

Profiles of Courage

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ALTHOUGH AQUINAS CLEARLY ASSERTS that there are infused versions of the Aristotelian acquired virtues and that it is these infused virtues which are virtues in the truest sense, he says little about how the two different sets of virtues are related. Does the Christian, in Aquinas's view, somehow possess and cultivate both types of virtue? Or does he believe that the acquired virtues are only relevant in the moral life of the pagan, so that the only virtues that are significant in the Christian moral life are the infused virtues? Even after centuries of Thomist scholarship, these questions and others like them remain the subject of controversy.¹ In my view, it is unlikely that such questions can be resolved solely by appeal to Aquinas's general remarks about the virtues. Aquinas simply says too little about how he envisions the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues and uses language too vaguely for these and other interpretive questions to be definitively resolved.

Given the ambiguity of Aquinas's general treatment of the virtues, one possible alternative is to seek some clarity in Aquinas's detailed

¹ For a summary of the different accounts of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues, see Angela Knobel, "Two Theories of Christian Virtue," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 84, no. 4 (2010): 599–618; Marcus Christoph, "Justice as an Infused Virtue in the *Secunda Secundae* and Its Implications for Understanding the Moral Life" (PhD diss., University of Fribourg, 2011); and Robert Coerver, *The Quality of Facility in the Moral Virtues* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1946).

discussions of the individual virtues in the *secunda secundae*. If it can be shown that Aquinas devotes the majority of his account to discussions of the infused virtues and not to their acquired counterparts, this will be evidence that Aquinas did not envision a significant role for the cultivation of acquired virtues in the Christian moral life. On the other hand, if it can be shown that significant portions of the *secunda secundae* are devoted to Christian's cultivation of the acquired virtues, this will be evidence for the opposite view. Although I have argued elsewhere that there are significant indications that Aquinas's *secunda secundae* may be largely devoted to a discussion of the infused moral virtues and not to their acquired counterparts,² I also think that the possibility of proving this decisively is small. While some aspects of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* do imply a preoccupation with infused virtue, Aquinas's language remains vague, and it is consequently difficult to determine whether his discussion of a given virtue is intended to be a discussion of an infused virtue or of its acquired counterpart. If my hypothesis is correct and these interpretive questions cannot be definitively resolved, then contemporary scholars must approach questions about the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues from a different angle. Instead of attempting to definitively prove what Aquinas's position was, they must instead ask whether one interpretation makes better sense of Aquinas's fundamental philosophical and theological commitments than another, and whether a proposed interpretation makes sense in its own right: is a given account of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues philosophically and theologically coherent?

In this article, using a recent debate over the proper interpretation of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude as a test case, I argue that Aquinas's *secunda secundae* discussions of virtue in fact do little to definitively settle questions about his view of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues. In her "Power Made Perfect in Weakness," Rebecca Konyndyk De Young argues that Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude demonstrates an almost exclusive pre-

² Angela McKay, "The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas' Moral Philosophy" (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2004).

occupation with infused, rather than acquired courage.³ In De Young's view, then, Aquinas's *secunda secundae* discussion of virtue supports those who claim that all the Christian's virtues are infused virtues. In his "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," on the other hand, Gregory Reichberg argues that Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude contains descriptions of both infused courage and of Christian acquired courage.⁴ As such, he argues that it supports a more traditional interpretation of Aquinas's moral theory. I argue that neither interpretation is definitive, for two reasons. First, both scholars base their interpretation of fortitude on fundamentally different assumptions about how Aquinas's more general distinction between infused and acquired virtue is to be understood. Consequently, it is impossible—at least within the confines of Aquinas's treatment of fortitude alone—to adjudicate between the two views. Reichberg and De Young, therefore, should either focus on defending their fundamental assumptions or make the case for their respective interpretations on the basis of features unique to Aquinas's account of fortitude. This, however, gives rise to a second problem. Although both scholars argue that aspects unique to Aquinas's account of fortitude support their position, examination of the cited texts shows that they are simply inconclusive. The test case of fortitude, I argue, suggests that it may be more productive to approach questions about the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues from a different angle. Instead of attempting to determine what Aquinas's position actually was, it may be more productive to ask whether a given account (1) is able to accommodate Aquinas's fundamental philosophical and theological commitments and whether (2) it makes sense in its own right.

³ Rebecca Konyndyk De Young, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas's Transformation of the Virtue of Courage," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 11 (2003): 147–80. Although De Young does not explicitly characterize her argument in this way, this is how Reichberg interprets it, and I think he is right to do so.

⁴ Gregory Reichberg, "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," *The Thomist* 74 (2010): 337–68. This interpretation of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude is not unique to Reichberg. Lee Yearley and Craig Titus offer similar interpretations. See Lee Yearley, "The Nature-Grace Question in the Context of Fortitude," *Thomist* 35 (October 1971): 557–79; Craig Titus, *Resilience and the Virtue of Fortitude* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2006). Because Reichberg makes the most explicit effort to tie his interpretation to the text, and because he directly addresses De Young's interpretation, I have chosen to focus on his argument.

This article has three parts. In the first, I explain briefly why Aquinas's account of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtue has been and continues to be the subject of controversy. In the second part, using the recent debate over the proper interpretation of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* fortitude as a test case, I argue that it is unlikely that a definitive answer to this interpretive question can be found in his detailed treatments of the individual virtues in the *secunda secundae*. I conclude with some remarks about the ramifications that Aquinas's vagueness has for modern interpreters.

Relating the Virtues

Thomas Aquinas makes a clear distinction between the infused virtues, which order man to supernatural beatitude, and the acquired virtues, which order man to the good of the present life.⁵ Although Aquinas makes this distinction in a number of texts, and although he also asserts a number of central differences between the infused and acquired virtues,⁶ his view of the relationship between these two very different sets of virtues remains unclear. Because Aquinas asserts that the infused and acquired virtues order man to different ends, and because all those in a state of grace are ordered to the end of supernatural beatitude, it might initially seem that any virtuous act performed by an individual in a state of grace is an act of infused virtue. However, while some scholars do attribute such a position to Aquinas, others maintain that Aquinas believes that those in a state of grace can and should cultivate both acquired and infused virtues.⁷ Neither account, however, is decisive. First, the most common versions of each interpretation are not only problem-

⁵ See, for instance, Aquinas, *Scriptum super sententiis* (hereafter *In Sent.*) III, d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, qa. 3; *Summa theologiae* (hereafter *ST*) I-II, q. 63, aa. 3–4; and *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus in communis* (hereafter *De virtutibus*) a. 10.

⁶ Aquinas argues that the infused and acquired virtues not only produce acts proportionate to different ends but also come to be and depart differently, seek a different mean, and confer a different kind of facility in action. See, for instance, Aquinas, *In III Sent.* d. 33, q. 1, a. 2, qa. 4; *ST* I-II, q. 63, a. 4; *De virtutibus* a. 10; and *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus cardinalibus* (hereafter *De virtutibus cardinalibus*) a. 5.

