

The Wayfarer's Way and Two Guides for the Journey:
The *Summa Theologiae* and *Piers Plowman*

by
Sheryl Overmyer
Department of Religion
Duke University

Date: _____

Approved:

Stanley Hauerwas, Supervisor

David Aers

Paul Griffiths

Amy Laura Hall

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Department of
Religion in the Graduate School
of Duke University

2010

ABSTRACT

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Abstract

This dissertation draws on the virtue ethics tradition in moral theology and moral philosophy for inquiries regarding the acquired and infused virtues, virtue's increase and remission, and virtue's relation to sacramental practice. I rely on two medieval texts to ask and answer these questions: the *Summa Theologiae* by Thomas Aquinas and *Piers Plowman* by William Langland. My arguments are primarily inter- and intra-textual with some attention to the Catholic culture in which texts were written and their subsequent history of interpretation. I conclude that the texts share pedagogical features that teach their readers in what the perfection of virtue consists and show readers how to increase in that perfection.

This thesis follows from the work of David Aers, Stanley Hauerwas, Alasdair MacIntyre, Josef Pieper, and Eberhard Schockenhoff.

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Introduction

When I first conceived this dissertation, the “pagan virtues” captured my imagination. Among Christians there is widespread agreement that pagan virtue is the name for virtue of non-Christians from a Christian perspective. Despite shared agreements, Christians' assessment of these virtues covers a vast range – from an outright rejection of them as actual virtues to an exaltation of them as essentially equivalent to their Christian counterparts. Judgment regarding pagan virtues entails further judgments in matters that surround the virtues – agency, conversion, and community – furthermore all such questions are of significance historically, culturally, and politically. Pagan virtues appeared a fruitful way to start.

I adopted as my guides on this topic two medieval texts steeped in the virtue tradition, Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae* and William Langland's *Piers Plowman*.¹ Recent interpretation of Thomas revives questions about the relationship of pagan virtue to Christian virtue with widely divergent conclusions.² And the guild of

1 Leonard Boyle argues more specifically that Thomas and Langland are inheritors of the Fourth Lateran Council and its influential pastoral constitution *Omnis utriusque sexus* (“The Fourth Lateran Council” in *The Popular Literature of Late Medieval England* ed. Thomas Heffernan (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1985), 30-43). New episcopal legislation on the relationship between priest and penitent gave rise to various kinds of pastoral works, including Thomas' *Summa* as a revision to extant Dominican pastoral manuals and Langland's *Piers* in the line of pastoral literature. Each author departs from their contemporaries' customary treatment of virtues and vices: Thomas on virtues-and-vices emphasizing the human capacity for virtue and the vices as departures from the life of virtue that is the goal of the Christian and Langland on vices-and-virtues as rooted in 11th century sources with an eye toward ecclesial and social reform. Both stand in the tradition of Innocent III's pastoral concerns “to extirpate vices and foster virtues, correct abuses and reform morals, suppress heresy and strengthen the faith...”

2 See Bonnie Kent, “Moral Provincialism,” *Religious Studies* 30 (1994): 269-85; *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1995): 27-33; Brian Shanley, O.P., “Aquinas on Pagan Virtue,” *The Thomist* 63 (1999): 553-77. Initiating a shift in the conversation see Thomas Osborne Jr., “The Augustinianism of Thomas

Langland interpreters have long assumed a standard reading of Langland on the virtues that is called into question in current scholarship.³ The time appeared ripe to read these texts. Moreover the special combination of the *Summa* and *Piers* entails formal differences – differences that are likely to yield different kinds of knowledges on the same ostensible topic.⁴

As I began to read the *Summa* and *Piers* more closely, however, my initial assumptions about these issues were challenged. The challenge came from the texts themselves. As I read these texts, I began to understand that these texts *teach* readers how to see and describe the Christian moral life.⁵

Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 279-305; and its subsequent trajectory in Angela McKay Knobel, "Prudence and Acquired Moral Virtue," *The Thomist* 69 (2005): 535-55; Thomas Osborne Jr., "Perfect and Imperfect Virtues in Aquinas," *The Thomist* 71 (2007): 39-64; Michael Sherwin, "Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice: A Test Case for the Thomistic Theory of Infused Cardinal Virtues," *The Thomist* 73 (2009): 29-52; Angela McKay Knobel, *Aquinas and the Infused Moral Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, forthcoming).

3 For an inquiry which identifies and engages these trends, see David Aers, *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland, and Fourteenth-Century Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2009), Chapter 2. Aers also contrasts his interpretation of Langland to standard ones in *Sanctifying Signs: Making Christian Tradition in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2004). This excerpt indicates the direction for my last chapter:

It seems that *Piers Plowman* does not give the kind of attention to the sacrament of the altar which would generate such studies, either by addressing it at length and directly or in those dazzling figural modes which are an endless lure to meditation and commentary. In light of such apparent reticence it may well seem that one should not go further than Adams's cautious statement with which the paragraph began: the poet's theology is 'ethical rather than sacramental,' even if the sacrament on which one wishes to focus is the sacrament of the altar. But such a conclusion is inseparable from assumptions as to what is properly sacramental have been shaped by an understanding that is the produce of divisions and determinations that have not been made quite irrevocable when Langland wrote *Piers Plowman*, although they were well on the way of being so. (30)

4 See Paul Griffiths, "The Limits of Narrative Theology," Chapter 12 in *Faith and Narrative*, ed. Keith Yandell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001): 217-236.

5 Much is written on the pedagogical form of the *Summa*. See Leonard Boyle, who writes on the setting of the *Summa* based on historical context and careful study of manuscripts in "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas," *The Etienne Gilson Series* 5 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1982); reworked as "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of Saint Thomas" in *Facing History: A Different Thomas Aquinas* ed. Boyle (Louvain-La-Neuve: Federation Internationale des Instituts d'Etudes Médiévales, 2000), 65-92; revisited as "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of Thomas –

The *Summa's* first prologue describes its purpose to serve as an introduction for beginners on the topic of *sacra doctrina*. It unfolds step-by-step according to a proper order such that real understanding is brought about in the mind of the reader. Readers enact virtues of intellect and will by participating in their display in the text. At the same time, readers extend their range of activity by acquiring this knowledge. Because revelation of *sacra doctrina* is hybrid, Thomas explores its characteristically speculative character in the First Part, its practical-moral dimension in the Second, and its sacramental aspect in the Third.⁶ That said, the entire *Summa* treats the virtues. The treatment of the virtues is fullest in its latter parts.

Piers' arrangement of material according to a pedagogical model is less explicit, though perhaps more obvious because its mode of moral inquiry is enacted narrative. The main allegorical figure Will first undertakes his quest to hear wonders. Through the processes of the poem and subsequent transformation of desire, Will's quest becomes a search for God. As the poem progresses, readers are pulled into its process

Revisited" in *Ethics of Aquinas* ed. Stephen Pope (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 1-16; revised as "The Setting of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas," in *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays* ed. Brian Davies (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006), 1-24; i.e., one good article, lots of mileage! See also Alasdair MacIntyre, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990) which plays a prominent role in advancing the argument that in part because of the distortions of Thomas' *ST* during the first several centuries of its reception, it *ought to be read* as a whole; Mark Jordan, "The *Summa of Theology* as Moral Formation," Ch. 6, *Rewritten Theology: Aquinas After his Readers* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2006); "Aquinas's *Summa theologiae* as Pedagogy" in *Medieval Education*, eds. Ronald Begley and Joseph W. Koterski (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2005), 133-142; "The *Summa's* Reform of Moral Teaching – and Its Failures," in *Contemplating Aquinas: On the Varieties of Interpretation*, ed., Fergus Kerr (London: SCM, 2003), 41-54; Rudi te Velde, *Aquinas on God: the 'divine science' of the Summa theologiae* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

6 In *Aquinas on God*, te Velde provides greater specification: "One has to conclude that the knowledge of sacred doctrine has three aspects: in the first place a speculative aspect inasmuch as it treats of God (*Prima Pars*), second, a practical aspect inasmuch as it is concerned with the moral practice of human life in relation to its end (*Secunda Pars*) and third, a sacramental aspect inasmuch as Christ is the full and final revelation of God through which man is led to his salvation in God (*Tertia Pars*)" (22).

alongside Will. Readers find that they are formed by episodes in the poem and as they advance to episodes later in the poem they learn to re-narrate earlier episodes to explain characters' failures and partial successes. A retrospective reading of the poem finally available to Will and the reader alike is of God's seeking and leading Will the wanderer back to Godself. The journey, which is discursive rather than linear, is far from finished when the poem ends.

Pulling them together, I interpret the *Summa* and *Piers* each as a whole ordered toward an end and as constituted by parts that are ordered to one another. The end these texts share is perfecting virtue in their readers. Their pedagogical structures help bring about this perfection. Moreover these pedagogical strategies have a bearing on the ordering of their material on the virtues and on various conceptual ancilla that buttress this material. I spend time in the dissertation making both sets of arguments ('formal' and 'material'). Both sets have to do with the fundamental intelligibility of the texts and should make plain why my initial questions regarding pagan virtues change.

To read these texts to determine their judgments about the "pagan virtues" alone belies a reading that refuses to learn what these texts have to teach. Neither Thomas nor Langland use this language in their texts. Even if one were to start by isolating something like pagan virtues, notwithstanding anachronism, one would see that over the course of their texts Thomas and Langland become concerned with entirely other kinds of virtue that have more to do with their reception than their possessor. Thomas' and Langland's attentions shift from questions concerning agentival causation to a focus on ultimate ends. Therefore one's description of pagan

virtues requires revision and qualification according to the transformation of one's understanding. This revision renders an exclusive focus on pagan virtues unlearned, for the subsequent virtues are needed to understand the pagan virtues. And as one understands the subsequent virtues, one's understanding of the pagan virtues changes. To shape one's inquiries around pagan virtues without an eye toward the whole remains an outsider reading of these texts.⁷

Instead, according to my reading of the texts, the preoccupations and conclusions that emerge pivot on the moral life as a journey. Progress along the *via* is constituted by increase in virtue. Different kinds of virtue are characteristic of different stages of one's wayfaring. Even as one is graced with the most perfect of virtues named charity, Langland demonstrates the vulnerability of such perfection and Thomas builds into the very form of the virtues a sense of incompleteness and relative qualification. Even the greatest perfection in this life is relative to perfection possible in the next. Perfection itself has degrees and stages. Perfection, then, is not and cannot be a static final goal at which some have already arrived. Even the perfect may progress.⁸ The trajectory of this dissertation follows the authors' segue from virtue to the diversity of virtues, from vitiated forms to their fullest, to their end in sacramental

⁷ That is, a reading that brings 'outside' questions to the text expecting the text to supply an answer. For example, I am sympathetic with Jennifer Herdt's set of inquiries that guide her perceptive reading of the development of the virtue ethics tradition in *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008). Her focus on the splendid vices, however, can color her interpretation of her chosen authors. They arguably do so as she reads Thomas and finds him wanting. Herdt's emphasis causes her to miss crucial shifts in the matter of Thomas' convictions and in the overall form of his argument, features which make Thomas' own text – instead of Erasmus' – the very holistic model which Herdt seeks.

⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, The Second Part of the Second Part, Question 24 (hereafter *ST 2a2ae q24*); see Chapter Two.

practice. Sacramental practice, our *viaticum*, is for us wayfarers the *via* toward fullness in virtue. I say more about “the way” and “the wayfarer” next.

In Chapter One of the dissertation, I start with the beginning of *Piers* and an allegorical wayfarer named Will. Will adopts his worldly desires as his guide to make his way through a world that is thoroughly assimilated to the practices of the market. These forms of exchange warp relations such that the community's common practices are alienated from the virtues. The virtues appear instead in parodic and vitiated forms. As Will makes his way through this world, Langland offers a set of descriptions of virtues (and law) which constitute the first extended episode in my dissertation. Then I contrast this world with a second, later episode in the poem in which Langland introduces decidedly Christological virtue connected with the community founded on Christ and sacramental practice. Thus Langland offers a display of the genuine range of virtue, on the one hand its parodic versions and on the other its fullest meaning. At the same time, he offers an account of the conversion needed for a wanderer to traverse from one version of virtues to the next.

Thomas takes up an analogous task in the *Summa* in what can be read as an extension of Langland's project. Thomas starts with an intermediary form of virtue (i.e., acquired virtue) and extends the range of virtue with new distinctions. Chapters Two and Three treat Thomas' expansion of Langland's initial vision. In both chapters, I use the same three questions from the Second Part of the *Summa* that capture the extremes of virtue's forms along with its many intermediate forms. That I chose only three questions to interpret Thomas should indicate to the dissertation's readers that I aim to identify the spirit of his treatment rather than to provide an exhaustive account

of Thomas on the virtues.

Finally in Chapter Four, in a constructive turn I round off this account of Thomas and Langland by putting both into more direct conversation regarding the virtues' consummation in sacramental practice.⁹ The virtues are cast against a greater Christological and sacramental horizon with an eye toward the way of salvation. Christ the Way provides the path that stretches between the wayfarer and the wayfarer's goal. The sacraments are given as wayfarers' food. The virtues name our progression along the way to the ultimate end. Perfection in virtue is related to union with Christ. On this side of the eschaton, the virtues are annexed to sacramental life. In this final part of the dissertation, Thomas' positive cast of the increase in virtue and faithful sacramental observance is complemented by Langland's more dark vision of the virtues as their relationship with the sacraments is compromised.

Stepping back from my project, I see the reordering of my questions from pagan virtues to sacramental practice in light of Alasdair MacIntyre's "Narrative Ethics, Virtue Ethics and Natural Law." Here MacIntyre relates the enacted dramatic narratives of readers to the text of the *Summa*. The *Summa* 1a2ae

responds to our interrogation by interrogating us... So it is at the beginning of the 1a2ae, a work designed for teachers, confessors and

9 For Thomas on varied and related invocations of *via*, see the Appendix (pages 209-213). For a highlighting of the same theme in Langland, see Aers, "Remembering the Samaritan, Remembering Semyuief," Chapter 4 in *Salvation and Sin*. Aers' citation of Augustine is apropos: As man he is our Mediator; as man he is our way. For there is hope to attain a journey's end when there is a path which stretches between the traveler and his goal. But if there is no path, or if a man does not know which way to go, there is little use in knowing the destination. As it is, there is one road, and one only, well served against all possibility of going astray; and this road is provided by one who is himself both God and man. As God, he is the goal; as man, he is the way. Augustine, *City of God Against the Pagans*, 5th ed., trans. Henry Bettenson, XI.2 and for the Latin *De Civitate Dei*, ed. B. Dombort and A. Kalb (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1993); in Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 87.

other intermediaries between its text and the readings of the practical reader or hearer. Such a reader is forced back upon questions to which his or her own questioning has to be subordinated and by which it is likely to be transformed.¹⁰

Rather than the reader being guided by the initial questions formed by her or his particularized social context and relationships, the reader learns through the text how to dialectically respond to the questions the text itself poses. As a reader, my questions were transformed in the way MacIntyre's account suggests. MacIntyre adds that this process of practical inquiry in the *ST 1a2ae* requires that the reader “embodies in the dramatic sequences of her or his life a highly particularized counterpart of the ordered sequences of moral learning presented in the questions and answers of those parts” of the text.¹¹ The text gives the reader an articulate understanding of her or his progress along the stages of the enacted narrative of her or his life – a progress that is “always the beginnings of a pilgrim's progress” – progress that is indeed moral but only “fully intelligible when it is understood in an adequate theological light.”¹² As a reader, I follow MacIntyre's progress of the pilgrim wayfarer to its theological culmination in the remainder of the *Summa* and *Piers*.

The language I use to describe my readings seems to imply that these texts *do* things. Throughout the dissertation, I describe texts as “teaching the virtues” or “progressing.” I use this language as shorthand to mean: “reading Thomas' text can become the occasion for the reader to be taught” or “reading Langland's text may offer

10 Alasdair MacIntyre, “Narrative Ethics, Virtue Ethics and Natural Law,” Unpublished lecture (September, 1990), 1-20; here 14.

11 *Ibid.*, 15.

12 *Ibid.*, 20.

the reader an experience of progress.” Every time I use this shorthand, I mean to invoke this more complex relation between author, text, and reader. Also, I say “*can* become the occasion” and “*may* offer the reader” because the texts need not always assume the meaning I attribute to them. Other readings of the same texts are possible. I follow the usual academic practice of noting these other readings in my footnotes.

