demand and then becomes the real reason why I act justly. It is right to reject such motives as the exclusive or principal motives for acting justly. One cannot serve justice merely "for pay." Love for justice cannot be self-referential in this way. Justice must itself be the main reason for acting justly.

The point is similar to the fundamental principle of sexual morality that I must not use another person as a mere means for pleasure, but must recognize and love the dignity and beauty of the other in herself or himself. Hildebrand quotes a text in which St. Augustine defines temperance as, "a love that gives itself whole to the beloved" *("amor integrum se praebens ei quod amatur.")*[121] St. Augustine transfers this demand of a wholeness of gift also to the love of God, which must be chaste in exactly the same way.

> God wants to be worshiped and loved without payment, that is, to be loved chastely, to be loved not because he gives something other than himself, but because he gives himself.[122]
>
> If I said, "God has promised gold!" you would be delighted. He promised himself, and you are sad? If a rich man does not have God, what *does* he have? Don't seek anything from God except God. Love him without payment. Ask him for him himself. Don't be afraid of poverty. Let him give himself to us and let this be enough for us.[123]

### *The Definition of Happiness as Final End*

How is St. Thomas's concept of happiness related to "final end" in the analysis of justice offered above? Is St. Thomas's thesis that happiness is the final end compatible with the insistence that justice must be done for its own sake? At the beginning of his discussion of happiness, Aristotle distinguishes between an aspect of happiness on which there is agreement between people and an aspect on which there is disagreement.

> Let us resume our inquiry and state, in view of the fact that all knowledge and choice aims at some good, what it is that we say political science

[121] St. Augustine, *De moribus ecclesiae catholicae,* I, CCL 261.1322, see Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 459.

[122] St. Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos,* Psalm 52, par. 8.

[123] St. Augustine, *Sermo* 331, PL 38, 1461, emphasis added.

> aims at and what is the highest of all goods as far as human acts are concerned. As to the name, most people are in agreement; for both the many and superior people say that it is happiness, and identify living well and acting well with being happy; but with regard to what happiness is they differ, and the many do not give the same account as the wise.[124]

If Aristotle understood the word "happiness" as Hildebrand (following Kant) understands it, namely as a pervasive experienced state of delight and joy, then the question "What is happiness?" would be settled from the outset. The only remaining question would be "What is the source of happiness? What *makes* me happy?"—and that is a very different question. Aristotle is unambiguously clear on this point. The disagreement between people lies in their understanding of "what" happiness is, τί ἐστιν.

What then is the essential content of the word "happiness" on which, Aristotle claims, people agree? This is an extremely important question, because according to Aristotle and St. Thomas, everyone desires happiness in this sense, not in the more determinate sense of happiness that emerges once the question—"What is happiness?"—is answered. In the text just quoted Aristotle formulates the meaning of the common notion happiness first as the answer to "What is the highest of all goods as far as human acts are concerned?" People commonly answer this question, he points out, by saying, εὐδαιμονία. Why do they answer in that way? It is because the common notion of happiness can be defined as "living well and acting well, τὸ εὖ ζῆν καὶ τὸ εὖ πράττειν." What is striking about these two phrases is that they are extremely general. The concept "living" encompasses everything that takes place in a specifically human existence. The verb πράττειν is less clear. It could be translated as "doing" in the sense of acting, or as part of the idiom εὖ πράττειν, which has a close English parallel, namely, "doing well" (in a wider sense than being "well-to-do," which usually refers to financial prosperity). Either way, the import of εὖ πράττειν seems to be close in universality to "living," while focusing more immediately on human acts, which is appropriate for ethics.

Even more important than these two words is the true operative term of the definition, namely, well (εὖ). "Well" is exactly as general as "good" since it is simply the adverbial form of "good." Crosby pinpoints the most general of all senses of "good."

> I follow von Hildebrand in recognizing a certain positivity common to all the kinds of good, common to value, to the merely agreeable, and common to whatever other kinds of good one can distinguish. Von Hildebrand calls by the name of *positive importance* this positivity in

[124] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* 1095a.17–22.

> virtue of which an object can interest us. Positive importance does not express a kind or category of goodness, but rather a trans-categorial goodness; this is the object of the will, that without which the will cannot be attracted or moved.[125]

"Living well" should not be taken in a specific sense of goodness, such as living morally or eating the right food or enjoying health. Not all people agree on these specific senses of "well." They do by nature agree on some construal of "well," a fact reflected in Hildebrand's thesis that some kind of transcategorial goodness is necessary for the will to be attracted or moved. This is a question of nature, not of choice.