⁷ For a fuller discussion of these positions and a list of scholars who ascribe to them, see Angela Knobel, "Two Theories of Christian Virtue" and "Can the Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist in the Christian Moral Life?" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 84 (2010): 599–618.

atic in their own right but also fail to accommodate some of Aquinas's most central claims about the infused and acquired virtues.⁸ Second, although scholars on both sides cite a number of different texts as evidence that Aquinas ascribed to a certain view of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues, I have argued elsewhere that these texts do not in fact establish the claims they ostensibly prove.⁹

Given the ambiguities of Aquinas's general treatment of virtue, one alternative is to seek some clarity about Aquinas's view of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues in the detailed descriptions of the individual virtues that he offers in his *secunda secundae*. If one can establish that Aquinas is exclusively preoccupied with describing infused virtues and not their acquired counterparts, then this will be significant evidence that Aquinas believed that the only virtues relevant to the Christian moral life are infused virtues. On the other hand, if one can show that Aquinas devotes a significant portion of this text to a discussion of the Christian's acquired virtues, this will be evidence for the opposite view. Although a number of scholars believe that Aquinas's *secunda secundae* accounts of virtue are clearly devoted to one type of virtue or the other, I argue in what follows that—at least in the case of courage—Aquinas's position is far from obvious.¹⁰

Two Accounts of Courage

In recent essays, Rebecca Konyndyk De Young and Gregory Reichberg offer drastically different interpretations of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* account of courage. While De Young believes that Aquinas is almost exclusively focused on infused courage in this text, Reichberg argues that Aquinas is demonstrably concerned to describe both infused and acquired courage. In this section, I examine the respective interpreta-

⁸ See Knobel, "Two Theories of Christian Virtue" and "Can the Infused and Acquired Virtues Coexist?"

⁹ Angela McKay Knobel, "Relating Aquinas's Infused and Acquired Virtues: Some Problematic Texts for a Common Interpretation," *Nova et Vetera* (English) 9 (2011): 411–31.

¹⁰ René Mirkes, for instance, simply asserts that—with the exception of the questions devoted to faith, hope, and love—Aquinas's entire *secunda secundae* is devoted to descriptions of acquired moral virtue. See René Mirkes, "Aquinas's Doctrine of Moral Virtue and Its Significance for Theories of Facility," *The Thomist* 61, no. 2 (1997): 189–218.

tions of Reichberg and De Young, and argue that Aquinas's text does not definitively support either interpretation, for two reasons. First, both scholars rely heavily on assumptions that go beyond any claim explicitly made by Aquinas. Second, Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude proves far less than either scholar claims.

Two Foundational Assumptions

Although Reichberg and De Young offer two different readings of Aquinas's account of fortitude, only a small portion of their disagreement has to do with the details of his *secunda secundae* account of fortitude itself. To the contrary, as I show in what follows, each scholar makes a different assumption about how Aquinas's basic distinction between the infused and acquired virtues is to be understood. These conflicting assumptions, more than anything specific to Aquinas's description of the virtue of courage, are the real source of their disagreement. Because De Young assumes that any virtue "ordered and directed" by charity is necessarily an infused virtue, she believes that Aquinas's assertions about the close connection between charity and courage are evidence of his preoccupation with infused courage. Reichberg, on the other hand, makes a different assumption, namely, that one can perform acts compatible with one's order to supernatural beatitude that are nonetheless ordered to a natural, rather than supernatural, end. On the basis of this latter assumption, he sees accounts of both acquired and infused courage in Aquinas's *secunda secundae* account of fortitude. My aim in this section is not to argue that either foundational assumption is correct, but to show that it is these foundational assumptions, not anything specific to Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude itself, that drive the respective interpretations offered by De Young and Reichberg.

De Young's Interpretation

In her "Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas's Transformation of the Virtue of Courage," Rebecca Konyndyk De Young argues that Aquinas transforms Aristotelian acquired courage—a courage that finds its highest expression on the battlefield—into an account of a thoroughly Christian, infused courage, a courage that finds its highest expression in

Christian martyrdom.¹¹ Whether or not such a claim is controversial depends on the details of De Young's argument. If De Young merely wishes to remind her readers that Aquinas recognizes a form of courage—infused courage—that transcends Aristotelian acquired courage, and that it is infused virtues that are at the core of Aquinas's moral theory, then her reminder, while welcome and beneficial, is not particularly controversial. Few scholars familiar with Aquinas's account of virtue would deny that Aquinas posits infused courage, and many would willingly characterize the infused virtues as "transformations" of their acquired counterparts.¹² Similarly, it is unlikely that any scholar familiar with Aquinas's writings on the virtues would deny that the infused virtues are both at the core of Aquinas's moral theory and—in his view—the only "true" virtues.¹³ De Young might, however, have a far more specific and controversial thesis in mind. For instance, if De Young intends to claim not merely that for Aquinas the truest and most complete virtue is infused virtue but that Aquinas recognized no virtues that were not infused virtues, then her claim will be a controversial one. Though I think it unlikely that De Young would make such a claim, I argue in what follows that she does seem committed to a more moderate but still controversial assumption about how Aquinas's understands the distinction between infused and acquired virtues, namely, that for Aquinas any good act performed by an individual in a state of grace is necessarily an act of infused virtue.¹⁴

De Young offers three main arguments in support of her claim that Aquinas thoroughly transforms Aristotelian courage. Two of her argu-

¹¹ De Young, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness," 150.

¹² Even scholars who take different positions on Aquinas's view of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues describe the infused virtues in this way. See, for instance, Etienne Gilson, *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. L. K. Shook (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), 349; Romanus Cessario, O.P., *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), 108; and Eberhard Schockenhoff, "The Theological Virtue of Charity," in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 251.

¹³ Aquinas explicitly says as much, arguing that infused virtue is the only virtue that is virtue *simpliciter perfectae*. See, for instance, Aquinas, *De virtutibus cardinalibus*, a. 2.

¹⁴ This latter interpretation, unlike the former, can still accommodate a role for the acquired virtues: it simply maintains that they are only relevant in the pagan moral life. The former interpretation would deny them altogether.

ments—which focus on the privileged place Aquinas allots to endurance and martyrdom—have specifically to do with the details of Aquinas’s account of courage, and consequently I examine these in a later section. De Young’s first argument, however, has to do with the connections that Aquinas draws between courage and charity. Although Aquinas does indeed draw close connections between charity and courage, the significance that De Young attaches to this connection reveals that her interpretation of Aquinas is based on an important assumption.

De Young argues that the close connection that Aquinas draws between courage and charity is indicative of the extent to which he transforms Aristotelian courage. She makes two comments that are particularly important for our purposes. First, De Young seems to imply that—at least for Aquinas—there can be no courage apart from charity. De Young rightly points out that Aquinas emphasizes the interconnectedness of courage and charity. One cannot, De Young argues, understand Aquinas’s account of courage without understanding the role that charity plays in it: “Charity’s role as source, end, and commanding virtue is essential for understanding the nature of courage. In a given action, the two work together in this way: the cardinal virtue functions as the ‘eliciting’ virtue, and, as such, is responsible for the proximate motive and end of the act. Charity, however, functions as the ‘commanding’ virtue, setting the ultimate motive and end of the action.”¹⁵ For De Young, then, it is no accident that Aquinas begins the *secunda secundae* by treating the virtues of faith, hope, and charity: it is charity that makes courage and the other virtues what they are. Courage for Aquinas is not just about standing firm in the face of danger; it is about standing firm in danger for the appropriate reason, and the appropriate reason is supernatural beatitude: “To see courage as merely requiring facing death stalwartly would be to miss its main point . . . in its most perfect form, courage points beyond itself both to charity as its source and to charity’s end as its goal.”¹⁶ In support of this claim, De Young cites texts where Aquinas points to faith and charity as the virtues courage is ordered to.¹⁷