I offer this set of readings on Thomas and Langland on the virtues because I find these readings compelling. The way I read these texts *and* the conclusions I reach on the basis of these readings are, in my view, promising entrées into contemporary conversations in both fields. My hope in placing Thomas and Langland in conversation is to help readers read both better. Thomas' readers can learn from Langland that narrational descriptions regarding the moral life defy neatly ordered progress and that readers would do well not to depend too heavily on the many distinctions Thomas proposes. Rather, the summation of Langland's (and Thomas') meditations on virtue concerns the greatest of these: charity. Langland's depiction of allegorized divine agency reminds Thomas' readers of charity's relationship to Christ and the sacraments.

In turn, Thomas gives readers of Langland names for virtues that seemed to defy naming. For Thomas complements Langland's riveting account of the habituation of sin with Thomas' many gradations of virtue and a clear ordering of them relative to one another. Also, Thomas' account of participation can offer readers of Langland edification as Thomas traces what happens when one participates in the sacraments rightly. Difficult as it is, Thomas can likewise help Langland's readers envisage an extension of Easter joy into all liturgical time. This dissertation's readings are

predicated on the basic insight that Thomas can help Langlandians discover a more medieval Langland and vice-versa.

As I wrote this dissertation, I envisioned of a readership of four. As I revise and build upon this work, I hope it will become a contribution to existing conversations in moral theology. The questions driving this project were formed as I read texts with Stanley Hauerwas, including initially questions of pagan virtues and then the paradigm shift demanded by the authors' Christian commitments. The arguments I eventually developed assume the direction signaled by Romanus Cessario and Jean Porter that reading Thomas should attend to the complex interplay of acquired and infused virtue in the life of a Christian – a reading which in turn can draw from sources such as Josef Pieper and Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange O.P. By my lights, these arguments are an important complement to the work of at least three Thomists who write on the curious matter of the co-existence of infused virtue and acquired vice in the life of a Christian: Michael Sherwin O.P., William Mattison, and Angela McKay Knobel. I hope my work will also appeal to theologians concerned with fundamental questions regarding sanctification and the good life.

Although these readings may point us to a set of changed questions, it does not mean all questions are answered. Important questions remain such as: Do the variety of kinds of virtues mean a number of different communities are needed for formation? How do communities learn to identify and reform their false participation in the sacraments? I mention these questions now for they should lurk in the back of your mind as you read the dissertation and search for hints or clues that I missed but the authors left behind.

This dissertation's contribution to the field lies predominantly in exemplifying a habit of reading. To move beyond it calls for an extension and appropriation of its 'formal' characteristics to other portions of the text to supplement its 'material' conclusions. It includes regarding the *Summa* and *Piers*, which beckon us to read and re-read them, as fellow wayfarers who help us know better how to go on.

Chapter One. Law, Love, and Langland

We begin in *Piers Plowman* with a wanderer, Will, who goes into the world in search of treasure. Like those around him, Will hopes success in this world will amount to the only heaven there is: an earthly one. Holy Church intervenes, re-directing Will by pointing him beyond mere earthly goods. She leads him to a more rich conception of treasure as adumbrated in the Gospel. As Will learns from her his question becomes, “How may I save my soule?,” a question that *now* defines his quest (Passus I.80).¹ Will's desires change as the text progresses. Throughout *Piers*, Will's understanding of what the good life is and the means by which he seeks that good life are transformed with successive life-changing encounters.

By my reading, Langland's dialectical revision throughout the poem means that Will's early encounters, however illuminating, are only provisionally so. Whatever is gained from them is open to re-narration and retrospective re-evaluation. Will's final perspective, ultimately available to Will and the reader alike, allows Will to tell the story of God's seeking and leading the wanderer back to Himself.

In this chapter, I am concerned with the different forms of virtue made manifest in and through Will's encounters. I look to three episodes of *Piers* where Langland is

1 “How y may saue my soule?” (Russell-Kane, I.80)

‘Will’ is both a proper name for the narrator in a poem by William Langland and a personification of a power of the soul. In the body of the chapter I use George Economou’s translation of the C-version: William Langland, *Piers Plowman*; a verse translation by George Economou (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996). In the footnotes, I quote from the George Russell and George Kane’s edition, *Piers Plowman: The C Version*, (Berkeley, CA: Athlone Press, 1997) alongside Derek Pearsall’s edition, *Piers Plowman: An Edition of the C-text* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2008).

his most explicit regarding the virtues and the virtues' systematic interrelations with forms of law and community. The first two episodes furnish the material of this chapter, Chapter One. I postpone my treatment of the third episode to Chapter Four.

The first episode begins with the first few passus of *Piers*. Langland depicts a complex social, political, and economic world in which agents' overriding, implacable pursuits of worldly success are inextricable from the character of 'Lady' Meed. Her symbiotic relationships with individuals (the King) and personifications (Conscience) are corrupted and corrupting. Law and virtue become allied to meed but in so doing become parodic versions of themselves. Neither individuals nor institutions have the wherewithal to escape this miry mess, and Langland offers few conceptual resources for the reader – or the poem's wanderer – to know how to go on.

In the second episode, I take up Langland's account of resolution which must come from outside Will himself several passus later in XVIII and XIX. Here Will finally encounters the virtues – Faith, Hope, and Charity – that advance his journey in a way impossible up to this point. The Samaritan, identified with Charity, enlivens individuals wounded by sin and creates the conditions for future flourishing by establishing a sacramental, grace-filled community. This community is determined by penitential practice, a people who are bound to *reddere quod debet*. Finally Will (and the reader) can see how to re-narrate the earlier passus of the poem to explain Will's (and the reader's) initial failures.

Through this chapter, I hope that readers may better appreciate two theses regarding the virtues in Langland's work: there is a genuine range of virtue from its parodic versions in corrupt communities to its full meaning among a penitential and

eucharistic people *and* the process of conversion is needed for Will and readers to journey from one form to the next.

1.1 Law and 'Lady' Meed

Virtues and law make their first appearance in the *Prologue* when Conscience comes to accuse those who have corrupted the Church. First he narrates the establishment of the Church:

Some of the power given Peter I perceived,
To bind and unbind, as the book tells us,
How he left it with love as our lord wished
Among the four virtues, most virtuous of virtues
That are called cardinal and on which the gate hinges
By which Christ in his kingdom closes off heaven. (*Prologue*.128-133)²

2 "I parsceyued of þe power that Peter hadde to kepe,
To bynde and to vnbynde, as þe boke telleth,
Hou he it lefte with loue as oure lord wolde
Amonge foure vertues most vertuuous of vertues
That cardinals ben cald and closyng-~~3~~ates
Thare Crist is in kynedom to close with heuene." (Russell-Kane, *Prologue*.128-133)

The original reads "of þe power that Peter hadde," which Economou, based on earlier editions of Pearsall, rendered "some of the power given Peter" – a revision which appears to circumscribe the authority of the apostle and by extension the papacy.

Conscience is a major character throughout the poem. Langland's potential sources for Conscience are diverse, ranging from monastic sources to Thomas Aquinas (Timothy C. Potts, *Conscience in Medieval Philosophy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980); Gerald Morgan affirms the latter with qualification that Langland is located "within the bounds of scholastic orthodoxy" in "The Meaning of Kind Wit, Conscience, and Reason in the First Vision of *Piers Plowman*," *Modern Philology*, Vol. 84, No. 4, May 1987, 351-58, 351). Whatever Langland's source/s, it remains best to resist mapping on modern talk by conscience which denotes something very different (see Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), Chapter XI for a treatment of *conscientia* which affords a greater degree of specificity than its modern counterpart).

To forge a more fruitful way to think about Conscience, I can briefly consider Thomas' use in relation to Langland's. Thomas mentions conscience two significant times the *Summa*. When considering the intellectual powers, he calls it an act of applying knowledge to something – thus its activity is witnessing, binding, inciting, accusing, tormenting, rebuking. Timothy Sutor, translator of the Blackfriars edition, notes the prominent usage of the language of conscience in O.T. and N.T. sources, and points out that "in such texts, faith, hope, charity, conscience, and doctrine are correlated casually within the scheme of man's redemption by Christ's death" (192, *Summa*; cf. "Why Conscience Likes Dogmatic Definitions" in *Canadian Journal of Theology*, 14.1 (January 1968), 43-56; 46). Yet for Thomas, conscience plays a less prominent role in his moral theology than prudence (cf. Cicero's and Seneca's deployment of the same, *conscientia*, with a heavy moral sense). The other mention of conscience is in Thomas' questions on law in the I-II. He discusses human law, which binds a man's conscience only if they are just laws (ordered to a common good, by a rightful authority, requiring a

Conscience alludes to Matthew 16:18-19:

And I say to thee: That thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven.³

Conscience's treatment of these verses from Matthew receive similar treatment in Thomas' *Catena Aurea*. There one finds the same connections between the establishment of the Church and virtue. Correlative to the connection between Church and virtue is its contrary, which Thomas cites from Jerome: "I suppose the gates of hell to mean vice and sin, or at least the doctrines of heretics by which men are ensnared and drawn into hell."⁴ The cardinal virtues receive specification that is ecclesiologically-rooted and eschatologically-oriented. They are left "with love."

Langland's use of the word "cardinal" also echoes Thomas, as Andrew Galloway points out in his commentary on *Piers*: "Aquinas elaborates the image in terms that suggest the source for the passage in *PP*: the term cardinal is taken from *cardo*, 'the hinge on which a door turns, as in Proverbs [26:14], 'As a door turns on its

burden equitably placed on subjects). Unjust laws (against what is fair in human terms, against God's rights) do not oblige in the court of conscience. Concerns over virtue and law are thus bound up in one another in the judgment of conscience. Conscience is a crucial character in *Piers Plowman* whose coupling with virtue and law in XXI-XXII occurs only after the Christological passages.

3 *The Holy Bible* translated from the Latin Vulgate and diligently compared with the Hebrew, Greek and other editions in divers languages (New York: The Douay Bible House, 1941). "Et ego dico tibi, quia tu es Petrus, et super hanc petram aedificabo ecclesiam meam, et portae inferi non praevalebunt adversus eam. Et tibi dabo claves regni caelorum. Et quodcumque ligaveris super terram, erit ligatum et in caelis: et quodcumque solveris super terram, erit solutum et in caelis" from *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, 4th ed., ed. Alberto Colunga and Laurentio Turrado (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1946).

4 Thomas Aquinas, *Catena Aurea: Gospel of Matthew*, trans. William Whitson, (London: J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1842), Chapter 16, Lectio 3, 585. *Catena aurea in quatuor Evangelia, t. 1: Expositio in Matthaeum*, ed. A. Guarenti (2^a ed.: Marietti, Taurini-Romae, 1953): "Ego portas Inferi, vitia reor atque peccata; vel certe haereticorum doctrinas, per quas illecti homines ducuntur ad Tartarum."

hinges, so does a sluggard on his bed.’ Therefore, we call those virtues cardinal on which a human way of life is founded, and through which as through a door one proceeds...”⁵ “Cardinal,” which derives from the Latin *cardo* (“hinge”), plays on the meaning of these virtues as the *hinges* upon which the gates of heaven open and close. Conscience's coupling of the cardinal virtues and Church through Christ signal what is essential for salvation.

Yet – “but” – in the same breath, Conscience remarks that the cardinals at court also claim the same name: “But the cardinals at court that the name also claim/ And its power presume in their choosing a pope/ That power from Peter I would never impugn– ” (Prologue. 134-136).⁶ Conscience draws attention to the potentially varied use of language to signal the non-parity between the *cardinal* virtues and the *cardinals* at court. Thus the reader can begin to differentiate between various meanings of the same word. Since the cardinals are separated from virtue, ascription of the same name is equivocal. (The “power presumed” by the cardinals alludes to the Great Schism of 1378 in which French cardinals elected a rival pope. Langland overtly shifts to politics

5 Andrew Galloway, *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman*, Vol. 1 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 110-111 also noted by Skeat in *Notes to “Piers the Plowman,” The vision of William concerning Piers Plowman, together with Vita de Dowel, Dobet, et Dobest, secundum Wit et Resoun*, by William Langland, edited from numerous manuscripts with prefaces, notes, and a glossary by the Walter W. Skeat (London: Pub. for the Early English Text Society, N. Trübner & Co., 1867-77). Galloway quotes from Aquinas, *Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus*, art 1, ad 4.

6 “Ac of þe Cardinales at Court þat caught han such a name
 And power presumen in hemself a pope to make
 To haue þe power þat Peter hadde in pugne hem y nelle.” (Russell-Kane, *Prologue*.134-6)
 The “cardinales at court þat caught han such a name” – the cardinals at court that caught – enjoys a slightly different connotation (and wordplay) than modern English renditions. That the cardinals are not qualified to assume the name, Economou translates as “claim”-ing. But what Economou fails to capture is how the wording indicates that language itself is open to corruption (and full re-appropriation) when wrenched from its original context.

involving Conscience and the king at court.⁷) Meanwhile, the Church in the dark satire of the Prologue is assimilated to the late medieval market, accommodated by avarice. The divergence between the virtues and the cardinals at court is profound, the significance of which will soon become clear as Langland next treats law briefly and then in detail in Passus II-IV. The crucial link between the Church, virtue, and cardinals is not reiterated until the end of *Piers Plowman*. The intervening passus are marked by its absence.

Law appears first in the *Prologue* in the narration immediately following Conscience's speech. The background story runs: a king came whose rule was secured through might. Under his rule, Kynde Wit, Conscience, and the knighthood established that the people would supply all provisions through their crafts, and live "by true labor while life on land lasts" (*Prologue* 146).⁸ The life of the "commons" or the people is dictated by the law formulated for them. But this law is contrasted to rulers

7 In W. Mark Ormrod's study of political life in medieval England, *Piers Plowman* is described as astute, eloquent expression of political disillusionment. Ormrod writes:

Did Langland's representation of parliament as a high court rather than as a political assembly reflect his (and, by implication, others') ignorance of the world of government, or was it intended to conflict deliberately with reality in order to demonstrate the desperate need felt in the 1370s for a monarchy that would once more take command of the institutions of the state? Whatever the case, it is clear that those anonymous (probably London-based) writers who followed in Langland's tradition had no doubts about the details of high politics and no qualms about satirising them.

W. M. Ormrod, *Political Life in Medieval England, 1500-1450* (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 59. Ormrod's discussion of the "institutions of the state" is anachronistic. Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer argue that despite the many medieval institutions – including Parliament, the law, and the Crown itself – which enjoy remarkable continuity of form into modern times, the resemblance to something that we recognize as "state" form is usually dated to some eighty years after Ormrod's study (*The Great Arch: English State Formation* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1985)).

8 "With lele labour to lyue while lif on londe lasteth" (Russell-Kane, *Prologue*.146). Economou offers another problematic translation of the Middle English 'Kynde Wit' into 'Common Sense.' The history of Western philosophy should be baggage enough to discourage usage of Common Sense, moreover, the vocabulary of Kynde Wit maintains connections to kinship, nature, and the Incarnation. Would that there were another untranslatable name for today's problematic 'Conscience'!

and law-makers, i.e., the House of Commons. Conscience first mentions law:

Conscience to clergy and the king said,
'I am a king, I'm a prince,' you say, but neither perhaps one day.
Oh, you who rule by the special laws of Christ the Ruler
To do it better; be as loving as you're just to the letter:
You should dress naked justice in tenderness.
So you may reap just as you've sown.
If you seed love, may love be what you reap. (Prologue.151-157)⁹

Conscience advises that justice be joined with love and law with Christ. This is a remarkable configuration of Christ, charity, justice, and law, whatever reasonably inferred as the tone.¹⁰ Next Conscience and the king go into court where the lawyers

9 "Conscience to clergie and to þe kyngge sayde,
'Sum Rex, sum Princeps: neutrum fortasse deinceps.
O qui iura regis christi specialia regis,
Hoc ut agas melius, iustus es, esto pius!
Nudum ius a te vestir[is] vult pietate.
Qualia vis metere talia grana sere.
[*Si ius nudatur nudo de iure metatur*];
Si seritur pietas de pietate metas." (Russell-Kane, *Prologue*.152-159)

The B-Text includes before the speeches to the king a gloss: "The kyngge and the comune and kynde wytte the thridde/ Shope lawe and lewte, eche man to knowe his owne" (*Prologue*.121-22). This version's addition is crucial for Patricia Kean's argument in "Love, Law, and Lewte in *Piers Plowman*," *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 15, No. 59, (Aug., 1964): 241-261. Kean argues that the Prologue.122 in the B-Text is Langland's definitive formulation of the creation of law which accords with Thomas' views on law and government more generally and particularly on the relationships between divine, human, and natural law. Although I will echo Kean's suggestion that there are crucial elements on law in common between Thomas and Langland, I hesitate to affirm Kean's argument that Langland is wholly appreciative of the account of law given in the *Prologue* if only because Langland omits these lines in the C-Text.