One further important point is implicit in Aristotle's definition "living well and acting well." This definition is to be taken without any further qualification or specification such as living well here or there, living well now or then, living well intellectually as opposed to morally, and so on. It is to be taken in the most unqualified and therefore most universal and encompassing sense. Nothing that is in any way good in a human life can fall outside "living well" in this broad sense. For this reason "living well" has the character of a final end. It cannot be desired for anything else since it is absolutely comprehensive. For this reason, the common notion of happiness can be defined as "final end."

In Question One of the *Prima secundae*, St. Thomas gives a similar account of the common notion of happiness. What characterizes the common notion, he says, is the aspect or *ratio* of *final end*, nothing more and nothing less. Distinct from this common notion are two more specific ways of understanding happiness that emerge when one answers two further questions. In what is the aspect of final end truly found? The second is Aristotle's question, What is happiness? St. Thomas is most emphatically clear that his thesis—"Everyone desires happiness!"—applies to the common notion, not to the more determinate understanding of happiness.

> We can speak about the last end in two ways, in one way according to the *ratio* of final end, in another way according to that in which the *ratio* of final end is found. As far as the *ratio* of last end is concerned, all agree in the *appetitus* for the last end because all desire to fulfill their perfection, which is the account of the last end, as was said above.[126]

### *Argument for the Natural Desire for Happiness*

On this basis, the argument for the natural desire for happiness can proceed. The first premise is the inescapable *nature* of the human will. It is a power

[125] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 182, footnote 9.
[126] St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 1, a. 7 c.

that can direct itself to something *only if* some aspect of good is present: "our positive will necessarily presupposes an object endowed with a positive importance."[127] "Positive importance does not express a kind or category of goodness, but rather a transcategorial goodness; this is the object of the will, that without which the will cannot be attracted or moved."[128]

A second premise is needed, one relating to reason rather than will. It follows from the inescapable nature of our reason that we human beings grasp particular beings by universal notions such as "being" and "good." This is not a mode of knowing we choose, but we receive it together with our nature. We therefore understand that every particular being and every particular good only participates in being and goodness and does not exhaust the notions "being" and "good." "A being" is one being among others, participating in being together with others without in any way exhausting the possibilities of being.

It follows from this natural way of knowing characteristic of the human mind that when we direct ourselves to a particular good by our will, we infallibly grasp that good as merely one particular instance of good. This conclusion follows already from the most universal transcategorial notion of "good" of which Crosby rightly says, "this is the object of the will, that without which the will cannot be attracted or moved."[129] When we direct ourselves toward a particular good precisely *inasmuch as* it is a particular example of good, a more universal love for the good is necessarily at work. Unless we love good more in general, we cannot love the particular good. "For the object (of the will) is the universal good, just as the object of the intellect is the universal being."[130]

One can express the same truth also in terms of "end," taking "end" in the broad sense in which all human actions are directed toward an end. What we saw to be true of willing justice is true of all human willing. Unless I direct myself to a particular good for the sake of a more comprehensive end, I cannot direct myself to that particular good at all. For example, if I direct myself to eating right now because I see eating as good, I can only do so because I love this good as a particular falling under the more general notion of good. The more comprehensive end is what moves the will in a particular case. Only if I regard eating now as a means to a more encompassing end can I love eating now at all, and actually eat now.

This order among ends and means requires an end that is first in intention, since one cannot indefinitely add necessary causes in an infinite

[127] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 306.
[128] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 182, footnote 9.
[129] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 182, footnote 9.
[130] St. Thomas, *ST* I, q. 105, a. 4 c.

series. Willing could not begin if there were no end that is first in intention (even if last in execution). The most universal and all-encompassing end is the one that corresponds to the most universal and all-encompassing notion of "good," which Crosby calls "positive importance" or "trans-categorial goodness." Since the will can only direct itself when it directs itself by the power of this most universal notion, it can only direct itself to a particular good because it loves a final and all-encompassing end. This is what is meant by happiness. Therefore the will can only direct itself to a particular good if it directs itself to it as a means for happiness.