While one could read the assertions above as a denial that there can

¹⁵ De Young, “Power Made Perfect in Weakness,” 151.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

be any courage at all apart from charity, I would be hesitant to ascribe such an interpretation to De Young. Although she does claim that charity is the source of courage, she does not say that charity is the source of all courage, but instead that charity is the source of courage *in its most perfect form*. It would be premature, therefore, to claim that De Young thinks that Aquinas denies the very possibility of acquired courage. De Young does, however, seem to make a different assumption, namely, that any courageous act guided by charity is necessarily an act of infused virtue. For De Young, the close connection between charity and courage is evidence that Aquinas's treatment of courage is a treatment of infused courage and not a treatment of its acquired counterpart. Because courage is informed by and directed to charity, she argues, courage is necessarily an infused virtue. Indeed, De Young even goes so far as to claim that Aquinas defines courage as an infused virtue from the very outset of his discussion of courage: "From the beginning [Aquinas] defined courage as being informed by and directed toward charity, as an infused virtue."¹⁸ In support of this claim, De Young cites the first article of question 124 of the *secunda secundae*, a question that—tellingly—has to do with martyrdom, not with the general definition of courage.¹⁹

Even if it would be premature to claim that De Young's Aquinas denies the very possibility of acquired virtue, she does seem to make an important assumption about his view of the role of infused virtue in the Christian life. As the previous quote reveals, De Young believes that "being informed by and directed toward charity" and being "an infused virtue" are interchangeable descriptions. Insofar as we can assert that a virtue is informed by and directed toward charity, we can assert that it is an infused virtue. While such a claim, if correct, certainly would seem to imply that Aquinas's entire *secunda secundae* account of courage is an account of infused virtue, it is also a claim that many scholars would resist.

At first glance, Aquinas's more basic distinction between infused and acquired virtue implies something like De Young's account. Infused and acquired virtues are distinguished by their end. Thus acts ordered to supernatural beatitude are acts of infused virtue, while acts ordered to man's natural good are acts of acquired virtue. Because Aquinas says

¹⁸ Ibid., 178.

¹⁹ Ibid.

that courage is guided by charity, he must be speaking of courage that is ordered to supernatural beatitude and hence of infused courage. If this is how Aquinas intends his basic distinction between infused and acquired courage to play out, then De Young is clearly correct: Aquinas's entire discussion of courage is a discussion of infused courage. This point, however, is by no means obvious. As we saw in the previous section, many scholars well aware of Aquinas's basic distinction would deny that any act ordered to supernatural beatitude is necessarily an act of infused virtue.

Thus, while De Young's line of reasoning is clear, it will be convincing only to those who ascribe to her interpretation of Aquinas's basic distinction between infused and acquired virtue. While some scholars do share her interpretation, others would resist it. One can find any number of scholars who insist that Aquinas believed the Christian should cultivate acquired virtues and who would nonetheless agree that the Christian's acquired virtues are guided and informed by charity. For such scholars, the close connection that Aquinas draws between charity and courage will not be terribly significant, and it certainly will not be evidence that he is exclusively preoccupied with infused courage.

Reichberg's Interpretation

In his "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," Gregory Reichberg criticizes what he calls the "substitution accounts" of fortitude offered by scholars such as De Young: accounts, that is to say, that claim Aquinas's "main purpose in writing question 123 was to substitute the ancient Greco-Roman admiration for military heroism with a Christian focus on martyrdom."²⁰ Reichberg argues that it is mistaken to characterize Aquinas's *secunda secundae* account of fortitude—as De Young does—as "almost exclusively" concerned with infused courage.²¹ Aquinas, Reichberg argues, does not simply substitute infused courage for acquired and martyrdom for glorious deaths on the battlefield but is instead attentive to both infused and acquired courage and "to the various relations that can exist between these two modalities—acquired and infused—of for-

²⁰ Reichberg, "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," 337.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 337–38, esp. n4.

titude.”²² It is clear, then, that Reichberg wishes to argue that Aquinas recognizes acquired fortitude and that he wishes to argue that acquired fortitude plays an important role in Aquinas’s *secunda secundae* account of courage. It is less clear, however, just what role Reichberg believes Aquinas ascribes to acquired fortitude.

Given his general criticism of De Young, it seems to me that Reichberg could wish to advance one of two theses about the role Aquinas envisioned for acquired fortitude. As we saw in the previous section, De Young claims that any act guided and directed by charity is an act of infused virtue. Consequently, the Christian’s courageous actions—insofar as they are guided and directed by charity, are acts of infused virtue. Under such an account, any good action the Christian performs is an act of infused virtue. While a significant number of scholars find such an interpretation compelling, this is by no means an uncontroversial claim, and it is by no means the traditional reading of Aquinas. As I noted above, many scholars would argue that the Christian can and should cultivate acquired virtues: that is to say, that he can perform acts that are both compatible with his order to supernatural beatitude and directed by charity but are nonetheless acts of acquired, not infused, virtue. When Reichberg argues that Aquinas allots an important place to acquired courage, then, he may mean to advance the thesis that:

1. Aquinas allots an important place to the cultivation of acquired courage within the Christian moral life.

If this is Reichberg’s goal, then he will need to show that Aquinas’s *secunda secundae* account of fortitude indicates that the Christian ordered to supernatural beatitude sometimes cultivates acquired courage and sometimes cultivates infused courage.

As we also saw in the previous section, however, De Young also might seem to advance an even stronger thesis, namely, that there *cannot be* courage—or indeed any virtue at all—apart from charity. Such a claim, if true, would seem to mean that those apart from grace cannot possess any virtue at all, let alone courage. It could be, then, that Reichberg merely wants to attack this lesser claim, and to show that:

²² Ibid., 338.

2. Aquinas posits a role for acquired virtue insofar as he recognizes it as an important component of the pagan moral life, even though all Christian courage is infused courage.

If this is all Reichberg wishes to establish, then he would agree with a significant portion of De Young's account, namely, her claim that that every virtuous act the Christian performs is an act of infused virtue: he would merely wish to insist that Aquinas believes that acquired virtue is important in its own right—insofar as it is a component of the pagan moral life—and that it should not be disregarded altogether. If so, his task is a relatively simple one, but his criticism of De Young is considerably diminished. It is relatively easy to show that Aquinas recognizes the importance of acquired virtue, and—as I noted in the previous section—it is unlikely that De Young meant to deny that Aquinas did not even recognize the possibility of pagan acquired virtue. The more likely and more charitable reading of her claim would understand it as an assertion that the forms of courage that really matter cannot exist apart from charity. I also do not think, however, that Reichberg merely wishes to advance thesis 2. As I argue in what follows, there is strong evidence that Reichberg intends to advance thesis 1.