Moreover, Kean's argument for similarities between Thomas and Langland relies heavily on *De Regno*. According to a reader very familiar with Thomas' corpus, Jean-Pierre Torrell, it would be a bad methodology to permit oneself on the basis of this text alone to build up a political system according to Thomas. Torrell cites Marie-Dominique Chenu in his support: "The *De Regno* is a pedagogical and moral treatise for the use of a prince, not an organic work of political theory." Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas, Vol I: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1996), 170-1. Cf. E. T. Donaldson, *Piers Plowman: The C-Text and Its Poet* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1949). Donaldson argues that the political references of the B-Text *Prologue* are muted in the more "conservative and traditionalist" C-Text (110). Cf. Anna P. Baldwin, *The Theme of Government in Piers Plowman*, *Piers Plowman Studies 1* (Cambridge, D.S. Brewer, 1981) also contrasts the B-*Prologue* and C-*Prologue*, characterized as portraying "limited monarchy" and "triumph of absolutism," respectively. In the C-*Prol.*, then, the king has ultimate authority over law: "indeed it encourages [the king] to take full responsibility for the social justice of his kingdom, *whether or not* he acts through law" (15).

10 Kean in "Love, Law, and Leute," 243-48 argues at length that the speech is advice and warning, and merely reflects commonplaces of medieval political theory. In contrast, this speech to the king could

are “pleading the law for pennies or pounds/ And not opening their lips once for love of our lord” (*Prologue*.161-2).¹¹ The gift of language has become a commodity. And language itself serves as the very instrument for the ideological justification of social wrongs and violence in a fable that closes the *Prologue*.

The compromise of law and justice throughout the *Prologue* are a prefiguration of Meed. And Meed only compounds the question of what hope there is for reform. Even here, Conscience speaks to those characters who are driven by profit and who rule through dominion. What kind of law is this? Thus far, readers have the conceptual apparatus to distinguish the law of Christ (*Prologue*.153) from human law (*Prologue*. 161). What if human law is a stranger to justice? What then? These questions become more acute in the ensuing episode.

Now that the backdrop of Passus II-IV is somewhat familiar, I would like to focus on the proliferation of rival versions of law. In this period, there are acute clashes between civil and church courts in which each brandishes their own version of law for the commons. It not clear that either court aims in practice to embody a conception of law named by then contemporary theologians as ‘law.’ A way to focus

be seen as satire or flattery in D.W. Robertson and B.F. Huppe’s *Piers Plowman and Scriptural Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1951), 27. Both of these interpretations refer to the B-Text, whose speakers are the Lunatic, Angel, and Goliardeys. As for the C-Text, I think it significant that the speeches are attributed to Kynde Wit and Conscience. As such they are spoken by known characters, intended with a seriousness that indicts them without their knowing it. Are they early examples of what Scripture warned are *multi multa* who *sciunt e seipos nesciunt* (XI.166)? A few lines earlier, both Kynde Wit and Conscience were crucial agents in constructing this order which, however Christologically-construed, lacks Christ. They are complicit in this social arrangement even as they judge it.

11 “Plededen for penyes and pounde[d] þe lawe/ And nat for loue of oure lord vnlose here lypes ones” (Russell-Kane, *Prologue*.161-2). This is another distinctive emphasis of the C-Text due to its placement to doubly emphasize the connection between king and law. The B-Text postpones the lawyers and courts until after the fable at B.*Prologue*.211-13, although its language evokes the same connection.

these clashes as opening into a treatment of Meed is to look at accounts by James Brundage and Leah Lydia Otis regarding the conflicts which emerged surrounding prostitution.¹²

Officially, thirteenth- and fourteenth-century canon and civil law come together in shared judgment against prostitutes. Unofficially, both forms of law incline toward pragmatic toleration. Such toleration ironically becomes a kind of ideological justification. For canonists and theologians acknowledge that prostitutes have a public usefulness and what is required, according to Brundage, is “to set limits to her practice, rather than to eliminate her from society.”¹³ Prostitution is accepted within the model of a flourishing medieval society. During transitional centuries, it moves from acceptance to institutionalization, with increased activism by royal and municipal governments in the regulation of sexual behavior; in some regions, there are public takeovers of the industry.¹⁴ These institutional interventions are often sparked by self-interested motives to support existing socio-economic and political arrangements.

Theologians and canonists “bolstered the social order by teaching a sexual ethic well

12 James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Leah Lydia Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society: The History of an Urban Institution in Languedoc* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985).

13 Guido de Baysio, *Rosarium* to C. 32 q. 4 c. 3 (Lyon: Apud Hugonem a Porta, 1549), fol. 350va; Hostensis, *Lectura* to X 4.1.20 section 7; Thomas Aquinas *ST 2a2ae* q10 a11; Nicholas of Lyra, *Postilla super totam Bibliam*, 4 vols. (Strasbourg: Johann Gruninger, 1492; repr. Frankfurt a/M.: Minerva, 1971; unpaginated), praefatio in quatuor evangelistas; etc. cited in Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society*, 464.

14 Comparing Otis and Brundage, one finds that their treatments are more broad and more narrow by turns. In her *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, Otis paints this transition in rather broad strokes as occurring between the twelfth and thirteenth centuries and the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries (with the sixteenth dismantling prostitution altogether) in the region of Languedoc, the large province in what is now southern France. Brundage reflects the nexus of socio-economic and theological events as significant for the whole of medieval Europe, marking the transition as taking place between 1234-1348 and 1348-1517.

adapted to social practice and economic conditions.”¹⁵ Moralists became concerned that prostitutes charge no more than a just price for their services. Legalists wanted to protect the property prostitutes gained from their occupation.¹⁶ The clashes between civil and Church courts appear largely a result of a shared, ambivalent comportment toward regulating law and sexual behavior.

This ambivalent comportment is about to assume a more determinative form as it became subject to powerful centralizing forces associated with division of labor and the re-distribution of power. R.I. Moore tracks these forces as the authority of smaller, local communities was transferred to the organs of the bureaucratic regime.¹⁷ Moore writes:

The attacks on particular *loci* of communal power which are represented by these forms of persecution and allied processes are generalized in the campaigns of moral repression with which newly instituted regimes so often establish their legitimacy, proclaim their adherence to traditional values, discredit their enemies and consolidate their hold on the instruments of power.¹⁸

Moore offers France’s Louis IX as an example of such a leader consolidating his power by “rigorous and imaginative innovation in the arts of government.”¹⁹

What did this consolidation and innovation look like? In 1254, Louis IX’s

15 Brundage, *ibid.*, 495.

16 On the former Brundage cites Nevizzani, *Silva nuptialis* (Lyon: Imprensa per J. Moylinal’s de Cambray, 1524), fol. 8vb; Dennis Doherty, *The Sexual Doctrine of Cardinal Cajetan*, Studien zur Geschichte der katholischen Moraltheologie, vol. 12 (Regensburg: F. Pustet, 1966), 102 n. 35. On the latter Brundage sites Franciscus de Platea, *Opus restitutionum* 52-3 (Venice: Johannes de Colonia & Johann Manthen, 1474, unfoliated); Nevizzani, *Silva nuptialis*, fol. 41rb. *Ibid.*, 523.

17 R. I. Moore, *Formation of a Persecuting Society: authority and deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250*, 2nd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007).

18 Moore, *Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 127.

19 *Ibid.*

measures to guarantee public morality included prohibitions of gaming, blasphemy, and usury and an unambiguous condemnation of prostitution.²⁰ He radicalizes medieval legislation on prostitution and in some cases reverses it. Yet by 1256 he recognizes that his legislation is far too restrictive to be enforced.²¹ In a last text concerning prostitution in 1269, Louis IX revives the former spirit of reform by ordering “notorious and manifest brothels... to be exterminated, in towns as well as outside them.”²² Otis notes that Louis’ use of *notorious* and *manifest* derive from canon law. This use allows a suspension of normal criminal procedure, so flagrant was brothels’ violation of the community good. At the time, more moderate legislation wins out.

What stands out on the whole about Louis’ legislation is not its distinctively theological roots for indeed he shared these convictions with some contemporaries – but its real, albeit failed, attempt at rigorism.²³ What is the alternative to rigorism and what does this alternative look like? Otis writes:

20 Otis, *Prostitution in Medieval Society*, 19 quotes from the ordinance.

21 To be more specific, the Ordinance of 1256 differs from that of 1254 on its fundamental point, which regards prostitutes – that they were no longer to be expelled “from the fields as well as the towns,” but simply from the center of towns. As such, the ordinance prescribes current custom. Otis, *ibid.*, 20.

22 Eusèbe-Jacques de Laurière, ed., *Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race*, 21 vols., (Paris, 1723-1849), 1:105. Quoted *ibid.*

23 Moore marks Louis IX as contributing to that emergence of the state by the specialization and professionalization of government (*Formation of a Persecuting Society*, 128). Through his inquests and reforms, Alasdair MacIntyre argues, Louis IX transformed the law into a distinctively bureaucratic instrument of centralized authority and power. This marks a handing over of the enforcement and understanding of law to trained lawyers, administrators, and professional specialists who monopolize expertise, which in turn signals political and legal failures by Thomistic standards. See Alasdair MacIntyre, “Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 26 (1996): 61-83; 69.

As in so many other domains, it was Saint Thomas Aquinas who crystallized the Church's position on prostitution in the late thirteenth century by paraphrasing the Augustinian warning that an elimination of prostitution would result in the pullulation of sexual passions and abuses.²⁴

Next I turn to Thomas' text to understand the "Church's position on prostitution in the late thirteenth century," and to sharpen Langland's questions regarding prostitution, law, and virtue.

In the *Secunda Secundae* of the *Summa Theologica*, Thomas begins with the virtue necessary for Christians to be taken up into the life of God, the virtue of faith.²⁵ Its object is truth and its subject reason, which means that reason is not antithetical to faith, rather the perfection of reason is faith. Faith is a gift handed on through the Church and its Sacraments. The vice that threatens faith is unbelief, the greatest of sins which severs believers from God. However grave unbelief, it does not destroy natural reason by which some knowledge of the truth remains and by which unbelievers are able to do generically good deeds.²⁶ As such, natural reason and law cannot trump unbelief – as Thomas argues is the case for unbelievers whose children ought not to be baptized against their parents' will.²⁷ To do so would be against

24 *De regimine principum* 4:14 and *Summa* 2a2ae q10 a11 cited in Otis, *ibid.*, 23.

25 *ST* 2a2ae q1 a9; see Stanley Hauerwas and Sheryl Overmyer, "The Virtues," forthcoming.

26 *ST* 2a2ae q10 a4 ad 3: "Unbelief does not so wholly destroy natural reason in unbelievers, but that some knowledge of the truth remains in them, whereby they are able to do deeds that are generically good." "Per infidelitatem non corrumpitur totaliter in infidelibus ratio naturalis, quin remaneat in eis aliqua veri cognitio, per quam possunt facere aliquod opus de genere bonorum."

27 *ST* 2a2ae q10 a12. See also *Quodlibet* II q4 a2. Torrell comments: "It has been long noted that the text of the *IIaIIae* q10 a12 is a literal repetition (including both arguments and responses) of *Quodlibet* II q4 a2 [7], with the exception of an omission through homoeoteleuton and some small copyist's errors. We might think here that Thomas gave the text to one of his assistants to be recopied and did not reread it." (*Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 242-3)

natural reason, natural law, and natural justice. To put it another way, the virtues and the laws which sustain them go wrong if they violate reason by coercion. In Thomas' treatment of unbelief also comes his alleged authoritative stance on prostitution. He writes:

Human government is derived from the Divine government, and should imitate it. Now although God is all-powerful and supremely good, nevertheless He allows certain evils to take place in the universe, which He might prevent, lest, without them, greater goods might be forfeited, or greater evils ensue. Accordingly in human government also, those who are in authority, rightly tolerate certain evils, lest certain goods be lost, or certain greater evils be incurred: thus Augustine says (*De Ordine* ii, 4): "If you do away with harlots, the world will be convulsed with lust." Hence, though unbelievers sin in their rites, they may be tolerated, either on account of some good that ensues therefrom, or because of some evil avoided.²⁸

Thomas acknowledges that prostitution, and by extension the rest of sin, is evil. But here he is more concerned with whether all sin should be outlawed by human

28 *ST* 2a2ae q10 a11 co.:

Dicendum quod humanum regimen derivatur a divino regimine, et ipsum debet imitari. Deus autem quamvis sit omnipotens et summe bonus, permittit tamen aliqua mala fieri in universo, quae prohibere posset, ne eis sublatis, majora bona tollerentur vel etiam pejora mala sequerentur. Sic ergo et in regimine humano illi qui praesunt, recte aliqua mala tolerant, ne aliqua bona impediatur, vel etiam ne aliqua mala pejora incurrantur, sicut Augustinus dicit, *Aufer meretrices de rebus humanis, turbaveris omnia libidinibus*. Sic ergo quamvis infideles in suis ritibus peccent, tolerari possunt vel propter aliquod bonum quod ex eis provenit vel propter aliquod malum quod vitatur.

Maria Fontana Magee uses this passage from Thomas to argue that his tolerance is importantly different than that of John Rawls in her "Thomistic Philosophy Page: A Thomistic Case for Tolerance," (1999) available from <http://www.aquinasonline.com/Topics/tolerance.html>; Internet; accessed 2 June 2008.

For my part and in this case, I wonder if Thomas' bounds for what can be tolerated for the sake of civil order is pragmatic compromise rather than practical wisdom shaped by the virtues. To avoid that and to forge another way forward, one might turn Thomas against himself. In being preoccupied with the good of those who frequent prostitutes (thereby keeping them from falling into lust), he overlooks the good of the frequented, the 'least of these.' This oversight results in an anemic conception of the common good. What is further, Thomas' own conception of law insisted that legislation offer protection from the most grievous of crimes. Could not prostitution be one such crime against women? Furthermore, the 'harlots' from the *Summa* are lumped together with the *infideles*, by Augustine's rendering and Thomas'. That they are so should reify the conviction that prostitution remains a grave evil that may come to threaten the Church.

government.²⁹ He replies to the contrary.

However counterintuitive some may find Thomas on this point, his judgment finds corroboration in his treatment on law some questions earlier in the *Summa*. His treatment of human law is a development of his more determinative account of the virtues which precedes it.³⁰ Law is meant to aid us in gradually becoming virtuous. Law is an external help, along with grace, which aids in that journey back to God begun in faith. Law is not something extrinsic to the operations of the creature but is rather a product of reason itself. In sum, law is a precept of reason, promulgated by one in rightful authority, directed toward the common good. Any law that fails on any of these counts – whether it violates reason, is enforced by unjust authority, or undermines the common good – simply fails to be law.

By this point, it is clear that human law is connected to the promotion of virtue. But does law prescribe all virtue? And, to return to a previous concern, does it repress all vice? Thomas considers both questions in Question 96. On both counts he answers negatively.³¹ He offers two explanations. For one, human law is intended to

29 To be clear, I quote Herbert McCabe as an expositor of Thomas:
A society that legally tolerates any number of devious and peculiar sexual or financial practices is not proclaiming its belief that these are harmless (still less that they are possible options for the good life); it is proclaiming its belief that, whatever harm they do, sending in the police or opening the way for blackmail, would be immensely more disruptive and dangerous to the general good.

God Still Matters (London, New York: Continuum, 2002), 154. More specifically, Thomas argues that prostitution itself is evil but human government need not outlaw it. Thomas had distinctive conceptions of the virtues and laws for Christians and that to which we could hold others (*infideles*). It would be a violation of natural law for Christians to forcibly impose their convictions upon others, as was argued earlier in connection to *ST 2a2ae q10 a12*.

30 *ST 1a2ae q96 a2*. Also see Servais Pinckaers, O.P., *Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, O.P. (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of American Press, 1995); Martin Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of the Acting Person: Essays in the Renewal of Thomistic Moral Philosophy*, ed. William F. Murphy, Jr. (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008).

31 Here I follow the lead of Alasdair MacIntyre, “Natural Law as Subversive.”

be morally educative. The analogy Thomas develops points to the difference between children and full-grown adults. Just as those things possible for children are not so for adults, so too those things permissible to men not perfect in virtue are intolerable in the virtuous.³² Development is “gradual.”³³ What is permissible must take into consideration what is possible.