What must be emphasized at this point is the indeterminacy of the natural and infallible love for happiness. Apart from "all-encompassing" and "final" one cannot say anything determinate about the end, at least as long as one considers only this natural and necessary structure of willing. Apart from "leading in some way to the end" whether as part of it or as an instrumental means, one cannot say anything determinate about the means.

There is a sense of "self-perfection" which corresponds to this indeterminate final end. When St. Thomas claims "all desire to fulfill their perfection, which is the account of the last end," this does not mean that they desire their "true good" or "objective good for the person" or any other determinate good or mode of goodness. Don Giovanni also desires his self-perfection in this broad sense when he desires pleasure, because he has a universal notion of pleasure.

Crosby does not make the distinction between the common notion of happiness and the determinate notion that emerges in answer to "What is happiness?" For this reason he overdetermines the notion of happiness in his interpretation of Aristotle and St. Thomas.

> I refer with this name (i.e., eudaemonism) to the teaching that each human being always aims only at his own happiness and in fact cannot act without making the attainment of his happiness the main point of his acting. . . . Of course, the happiness of the eudaemonist is not just the satisfaction of any urges or wants; the eudaemonist is not a hedonist. The eudaemonistic idea of happiness, as found, for instance, in Aristotle, is based on the real perfection of human nature, and thus the goods for which the eudaemonist lives are goods in the sense of *bonum* and not in the sense of the merely agreeable.[131]

It is not in this determinate way that, according to Aristotle and St. Thomas, everybody inescapably desires happiness. Don Giovanni is not a eudaemonist in Crosby's sense, but a hedonist, and yet, regardless of his

[131] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 179.

moral condition, the thesis that *all* human beings naturally desire happiness and desire every particular good as a means for happiness still applies to him—as it does to the sage and the saint.

> *Leporello:* But we must leave alone the women.
>
> *Don Giovanni:* Leave alone the women? Idiot! For me, I tell you, they are more necessary than the bread I eat, more than the air I breathe.
>
> *Leporello:* And you have the heart to deceive them all?
>
> *Don Giovanni:* It is all love. If you are faithful to one, you are cruel to the others. I sense in myself such an expansive feeling that I love them all. The women cannot understand this and call my good nature deception.
>
> *Leporello:* I have never seen a nature more vast and more well-meaning.[132]

The irony is thick in "good nature" and "well-meaning." Both Don Giovanni and Leporello know that the opposite is the case. Don Giovanni abandons objective standards that would make for an objectively perfected nature or even just plain good sense. It is not in this objective and rational way that he desires happiness.

Nevertheless, the universality of reason is poured out over the whole scene: "It is *all* love." Don Giovanni is truly a *rational* animal. He desires happiness inasmuch as he continues to act by universal notions. He errs about happiness in the choices he makes. That in which the *ratio* of final end is found is, in fact, not the pleasure of erotic encounters. And yet the Don grasps each woman as a case of woman, each pleasure as a case of pleasure, and knows that he will restlessly move on to the next. If he loved only one experience of sexual pleasure in its completely isolated individuality cut off from the universal good, he could and would not love sexual pleasure at all. Only animals can love in this way since only they can grasp particular goods alone, at the total exclusion of the universal good. No human act can take place in this manner.

The natural and infallible love for happiness comes before any moral determination and is retained in all moral determinations, because it is rooted in two inescapable facts of human nature: (1) human knowing involves universal notions, and (2) human willing is by nature directed to the good in the most general sense. The enlightened self-interest of the eudaemonist, which Crosby rightly rejects, is one moral determination. It is one possible answer to the further question, "What is happiness?" Not every human being desires happiness in *this* way. Aristotle is not a eudaemonist in this sense.

[132] Da Ponte/Mozart, *Don Giovanni,* Act II, scene 1.

How is this concept of happiness related to "final end" in the account of justice offered above? Is the thesis that happiness is the final end compatible with the insistence that justice must be loved and done for its own sake? Indeed, it i*s fully compatible*. The thesis that happiness is the final end is simply the more universal form of the thesis that each act of justice, in order to be an act of justice, must involve an ultimate end. Neither the definitive end of doing justice before God nor the more encompassing final end of human life as a whole instrumentalizes moral goodness.

Of course, if one means by "happiness" a spiritual state of pervasive delight and joy, or the comprehensive objective well-being of the person in accord with the human entelechy, then indeed happiness has a self-referential quality that would make it impossible to claim it is the final end.