Reichberg's stated aim is to show—against “substitution” accounts that claim Aquinas is predominately preoccupied with infused fortitude—that Aquinas is attentive not just to the infused fortitude exhibited by the martyr, but also to the kind of fortitude exhibited by the soldier in battle, a fortitude that is the exemplar of acquired courage:

Despite Aquinas's obvious interest in highlighting martyrdom as the highest instantiation of fortitude, he does not discredit the value of battlefield courage within the Christian life of virtue. On the contrary, he elaborates a two-stage theory in which military heroism is put forward as the exemplar of acquired fortitude, while martyrdom is praised as the paradigm of infused fortitude. Having embraced the principle “grace perfects nature,” Aquinas is attentive to the various relations that can exist between these two modalities—acquired and infused—of fortitude. On the one hand, the heroism of soldiers provides him with a natural basis for understanding the supernatural forti-

tude of holy martyrs. On the other hand, he recognizes how infused fortitude can find expression in military deeds, such that death on the battlefield will sometimes count as martyrdom.²³

Reichberg, then, states that (1) he wishes to show that Aquinas believed “battlefield” courage to be an important part of the Christian life of virtue and (2) the heroic acts that occur on the battlefield are the exemplar of acquired courage. Instances of martyrdom *can* occur on the battlefield, as Reichberg acknowledges, and hence infused fortitude certainly can “find expression in military deeds,” but such deaths are by implication the exception rather than the norm, let alone the paradigm of military courage.²⁴ If battlefield courage comprises an important subset of Christian courage, and if battlefield heroics are the paradigm of acquired courage, then Reichberg would seem to be committed to the thesis that Aquinas believed the Christian can and should cultivate acquired virtues, specifically acquired courage. The fact that one can perform acts of infused courage on the battlefield is evidence that Aquinas is “attentive to the various relations that can exist between these two modalities—acquired and infused—of fortitude,” but Reichberg hardly seems to think that instances of bravery on the battlefield are typically instances of infused virtue. This implication is borne out by Reichberg’s explanation of what has to occur in order for a soldier to perform an act of martyrdom. As I show in what follows, under Reichberg’s interpretation acts of infused virtue can only occur in highly specific circumstances.

As Reichberg interprets Aquinas’s *secunda secundae* account of courage, some but not all courageous acts performed on the battlefield are acts of martyrdom. In response to the argument that faith must be the sole reason for martyrdom, because otherwise we would celebrate those who die in just wars as martyrs, Aquinas argues that a willingness

²³ Ibid., 338.

²⁴ One reason why Reichberg’s quote is ambiguous is that he does not sufficiently distinguish between infused courage and its paradigmatic act. If one can perform acts of infused courage that are not acts of martyrdom (and I argue in what follows that one certainly can), then it is possible that soldiers could exhibit infused courage even when their acts do not meet the criteria of martyrdom. Reichberg, however, does not make this distinction and seems to refer to every courageous act ordered to supernatural beatitude as an act of martyrdom. I discuss this point in more detail below.

to face death for the sake of any genuine good can be an instance of martyrdom so long as the good question is referred to God.²⁵ Although this text would initially seem to support those who claim that any good act performed by one ordered to supernatural beatitude is an act of infused virtue, Reichberg interprets it rather differently, arguing that other texts found in the *Scriptum Super Sententiis* and in the *tertia pars* help to clarify Aquinas's meaning here. In these latter texts, Aquinas argues that when an individual dies for the common good without relating his death to Christ, he does not merit a martyr's reward. When he does refer his death to Christ, he does merit a martyr's reward.²⁶ Aquinas also offers an example of such deaths, contrasting one who merely seeks to defend his country with one who seeks to defend his country from those who would destroy the faith.²⁷ Reichberg's interpretation of this text is crucial, for it is indicative of his more general understanding of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues. When someone dies for his country without explicitly referring his act to God, Reichberg argues, his act will not count as an act of martyrdom. He will only have performed an act of martyrdom when the reference to the divine good is explicit:

Two different scenarios are entertained in this text. On the one hand, someone can willingly die for his country . . . *prescinding* from any ulterior ordination to the transcendent divine good. This may well be a virtuous death—compatible with the faith and charity—but it falls short of the special honor signified by the ecclesial title “martyr,” since in this instance death is under-

²⁵ *ST II-II*, q. 124, a. 5, ad. 3: “Quia tamen bonum humane potest effici divinum, ut si referatur in Deum; potest esse quodcumque bonum humanum martyrii causa secundum quod in Deum refertur.”

²⁶ *In IV Sent.* d. 49, a. 5, a. 3, qa. 2, ad. 11: “Ad undecimum dicendum, quod etiam bonum increatum excedit omne bonum creatum; unde quicumque finis creatus, sive sit bonum commune, sive bonum privatum, non potest actui tantam bonitatem praestare quantam finis increatus; cum scilicet aliquid propter Deum agitur: et ideo cum quis propter bonum commune non relatum ad Christum mortem sustinet, aureolam non meretur; sed si hoc referatur ad Christum, aureolam merebitur, et martyr erit; utpote si rempublicam defendat ab hostium impugnatione qui fidem Christi corrumpere moliuntur, et in tali defensione mortem sustineat.”

²⁷ *Ibid.*

gone for a temporal, not a transcendent end. On the other hand, one's country can bear reference to a transcendent end insofar as the temporal common good includes the public practice of religion . . . Should one die in the process, this death will count as martyrdom.²⁸

Thus even those who are ordered to supernatural beatitude and who perform acts compatible with that order only perform acts that have supernatural beatitude as their end under highly specific circumstances, namely, when they do not “prescind” from it. When they do “prescind,” then their good acts have the civic good, not supernatural beatitude, as their end.²⁹

Though Reichberg's aim in the argument described above is to show that the Christian's death on the battlefield only counts as an instance of martyrdom in certain highly specific circumstances, the argument he offers actually amounts to an argument that the Christian's death on the battlefield only counts as an instance of infused virtue in certain highly specific circumstances. Reichberg distinguishes acts of infused and acquired virtue according to the ends they are ordered to: acts of acquired virtue have the civic good as their end, while acts of infused virtue have the divine good as their end.³⁰ It is the difference in *end*, moreover, that leads Reichberg to argue that the soldier's courageous actions are not typically acts of martyrdom. He argues that the soldier's courageous acts are typically not acts of martyrdom because they are—in the typical case—performed for the civic and not the divine good. Because Reichberg argues that these acts cannot be acts of martyrdom because they have the end of acquired and not the end of infused virtue, it must be his position that such acts are not acts of infused virtue at all. Such a

²⁸ Reichberg, “Aquinas on Battlefield Courage,” 362–63.

²⁹ The details of how this “prescinding” occurs are unclear. Reichberg's examples seem to imply that one only prescinds in highly specific situations, situations where the divine good is somehow the explicit goal of the act, such as when one fights infidels or refuses to offer a judgment that denies a truth of the faith. Such a position would not make sense, however, as one can clearly fight infidels for purposes other than the divine good, and one can clearly seek mundane goals with the divine good in mind. The most charitable interpretation, then, would be to say that Reichberg believes that whether one “prescinds” depends on the explicit intentions one has when one acts.

³⁰ Reichberg, “Aquinas on Battlefield Courage,” 344, esp. n24.

claim is based on crucial assumption, however, an assumption that goes far beyond anything in Aquinas's *secunda secundae* account of fortitude.

While Aquinas does reiterate his basic distinction between infused and acquired virtue, and while he does say that the infused act of martyrdom only occurs when one suffers death for the sake of the divine good, he never makes claims that necessitate the account described above. One can only interpret the texts above in the way that Reichberg does if one brings additional assumptions about the relationship between infused and acquired virtue to bear. In the texts examined thus far, Aquinas has only distinguished infused and acquired courage according to the end that each seeks and distinguished acts that are referred to supernatural beatitude from those that are not. What he does assert does nothing to conclusively demonstrate that he shares the position advocated by Reichberg and others, namely, that some of the Christian's meritorious good acts prescind from any order to supernatural beatitude, and he has certainly not said that when the Christian performs such acts he cultivates acquired virtues. Those who wish to defend the opposite position could easily argue that any good Christian act is necessarily "referred" to supernatural beatitude insofar as any good Christian act has supernatural beatitude as its ultimate end. To this point, then, Reichberg has not shown that Aquinas's account of fortitude provides evidence for his theory of the relationship between infused and acquired virtue. He has merely read Aquinas's account of fortitude in a way that reflects his presuppositions. If one is to show that Aquinas's *secunda secundae* account of fortitude provides concrete evidence for a given theory of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues, one must show that something specific to the *secunda secundae* account itself sheds light on Aquinas's view of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues.