Secondly, unduly restrictive human laws are counterproductive. This principle also has analogues in nature. Thomas uses Scripture to make his point: “Therefore it does not all at once burden the crowd of imperfect men with the responsibilities assumed by men of the highest character, nor require them to keep away from all evils, lest, not sturdy enough to bear the strain, they break out into greater wrongs. Thus it is said in *Proverbs*, *He that violently bloweth his nose bringeth out blood*.”³⁴ It should be clear from this discussion that there are good reasons for human law *not* to prescribe all virtue. Law is instead intended to help *viators* along the way toward virtue. Only that law which is perfected in love will be virtue itself. What this crucial transformation looks like is to come in ensuing passus of Langland’s *Piers*.

What can be reasonably expected from these precepts of reason, these laws? Human law does not prohibit everything forbidden by the natural law, for it falls short.³⁵ Human law at least prohibits the most grievous of vices. At most, it gradually

32 *ST* 1a2ae q96 a2.

33 “Gradatim” in *ST* 1a2ae q96 a2 ad2.

34 *ST* 1a2ae q96 a2 ad2: “Et ideo non statim multitudini imperfectorum imponit ea quae sunt jam virtuosorum, ut scilicet ab omnibus mamlis abstineant; alioquin imperfecti hujusmodi praecepta ferre non valentes in deteriora mala prorumperent; sicut dicitur *Prov.*, *Qui nimis emungit, elicit sanguinem*.”

35 *ST* 1a2ae q96 a2 ad3. MacIntyre argues that it is of particular importance that Thomas appeals to natural reason, “not only for his account of the purpose and function of law but for the standard to

leads toward virtue. Thus the Thomistic version of law is conspicuously at odds with two other versions of law: that of the medieval Church regarding prostitution and that as promulgated by Louis IX prohibiting prostitution. The Church's compromise with contemporary market forces threatens and undermines the common good.³⁶ Law, created to serve virtue, does not do so.³⁷ This split between law and virtue is shown in the *Prologue's* separation of cardinals from virtue. This critique of the medieval Church spills into the ensuing passus.

Moreover the Thomistic version of law is at odds with Louis IX's prohibitions, which though aimed at the good, overstepped their bounds and so thwarted the good of the commons. In both cases, the law becomes an expression of will promulgated by authorities who ultimately subvert the good of the community.³⁸ By the Thomistic

which all positive legal enactments and administrative measures must conform, if they are to be appropriate law" in "Natural Law as Subversive," 67. Indeed, Thomas and Langland are not far from one another. Nonetheless it is a premature claim to make on behalf of Langland at this point in the poem.

36 The Church was deeply implicated in the socio-economic and political fabric of medieval society (R. H. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism: A Historical Study* (London: J. Murray, 1926; 56). Tawney's early historical study appears in a wider bibliography on the same literature in Aers, *Chaucer, Langland, and the Creative Imagination* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 205 fn 11. One might fruitfully elaborate these histories in connection to papal teachings on the same themes, especially *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). D. Stephen Long and Nancy Ruth Fox offer yet another history in *Calculated Futures: Theology, Ethics, and Economics*, (Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2007). Their arguments are formulated as a part of 'traditioned theological inquiry' and include 'medieval economics.' This work may be worth noting since it also includes explicit treatments of law and virtue.

37 I do not mean to imply that law actually serves this intended function in pre-capitalist markets – or even further that there was once a time when 'quiet hierarchies' transition to 'modern' and new antagonisms – and the law that once was is no longer. Aers deals with these classic misconstruals of the medieval world(s) and pinpoints their failings in *Community, Gender, and Individual Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1988), Introduction.

38 See M.S. Kempshall's *The Common Good in Late Medieval Political Thought* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. Chapter 4, "Thomas Aquinas – Love, Justice, and the Life of Virtue," 102-129. Kempshall notes that Thomas' introduction of the common good into his definition of law rests on Cicero, Isidore, Ulpian, and Aristotle. Although the common good requires the subordination of the individual good to the political community, this subordination cannot become absolute. If it does, Thomas admits cases of dispensation. Yet dispensation also had its limits, i.e., dispensation from the Ten

definition, such law ceases to be law. Langland gives one picture of what failure looks like, located in the character of one noble, even Church-configured, prostitute.³⁹

Meed is first presented as an aristocrat:

I looked to my left as the lady said
And saw a woman wonderfully clothed.
She was trimmed all in fur, the world's finest,
And crowned with a coronet as good as the king's;
On all five fingers were the richest rings
Set with red rubies and other precious gems.
Her robes were richer than I can describe,
To talk of her attire I don't have time;
Her raiment and riches ravished my heart. (II. 8-16)⁴⁰

She appears as the very treasure which our seeker, Will, longs for and yet recognizes may be an impediment to his salvation.⁴¹ Her identity is revealed gradually. As the story unfolds, she is described as a “bawd” and “common as the cartway to every bum”

Commandments would be a contradiction in terms, since all these laws necessarily secure the common good (113; see *ST* 1a2ae q100 a8). The complexity of subordination of the individual good to the common in a fitting way is considerable – based as it is on fallible human judgment, the contingent nature of the common good, the differences between people to whom it is applied, the subject-matter with which it is concerned, and the historical period in which it is instituted. As such, it prompts continuing concrete questions including such subjects as correction, punishment, legislation, dispensation, taxation, obedience, resistance, and the exercise of political authority (103).

39 “Meed’s networks are unequivocally located in the agents, institutions, practices, and relationships of the Catholic Church. She is at home in its ordained officials, its lawyers, its distribution of benefices, its practice of the sacrament of penance (central in the poet’s religious vision), and in its institutions from parish to papacy.” Aers, “Class, Gender...,” 66. Cf. Eamon Duffy *Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England c.1400- c.1580* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992) for a more idealized version of Church.

40 “Y lokede [o]n my luft half as þe lady me tauhte
And [was war of] a womman wonderly yclothed.
She was purfiled with pelure, non puyrere on erthe,
And crowned [in] a croune, þe kyng haþ non bettre;
On alle here fyue fyngeres ful richeliche yrynged
And thereon rede rubies and othere riche stones.
Here robynge was rychere þen y rede couthe,
For to telle of here atyer no tyme haue y nouthe;
Here aray with her rychesse raueschede my herte.” (Russell-Kane, II.8-16)

41 Consider in connection to the driving quest and question of Will in I.79-80: “teach me no more of treasure, but tell me this,/ Sainted lady, how may I save my soul.”

such that “to monks et al., even lepers in the hedges;/ Learned and rude, they lie with her as they please” (III.164, 167, 168-9; also IV.161).⁴² She is common and common to all men; she is all things to all men.⁴³ Her identity is a product of desire and Will’s willing. Her exceptionally rich identity includes, according to David Aers, “noblewoman, courtly lady, ecclesiastic patroness, representative of the arms industry, representative of small-scale commodity production, and the exploitation of those without property and capital resources, representative of the urban patriciate; and also a common prostitute.”⁴⁴ Prostitution, like the rest, names a relationship of manipulation primarily configured by the market economy.⁴⁵ These kinds of

42 “Baud” and “comyn as þe cartway to knaues and to alle” such that “to Monekes, to [mynstrals, to] musels in hegge[s];/ Lyggeth by here when hem lust, lered and lewed” (Russell-Kane, III.166, 169, 170-1). Pearsall renders this latter passage as “monekes, to alle men, **3e**, musels in hegge,” which iterates from III.167 the expansion of her scope considerably (“to alle men,” III.168).

43 Contrast to the disciple who becomes “all things to all people, so that I might by any means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel.” 1 Corinthians 9:22, NRSV. Aers reads this articulation of Pauline discipleship as key to understanding Piers, who “appears and acts towards all men as the saving agent appropriate to their own perception, tending to embody what Langland takes to be the best insights available at particular stages and contexts in the poem. In this way he also shows us the stage dreamer and reader have reached in the poem’s search” in *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1975), 79.

44 Aers, “Class, Gender, Medieval Criticism and *Piers Plowman*,” in *Class and Gender in Early English Literature: Intersections*, ed. Briton J. Harwood and Gillian R. Overing. (Indiana University Press, 1994), 59-75; 69. Brundage would echo her identity as ‘prostitute’ defined rather widely: “Promiscuity remained the defining feature of prostitution for legal writers of this period. So long as a woman made herself available to anyone who wanted her, she was a prostitute” in Brundage, *ibid.*, 464-5.

45 The connections between such an economy and social relationships could use further elaboration. One would do well to consult Alasdair MacIntyre’s characterization of emotivism as that which obliterates any genuine distinction between manipulative and non-manipulative social relationships in “Emotivism: Social Content and Social Context,” Chapter 3, *After Virtue*, 2nd ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984). For a retooling of those relationships, see MacIntyre’s example concerning the buyer and the butcher in *Dependent Rational Animals: why human beings need the virtues* (Chicago, IL: Open Court, 1999)

It is indeed true that ‘It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer or the baker, that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.’ And just as butcher, brewer, and baker generally act with regard to their own interest, so too do their customers. But if, on entering the butcher’s shop as an habitual customer I find him collapsing from a heart attack, and I merely remark ‘Ah! Not in a position to sell me my meat to-day, I see,’ and proceed immediately to his competitor’s store to complete my purchase, I will have obviously and grossly damaged my *whole*

relationships rather than (virtuous) other kinds of relationships mean that the communities' possibility for a shared vision of the common good is radically diminished. Meed's effects extend to law, which should help protect if not cultivate virtue.

Meed is introduced by Holy Church, who puts Meed in relationship with law:

That is the maid Meed, who has hurt me many times
And lied against my beloved who is called Loyalty
And slanders him to the lords that keep all our laws,
In the king's court and the commons' she contradicts my teaching,
In the pope's palace is privy as I. (II.19-23)⁴⁶

At the same time as Holy Church seeks to distinguish herself from the maid, she admits commonality. In fact Holy Church's desire to differentiate herself belies the fact that she is inextricably linked with Meed, a relationship which will become clear over the next three passus. The familiar rift between love and law is attributed to Meed's "lying," upon which Holy Church cleverly puns. Conscience's objections to Meed also connect Meed's lying to her unlawfulness (III.286-293). Loyalty is put in

relationship to him, including my economic relationship, although I will have done nothing contrary to the norms of the market. Less obviously and less grossly, even if I respond to his condition only by satisfying those minimum requirements that will enable me to rebut quasilegal accusations of irresponsibility – I call an ambulance and the moment the medical technicians arrive I leave – I will still have undermined my relationship to him and his, by my avoidance of my larger responsibility. Market relationships can only be sustained by being embedded in certain types of local nonmarket relationship, relationships of uncalculated giving and receiving, if they are contribute to overall flourishing, rather than, as they so often in fact do, undermine and corrupt communal ties. (117)

The problem, then, is not social 'manipulation' but the kinds of social relationships in which its forms are often embedded.

46 "That is mede þe mayde, hath niyed me ful ofte
And [lakked] my lemman þat leute is hoten
And [yelow on] hym to lordes þat lawes han to kepe,
In kynges court, in comune court contra[r]ieth my techynge,
In þe popes palays she is pryue as mysulue" (Russell-Kane, II.19-23).

relationship with love and law.

Patricia Kean notes Langland's use of what is here translated as 'Loyalty' is in fact an unusual Middle English word, *Lewte*, which is difficult to translate into modern parlance.⁴⁷ Kean argues that it can best be understood as the Aristotelian virtue of justice.⁴⁸ Both Aristotle and Thomas describe that virtue as having to do with relations with one's neighbor. Kean writes: "practically the majority of the acts commanded by the law are those which are prescribed from the point of view of virtue taken as a whole; for the law bids us practice every virtue and forbids us to practice any vice."⁴⁹ To configure law in this way takes it up into a social whole and elaborates it in relationship to the virtues such that forms of legalism are equally as misguided as forms of lawlessness. The inverse of Meed's activities are given in Christ who links law, love, and loyalty according to a speech by Conscience; Conscience follows through the logic by positing a genuine retooling of social relationships in light of this confluence (III.355-380).

47 Patricia Kean, "Love, Law, and Lewte," 254-257, esp. 256.

48 Conscience emphasizes justice explicitly in Passus XXI.405-406: "Unless you live by the teachings of *Spiritus iusticie*,/ The chief seed that Piers planted, you'll never be saved." It is not clear why Kean does not draw on this passage to underscore her inference. Doing so, however, may require her to satisfy this question: if Langland intended exactly this concept, why does his diction shift between the beginning and the end of the poem? I will make an argument as to why Langland used different language between the beginning and end of the poem in the next section, 1.2 If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments.

49 *Ethics*, v. ii. 1130b, cf. 1129h; *Summa*, 2a2ae q58 a5; cited in Kean, 256. For an argument which requires that Kean nuance hers considerably, I refer to MacIntyre, "Natural Law as Subversive" where MacIntyre argues that Thomas' version of law does *not* "bid us practice every virtue" as does Aristotle's referring to Thomas' *ST* 1a2ae q96 a2. The reasoning has been rehearsed, so beyond that I offer MacIntyre's gloss: "Aquinas thus disagrees with both later puritans and with later liberals. Like those puritans and unlike those liberals he understands the law as an instrument for our moral education. But, like those liberals and unlike those puritans, he is against making law by itself an attempt to repress all vice" (66).

I now pause to consider what kinds of social relationships are depicted in these two passus, Passus II and III, specifically as they relate to law.⁵⁰ Meed's retinue includes "all kinds of men that were Meed's kin,/ Knights, clerics, and other common people" (II.57-8).⁵¹ Kinship indicates a sharing in kind, a mark of likeness and affinity that bears ontological resonance with that which Thomists call 'nature.'⁵² The inclusive listing of kin to Meed occupies several lines of poetry to signal Meed's absolute pervasiveness. The list saves the best for last: "But Simony and Civil and his jurymen/ Were tightest with Meed it seemed of all men" (II.63-4).⁵³ Simony is a traffic in sacred things and civil a personification of the civil law. Both the sacred and civil, bound up

50 Simpson explores the 'legal' in relation to 'truthe' as defined by Holy Church. Langland's portrayal of corrupted social 'truthe' is trumped by his dominant concern for the legal aspect of 'truthe,' Simpson argues, "since the institutions in which Meed is most profoundly and most threateningly embedded are legal institutions" in his *Piers Plowman: Introduction to the B-Text* (NY: Longman, 1990); 53. For example, Simpson writes, Meed's lover 'Leautee' takes on its *legal* meaning – rather than social – because Langland's use invokes notions of justice and fairness (*ibid.*). Yet by my reading any of Langland's versions of truth or justice or loyalty are inseparable from their social embodiment. I doubt that Langland's text can sustain Simpson's interpretive distinction; and in my view that makes Simpson's point not sustainable.

51 "Of many manere men þat of mede[s] kynne were,/Of knyghtes, of clerkes, [and] other comune peple" (Russell-Kane, II.59-60).

52 Kynde, translated Kind, means 'nature' in Middle English, MED sense 8(a): "(a) Nature as a source of living things or a regulative force operating in the material world; -- often personified; bi (of) ~, of qualities, abilities, etc.: by native endowment, inborn, innate; of branches: natural, not grafted." Kinship is a crucial concept which is developed over the course of poem, and Davlin aims to draw out its fullest meaning in "The Spirituality of Piers Plowman," in *The Mystical Gesture: Essays on Medieval and Early Modern Spiritual Culture in Honor of Mary E. Giles*, ed. Robert Boenig. (Aldershot, Eng., and Burlington, Vt: Ashgate, 2000), 23-40. Also Davlin argues for *kynde knowyng* as "a major theme of the whole poem, a key to its basic meaning and unity" in "*Kynde Knowyng* as a Major Theme in *Piers Plowman B*" *The Review of English Studies*, New Series, Vol. 22, No. 85, (Feb., 1971): 1-19; 2. By Davlin's reading, the turning point for the development of the theme occurs in B.XV where Will encounters Abraham, Spes, and the Samaritan. I also turn to Will's encounter as a turning point in this chapter. Thus Davlin's reading complements and substantially adds to mine.

53 "Ac simonye and syuile and sysores of contrees/ Were most pryue with Meed of eny men [me] thoghte" (Russell-Kane, II.63-4). John Yunck explains that the framework of this episode, most particularly including Meed's chief retainers of Simony and Civil, fit the standards for commonplace material for conventional venality satire in *Lineage of Lady Meed: The Development of Mediaeval Venality Satire*, (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1963), 294.

in kinship with Meed, are bastardizations of their intended, specifically legal, forms. They free Meed for her characteristic activity.