These more determinate ways of understanding happiness regularly stand behind the alternative that one encounters again and again in discussion with followers of Hildebrand: Either I act justly for the sake of justice, or I act justly for the sake of happiness. If happiness is one particular good among others, as Hildebrand and Crosby take it to be, then the alternative is justified. If happiness is understood as Aristotle and St. Thomas understand that word, then the alternative is mistaken. Doing justice for the sake of justice now and doing justice now for the sake of justice in my whole life are not two diverse things. Doing justice now is through itself (per se) ordered to doing justice more comprehensively. In the same way, seeking justice and happiness are not two diverse things. They are related to each other as seeking a part and seeking a whole. Doing justice is not the whole, but only part of a life lived well. Justice is ordered through itself (per se) to a further goal inasmuch as it is a particular good. Its own goodness as a particular good is what makes of it a means to a further end.

### *The Choice Between Two Directions of Life*

Does this account of happiness as the natural and inevitable final end leave any room for the principal point which Hildebrand's distinction between value and the subjectively satisfying is intended to explain, namely, that we must and do choose between two directions of life in accord with St. Augustine's distinction between two loves? It seems that the choice between the two directions of life is not a choice of mere means to a fixed and established end. It seems to be a choice of a certain kind of end, ultimately God or subjective satisfaction. Human striving, therefore, does not seem to be finalized around one supreme and inescapable end; there seem to be two irreducible, incommensurable ends

and two incommensurable kinds of desire or love. When we choose between them we exercise the most fundamental and far-reaching self-determination that we are capable of.[133]

One can respond that the choice between the two lives is not, on Hildebrand's own terms, a choice between two *ultimate* ends. Hildebrand clearly teaches that there is a general sense of "good" that applies to both lives. This most general sense of good necessarily implies a most encompassing end that is not yet determined by the choice of lives. If one or the other is chosen, it still is *under* the aspect of its being "good" in the most general sense. A natural love of the good is still one of the essential principles of that choice.

More needs to be said, however. There is a truth which Hildebrand expresses by speaking of a choice of final ends. The choice between the two directions of life bears in some way directly on the question of ultimate end. We decide for a particular direction of life when by our concrete choices and actions we answer the two questions, "In what is the *ratio* of final end found?" and "What is happiness?" By his choices and deeds, Don Giovanni *places* the *ratio* of ultimate end in erotic encounters which ultimately answers the question, "*What* is happiness?" by "Subjective satisfaction." "The voluptuous life *places the end in* bodily pleasure (*ponit finem in* delectatione corporali) . . . "[134] "A sinner *places the last end [in something] in* which it is not (*ponit finem ultimum in* quo non est)."[135] "The one who *places his end in* bodily pleasures (qui *ponit finem suum in* voluptatibus corporalibus) considers them best, which is the account of the last end."[136] This "placing" of the end "in" some particular life is not so much a choice of the final end as end. The final end (the common notion of happiness) remains the inevitable object of natural desire. "Placing the end in.." is, rather, a moral determination of the end in the concrete. When I act, I determine concretely *where* "living well" lies for me, and *what* "living well" means for me. Here we are in the sphere of moral good and evil, in which the natural desire for happiness has been turned in a particular direction.

Once this moral determination of the end in the concrete has been made clearly, one can with a certain justification say that the two directions of life have different final ends. Don Giovanni has a different final end (erotic pleasure) than one who honors marriage and loves God. It is not that Don Giovanni has lost his natural desire for happiness, but that

[133] See Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 178–85.
[134] St. Thomas, *ST* II–II, q. 179, a. 2, ad 1.
[135] St. Thomas, I *Sent.,* d. 1, q. 4, a. 1, c.
[136] St. Thomas, *Contra Gentiles,* 4, cap. 92, no. 4.

he has erroneously identified happiness with pleasure, contrary to the truth, due to a voluntary and culpable defect of love. Provided one makes these necessary qualifications and does not identify the natural desire for happiness with any morally determinate ordering of oneself to the final end, one can conclude with Wojtyla.