Aquinas's Secunda Secundae Account of Fortitude

In the preceding section I argued that Reichberg and De Young's different interpretations of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude are partially derived from two different understandings of Aquinas's fundamental distinction between infused and acquired virtue. The important question for our purposes, however, is whether anything specific to Aquinas's account of fortitude explicitly places him in one in-

terpretive camp or the other. To put the point differently, is there something about Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude itself that indicates that all Christian courage is infused courage—something that would support De Young's interpretation—or that the Christian cultivates both infused and acquired courage—something that would support Reichberg's interpretation? Both Reichberg and De Young argue that such indications can be found. De Young argues that Aquinas's privileging of endurance and of martyrdom as the highest instantiation of it is indicative of his focus on infused courage. Reichberg, on the other hand, argues that Aquinas explicitly contrasts the respective roles of the Christian's infused and acquired courage. In what follows I examine both claims and argue that neither succeeds.

Endurance and Infused Courage

For De Young, the privileged place that Aquinas allots to endurance is indicative of a significant departure from Aristotle. Under an Aristotelian account of courage, De Young argues, the paradigmatic activity of courage is found in the sort of overt acts of aggression found on the battlefield.³¹ The martyrdom upheld by Aquinas, however, is essentially passive, a reaction to the aggression of others rather than an act of aggression in its own right.³² Indeed, De Young even goes so far as to speculate that Aquinas did not think it possible for one to perform an act of aggression ordered to the divine good.³³ If acquired courage is primarily about aggression and infused courage primarily about endurance, and if Aquinas describes a virtue that is primarily about endurance, then De Young will have a compelling argument: Aquinas's account of courage certainly will seem to be an account of infused courage. In what follows, however, I want to examine whether this actually is the case. I argue that there is little evidence that Aquinas believes acquired virtue to be more concerned with aggression than infused courage is, and little evidence

³¹ De Young, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness," 159: "Throughout history, ideally courageous acts were and are typically acts of military daring: the soldiers who receive medals are those who for example, went back into heavy fire . . . All of Aristotle's examples of courage, both true and false, follow the military model of facing death on the battlefield."

³² *Ibid.*, 160.

³³ *Ibid.*, 167, esp. n88.

that he believes infused courage has less to do with acts of aggression than acquired courage does. To the contrary, Aquinas's account implies that any form of courage would involve the same degree of both. Aquinas certainly does privilege endurance, but there is every reason to think it would receive the same primacy of place in both infused and acquired forms of that virtue.

Aquinas claims that courage has two features, namely, endurance and attack. He also claims that the principal act of courage is endurance.³⁴ Aquinas explains that this is because courage—as Aristotle tells us—has more to do with suppressing fear than with controlling daring. Dangerous situations are themselves a check on daring, but they increase fear, and hence fear is more difficult to control than daring.³⁵ Because attack has to do with courage insofar as courage regulates daring and endurance insofar as courage controls or suppresses fear, endurance has to do with the more difficult aspect of courage. Thus courage's main task has to do with suppressing fear, or standing one's ground in the face of danger.³⁶

It is important to note that nothing in this preliminary account of the respective roles of endurance and attack indicates that the two operate independently of each other. Different aspects of the same situation might require both the suppression of fear and the regulation of daring. The soldier charging into open fire needs the virtues associated with endurance every bit as much as he needs those associated with attack, especially because Aquinas tells us that attack has to do with future evils

³⁴ *ST* II-II, q. 123, a. 6: "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, et philosophus dicit, in III *Ethic.*, fortitudo magis est circa timores reprimendos quam circa audacias moderandas. Difficilius enim est timorem reprimere quam audaciam moderari, eo quod ipsum periculum, quod est obiectum audaciae et timoris, de se confert aliquid ad repressionem audaciae, sed operatur ad augmentum timoris. Aggredi autem pertinet ad fortitudinem secundum quod moderatur audaciam, sed sustinere sequitur repressionem timoris. Et ideo principalior actus est fortitudinis sustinere, idest immobiliter sistere in periculis, quam aggredi."

³⁵ *Ibid.* "Difficilius enim est timorem reprimere quam audaciam moderari, eo quod ipsum periculum, quod est obiectum audaciae et timoris, de se confert aliquid ad repressionem audaciae, sed operatur ad augmentum timoris. Aggredi autem pertinet ad fortitudinem secundum quod moderatur audaciam, sed sustinere sequitur repressionem timoris. Et ideo principalior actus est fortitudinis sustinere, idest immobiliter sistere in periculis, quam aggredi."

³⁶ *Ibid.* "Et ideo principalior actus est fortitudinis sustinere, idest immobiliter sistere in periculis, quam aggredi."

and endurance with present ones. Moreover, even in what we typically consider overt acts of aggression, such as an army storming the ramparts, there is good reason to think that—according to Aquinas’s criterion—courage would still have more to do with endurance than with attack. Courage has more to do with endurance than attack because daring is more easily controlled than fear. The very acts of aggression that are paradigmatic of military courage are themselves evidence of this. Those rushing into a hail of bullets need little help to keep their daring in check. The bullets themselves provide the necessary check on daring. They likely need a great deal of help, however, to keep from being overcome by fear; to endure present difficulties, which in this case occur in the form of a rain of bullets. This is what endurance provides, and it would seem as important on the battlefield as anywhere else. Thus, although Aquinas privileges endurance over attack, there is thus far no reason to take this as an indication of a preoccupation with acts of passivity rather than acts of aggression.

That endurance and attack both play essential roles in any form of the virtue of courage is further apparent in Aquinas’s description of the “parts” of courage. When Aquinas offers a description of a given virtue, he typically offers a description of the virtue in general and then follows that description with an account of the “parts” of the virtue in question. The “parts” of a virtue can be subjective, integral, or potential. Aquinas defines the different “parts” of virtue in his treatment of prudence, and he consistently refers back to those definitions in his treatment of the other cardinal virtues. A virtue’s integral parts are those virtues whose combined acts give rise to the successful performance of that virtue. The integral parts are to the virtue itself, says Aquinas, as the roof, walls, and foundation are to a building.³⁷ A virtue’s subjective parts are the different species of the virtue.³⁸ A virtue’s potential parts, finally, are those virtues not identical to the virtue in question, but closely allied to it in some way.³⁹ Aquinas appeals to these divisions in his treatment of the

³⁷ *ST II-II*, q. 48, a. 1: “Tribus ergo modis possunt assignari partes alicui virtuti. Uno modo, ad similitudinem partium integralium, ut scilicet illa dicantur esse partes virtutis alicuius quae necesse est concurrere ad perfectum actum virtutis illius.”

³⁸ *Ibid.* “Partes autem subiectivae virtutis dicuntur species eius diversae.” Importantly, Aquinas does not believe that courage has any subjective parts.

³⁹ *Ibid.* “Partes autem potentiales alicuius virtutis dicuntur virtutes adiunctae quae

cardinal virtue of courage, and his discussion is general enough to be applicable to either infused or acquired virtue.