Alternatively, Theology leaves open the possibility that Meed may be legitimate and redeemed. Theology invokes the law to that end (II.120, 137).⁵⁴ Theology in fact turns against Simony and Civil for their corrupting influence on Meed, alluding to the authoritative *Golden Legend*.⁵⁵ Theology accuses them: “What you and the lawyers get brings nothing/ To Holy Church, and you just chew up charity” (II.139-140).⁵⁶

Theology ultimately subjects Meed to the same corrupt forms of law which already legitimate her activities, whether or not this is Theology’s meaning (II.147-54)!⁵⁷

Meed’s entourage conveniently understands Theology’s demand for a legal ruling as an affirmation rather than a contest.⁵⁸

54 Underlining Theology’s ambiguity is the fact that he contradicts Holy Church on the issue of Meed’s legitimacy in II.24 where Holy Church declared, “But Truth would she weren’t for she’s a bastard.”

55 This establishes a pattern of invocations of texts against others, particularly as it asserts claims to justice as noted by Galloway in *The Penn Commentary on Piers Plowman* (269). The invocation is particularly acute in the A- and B-texts where Theology cites Luke 10:7 (“the workman is worthy of his hire”) pointing to the controversies in late medieval culture over just wage. In the C-text, Theology’s example of just reward alludes to St. Lawrence’s dying words, in II.136: “no man bot treuthe.” “The change may be,” Galloway ventures, “because the tag from Luke addressed too narrowly the right to receive just wages and not clearly enough the importance of heavenly rather than worldly reward...” (270-71). Going further, Galloway attributes the addition of the key word *mede* to the liturgy for the feast of St. Lawrence where for the octave, the York and Salisbury uses include Matthew 10:37-42 which speak of heavenly reward of the righteous.

56 “That **3e** nymeth [and] notaries to nauhte gynneth brynge/ Holy churche, and charite **3e** cheweth and deuouereh” (Russell-Kane, II.142-43). This is probably best understood as a perversion of Eucharistic-imagery, contrasted to II.37 and more fully elaborated in XX.403-8.

57 In *Penn Commentary*, 271-2, Galloway notes that scholars have been perplexed by Theology’s proposal to settle the legality of Meed’s marriage in *London*. Meed’s entourage understand this to mean Westminster. Marriage disputes were properly a matter for ecclesiastical courts; could Theology mean the Christian courts in London?

58 Anticipated celebration is a distinctive emphasis of the C-text: “To wende with h[e]m to westminstre [the] weddyng to honoure” (Russell-Kane, C, II.177). A and B on the same: “to wisse [bis dede]” (A.V.C. Schmidt, *Vision of Piers Plowman: A Critical Edition of the B-Text Based on Trinity College Cambridge MS B.15.17*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Tuttle, 1995), A, II.125 and B, II.161).

The King also enjoys convenient understanding. He conceives of law as a form of coercion to bend others to his will (II.209ff). He is yet another character who cannot acknowledge the conditions of his own existence.⁵⁹ For he intends to force Meed into submission to his law, yet he fails to appreciate either Meed or law. That is, while Meed waits for her trial judges, clerks, and a friar comfort her. In return for her favor, they transgress and flaunt the law. Meed will go on to graciously beseech “the mayor/ Both the sheriffs and sergeants, and all law enforcers” (III.77-78).⁶⁰ Her influence over and through the law is unquestionable. The ones really in doubt are instead those who fail to see her for who she is.

Law soon enjoys its own personification. Conscience narrates Meed’s activities:

“By Jesus! she corrupts the judges with her jewels;
 She perjures herself and puts obstacles
 Before faith’s coming forth, so thickly her florins fly;
 She bends the law and sets lovedays at will.
 On her loveday one loses what Loyalty might win –
 Confusion for the common man though he plead his case forever!
 Law is so haughty and hates to conclude;
 Without money or presents he pleases so few.” (III.192-99)⁶¹

In subordinating the common good to her own, Meed is antagonistic to communal

59 Earlier I suggested the same was so for Kynde Wit and Conscience in the *Prologue*; cf. XI.166.

60 “**3**ut mede the Mayr myldeliche he bysouhte,/ Bothe Schyreues and seriauntes and suche as kepeth lawes” (Russell-Kane, III.77-78).

61 “By Jesu! with here ieweles the Iustices she shendeth;
 He lyth a**3**eyn þe lawe and let[tte]th hym þe gate
 That fayth may nat haue his forth, here floreyne goth so thykke;
 And le[deth] þe lawe as here luste and louedayes maketh.
 Thorw which loueday is loste þat leute myhte wynne;
 The mase for a mene man thow he mote euere!
 Lawe is so lordliche and loth to make eny ende;
 Withoute presentes oper pans he pleseth [wel] fewe.” (Russell-Kane. III.193-200)
 Pearsall’s version substitutes “She” (Pearsall, III.193) for Russell-Kane’s “He” (Russell-Kane, III.194), and Schmidt’s version lands somewhere in the middle: “Heo” (*Critical Edition of the B-Text*, III.193).

forms of justice.⁶² She corrupts those practices and activities which would cultivate the virtues. Instead she promotes “covetous customs that destroy the commons” (III.206).⁶³ Naturally Meed responds to Conscience in a detailed and self-justifying rejoinder. Her response delineates her relationship with the law through her connection to the institutional Church and to the present political order (III.220-282). Because her claims to legitimacy are in a sense legitimate, we have some indication of how much she has corrupted the very institutions which should be inimical to her.

To be sure, it is not as if Meed has all of the agency on the one hand and institutions have passively suffered her on the other. As Simpson points out, “personification allegory, in Langland’s hands, is necessarily raising questions about social institutions, since the concepts denoted by the personified words inevitably attach themselves to particular institutions.”⁶⁴ Langland’s poem circumvents a false dichotomy. Instead, Meed both produces and is produced, as individual and as institution. She both acts and is acted upon.⁶⁵ Meed might be said to parallel Alice

62 Seen not the least in that Meed sets lovedays at will, quoted above in III.199. Lovedays were a peace-keeping practice, established for the settlement of disputes through amicable agreement. “But,” Josephine Waters Bennett writes, “the chief complaint against it was that it was even more open than the law courts to bribery, intimidation, and injustice” in “The Mediaeval Loveday,” *Speculum*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Jul 1958): 351-70; 364. These lovedays set at will further promote Meed’s agenda.

63 “And custumes of coueytise þe comune to destruye” (Russell-Kane, III.207).

64 Simpson, *An Introduction to the B-Text*, 50.

65 Cf. Elizabeth Fowler, “Persons in the Creation of Social Bonds: Agency and Civil Death in *Piers Plowman*” (95-133) in her *Literary Character: The Human Figure in Early English Writing* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003). For Fowler, Passus II-IV represent Langland’s governing model of agency relations in the institution created by marriage. Fowler argues that Meed is a model of pure passivity, her own interests being voided because her acts are subsumed under the interests and intentionality of the social bond (here, marriage). Although I appreciate Fowler’s depiction of the influence of agents upon one another – where agents appear as individuals but personify social bonds – I see her contention regarding the pure passivity of Meed as too strongly put. I argue for the both/and, i.e., Meed as an individual and Meed as personification of social bonds. Stephanie Trigg argues strongly against Fowler and Fowler’s “civil death,” instead arguing for a Meed with real political power in “The Traffic in Medieval Women: Alice Perrers, “Feminist Criticism and *Piers Plowman*,” *The Yearbook of*

Perrers, an actual political figure in late medieval England whose life is comparable Meed's in important ways and to whom such connections have often been made.⁶⁶ In Ormrod's account of Alice Perrers, Alice is described as a symbol rather than a cause of crises. Ultimately her story indicts the compromised structures and complicit others which made her agency possible by benefitting from her compromises. Again, the failures are multiple.

Passus IV only makes more pressing the inadequacy of the configuration of law under Meed's influence. The trial in the King's court goes badly wrong when Meed buys Peace in place of amends. What exactly reconciliation looks like is far from clear at this point in the poem (IV.91).⁶⁷ Langland puts into the mouth of a 'wise one': "[Wrong] makes amends, let him out on bail/ Which can be pledged for his offense and buy him relief/ And amend what's been misdome and so much the better" (IV.84-6).⁶⁸ Yet it is not clear whether readers can trust this speaker or this course of action, first and foremost because the language of bail and buying further re-inscribe agents in the market economy. Against the regnant version of law and loyalty is Reason's

Langland Studies, Vol. 12 (1998): 5-29.

66 On this point I primarily draw on W. Mark Ormrod's "Trials of Alice Perrers," *Speculum* 83, 2 (April 2008), 366-396. Ormrod points to John L. Selzer, "Topical Allegory in *Piers Plowman*: Lady Meed's B-Text Debate with Conscience," *Philological Quarterly* 59 (1980): 257-67; Baldwin, *The Theme of Government in Piers Plowman*, 24-38; and Aers, "Class, Gender..."

67 Meed's bribery is the very corruption to which the lovedays were subject (see footnote 57 above). This activity sheds light on Meed's genealogy, for between Theology's speech on her as the daughter of Amends in II.120 and her cooperation with Fauel here, she is now rendered 'False Amends.'

68 From a 'wys oen': "Yf he amendes may [make] lat maynprise hym haue/ And be borw for his bale and buggen hym bote/ And amende þat is mysdo and eueremore þe betere" (Russell-Kane, IV.84-6). The insufficiency of the forms of repentance, forgiveness, and absolution in these early episodes are treated by Rachael Deagman in "The Formation of Forgiveness in *Piers Plowman*," Chapter 3 in *Learning to Love*, Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 2010.

reconciliation of both in love (IV.133-145). The way forward will have to be an abandonment of meed, as the King comes to recognize:

The King then called Conscience and Reason into council
And kept looking angrily over at Meed
And scowled at the lawyers and spoke to them directly;
“Through your law, I believe, I’ve lost much revenue;
Meed and men of your skill have often blocked the truth.
But Reason will reckon with you as long as I reign
And judge you, by this day, as you have deserved.
Meed will not bail you out, by Mary in heaven!
I will have loyalty in my law and no more haggling
And my law will be delivered by true and upright men.” (IV.166-175)⁶⁹

The confluence of love, law, and loyalty harkens back to the previous passus, II and III. The three are together again. But readers are given no concrete idea what these abstractions look like. Also there is no attempt at explanation, either by the King or Reason, for how the radical alienation from earlier was overcome. The re-appearance of law, love, and loyalty depends on the facile assumption that they can be brought

69 “The kyng to consayl tho toek Conscience and resoun
And modiliche vppon mede many tym[e] lokede
And lourede vppon men of lawe and lyhtlych sayde:
‘Thorw **3**oure lawe, as y leue, y lese many chetes;
Mede and men of **3**oure craft mucche treuthe letteth.
Ac Resoun shal rykene with **3**ow yf y regne eny while
And deme **3**ow, by this day, as **3**e haen deserued.
Mede shal nat maynprise [**3**ow], by mary of heuene!
Y wol haue leutee for my lawe and late be al **3**oure iangl[ing]
And by lele and lyf-holy my lawe shal be demed” (Russell-Kane. IV.166-75).

Martin Bloomfield’s apocalyptic hermeneutic for the entirety of the poem does not neglect Langland’s figure of the King, who is a “multidimensional symbol but whose majesty can unite the religious, social, and psychological realms, with the social (and political) bearing the main emphasis” who at this point in the poem promises “to submit to Reason and Conscience and punish Meed. The gift of counsel has in effect been given to the King so that he may exercise *discretio* and really become the just ruler and saviour-emperor” in *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 113. Without a doubt kingship is crucial to Langland’s inquiry but what exactly the limitations of an earthly King are, here or anywhere, appears more open to debate. Conclusions on kingship relate to whether or not Langland possesses the vision that Bloomfield attributes to him: “the evil of the present, especially the sins of the clergy, is in fact proof of God’s mysterious ways, for the contemporary crimes of the Church are only a sign of the coming great renewal and return to the pristine status of apostolic purity” (121). Cf. Aers, “Visionary Eschatology: *Piers Plowman*,” *Modern Theology* 15 (2000): 3-17.

together through the agent's own willing, without those exact forms of assistance which a medieval Christian is trained to expect: the Sacraments. This resolution cannot be gotten without someone paying the price. And that, Christ does, in Passus XX.

1.2 If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments

The absence of Christ is felt all the more palpably in Passus XVIII and early on in XIX when there are only stories without an actual appearance of Christ. *Piers* recounts Christ's attack on the Temple merchants, the promise of His Resurrection, and His handing over to the justices. Then come the Trinity and law by way of faith and hope, without charity or Christ. The excursus on only two of the three theological virtues (faith and hope) begs for concrete display to come in the life, Passion, and Resurrection of the Incarnate Christ.⁷⁰ Moreover, with the advent of Christ, Langland introduces a new version of law. And this version of law is integrated with a new set of virtues, all of which are embedded in a new kind of community and a new set of practices.

Augustine holds these many parts together as he meditates upon the redeemed soul for this new life. He traces the way:

But by the law is the knowledge of sin; by faith is the obtaining of grace against sin; by grace is the healing of the soul from the harmful effect of

⁷⁰ This display really is 'to come' in the C-Text. In the C-Text, Will meets Abraham and Moses in XVIII before the Samaritan's salvific work in XIX and trial, Passion, Harrowing of Hell, and Resurrection in XX. The B-Text includes the life of Christ through Good Friday just before Will wakes up (B.XVI.160-166). The later placement of the Passion in the C-Text makes more clear that the consequences of Christ's work for Will and for the community are linked with the fuller narration of the life and death of Christ.

sin; by the healing of the soul is freedom of the will (*liberum arbitrium*); by freedom of the will is the love of righteousness; by the love of righteousness is the operation of the law.⁷¹

Without faith, grace, or healing, Will's progress will be frustrated. It turns out exactly as Augustine says, for *Piers* continues with Will's waking to find that he has been abandoned by *Liberum arbitrium*.⁷² While Will waits – and wanders, readers surmise – he is graciously led into his next encounter. This encounter ultimately becomes the path he seeks for salvation, one that throughout the poem he has been powerless to embark upon.

It is the season of confession, contrition, and absolution. On Mid-lent Sunday, Will meets Abraham who is “with faith... I couldn't tell a lie,/ A herald of arms before there was any law.” (XVIII.185-6)⁷³ Will meets Faith and later he will meet Hope,

71 Augustine, *De Spiritu et Littera* 30.52 [*Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum* 60, 208] (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2005): “Sed per legem cognitio peccati, per fidem inpetratio gratiae contra peccatum, per gratiam sanatio animae a uitio peccati, per animae sanitatem libertas arbitrii, per liberum arbitrium iustitiae dilectio, per iustitiae dilectionem legis operatio.”

72 Langland actually cites Augustine and Isidore as authorities when naming the functions of the soul in XVI.198. Economou's rendering of the text's *Liberum Arbitrium* as Free Will is problematic since the word choice evokes a host of Reformation and post-Reformation directions, assumptions, and debates. Eleonore Stump describes these non-medieval versions in relation to Thomas' conception of 'free will' in “Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will,” Chapter 9, *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays*, ed. Brian Davies (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 203-222. Stump's explanation may help make Economou's misstep clear: free will presumes the power to choose between a variety of alternatives whereas *liberum arbitrium* denotes the power to choose to do the good rather than evil thus *liberum arbitrium* is a will attaining to its proper end. All the better to note Langland's use of *Liberum Arbitrium* because the C-text was revised to include it here (XVIII.180). The C-text protagonist has lost *Liberum Arbitrium* – *voluntas* has lost *Liberum Arbitrium*. Its being 'free to do otherwise' is a constitutive aspect of the rational power of the will and to be *not free* is exactly what Langland appears to emphasize because of the sin to which the will is beholden. See *ST Ia* q85.

73 “I am with fayth... hit falleth nat me to lye,/ An heraud of Armes Ar eny lawe were” (Russell-Kane, XVIII.184-5). James Simpson in his *Introduction to the B-Text* marks the seminal text behind the association of Abraham with mid-Lenten Sunday: Galatians 4:22-31 in which Abraham's son of the free woman is a “child of promise” (194). See, also, Galatians 3:7: “they who are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” This mid-Lent reading from Galatians 4 along with 1 Corinthians 10 and 2 Corinthians 3 greatly influenced the tradition of Biblical interpretation to allegorize the Old Testament. The allusion, personification, and speech in this episode all pay homage to that tradition.