> An attribute of this [i.e., human nature] is above all the desire for happiness. It is something natural and necessary. Man is unable not to desire happiness. He wills it always and in everything although he does not always name the object of his desires. And precisely for this reason it can seem as if he did not desire happiness, but only strove for the various values with which he is concerned, because he desires happiness in all and through all.
>
> The desire for happiness does not lie on the uppermost surface of willing and even less so on the surface of human acts. It is not difficult, however, to discover it in them and grasp it objectively—nobody will deny that this desire is always alive in the depth of willing.
>
> Ethics can neither reject this fact, not occupy itself with it to the exclusion of all else. According to its nature, Ethics is not the doctrine of happiness, because it is a normative science, while happiness stands outside and above every norm. Happiness is the goal of nature and cannot be an object of choice, while the norm concerns only that which is an object of choice. The object of choice is always a way on which a particular person must walk.
>
> Happiness, by contrast, is not a way, but the goal of all the ways of human beings. It is, therefore, not difficult to agree that in a mediate way Ethics shows human beings the way toward happiness. Aristotle understood the role of happiness in this way, and so does the Gospel.[137]

There is an implicit presence of God in the natural desire for happiness, regardless of the life one chooses to live. Crosby develops this line of thought without explicitly appealing to the concept of happiness.[138] He begins the argument by pointing to "*a restlessness* that we feel in relation to the objects of consciousness, a restlessness typically expressed in the raising of questions about them."[139] One reason for this restlessness lies in the universality of human knowing. When we know particular beings as falling under universal notions like "being" and "good," we grasp that they only participate in being and goodness. The fullness in which they participate is not actually revealed to us in its infinity. Such a revelation would be the

[137] Wojtyla, Karol. "[The Ethical Primer] Die ethische Fibel," in Karol Wojtyla, *Erziehung zur Liebe: Mit einer ethischen Fibel* (Stuttgart-Degerloch: Seewald, 1980) 63–154; here 110–1.

[138] See Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 161–73.

[139] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 161.

vision of God. Nevertheless, we do have a sense of a mysterious fullness from afar. It is only against the background of such infinite fullness that particular beings take on the sharp contours of something understood.

> Indeed, it seems that the things of our experience do not really become *objects* of experience, are not really thrown up in front of us as intentional objects, nor do we really become *subjects* facing them, until we transcend them, reaching beyond them, seeing them against the background of this mysterious infinity.[140]

Crosby's observation can be applied to the natural order of human loving, not only to knowing. A definitive good, mysterious and indeterminate in the fullness of its goodness, always forms the backdrop of our love for particular beings. Without a love that reaches out to this infinity, we could not love any particular beings. This is not to say that a hedonist like Don Giovanni actually orders himself to God. By his choices he excludes God. Although God is ultimately implied in the universal notion "good" he remains profoundly hidden. His existence can be denied both theoretically and practically when one places one's end in something contrary to his goodness. Those who live entirely for the gratification of their bodily cravings and/or of their pride are aiming at goods in a manner that is devoid of any implicit affirmation of God.

In Exodus God says to Moses, "I will make all my goodness pass before you . . . While my glory passes by I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen" (Exod 33:19, 22–23). A similarly veiled presence of the creator is ineradicably inscribed in the natural order of human willing and loving. The natural love for happiness, which is inseparable from having a rational nature and therefore from being a person, is an implicit love of God, who alone is the fullness of goodness. A step takes place when one explicitly understands this natural love as a love of God's goodness and directs oneself deliberately to God. Not everybody takes this step. Some take the opposite step and refuse to affirm God. Not everybody desires happiness in this determinate sense of the word. Nevertheless, the desire for happiness is an implicit love of God. For those who reject God, the implicit presence of God takes the form of a restlessness that drives them beyond any finite good they have achieved. St. Augustine describes this restlessness of his life before his conversion with great clarity in the Confessions. What is ultimately at work in the desire for happiness is the religious sense (Luigi Giussani), at least in the form

[140] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 164.

of restlessness.[141] In the depth of the person, Giussani shows, the religious sense is more a question than an answer. It is the creature's restless openness to the free initiative of God.

### In What is the Ratio of Final End Found?

Crosby uses some disturbing superlatives when speaking about moral goodness: "In having moral goodness I . . . gain something that is *supremely good* for me . . ."[142] " . . . that *supreme good* . . . that comes from being morally good."[143] He expresses the point also in the negative, ". . . there is no non-moral evil that harms man as grievously and as ultimately as does moral evil."[144] In the use of such superlatives, Crosby follows Hildebrand.