While Aquinas argues that courage does not have any subjective parts, he argues that it has both integral and potential parts. Courage does not have any subjective parts, Aquinas claims, because—unlike prudence—courage can have only one object. Thus, although there can be specifically different kinds of prudence, there cannot be specifically different kinds of courage.⁴⁰ Courage does, however, have integral parts, which Aquinas again defines as those virtues which *coincide* in the virtue of fortitude.⁴¹ Aquinas lists four integral parts of courage, two that have to do with attack—confidence (or magnanimity) and daring—and two that have to do with endurance—patience and perseverance. In matters having to do with the danger of death, these four virtues are integral parts of courage, and courage cannot exist without these virtues any more than a house can exist without a foundation or a roof. In other matters, however, they are potential parts of courage.

Aquinas's claim that all four integral parts coincide in the courageous act is borne out still further in his more detailed account of each part of courage. Magnificence strengthens the mind for the performance of some difficult task.⁴² When the "difficult task" involves mortal danger, then, magnificence will coincide with courage and hence be an integral part of it. Magnificence only constitutes a separate virtue when the "difficult task" in which one remains steadfast is something

ordinantur ad aliquos secundarios actus vel materias, quasi non habentes totam potentiam principalis virtutis."

⁴⁰ ST II-II, q. 128, a. 1: "Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut supra dictum est, alicuius virtutis possunt esse triplices partes, scilicet subiectivae, integrales et potentiales. Fortitudini autem, secundum quod est specialis virtus, non possunt assignari partes subiectivae, eo quod non dividitur in multas virtutes specie differentes, quia est circa materiam valde specialem."

⁴¹ Ibid. "Assignantur autem ei partes quasi integrales, et potentiales, integrales quidem secundum ea quae oportet concurrere ad actum fortitudinis; potentiales autem secundum quod ea quae fortitudo observat circa difficillima, scilicet circa pericula mortis, aliquae aliae virtutes observant circa quasdam alias materias minus difficiles; quae quidem virtutes adiunguntur fortitudini sicut secundariae principali."

⁴² ST II-II, q. 129, a. 5: "Praecipue tamen hoc laudatur in virtutibus quae in aliquod arduum tendunt, in quibus difficillimum est firmitatem servare. Et ideo quanto difficilior est in aliquo arduo firmiter se habere, tanto principalior est virtus quae circa illud firmitatem praestat animo."

far easier, namely, the acquisition of goods.⁴³ Depending on the task at hand, then, magnificence will either be indistinguishable from courage or a potential part of it. Magnanimity, similarly, is the virtue through which one has the confidence to pursue some difficult good. If the good is difficult insofar as it involves the danger of death, then courage and magnanimity are indistinguishable. If the difficult good is something else, however, magnanimity will be a virtue that is different from, albeit importantly similar to, courage.⁴⁴ Aquinas makes the same distinctions with respect to patience and perseverance.⁴⁵ In each case, he argues that the part only constitutes a separate virtue in those cases which do not involve mortal danger.

Aquinas's account of the integral parts of courage is important for our purposes, because it indicates that it would be mistaken to associate any form of courage exclusively with one part over another. Does a soldier charging into enemy fire exhibit the virtues associated with attack? He surely exhibits both the requisite confidence and the requisite strength of mind, but there is every reason to maintain that he exhibits patience and perseverance as well. It takes a great deal of perseverance to keep from running in the opposite direction when bullets are flying overhead, and if—as Aquinas claims—it is patience that allows one to “endure hardship without dejection,” then there is good reason to think he would exhibit patience as well. Nor is it clear that only those with Christian preoccupations would think the soldier's patience and perseverance more laudable than his ability to confidently take on a difficult task. The doing is always more difficult than the imagining.

Aquinas's account of courage thus implies that courage cannot exist without the virtues associated with attack any more than it can exist without the virtues associated with endurance. It is not the case that some forms of the virtue of courage have to do exclusively with attack

⁴³ Ibid. “Difficilius autem est firmiter se habere in periculis mortis, in quibus confirmat animum fortitudo, quam in maximis bonis sperandis vel adipiscendis, ad quae confirmat animum magnanimitas, quia sicut homo maxime diligit vitam suam, ita maxime refugit mortis pericula.”

⁴⁴ Ibid. “Sic ergo patet quod magnanimitas convenit cum fortitudine inquantum confirmat animum circa aliquid arduum, deficit autem ab ea in hoc quod firmat animum in eo circa quod facilius est firmitatem servare. Unde magnanimitas ponitur pars fortitudinis, quia adiungitur ei sicut secundaria principali.”

⁴⁵ See *ST* II-II, q. 136, a. 4; q. 137, a. 2.

and others with endurance: any form of courage requires both attack and endurance. Of these, courage has more to do with the virtues associated with endurance because they involve something more difficult: the right regulation of one's fears. There is no reason to think, though, that infused courage has any more to do with the virtues associated with endurance or any less to do with the virtues associated with attack than acquired virtue does. An example can help to illustrate this point. Thomas Moore's martyrdom is widely acknowledged, and his martyrdom, at least according to both Reichberg and De Young, was an act of infused courage. Yet if his martyrdom was an act of infused courage, surely all the acts that led up to his martyrdom—his decision to accept the post of Lord Chancellor, his decision to refuse the king's demand for an annulment, his continued defiance even when threatened by imprisonment and death—were acts of infused courage as well. They certainly are under De Young's account because they are acts of courage that are guided by charity. They would be even under the more complicated division proposed by Reichberg, as they have to do with something specifically concerned with matters of the faith and because Moore's defiance was clearly motivated by his religious commitments. Yet although all of these seem to have been acts of infused virtue, only some of them seem to have more to do with endurance than attack. Some of these struggles clearly had to do with patience and perseverance, the virtues associated with endurance: Moore had to endure imprisonment and other indignities, and even, eventually, death. Moore's biographers also depict other important struggles equally central to Moore's courage, however, which seem to have more to do with the virtues associated with attack than those associated with endurance. Peter Ackroyd, for instance, tells us that Moore wrestled mightily with the question of whether or not it was morally right for him to oppose his king, with the question of whether his stance was one that it was moral to take.⁴⁶ In spite of these doubts, Moore eventually decided that his was morally required to oppose his king, and he determined to do so even though he knew his opposition might result in his death. These aspects of Moore's struggle, I submit, have more to do with attack than with endurance. The ability to recognize which battles one ought to engage in, for instance, is something

⁴⁶ Peter Ackroyd, *The Life of Thomas More* (New York: Doubleday, 1998).

associated with attack. Yet Moore had to exhibit this aspect of courage in order to defy his king. Another important feature of courage, and one that also has more to do with attack than with endurance, has to do with the confidence one needs in order to engage in certain battles. These abilities are surely as important for infused courage as they are for its acquired counterparts, and they were certainly both necessary antecedents of Moore's eventual martyrdom.

If the interpretation I offered above is correct, then the privileged place that Aquinas allots to endurance and even to martyrdom need not be taken as any indication of an exclusive focus on infused, rather than acquired, courage. Courage is inextricably bound up with the virtues having to do with both endurance and attack, and even if it has more to do with the former than the latter, the latter remains as important for the martyr as it is for the soldier. There is one text, however, which might seem to call the account I have offered thus far into question. In *ST II-II*, q. 124, a. 2, ad. 3, Aquinas appears to maintain that the martyr exhibits only endurance. Because martyrdom is the paradigmatic act of infused virtue and martyrdom—according to this text—only involves endurance, one might conclude that infused virtue is exclusively concerned with endurance. Even Reichberg takes this possibility seriously.⁴⁷ Reichberg, in fact, even goes so far as to claim—apparently on the basis of this text—that Christ's courage consisted only in endurance.⁴⁸ In what follows, however, I argue that such a conclusion is unwarranted.