Abraham and Moses respectively. Will's meeting with Faith marks Will's shift from his story to the history of the covenant. Faith's story returns Will to the foundation of the world, where the persons of the Trinity "were never apart" (XVIII.190).⁷⁴ Prior to any law were the persons of the Godhead. The Trinity is literally before all things. Faith expounds the doctrine of the Trinity to Will:

"God, who never had beginning but when he thought it good,
Sent forth his Son as servant that time
To occupy himself here till issue had sprung,
Who are Charity's children and Holy Church the mother.
Patriarchs and prophets and apostles were the children,
And Christ, Christendom and all Christians, Holy Church –
That betokens the Trinity and true belief." (XVIII.204-210)⁷⁵

The articles and mysteries of Faith are connected in an indissoluble bond that mirrors that of the Trinity itself. In light of the Trinity the Old Law is introduced in XVIII.222 and so too the new:

"And he promised me more for myself and my children,
Mercy for our misdeeds as many times
As we wished and were willing to ask with mouth and heart.
And then he sent me to see and said I should
Worship him with both wine and bread
At once on an altar in worship of the Trinity,
And make sacrifice so – it stands for something;

74 "Were neure atwynne" (Russell-Kane, XVIII.189).

75 "God [that] bigynnyng hadde neuere bote tho hym goed thouhte,
Sente forth his sone as for seruant þat tyme
To ocupien hym here til issue were spronge,
The whiche aren childrene of charite and holy church [the] moder.
Patriarches and prophetes and apostles were the childrene.
And Crist and cristendoem and alle cristene, holy churche
Bitokeneth þe trinite and trewe bileue." (Russell-Kane, XVIII.203-209)

Simpson works from the B-Text (XVI.261-7) where Langland uses "attached," "borgh," "daunger," "maynprise," "wed," and "wage." He observes that such language has heavily legal connotations in fourteenth-century England. (*Introduction to the B-Text*, 195) Going even further than Simpson, one might note that these legal connotations, the interplay of characters, and the specific mention that Christ will "wage" prefigures a specific depiction of the Atonement.

I believe that the same Lord intends to make a new law.” (XVIII.258-265)⁷⁶

This language gives indication that not all law in *Piers* is univocal. There are multiple versions of law in this single episode: XVIII.222, 265; cf. XIX.2, 16.

As also seen in the Meed episode, there must be some sort of relationship between law and virtue. Again, Langland shares Thomas' model for coupling virtue and law. Thomas Hibbs writes of this shared model: “laws are impotent in the absence of the moral virtues because only the moral virtues provide the necessary skills of perception and practical articulation. The integration of principles and prudence entails, accordingly, the unification of law with the entirety of moral virtue.”⁷⁷ If this relationship pertains to the moral virtues, how does law stand to the theological virtues – faith, hope, and love?

What the New Law looks like in relation to Faith is unclear at this point in the poem. Faith seeks the coming of Christ/charity with that law (XVIII.265-9). Meanwhile, the reality of sin without Christ overwhelms Will and in a flash of recognition Will is overcome by his need for forgiveness. Yet Christ is only *prefigured*. There is no actual appearance. What can Will do but hope?

76 “To me and [to] myn issue more he me bihihte,
Mercy for oure mysdedes as many tymes
As we wilnede and wolde with mou[th]e and herte aske.
And sethe a sente me to seyn and saide that y sholde
Worschipe hym with wyn and with breed bothe
At ones on an auter in worschipe of th[e] trinite,
And ma[k]e sacrefice so – somewhat hit bitokneth;
I leue þat ilke lord thenketh a newe lawe to make.” (Russell-Kane, XVIII.257-264)

77 Thomas Hibbs, *The Pedagogy of Law and Virtue in the Summa Theologiae*, Ph.D. Dissertation, (University of Notre Dame, 1987), 11. Hibbs’ “moral virtues” are for us cardinal virtues.

Next comes Hope. Hope introduces himself as a fellow seeker who has been given the law and searches for its completion:

“I am *Spees*, a spy,” he said, “and scout after a knight
Who gave me a commandment on Mount Sinai
To rule all realms with righteousness and reason.
Look, obey the letter,” he said, “in Latin and Hebrew;
That what I say is truth let whoever it pleases see.”
“Is it sealed?” I said; “may one see your letters?”
“No, it’s not,” he said, “I seek him who keeps the seal,
Which is Christ and Christendom and cross hanged upon it.” (XIX.1-8)⁷⁸

The law accords with “righteousness and reason.” Meed’s law in earlier passus violated both righteousness and reason by undergirding wicked lawlessness in unchecked practices of the economy of meed. But the reconciliation anticipated by Reason that Reason cannot provide on his own (IV.133-145) is now given. This gift and its proclamation are remarkably public in contrast to the private transactions of Meed.⁷⁹

Moreover, Hope’s introductory speech re-works the language of Passus II-IV

78 “I am *Spees*, a spie’ quod he, ‘and spere aftur a kny³te
That toek me a maundement vpon þe mont of synay
To reule alle reumes þerwith in ri³hte and in resoun.
Lo, here the lettre,’ quod he, ‘a Latyn and [an] ebrew;
That that y say is soeth se hosō liketh.’
‘Is hit asseled?’ y saide; ‘may man yse th[e] lettres?’
‘Nay,’ he saide, ‘y seke hym þat hath þe seel to kepe,
The which is Cr[oes] and cristendoem and cristendoem and cr[ist] þer[o]n [to] hang[e].’”
(Russell-Kane, XIX.1-8)

79 Is it ironic that this ‘common’ prostitute is engaged in fundamentally ‘privatizing’ activity? For an argument on the fruitfulness of the distinction between private and public, and a morality that privatizes versus one that publicizes, see Charles Taylor’s *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), Part II. For another genealogical survey of the theoretical complexity of the distinction, focused on ‘politics’ as identified by the modern academy – while explicitly sidelining the ‘public’ as described by Clifford Geertz – see Jeff Weintraub, “The Theory of Politics of the Public/Private Distinction,” in Weintraub and Kumar, eds., *Public and Private in Thought and Practice: Perspectives on a Grand Dichotomy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1-42.

regarding knighthood and letters, and by extension Kingship and law.⁸⁰ The letters are the King's, the official tables of the law, which are not yet sealed by Christ. The earlier language and conception of Kingship and law are subordinate to, and derive their full meaning from, the Kingship and law of Christ.⁸¹ If the orientation and form of law has specifically to do with Christ, what does this reformulation of law mean?

The fullest answer, prefigured but as yet unseen, depends heavily on love.

Hope describes the law given to him that awaits fulfillment:

“Let's see your letters,” I said, “we could know the law.”
 [Hope/Moses] plucked forth a letter patent, a piece of hard rock
 On which two words were written and glossed in this way:
Love God and thy neighbor.
 This was the text truly, I took a very good look.
 The gloss was written gloriously with a gilt pen:
On these two commandments dependeth the whole law. (XIX.11-15)⁸²

80 Baldwin characteristically severs the religious and political in *Theme of Government in Piers Plowman* yet here she acknowledges the connection between the law of Christ and kingship. For Baldwin, this law is dark:

Christ's letter patent in *Piers Plowman* grants a new law instead. This not only stresses His royal power, but leaves man as big a part to play (in obeying the New Law) as the bail imagery of the previous *Passus* had done, so that once again the image looks forward to the Last Judgement. The king of Heaven suffered for His obedience to the law, and has no intention of ruling without law. (66)

It is telling that Baldwin explains this allegory of the law of Christ without mentioning love.

81 Working well within extant Christian tradition, Langland espouses metaphorical imagery for Christ's kingship. Later he moves to knighthood and conqueror in *Passus XX*, and Conscience outlines the work of Christ in relation to all three roles in XXI.26ff. Elizabeth D. Kirk argues that the concatenation of images of Christ in *Piers*, most particularly that surrounding the Incarnation and Atonement, serves a particular narration of salvation history. Comprised of “a multiplicity of discontinuous but complementary images and contexts” (23), the poem offers a Christology distinct from the affective piety of the later Middle Ages (“Langland's Narrative Christology” in *Art and Context in Late Medieval English Narrative: Essays in Honor of Robert Worth Frank, Jr.*, ed. Robert R. Edwards (Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer, 1994), 17-35). This much seems right, though I remain doubtful of some Nominalistic overtones in Kirk's interpretation of Langland's doctrine of God.

82 “‘Let se thy lettres,’ quod y, ‘we myhte þe lawe knowe.’
 A pluhte forth a patente, a pece of an hard roche
 Whereon was writen two wordes and on this wyse yglosed:
Dilige deum et proximum [tuum].
 This was the tyxt trewly, y toek ful good gome.
 The glose was gloriously writen with a gult penne:
In his duobus [mandatis tota lex pendet et prophete] (Russell-Kane, XIX.11-15)

The letter of Hope alludes to Matthew 22:

But the Pharisees hearing that he had silenced the Sadducees, came together: And one of them, a doctor of the law, asking him, tempting him: Master, which is the greatest commandment in the law? Jesus said to him: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, an with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind.* This is the greatest and the first commandment. And the second is like to this: *Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.* On these two commandments dependeth the whole law and the prophets.⁸³

Jesus' very formulation of the law in Matthew is repeated in Hope's Christological expectation in XIX. In waiting for the seal, Hope waits for that which is to come: literally Christ Himself.

The core of the New Law is love. Christ, Langland, and Thomas all describe it as such. The bringing together of law and hope in Hope's speech is displayed systematically in the *Secundae Secunda*, where Thomas also presents together as one the divine law and infused virtues.⁸⁴ Thomas brings together charity and obedience to law in the virtue of hope, for in hoping in God we are encouraged to obey His commandments and to love Him.⁸⁵ Charity is at the heart of the life in Christ, and

83 Matthew 22: 34-40, *The Holy Bible*.

84 One need not venture beyond Thomist camps to find thinkers who treat law independently of virtue, e.g., John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

85 *ST 2a2ae q17 a8*. Thomas stands firmly in the tradition of the unity of the virtues. Here he displays the connections between the theological virtues by arguing that hope leads to charity yet also presupposes charity. Hope leads to charity, for in the movement from hoping in God we are encouraged to love Him as well. Yet charity also precedes hope, for charity brings hope to perfection through an increase in friendship with God.

In a departure from earlier authors, John Duns Scotus held that the theological virtues were independent from one another. He reasoned that in the state of beatitude after death, charity can and does exist without faith and hope and as such, charity need not necessarily be connected with the other theological virtues. Ioannes Duns Scotus, *Quaestiones in IV lib. Sententiarum*, Opera omnia VIII-XXI (Paris, 1893-4); Allan B. Wolter, *Duns Scotus on the Will and Morality* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1986). Cited in Rega Wood, *Ockham on the Virtues* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1997).

Michael Sherwin, O.P. argues that Thomas saves Augustine from "extreme" views of some twelfth-

indeed Thomas elaborates how charity as the form of the virtues impacts the other virtues and law.⁸⁶ In Passus XIX, Will learns of law perfected in love. What becomes most interesting is that this crucial virtue, love, is itself described as law.

The action of the poem which ensues, having drawn upon Matthew 22, alludes to Luke 10 in which a lawyer challenges Jesus:

And behold a certain lawyer stood up, tempting him, and saying,
Master, what must I do to possess eternal life? But he said to him: What
is written in the law? how readest thou? He answering, said: Thou shalt
love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul,
and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind: and thy neighbour as
thyself. And he said to him: Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou
shalt live. But he willing to justify himself, said to Jesus: And who is my
neighbour? And Jesus answering, said...⁸⁷

Jesus answers with the parable that is recounted in Passus XIX of *Piers*. In the context of the poem, the parable is an answer both to Will's quest for salvation and an endorsement of the law of love which resolves earlier tensions in the poem. Writing in an allegorical mode, Langland extends the parable into the redemption of humankind.

century Augustinians ("Aquinas, Augustine, and the Medieval Scholastic Crisis concerning Charity" in *Aquinas the Augustinian*, ed., Michael Dauphinais, Barry David, and Matthew Levering (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2007), 181-204; 194). Augustine's charity as *motio toward* God – reduced by some to a mere love of desire – assumes a fuller meaning in Thomas when portrayed alongside a rich theology of hope.

86 It is good to note Thomas on the distinction between love and charity in *ST* 1a2ae q62 a2 ad3; 1a2ae q65 a2 et4; 2a2ae q23. More directly, Thomas cites Matthew 22 as offering the two commandments (*praecipis*) of charity and writes, "God and our neighbor are those with whom we are friends, but love of them includes the loving of charity, since we love both God and our neighbor, in so far as we love ourselves and our neighbor to love God, and this is to have charity." (*ST* 2a2ae q25 a2 ad1: "Deus et proximus sunt illi ad quos amicitiam habemus. Sed in illorum dilectione includitur dilectio caritatis, diligimus enim proximum et Deum in quantum hoc amamus, ut nos et proximus Deum diligamus, quod est caritatem habere.") It might be fruitful work to compare Thomas' triple distinction between dilectio, amor, and caritas to Langland's various usages. For my purposes, I think it fair to interpret Langland's love to exactly mean Thomas' charity when Langland writes of the love of God.

87 Luke 10:25-30, *The Holy Bible*, trans. from Vulgate.

Langland's interpretation of the parable is in conversation with conventional medieval interpretation, argues Ben Smith, emphasizing Langland's singular personification of charity in the Good Samaritan.⁸⁸ Smith writes, "at least four thematic patterns may be seen to underlie the figurative progression in *Piers* from Abraham-Faith and Moses-*Spes* to the Good Samaritan: the fulfillment of the Old Law in the New; the perfection and operation of faith and hope through the operation of charity; the salvation of the just men of the old dispensation through the supreme act of charity, Christ's sacrificial offering of himself; and, finally, the salvation of mankind, not through his own efforts, but by the unearned gift of divine grace."⁸⁹ Various figurative patterns are sustained and concluded finally in this Good Samaritan episode where Charity is personified.

The parable reads:

And as we went on our way thus discussing this matter,
 We then saw a Samaritan come sitting on a mule,
 Riding very fast in the direction we were going,
 Coming from a country that men called Jericho;
 He jounced along fast as he could to a joust in Jerusalem.
 Both Abraham and *Spes* and he met together
 In a wild wilderness where thieves had bound
 A man and given him a very bad time, it seemed to me then;
 For he could neither step nor stand nor stir a foot or hands
 Nor help himself in any way, for he seemed *semyuief*,
 And as naked as a needle and no help about. (XIX.46-56)⁹⁰

88 Ben H. Smith, *Traditional Imagery of Charity in Piers Plowman* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1966), Chapter IV, esp. 81.

89 *Ibid.*, 88-89.

90 "And as we wenten in þe way thus wordyng of this matere,
 Thenne sey we a samaritaen cam sittynge on a muyle,
 Rydyng ful raply þe rihte way we **3**eden,
 Comynge fram a contreye þat men callide Ierico;
 To ioust in Ierusalem he iaced away faste.
 Bothe abraham and *sp[e]s* and he mette at ones
 In a wi[d]e wildernesse where theues hadde ybounde
 A man as me tho thouhte, to moche care they brouhte;

The tradition of which Langland is a part, argues Aers, understands *semyuief* as wounded by sin.⁹¹ Langland's allegory of the Samaritan and *semyuief* is couched well within Augustine's treatments of the parable and extends the similarities to much of medieval exegesis including Thomas, Nicholas of Gorran, Nicholas of Lyra, Dennis the Carthusian. Aers' stress on the interpretive tradition of which Langland is a part points to the necessity of the sacraments and the Church, the gratuity of grace, and the centrality of charity for restoration of right relationships. The process of recognition, forgiveness, and healing is a gift possible only through the work of the Samaritan. Even more is available through the Samaritan: "through Christ's presence we are enabled to see what had not been seen in the poem's multivarious, inventive representations of vice: *semivivus*, in English, *semyuief*."⁹² The character of *semyuief*

For he ne myhte stepe ne stande ne stere foet ne handes

Ne helpe hym sulue sothly, for *semyuief* he semede,

And as naked as an nedle, and noen help abouten." (Russell-Kane, XIX.48-58)

Russell-Kane's "wi[d]e wilderness" (Russell-Kane, XIX.54) is "wilde" to Pearsall (Pearsall, XIX.52). Aers writes that Russell and Kane's change of text for their chosen manuscript (Huntington Library, MS Hm 143) is done for "no good reason." Instead Aers follows Pearsall's edition here, retaining "wilde" instead of their conjecture, "wide" (Aers, *Salvation and Sin: Augustine, Langland, and Fourteenth-Century Theology*, 211 footnote 59).