> The great insight and contribution made by Socrates—foreshadowing those words of our Lord: "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world, but suffer the loss of his soul?" (Matt. 16:26)—is precisely the insight that moral integrity, because of its value, is a *higher* objective good for the person *than any other good* which bestows pleasure or happiness on us.[145]

Can one say to God in prayer, "My moral integrity is a higher objective good for me than you are?" Most certainly, neither Hildebrand nor Crosby would agree with such a prayer. Granted, there is something uniquely important about moral goodness. Moral integrity is not an optional good. Yet to say it is unconditionally required is still far distant from Hildebrand's superlative. Granted also that Kant is right in some sense when he says, "Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will."[146] When one says, "This is a good person," one does not mean, "This is a good runner, or a good thinker, etc." One means, "This person has moral goodness."[147] Only the will can be the subject of virtue without qualification, not the intellect.

> The subject of the permanent disposition that is called virtue without qualification can only be the will, or another power as moved by the

[141] See Luigi Giussani, *The Religious Sense* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University, 1997).
[142] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 233, emphasis added.
[143] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 234, emphasis added.
[144] Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 233–4.
[145] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 57, emphasis added.
[146] Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.393.
[147] See Crosby, *Selfhood of the Person,* 231.

> will. The reason is that the will moves all other powers that are in some way rational to their acts, as shown above. And for this reason, when a man acts well, this is due to that man having a good will.[148]

Perhaps this is all Hildebrand means when he says, " . . . moral integrity, because of its value, is a *higher* objective good for the person *than any other good* which bestows pleasure or happiness on us." Yet, there remains a disturbing similarity with Kant's idolatrous moralism according to which moral goodness is "the highest good," "the highest and unconditioned good," " . . . its value *(Wert)* surpasses everything."[149] In Kant, God has only a subordinate role as a practical postulate ensuring the coherence of the moral universe. The love of God more than ourselves and above all things as the *summum bonum* in which alone the full *ratio* of final end can be found has faded away in Kant to give way to an idolatrous devotion to moral duty above all things. The thesis that moral integrity, because of its value, is a *higher* objective good for the person *than any other good, including God,* is distinctively the view of Kant, most decidedly not that of Socrates.

> "So these aren't the greatest," he [Adeimantus] said, "but there is something yet greater than justice and the other things we went through?" "There is both something greater," I [Socrates] said, "and also even for these very virtues it won't do to look at a sketch, as we did a while ago, but their most perfect elaboration must not be stinted. . . . (Y)ou have many times heard that the Idea of the Good is the greatest study and that it's by availing oneself of it along with just things and the rest that they become useful and beneficial."[150]

According to Socrates, justice itself only becomes useful and beneficial when it is viewed in relation to the Idea of the Good. Justice becomes useful and beneficial when the surpassing goodness of the Idea of the Good is seen and loved as something infinitely greater than justice. This infinity of goodness is the true end of all action. All love points to this end. Catching a glimpse of it is greater than all else, even justice. In the *Symposium*, Diotima instructs Socrates in the mysteries of love until she finally comes to the vision of the Beautiful itself, αὐτὸ τὸ καλόν.

> At this point of life, dear Socrates, said the stranger from Mantinea, if at any point, it is worth living for a man, when he sees the beautiful itself.[151]

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148 St. Thomas, *ST* I–II, q. 56, a. 3, c.
149 Kant, *Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten,* 4.402 and 403.
150 Plato, *Republic,* 6, 504d–505a.
151 Plato, *Symposium,* 211d.

The Platonic Socrates is here closer to Aristotle and St. Thomas than to Kant and, apparently, Hildebrand. According to Socrates, *the entire moral order is a means* for reaching the infinite Good itself, the infinite Beautiful itself. Yet, this insistence on the subordinate place of moral goodness is in no way to instrumentalize moral goodness. It remains true that a just act must be performed precisely because it is just. In it, I conform myself implicitly to God. The just act and its implicit love for God must be "chaste." Yet this entire order of goodness in me, my moral goodness, is still a fragment. It is one created good among others. The infinite ocean of divine goodness, which infinitely transcends us, this is the true end of human life.

For St. Augustine and St. Thomas it is of the utmost importance that God, in whom alone the *ratio* of final end is found, be loved as a *common* good. The transcendence of the person with which Hildebrand is rightly concerned is clear, above all, in love for the common good *as common*. This is what most profoundly distinguishes St. Augustine's two loves, love of self to the contempt of God and love of God to the contempt of self.