ST II-II, Q. 124, A. 2, AD 3

The second article of question 124 of the *secunda secundae* asks whether martyrdom is an act of courage. The third objection notes that in any virtuous act, it is the governing virtue that is principally praised. Because the martyr is praised for his endurance, martyrdom is an act of the virtue of endurance and not an act of the virtue of courage.⁴⁹ Aquinas

⁴⁷ See De Young, "Power Made Perfect in Weakness," and Reichberg, "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," 363.

⁴⁸ Reichberg, "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," 351.

⁴⁹ *ST II-II*, q. 124, a. 2, obj. 3: "Praeterea, Augustinus dicit, in quodam sermone de sancto Cypriano, facile est martyrem celebrando venerari, magnum vero fidem eius et patientiam imitari. Sed in unoquoque actu virtutis praecipue laudabilis redditur virtus cuius est actus. Ergo martyrium magis est actus patientiae quam fortitudinis."

responds by reasserting his initial claim: endurance is the more praiseworthy of the two acts that courage involves, and it is to endurance, not to aggression, that martyrdom pertains. With this said, Aquinas also praises the martyr's patience. The patience of the martyr is praised along with his courage, says Aquinas, because it ministers to the principle act of martyrdom, which is endurance.⁵⁰

While Aquinas certainly does tie martyrdom to endurance in the above text, I see no reason to conclude that infused courage consists only in endurance or that it is more concerned with endurance than its acquired counterpart would be. Two points are noteworthy here. First, Aquinas is responding to an objector who claims that martyrdom is an act of endurance, not an act of courage. Because Aquinas is responding to this position, and Aquinas insists in his response that martyrdom is an act of courage and not simply an act of endurance, it is unlikely that he means to affirm the objector's central claim, let alone that he thinks that all infused courage consists only in endurance. Second, however we understand Aquinas's remarks here, it seems that we must interpret them in a manner that is compatible with Aquinas's more foundational description of courage. As we saw above, in those foundational remarks, Aquinas claimed that the virtues associated with endurance and attack—patience, perseverance, magnanimity and magnificence—were potential parts of courage, related to it as the foundation and walls to a house. This more foundational description implies that courage is never identical with a single part, any more than a house is identical to one of its walls. Certain aspects or instances of courage may have more to do with one potential part than another, and certain of those parts may be more central than others, but none of them are insignificant.

How, then, are we to interpret Aquinas's reply? An important preliminary step, I think, is to distinguish between the act of infused virtue more generally and the paradigmatic act of infused virtue. If courage is about the pursuit of a difficult good, then it stands to reason that the paradigmatic act of courage would consist in those acts that involve the

⁵⁰ *ST II-II*, q. 124, a. 2, ad 3: "Ad tertium dicendum quod, sicut dictum est, principalior actus fortitudinis est sustinere, ad quem pertinet martyrium; non autem ad secundarium actum eius, qui est aggredi. Et quia patientia deservit fortitudini ex parte actus principalis qui est sustinere, inde est etiam quod concomitanter in martyribus patientia commendatur."

greatest difficulty and the greatest good. Such acts, by Aquinas's own account, will be those acts that require the greatest endurance and are performed for the sake of the greatest good. But one can concede this without negating the importance of daring and without maintaining that daring is somehow a less important feature of infused courage than of acquired courage. Even if martyrdom is the highest act of infused courage, it need not be the case that every act of infused courage is an act of martyrdom or even an act of endurance.

Evidence for this interpretation can be found in the fifth article of Aquinas's *Quaestiones disputatae de virtutibus cardinalibus*. In the context of examining whether or not the acquired virtues remain in heaven, Aquinas considers whether and how one and the same virtue might give rise to different acts. So long as the end the virtue pursues remains the same, one and the same virtue will produce different actions in different circumstances.⁵¹ Thus, says Aquinas, fortitude produces one sort of action before battle, another during, and still another afterward, yet the same virtue is present throughout.⁵² Although Aquinas offers this example in the context of explaining why the infused virtues remain in heaven and the acquired do not, his example is relevant for present purposes insofar as it illustrates why not every instance of infused courage need consist primarily in an act of endurance. What sort of action a virtue produces will depend on the situation. Sometimes—such as when one is contemplating whether or not to engage in a dangerous course of action—the courageous act will consist more of daring than anything else. Sometimes—such as when one has already committed to a course of action—the courageous act will consist in enduring the trails associated with it.

A Contrast between Infused and Acquired Courage?

If De Young sees an explicit focus on infused virtue in Aquinas's *secunda*

⁵¹ Aquinas, *De virtutibus cardinalibus*, a. 4: "Ubi vero ultimum virtutis differt specie (si tamen sub eadem serie motus continetur, ut scilicet ab uno perveniatur in aliud), est quidem actus differens specie, sed virtus est eadem; sicut fortitudinis actus ad aliud ultimum derivatur ante praelium, et ad aliud in ipso praelio, et ad aliud in triumpho: unde alius specie actus est accedere ad bellum, et alius in praelio fortiter stare, et alius iterum de adepta victoria gaudere; et eadem fortitudo est; sicut etiam eiusdem potentiae actus est amare, desiderare et gaudere."

⁵² Ibid.

secundae account of courage, Reichberg sees direct textual evidence of an explicit contrast between the respective activities of infused and acquired courage. Although much of Reichberg's interpretation of Aquinas's *secunda secundae* treatment of fortitude seems to hinge on his more basic interpretation of Aquinas's general distinction between infused and acquired virtue, he also points to a text where he believes Aquinas describes the different roles of infused and acquired courage in the Christian moral life. In *ST* II-II, q. 123, a. 8, in the context of addressing the question of whether or not the brave man delights in his act, Aquinas draws a distinction between spiritual and physical pleasure. The eighth article of question 123 asks whether the brave man takes delight in his actions. Aquinas responds by distinguishing the delight of the body—the delight that follows from physical contact—from the delight of the soul—the delight that results from conscious awareness in the soul.⁵³ Only the latter, Aquinas argues, follows the exercise of virtue. When one endures hardships with full awareness of what one is doing, one has a cause for delight in the latter sense, and a cause for grief in both the latter and the former sense. One has cause for delight, because one's soul delights in the act of virtue and its end.⁵⁴ When one ponders the loss of life and bodily pain that the act involves, however, one's soul also has cause for grief.⁵⁵ One likewise experiences bodily grief insofar as one experiences physical pain. Extreme physical pain, moreover, can cause it to be the case that one does not feel (*sentiri*) the soul's delight in the act of virtue. Aquinas notes one exception to this latter claim: in some cases God's grace so uplifts the soul to the divine good in which it delights that it does not feel the physical pain that

⁵³ *ST* II-II, q. 123, a. 8: "Respondeo dicendum quod sicut supra dictum est, cum de passionibus ageretur, duplex est delectatio, una quidem corporalis, quae consequitur tactum corporalem; alia autem animalis, quae consequitur apprehensionem animae."