91 Aers, "Remembering the Samaritan, Remembering *Semyuief*: Salvation and Sin in *Piers Plowman* (The C Version)," Chapter 4 of *Salvation and Sin*, 88-99.

92 Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 100. Seeing and perception are skills quite like those which concerned Iris Murdoch in "The Sovereignty of Good Over Other Concepts," in *Virtue Ethics* ed. Roger Crisp and Michael Slote (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 99-117 and Ludwig Wittgenstein in *Philosophical Investigations* trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1958). Stanley Hauerwas combines Murdoch and Wittgenstein's insights with habit as a kind of training for those skills. Hauerwas draws on Aristotle and Thomas, i.e., see above *ST* 1a2ae q95 a1 as cited above in "Situation Ethics, Moral Notions, and Moral Theology," *Vision and Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: Fides Publishers, 1974) and "The Self as Story: A Reconsideration of the Relation of Religion and Morality from the Agent's Perspective," *Vision and Virtue*. For an account congenial to Hauerwas', see Charles Pinches, *Theology and Action: After Theory in Christian Ethics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002) and philosopher Lawrence Blum, *Moral Perception and Particularity* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

shows what has hitherto been invisible: sin.

If sin now makes its appearance, what happens to the virtues and law? Thomas draws out the implications of the wounding of our powers by sin. “In the state of corrupt nature,” Thomas writes, “man falls short of what he could do by his nature, so that he is unable to fulfil it by his own natural powers.”⁹³ Sin incapacitates human nature even with respect to natural things, leaving the intellect darkened, the will disordered, and the passions vagrant, thus heaping manifold punishments on humankind.⁹⁴ Thomas depicts sin in a vein quite like Langland’s: “just as a sick man can of himself make some movements, yet he cannot be perfectly moved with the movements of one in health, unless by the help of medicine he be cured.”⁹⁵ For the sick man, the standards of the law and the end of the virtues are impossible for man to attain naturally. Even virtue can be insufficient in light of sin. *Semyuief* needs divine

93 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a2: “In statu naturae corruptae etiam deficit homo ab hoc quod secundum suam naturam potest, ut non possit totum huiusmodi bonum implere per sua naturalia.” Thomas follows with this celebrated passage:

Yet because human nature is not altogether corrupted by sin, so as to be shorn of every natural good, even in the state of corrupted nature it can, by virtue of its natural endowments, work some particular good, as to build dwellings, plant vineyards, and the like; yet it cannot do all the good natural to it, so as to fall short in nothing.

Quia tamen natura humana per peccatum non est totaliter corrupta, ut scilicet toto bono naturae privetur; potest quidem etiam in statu naturae corruptae, per virtutem suae naturae aliquod bonum particulare agere, sicut aedificare domos, plantare vineas, et alia huiusmodi; non tamen totum bonum sibi connaturale, ita quod in nullo deficiat.

94 See Hibbs, *Virtue’s Splendor: Wisdom, Prudence, and the Human Good* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2001), 183. Contrast the ambitious thesis of Janet Coleman, *A History of Political Thought: From the Middle Ages to the Renaissance* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 2000) that the natural order enjoys an autonomy “instead of sacralizing public power as had some contemporary theologians who followed an Augustinian tendency” (104-5). Thomas is, rather, “directly interested in the common good and the means to its realization by a multitude of men who, as *free subjects* find themselves together with common interests which require direction” (105, italics added). I would argue that Thomas’ treatise on grace eclipses Coleman’s rendering of *ST* 1a2ae q96 a4 with q109.

95 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a2: “Sicut homo infirmus potest per seipsum aliquem motum habere; non tamen perfecte potest moveri motu hominis sani, nisi sanetur auxilio medicinae.”

help.⁹⁶

The action of the poem surrounding *semyuief* bears out the self-descriptions of Faith and Hope *and* the insight of Thomas. For Faith and Hope without Charity do nothing; the law remains radically incomplete without Christ.

Faith had first sight of him, but he flew away
And wouldn't come nearer him than the length of nine fields.
Hope came hopping after, he who had bragged about
How with Moses' commandment he had helped many men;
But when this sick man came into sight, he drew himself aside
And with dread then backed away from him and dared not go nearer.
(XIX.57-62)⁹⁷

Contrast the Samaritan who, catching sight of the man, immediately goes to him. He soothes his wounds, anoints him, bandages him, and leads him away from the new market to *lavacrum-lex-dei*, a grange (XIX.71).⁹⁸ The Samaritan's care is distinctly

96 See Will's speech in which he suggests that what Faith and Hope ask are "incredible" in XIX.25-45. See *ST* 1a2ae q109 a2 co.:

And thus in the state of perfect nature man needs a gratuitous strength superadded to natural strength for one reason, viz., in order to do and wish supernatural good; but for two reasons, in the state of corrupt nature, viz., in order to be healed, and furthermore in order to carry out works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious. Beyond this, in both states man needs the Divine help, that he may be moved to act well.

Sic igitur virtute gratuita superaddita virtuti naturae indiget homo in statu naturae integrae quantum ad unum, scilicet ad operandum et volendum bonum supernaturale. Sed in statu naturae corruptae, quantum ad duo, scilicet ut sanetur; et ulterius ut bonum supernaturalis virtutis operetur, quod est meritorium. Uterius autem in utroque statu indiget homo auxilio divino ut ab ipso moveatur ad bene agendum.

97 "Fayth [hadde furst had of hym siht] Ac he fleyh asyde
And [n]olde nat neyhele hym by nyne londes lenghe.
Hope cam huppynghe aftur, þat hadde so ybosted
How he with Moyses maundement hadde mony men yholpe;
Ac when he hadde sihte of this s[egg]e asyde he gan hym drawe
And dredfully withdrow hym and durste go no nerre." (Russell-Kane, XIX.59-4)

98 In the B-Text, *semyuief* is sent to "*Lex Christi*, a graunge" (B.XVII.72). That *Lex Christi* and *lavacrum-lex-dei* are interwoven is one of many connections made in the poem, however, as it stands the C-Text brings out another sacramental aspect of the Samaritan's care.

sacramental for *salvation of semyuief*. That the law of love can only be fulfilled by charity appears a tautology, a logical necessity that Will could not understand until he has seen its work.⁹⁹

The work of the Samaritan is manifold. He promises his return, an eschatological return anticipated by observance of his absence.¹⁰⁰ He forgives Faith and Hope. He makes intelligible his intervention to Will:

“He’ll not be saved without the blood of a child,
A child that must be born of a maid,
And with the blood of that child anointed and baptized.
And though he stand up and take a step, he’ll never get strong
Till he has eaten all that child and drunk his blood,
And moreover be poulticed with patience when temptations excite him,

99 I write “could not understand” to signal that it is now possible that Will can understand, but not necessarily that he will. In fact Will does not understand *even after* he has seen Christ’s work.

Relevant here are multiple identifications – Samaritan/Piers, Piers/Jesus, Piers/Christ, Christ/Jesus, Samaritan/Christ. Will continues to need revelation and revision, including up to and through the last pivotal Christological passus. So in Passus XX, there are gestures toward Samaritan/Piers (“One who resembled the Samaritan and Piers the plowman somewhat” in line 8) and Samaritan/Christ (a Crucified Lord uses the language of the Samaritan). At the start of XXI, Will dreams of Piers “very much in all his limbs like our Lord Jesus” (line 8) which moves toward Piers/Jesus. The narration by Conscience explicitly identifies Piers with Christ for Piers/Christ. Does Will recognize that the Samaritan is Christ? Instead Will tries to reconcile what Conscience calls Christ with what Jews call Jesus for Christ/Jesus (despite Faith’s earlier clarification of the logic of the Chalcedonian formula as explaining the two proper names in XX.21ff). Conscience goes on to narrate one more life of Christ (XXI.62ff). Conscience’s movement from narrating the establishment of the Church to the eschaton displays the same presence/absence dialectic that unfolds next in this chapter for the Samaritan and the Sacraments.

In each of these episodes, the presence of Christ is more mediated and more elusive than in other contemporary medieval texts (Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*, 47-8). Will relies on Conscience and Faith to interpret for him and at any rate, these achievements wrought for Will are piecemeal and never exhaust the possibilities. Why this is necessarily so should also become clear in this chapter’s treatment of the Samaritan’s on the doctrine of the Trinity.

100 Aers reads the eschatological perspective as Langland’s response to his current devotional, ritual, and theological norms and a warning “against all temptations to fetishize the sacrament of the altar or the Church to which it is given. It works against the will to fix it into a sign whose precise modes can be so determined (for example, no material bread remains, only its accidents) that its expert knowers (the current ecclesiastical hierarchy) can use it as a test for distinguishing Christians who belong to Christ’s body from Christians who are ‘heretics’ deserving capital punishment” in *Sanctifying Signs*, 47. This danger becomes all the more real in the last few passus of *Piers*.

On the Church of history which is simultaneously ahistorical, for a people of memory and expectation, in the context of a more developed ‘theology of history,’ see Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1986).

(For no man ever came this way that wasn't robbed,
 Except myself truly and those I love),
 And further unless they believe loyally in that little child,
 That his body will heal us all in the end." (XIX.84-93)¹⁰¹

The Samaritan's speech stresses that the body, specifically the Incarnation, is needed for bodily healing. By this, Langland participates in the long tradition of asserting the fittingness of sensible signs for sensible creatures. At the same time, his emphasis runs somewhat contrary to commonplace tradition in its reticence regarding potentially bloody and fleshy elaborations.¹⁰² The Samaritan's emphasis in Passus XIX proves to be of more than passing relevance for the Samaritan proceeds to explain the same doctrines of the Church with bodily metaphors in contrast to the abstractions in Faith's Trinity and Hope's love toward which Will was initially drawn.

The Samaritan's speech confirms that the tradition of which Langland is a part extends *semyuief* as a condition applicable to any Christian who has sinned. The Samaritan's language bears this out ("For no man ever came this way that wasn't

101 "Withoute þe bloed of a barn he beth nat ysaued,
 The whiche barn mote nedes be born of a mayde,
 And with þe bloed of þat barn enbaumed and ybaptised.
 And thouh he stande and steppe, ri3t stronge worth he neuere
 Til he haue eten al þ[e] barn and his bloed dronken,
 And 3ut [b]e plasterud with pacience when fondynges [priketh hym] –
 For wente neuere man this way þat he ne was here yruyflod,
 Saue mysylue soethly, and such as y louede –
 And 3ut bote they l[e]ue lelly vpon þat litel baby,
 That his lycame shal lechen at þe laste vs alle." (Russell-Kane, XIX.86-95)

102 Distinctive for the late Middle Ages, Aers argues in *Sanctifying Signs*, 45, is Langland's reticence – linguistic and imagistic – in this treatment of the Eucharist. See also Aers' "Christ's Humanity and *Piers Plowman*: Contexts and Political Implications," *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 8 (1994): 107-25; 121 in which Aers engages Miri Rubin's *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 225-41 and Sarah Beckwith's *Christ's Body: Identity, Culture, and Society in Late Medieval Writings* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), 63-70; see too Aers' "The Humanity of Christ: Reflections on Orthodox Late Medieval Representations," in David Aers and Lynn Staley, *Powers of the Holy: Religion, Politics, and Gender in Late Medieval English Culture* (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

robbed," XIX.90). This healing process is exactly that – a process – that brings together the Sacraments of the Church as a continuing resource for the wounds of sin.

This episode also provides important configurations of agency. *Semyuief* will “be saved,” be “anointed and baptized,” “be poulticed,” to be healed through his own standing, eating, and believing. Yet the standing, eating, and believing are not possible without the *preceding* intervention by the Samaritan and the salvific power of the Sacraments. A helpful foil to this construal of agency is the widely accepted interpretation of Langland as “semi-Pelagian” by Robert Adams.¹⁰³ By semi-Pelagian, Adams intends to signify “that the thinker in question strongly repudiates key elements of the authentic Augustinian position and tends to emphasize the role of free will so far as to overshadow any theoretical statements he may make about a need for the divine concursus in human decisions.”¹⁰⁴ Adams is explicit as regards Langland: “Langland believed fervently in man’s obligation to do his very best (*facere quod in se est*) and in its guaranteed complement, divine acceptance.”¹⁰⁵ Adams turns attention to the Will’s conversation with the Samaritan. Following his work with *semyuief* in XIX, the Samaritan adumbrates the mysteries of the Godhead using metaphorical imagery.

103 Robert Adams, “Piers’s Pardon and Langland’s Semi-Pelagianism,” *Traditio* 39 (1983): 367-418. Adams cites other scholars who likewise see Langland “as a moralist urging good works as a means to obtain grace,” including Judson Allen, Pamela Gradon, Joseph Wittig, Gordon Whatley, and Janet Coleman (“Langland’s Theology,” in *A Companion to Piers Plowman*, ed. John Alford, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 87-114; 95-96). See Aers’ extended engagement with Adams and others around this same set of disagreements in *Salvation and Sin*.

104 Adams, “Piers’s Pardon,” 371. For those curious, the tradition of the later Augustine is described by Adams as the “total depravity of the human will, double predestination completely uncaused, and grace that irresistibly leads the elect – and only the elect – to beatitude” (*ibid.*, 383).

105 Adams, “Piers’s Pardon,” 377.

And as glowing coals do not gladden these workmen
 Who work and wake on winter nights
 As does a rushlight or a candle that's caught fire and blazes,
 No more do the Sire or the Son or Holy Spirit together
 Grant any grace or forgiveness of sins
 Until the Holy Ghost begins to glow and blaze.
 So that the Holy Ghost glows only like a coal
 Until love and belief truly blow into him,
 And then he flames as fire on Father and on *Filius*
 And melts might into mercy... (XIX.182-191)¹⁰⁶

The Samaritan likens the Trinity to a torch or taper – the Sire, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together – fostering forth love and belief that cleanses of sin all kinds of Christians (XIX.167-75). Using this passage, Adams emphasizes that the “acquisition of grace” (Adams’ language, not Langland’s) is not irresistible as is the grace of Augustine.¹⁰⁷ Free will enjoys great scope and the divine is relegated to “an almost mechanical conception.”¹⁰⁸ The range of powers of the human are construed with respect to the divine initiative, including an obligation to prepare for it and an ability to reject it. At the last, what finally determines whether or not God’s call is effective is freely chosen human behavior. Thus Adams does not appear to be concerned here or

106 Adams uses the B-Text edited by George Kane and E. Talbot Donaldson, *Piers Plowman: The B Version* (*Piers Plowman: The Three versions 2*; London, 1975):

And as glowynge gledes gladeþ no³t þise werkmen
 That werchen and waken in wyntres ny³tes
 As dooþ a kex or a candle þat caught haþ fir and blaseþ,
No moore dooþ sire ne sone ne seint spirit togidres
Graunte no grace ne forgifnesse of synnes
Til þe holy goost gynne to glowe and to blase,
So þat þe holy goost glowep but as a glede vnglade
Til þat lele loue ligge on bym and blowe.
 And þanne flawmeþ he as fir on fader and on *filius*
 And melteþ hire my³t into mercy... (Kane and Donaldson, B.XVII.221-30)

107 Adams, “Piers’s Pardon,” 395. Whether or not Adams’ is an accurate depiction of Augustine’s complex theology – or theologies – of grace is another matter. A good start is to trace Augustine’s development over the course of his writing. See James Wetzel who focuses on ‘irresistible grace’ in *Augustine and the Limits of Virtue* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; 197-206).

108 Adams, “Piers’s Pardon,” 395.

anywhere else with the *semyuief* parable and its implications, including how its placement might impact the meaning of the accompanying reflections by the Samaritan.¹⁰⁹

On the contrary, the model of agency in Langland manifests in a depiction of *semyuief* who responds to the initiative of the Samaritan in a response only possible through the Samaritan. The activity is best figured as initially and finally on the Samaritan's side. For the activity of the Samaritan affects sin and effects grace to alter the activity of *semyuief*. Helpless *semyuief* must be borne into the Church (itself described sacramentally: "*lavacrum-lex-dei*, a grange" in XIX.71) and given the resources he will need in order to be continually healed. Through narrative and allegory, Langland shows agency – here doubled – in connection to a specific doctrine of sin, Christology, ecclesiology, and theology of grace.

What is more, in this episode the sacraments are not sufficient. For *semyuief* must "moreover be poulticed with patience when temptations excite him" (XIX.89). The work of the sacraments is complemented by, indeed completed by, virtue. *Piers* traces Will's journey from law and virtue and sin and grace, to the Church and sacraments, and then back again to law and virtue. By now it should be no surprise that Langland's theology has 'ethical' import.