> These two loves—one of them is holy, the other impure; one is social, the other private; one looks after the common utility for the sake of the society on high, the other because of its arrogant domination carries even the commonwealth back to its own power . . .—have existed already in the angels, one in the good angels, the other in the bad, and have distinguished the two cities founded in the human race. . . .[152]
>
> It is not permissible for us to doubt that the contrasting appetites of the good and bad angels have arisen not from a difference in their nature and origin (for God, the good author and maker of all substances, created them both) but from a differences in their wills and desires. For some remained constantly in that which is the common good of them all: that is, God Himself, and his eternity, truth and love. others, however, delighting in their own power, as if they could be their own good, fell away from that higher and blessed good which was common to all to their private good. . . .[153]

In agreement with St. Augustine, St. Thomas argues that love *(caritas)* is a political virtue, because God is the common good *par excellence*. At the same time he makes clear the self-transcendence of the person in accord with nature.

> The philosopher says in Politics 8 that in order to be a good political person one must love the good of the city. When someone is admitted

[152] St. Augustine, *De genesi ad litteram,* XI.15.
[153] St. Augustine, *De civitate dei,* XII.1.1, PL 41.349.

to participation in the good of some city and becomes a citizen of that city, he must have certain virtues in order to do what a citizen must do and to love the good of the city.

In this way, when a person is admitted by divine grace to participating in blessedness, which consists in the vision and enjoyment of God, he becomes a citizen and member of that blessed society which is called the heavenly Jerusalem, according to Ephesians 2,19: "You are citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." A person who is in this way counted as part of the heavenly city must have certain freely given virtues which are the infused virtues. The right exercise of these virtues requires a love of the common good that belongs to the whole society, which is the divine good as the object of blessedness.

Now one can love the good of a city in two ways: in one way to possess it, in another that it might be preserved. If someone loves the good of a city in order to have and own it, he is not a good political person, because in this way even a tyrant loves the good of a city, in order to dominate it, which is to love oneself more than the city. He wants this good for himself, not for the city.

But to love the good of the city that it might be kept and defended, this is truly to love the city and this makes a person a good political person, so much so that some expose themselves to the danger of death and neglect their private good in order to preserve or increase the good of the city. In the same way, to love the good that is participated by the blessed, to love it so as to have or possess it, does not establish the right relation between a person and blessedness, because even evil people want this good.

But to love that good according to itself, that it may remain and be shared out and that nothing be done against this good, this gives to a person the right relation to that society of the blessed. And this is love *(caritas)* which loves God for his sake and the neighbors, who are capable of blessedness, as oneself.[154]

Let us return to the text quoted at the very beginning of this essay in which Hildebrand draws a contrast between nature and person.

> The capacity to transcend himself is one of man's deepest characteristics. So long as we consider his activities as *the mere unfolding of his entelechy, determined by his nature, or as immanent manifestations of principles proper to his nature,* we fail to grasp the most decisive feature of his character as a person. Man cannot be understood if we interpret all his activities as manifestations of an *automatic striving for self-perfection*. So long as we are confined to this pattern, so long as we see man differing from other beings only by the fact that their objective teleological tendency assumes in him a character of consciousness, we overlook the real nature of *man*

[154] St. Thomas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues,* q. 2, (on charity), a. 2. c.

> *as a person*. It is not an immanent movement, unconscious or conscious, which is man's typical mark. Certainly this also is to be found in man's nature, in the physiological sphere as well as in the psychical. *But the specifically personal character of man as a subject manifests itself in his capacity to transcend himself.* . . . In all immanent trends to unfold our nature, our attitude has the character of self-affirmation; whereas in every value response our attitude has the basic feature of self-donation.[155]

There is in St. Thomas's teaching no human nature trapped in immanent entelechial strivings, though there is a fallen condition of human nature to which that description partly applies. Rational nature, as St. Thomas understands it, reaches its most interior perfection precisely in the radical self-transcendence of the created person for the sake of the common good, which is ultimately identical with God himself. The moral perfection of every created person consists essentially in loving God according to his own superabundant goodness and communicability, which infinitely exceeds all creaturely participation. It consists of utter devotion to the intention that God may remain and be shared out and that nothing be done against his will. Only with such a moral disposition can the creature receive the gift of the vision of God. It is a disposition that does not destroy natural inclinations, but perfects them. There is a complete harmony between nature and person. NV

[155] Hildebrand, *Ethics,* 218 and 220, emphasis added.