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* "Et haec proprie consequitur opera virtutum, quia in eis consideratur bonum rationis. Principalis vero actus fortitudinis est sustinere aliqua tristitia secundum apprehensionem animae, puta quod homo amittit corporalem vitam (quam virtuosus amat, non solum in quantum est quoddam bonum naturale, sed etiam in quantum est necessaria ad opera virtutum) et quae ad eam pertinent, et iterum sustinere aliqua dolorosa secundum tactum corporis, puta vulnera et flagella."

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* "Et ideo fortis ex una parte habet unde delectetur, scilicet secundum delectationem animalem, scilicet de ipso actu virtutis et de fine eius."

afflicts it.⁵⁶ In support of this assertion, Aquinas offers the example of the martyr Tiberius, who reportedly claimed that walking over burning coals felt like walking on rose petals.⁵⁷ In other cases, however, courage simply ensures that physical pains do not overcome reason. Such individuals are said to act virtuously insofar as they put the good of virtue before bodily life. Conscious delight is not expected; it is enough that they are not overcome by sadness.⁵⁸

Reichberg believes that the above text should be read as offering a distinction between the respective acts of infused and acquired virtue. Acquired courage can only overcome the spiritual sorrow that arises from the performance of the courageous act. It does not overcome the physical aspects of that sorrow. For Reichberg, this indicates that acquired courage has more to do with helping one face death than with helping one endure great physical pain: "On this basis, Aquinas concludes that the habit of acquired fortitude is more effective in enabling a person to hold fast in the face of death than in resisting acute bodily pain."⁵⁹ Because God's grace can enable one to delight even in the face of acute physical pain, on the other hand, Reichberg believes that infused fortitude allows one to deal more effectively with this latter sort of difficulty: "By contrast, infused fortitude is effective even in the latter respect, since 'by a copious assistance of God's grace,' enabling the martyr to 'delight in divine things,' the pleasure of virtue is reinforced to the point where it can overcome extreme corporeal pain."⁶⁰ It is difficult to make the case, however, that the text described above supports Reichberg's interpretation.

Although Aquinas certainly does contrast the kind of delight that

⁵⁶ Ibid. "Ex alia vero parte habet unde doleat, et animaliter, dum considerat amissionem propriae vitae, et corporaliter."

⁵⁷ Ibid. "Nisi forte propter superabundantem Dei gratiam, quae fortius elevat animam ad divina, in quibus delectatur, quam a corporalibus poenis afficiatur; sicut beatus Tiburtius, cum super carbones incensos nudis plantis incederet, dixit quod videbatur sibi super roseos flores ambulare."

⁵⁸ Ibid. "Facit tamen virtus fortitudinis ut ratio non absorbeatur a corporalibus doloribus. Tristitiam autem animalem superat delectatio virtutis, inquantum homo praeferat bonum virtutis corporali vitae et quibuscumque ad eam pertinentibus. Et ideo philosophus dicit, in III Ethic., quod a forti non requiritur ut delectetur, quasi delectationem sentiens, sed sufficit quod non tristetur."

⁵⁹ Reichberg, "Aquinas on Battlefield Courage," 366.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

God makes possible through his direct divine intervention with the kind of delight made possible by the virtue of courage, there is no reason to think that Aquinas intends to draw a contrast between the kind of delight that is present in the respective acts of infused and acquired courage. In the first place, it is not at all clear that Aquinas intends to contrast infused and acquired virtue in this text. If such a contrast is intended, then the implication is that infused virtue diminishes or even overcomes physical pain in a way that acquired virtue does not. However, Aquinas gives us no reason to think—either here or elsewhere—that infused virtue in general lessens acute physical pain. To the contrary, Aquinas is often at pains to stipulate that infused virtue does far less than acquired virtue in this regard, at least with respect to contrary dispositions.⁶¹ More importantly, if infused virtue assists action by diminishing one's experience of physical pain and if every act of martyrdom is an act of infused virtue, this would seem to diminish the magnitude of the martyr's act. If Tiberius's painless walk across the coals is a typical instance of action that stems from the infused virtue of martyrdom, then martyrdom doesn't seem so difficult after all, or else to always entail a miraculous incident of an extraordinary kind. But Aquinas clearly distinguishes "gratuitous" or miraculous graces from sanctifying graces, and infused virtues are clearly sanctifying graces, not miraculous ones.⁶²

Because Aquinas makes no mention of infused and acquired virtue in the above text, and the text itself is concerned with a question that is in principle distinct from both infused and acquired virtue, it seems more reasonable to interpret the example of Tiberius as an example of divine intervention of a miraculous kind rather than as the typical activity of infused virtue.

Conclusion

If the arguments offered above are correct, neither De Young nor Reichberg offers definitive proof for their respective interpretations of Aquinas.

⁶¹ The infused virtues, for instance, do not drive out one's vicious desires in the way that the acquired virtues do. To the contrary, previous vicious dispositions remain even after the infusion of grace; Aquinas argues that those who have infused virtues have the strength they need to resist such desires. See *De virtutibus in communis*, a. 10.

⁶² *ST I-II*, q. 111, a. 1, a. 5. My thanks to Fr. Thomas Joseph White, O.P., for pointing out these texts to me.

nas's account of fortitude. Although I am sympathetic with De Young's broader understanding of Aquinas, and although I have argued elsewhere that there are at least some more global indications that Aquinas might understand fortitude in the way that De Young claims he does,⁶³ I am inclined to think that the prospects for conclusively deciding the issue—either on the basis of Aquinas's more general distinction between infused and acquired virtue or on the basis of the more detailed accounts of virtue found in the *secunda secundae* are dim. Aquinas simply says too little, and what little he does say is too general. It is entirely possible, in fact, that Aquinas simply did not have a well worked out theory of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues. Where does this leave us? The most productive method might be to take a different approach altogether. Perhaps instead of trying to prove what Aquinas thought, we should focus instead on the question of what a moral theory stands to gain or lose from the interpretations in question. Does one interpretation make more sense than the other, either in its own right or as an interpretation of Aquinas?

Although Aquinas says little about how the infused and acquired virtues are related, there are some fundamental theses that any genuinely Thomistic account of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues must accommodate. Aquinas is clear, for instance, that grace does not destroy nature but rather perfects it. Given this, it is doubtful that he would ascribe to any theory of the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues that either minimized the contribution of nature on the one hand or created a sharp dualism between nature and grace on the other. While theses such as these do not determine in advance the position one must take on the respective roles of the infused and acquired virtues, they do provide helpful guideposts that any proposed theory must accommodate. Such a guidepost also poses an important problem for the respective interpretations of fortitude offered by Reichberg and De Young. Reichberg, by overemphasizing the natural virtues, seems to diminish the role of the infused virtues. The

⁶³ See McKay, "Infused and Acquired Virtues." With respect to fortitude in particular, I argue that Aquinas's discussion of the integral parts of fortitude appear to be discussions of infused rather than acquired virtue. If the virtues that coincide in any act of fortitude are infused, then this would seem to imply that Aquinas believes fortitude itself to be an infused virtue.

infused virtues become, on his account, something that are operative only in highly specific situations, while the bulk of the Christian moral life seems to consist in the activity of the acquired virtues. De Young, on the other hand, overemphasizes not only the infused virtues, but the distance between the respective activities of the infused and acquired virtues. The natural virtues described by Aristotle, on her account, not only become irrelevant, but are not even substantially analogous to the infused virtues. While I am sympathetic to the view that the Christian's sole focus should be on infused virtue, I think it is likely that the parallels between the two types of virtue are closer than De Young implies.

N&V