Adams has something to say about this, too, for he claims that Langland's

109 Aers uses ventures in current studies, specifically the work of Robert Adams and Janet Coleman, *Piers Plowman and the Moderni* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1981), as entrees into a recovery of a robust Christology presented in Langland. Aers introduces the curious lack of sin in Adams' account of Langland (Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 84-5) and connects it to Langland's rendering of *semyuief* immediately preceding (88). That such a clear connection exists made my own possible.

theology is “ethical and social rather than sacramental and mystical.”¹¹⁰ Adam’s initial description is clarified or revised later in the same article when Adams suggests that Langland is even “vaguely anti-sacramental.”¹¹¹ By my lights, Adams’ argument must go further to rescue the ethical from the theological if, as this episode in the poem seems to suggest, the former is beholden to the latter. Adams must do more to explain away, discount, or supercede the practices, institutions, and agents which make the virtues described possible. Otherwise, it appears, the ethical and the theological come as inextricably one.

The Samaritan's speech on *semyuief* is an act of revealing and renders the Samaritan’s action meaningful. The paradox of mutual indwelling in the Samaritan’s eucharistic and baptismal imagery can bear closer scrutiny.¹¹² Mary Davlin notes the

110 Adams quotes with approval Gordon Whatley, “*Piers Plowman* B 12.277-94: Notes on Langland, Text, and Theology,” *Modern Philology* 82 (1984), 1-12 in Robert Adams, “Langland’s Theology,” 102. The text of this episode offers little reason to take one part and discard the other, as Adams’ position would require. If readers need a more substantive argument against Adams’ interpretation, however, see Chapter 2 of Aers, *Sanctifying Signs* on the sacrament of the altar in *Piers Plowman*.

111 Adams, “Langland’s Theology,” 110. Here Adams links Langland and Wyclif in a shared biblicism “eager to confront the individual reader with the Word of God’s demands unmediated by priestly casuistry.” A strong contrast to Adams’ description of Langland as “vaguely anti-sacramental” is Adams’ own claim that Langland’s “attitude seems altogether conventional and pious” some ten pages earlier when Adams begins treatment of the sacraments (98).

112 See Mary Clemente Davlin, O.P., *The Place of God in Piers Plowman and Medieval Art*, (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), Chapter 3. James Simpson argues that the Samaritan’s riddles are “deliberately obscure language about the Christian sacraments of baptism, penance, and the Eucharist; the language defamiliarises these common ideas by offering a pre-Christian account of them, evoking a strange, even barbaric rite of the kind found in romances of the period” (*Piers Plowman: An Introduction to the B-text*, 198). Simpson cites an example from *Amis and Amiloun*. Going further, Langland’s distinctive representations of Christ and the Eucharist are deliberate moves to counteract the temptation to myopia were Langland simply to iterate dominant imagery, and along these lines regarding Christ’s humanity Aers writes: “The fact that the dominant late medieval model was not favored by Lollards or by *Piers Plowman* needs to be studied within the framework suggested here: namely one that encourages an analysis which does not stop at the description of iconographical changes, but encourages us to address the political, ecclesiastic, and ethical dimensions of such a choice against dominant forms” in “Christ’s Humanity and *Piers Plowman*,” 123-4.

paradox as this: those to be healed both receive ‘the barn and his blood’ within themselves by eating and drinking and are bathed ‘in that blood, baptised as it were.’¹¹³ The healing process involves both a taking into and an immersion in, to underscore the sense in which one might be completely within another substance. This takes place in the context of loyal belief in the person to bear him within oneself (XIX.92).¹¹⁴ Faith figures prominently in the union in love. The theological virtues appear unified in a description offered by the Samaritan himself. At that, the allusion to the virtues accompanies sacramental practice.

The virtues and the sacraments, linked to Christology, spill into its extrapolation which is a thoroughgoing Trinitarianism. The remainder of Passus XIX is devoted to the Samaritan’s similes used to describe various models of the Trinity.

113 Davlin, 85 cites B.17.94-8 (XIX.84-88). That the imagery is focused on incorporation is an important point of difference for Langland from others. For by the late Middle Ages, Sarah Beckwith writes, “the mass was becoming more and more of a spectacle and less and less of a communion. The emphasis was increasingly on watching Christ’s body rather than being incorporated in it,” in *Christ’s Body*, 36-7. Beckwith quotes Dom Gregory Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London: Dacre Press, 1945), 599-600, who writes: “The old corporate worship of the eucharist is declining into a mere focus for the subjective devotion of each separate worshipper in the isolation of his own mind.”

This point is disputed from within the tradition. For example, contrast Duffy and Bossy to Sarah Beckwith’s description of “watching Christ’s body *rather than* being incorporated” and to Dix’s “isolation of his own mind.” Duffy writes in *Stripping of the Altars* on the elevation of the host: “Christ himself, immolated on the altar of the cross, became present on the altar of the parish church, body and soul and divinity, and his blood flowed once again, to nourish and renew Church and world. As kneeling congregations raised their eyes to see the Host held high above the priest’s head at the sacrificing, they were transported to Calvary itself” (91; cf. Aers, “Altars of Power: Reflections on Eamon Duffy’s *The Stripping of the Altars*,” *Literature and History* 3 (1994): 90-105.) See too Bossy whose view is clear from his essay titled “The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200-1700,” *Past & Present*, 100, 1 (1983): 29-61.

For a larger narrative of the historical shifts in theological rendering of Christ, Church, and sacrament, see Henri de Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum: the Eucharist and the church in the Middle Ages*.

114 The B-text names Faith: “For the barn was born in Behleem that with his blood shal save/ Alle that lyven in Feith and folwen his felawes techynge” (Schmidt, B.17.123-4). This ends about twenty lines of text in B that C does not have in which the Samaritan narrates the work and movements of Faith and Hope in relation (or, subordinate) to his own.

The C-text’s wording: “And **3**ut bote they l[e]ue lilly vpon þat litel baby,/ That his lycame shal lechen at þe laste vs alle.” (Russell-Kane, XIX.94-5)

The models are relational:

For God who began all in the world's beginning
Acted first as a first, and still is, as I believe,
 *Holding the world in his hand. (XIX.111-13)*¹¹⁵

For the Trinity is likened to a torch or a taper
As if wax and a wick were twined together
And then fire flaming forth from both. (XIX.167-9)¹¹⁶

These examples are tentative attempts to concretize the abstract threeness and unity of the Trinity. All such undertakings will finally be futile, if it is true that God eludes attempts to finally name Him.¹¹⁷ Indeed, the Samaritan's discourse acknowledges such

115 "For god þat al bygan in bigynnyng of the worlde
Ferde furste as a f[u]ste, and 3ut is, as y leue,
Mundum pugillo continens." (Russell-Kane, XIX.112-14)

Translator and commentator Walter Skeat in *Notes to "Piers the Plowman," The vision of William concerning Piers Plowman* suggests a possible original source for this image may be Isaiah 40:12 ("Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and weighed the heavens with his palm? who hath poised with three fingers the bulk of the earth, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?"). It becomes a part of the hymn sung at matins in the service of the Blessed Virgin Mary and in the office of the Annunciation. Davlin notes the intertextual links with Will's quotation of Ecclesiastes 9:1 in B.10.429 ("*Sunt iusti atque sapientes, et opera eorum in manu Dei*") and Piers' quotation of Psalm 36.24 in B.16.25 ("*quia Dominus supponit manum suam*").

The appropriation of the image has various potential, and it may be illustrative to contrast the decidedly metaphysical treatment of Julian of Norwich in *Showings: Authoritative Text, Contexts, and Criticisms*, ed. Denise Baker (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2005), Revelation I, Chapter 5: And in this he shewed a little thing, the quantitie of an haselnott, lying in the palme of my hand, as me semide, and it was as rounde as a balle. I looked theran with the eye of my understanding and thought, "What may this be?" And it was answered generaelly thus, "It is all that is made." I marvayled how it might laste, for me thought it might sodenly have fallen to nawght for littlenes. And I was answered in my understanding: "It lasteth and ever shall, for God loveth it. And so hath all thing being by the love of God." In this little thing I saw iii properties.

116 "For to a torche or to a taper þe trinite is likned,
As wexe and a weke were twyned togyderes
And thenne [a fuyr flaumyng] forth of hem bothe." (Russell-Kane, XIX.172-4)

117 Augustine concludes similarly to end his book-long meditation on the doctrine of the Trinity: Sapiens quidam cum de te loqueretur in libro suo, qui Ecclesiasticus proprio nomine iam vocatur: Multa, inquit, dicimus, et non pervenimus, et consummatio sermonum universa est ipse. Cum ergo pervenerimus ad te, cessabunt multa ista quae dicimus, et non pervenimus; et manebis unus omnia in omnibus: et sine fine dicemus unum laudantes te in unum, et in te facti etiam nos unum. Domine Deus une, Deus Trinitas,

limitations. He offers two examples.

Both begin with the Three Persons and move to relations among human persons. This movement takes part in the grand story of the Samaritan which extends the inner relationship of the Creator to all of creation.¹¹⁸ Drawing on the imagery from XIX.81-93, the relationship is one of blood and bodiliness animated by the Holy Spirit. The sharing in blood is a kinship with God by way of the Incarnation.¹¹⁹ Kinship compels kindness. To recapitulate the movement of the poem: the Samaritan's treatment of sacraments, Church, and virtue earlier in Passus XIX open to later doctrinal extrapolation of the Trinity which includes the Incarnation and all creation in kinship.

The real community which the Samaritan intends is made possible by grace. Folk who forgive and are forgiven receive mercy (XIX.199-201). They are to make restitution, to "amend and repay" (XIX.201).¹²⁰ The sacrament of reconciliation

quaecumque dixi in his libris de tuo, agnoscant et tui: si qua de meo, et tu ignosce, et tui. Amen.

De Trinitate in Patrologiae Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Vol. XLII (Paris, 1877), Liber XV.25.51.

118 This extension is explicit in the B-text:
And as þe hand halt harde and all þyng faste
Thoru foure fyngres and a thombe forþ with þe pawme,
Right so þe Fader and þe Sone and Seint Spirit þe þridde
Halt al þe wide world wipinne hem þre –
Boþe wolkne and þe wynd, water, and erþe,
Heuene and helle and al þat þer is inne. (Schmidt, B.17.157-62)

119 In the Middle English, God Himself is also named Kynde (X.128ff).

120 "Amenden and payen" in Russell-Kane, XIX.206. The language of amendment and repayment is crucial. In Passus II-IV, I drew attention to its problematic association with economic exchange. It will be iterated in another variation in the final several passus of the poem, both in the language of Christ's salvific work and in the penitential demand tied to the sacrament of the altar, *redde quod debes*. Here Langland construes making amends and repaying as a form of restitution, a practice at the heart of the virtue of justice. However much justice is of 'cardinal' importance throughout the poem, its contours prove somewhat evasive. I look more closely at justice in Chapter Four.

entails a life of “kindness.” Those who sever the sacramental practices from the kind of life those sacraments entail quench the grace of the Holy Spirit (XIX.215-219) in an undoing of what kindness has done (XIX.252), in an uncreating of creation. Once again, Will asks how he might be saved:

“Suppose I had sinned so,” I said, “and had to die now,
And I’m now sorry I so offended the Holy Spirit,
Confess myself and cry for his grace, God who made all,
And mildly ask for his mercy, might I not be saved?”
“Yes,” said the Samaritan, “provided you repent so
That through repentance righteousness might turn to pity.” (XIX.274-279)¹²¹

The Samaritan brings together right living through the virtues and the sacraments to narrate how Will can live into his salvation.

But in the same breath – XIX.280 and following – the Samaritan also leaves open the possibility that accommodation to corrupt practices will enslave the will as it turns inward away from grace given opening to full life in Christ. The work of Christ and the charity made possible by Him are integral to the life for which creatures were created. The stakes are high for living into this form of life made possible by Christ, for “to all unkind creatures, as Christ himself witnesses, *Amen I say to you, I know you*

121 “Y pose y hadde syneged so,’ quod y, ‘and sholde nouthe deye,
And now am y sory þat y so the seynte spirit agulte,
Confesse me and crye his grace, god þat al made,
And myldeliche his mercy aske, myhte y nat be saued?’
‘3us,’ saide þe Samaritaen, ‘so thow myhtest repente,
That rihtwisenesse throw repentaunce to reuthe myhte turne.’” (Russell-Kane, XIX.283-284)

The “ac” or “but” in XIX.280 which immediately follows this speech lays out the conditions for righteousness turning to pity, i.e., that the virtues are meritorious for salvation. Aers connects the earlier language of kynde and the power of sin to the Samaritan’s alleged impulse toward universal salvation. Aers writes that the figures in the to follow help interpret this word of Christ (which is, incidentally, not the final word of Christ in the poem) and ultimately “the Samaritan’s denial of divine obligation to humanity in its contempt for grace makes us consider with great care our participation, individual and collective, in the practices of ‘the rulers of the world of this darkness... the spirits of wickedness in the high places’ (Ephesians 6.12).” *Salvation and Sin*, 117-118.

not" (XIX.214). Do Will and *semyuief* now have the resources to live into the law of love?

1.3 *In Media Res*

Having covered two episodes, I want to look back at what Will and the reader have learned about the virtues thus far. The contrasts between the episodes and between the virtues characteristic of each episode crystallize in two figures: 'Lady' Meed and Charity. In the first episode, Meed dramatizes urgent questions about what justice looks like in a changing context. Meed is produced by and produces a culture obsessed with the relentless drive toward profit. In such a world, relationships are dominated by exchange. Lawlessness and competition thrive. Justice is a stranger, for Meed is opposed to it (II.49, III.474) and Theology and Conscience imply its absence by making petitions on its behalf. Meed's attempt at restitution is half-hearted, at best, and is undermined by her immediate reversion to her characteristic activity of substituting true amends for false. Her work obscures a shared vision of the genuine common good and along with that the virtues, laws, practices and institutions which undergird it. Instead Meed offers a parodic vision that threatens to undermine them all.¹²² It is hard to know how to go on.

122 In the passus between the episodes I consider, between IV and XVIII, the hope for present justice seems lost. For example, in a sequence in Passus VIII, Piers attempts to build a Christian polity but compromises with earthly power in so doing. His frustrations are potentially resolved by an imperative from Truth at the open of Passus IX. (Aers, *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory* engages this episode in terms of Langland's imagistic modes and processes particularly in light of its later revision in B.XIX.178-85, 121-123.) Truth appears to offer new and very real hope for justice in a model of strenuous ethical activity. Does this answer previously vexing questions? No, for the solution baptizes rather than challenges the terms dictated by the market, assuming that the individualistic economic interests of the merchants can be reconciled and integrated to serve a genuine common good rather than, again, a demonic substitution. This sidestepping of the limitations of man's powers under the bondage of sin ends in frustration. Truth's pardon reads: "*Qui bona egerunt ibunt in vitam eternam;/ Qui vero mala in ignem eternum.*" (IX.288-89) The pardon itself is an incomplete resuscitation of the Athanasian

Charity's definitive work finally enables and safeguards the way for Will's wilderness wanderings. In the second episode, the work of God who is Charity through charity finally establishes a community that *is* Charity.¹²³ Langland works with a simultaneous identification and differentiation of charity itself, binding together these essential elements to portray them as parts of a whole rather than discrete stages in a journey. The journey, which is discursive rather than linear, is far from finished when I leave off here.

Piers tells the story of how an initial quest "to hear wonders" becomes a search for God. This transformation of desire is something radically other than our seeker intends. Readers who embark on this journey with Will are likewise formed by the initial episodes of the poem, changed by the later episodes, and develop the ability to re-narrate earlier episodes to explain characters' failures and partial successes.

Thomas' work has been important for explicating Langland. Turning to it next will enable further inquiry into the same matter treated in this chapter: the virtues of the Meed episode, the "cardinal virtues," the theological virtues. Thomas' work is concerned with the same crucial issues surrounding agency, the nature of language, the effects of sin and sacraments' salve. *Piers* might be said to be an exercise in Thomistic imagination and the *Summa*, a systematic exploration of the half-truths and veracities

creed, one that by nature involves a fuller profession informed by the life of Christ and His activity on our behalf. This reconciliation wrought for us is the grounds for any pardon, and without it any pardon is premature. Indeed, at this point in the poem those resources are unavailable. So the priest eviscerates this 'pardon,' lifted from the creed: "I can find no pardon,/ But only 'Do well and have well and God shall have your soul'" (IX.290-1). ("Y kan no pardoun fynde/ Bote 'Dowel and haue wel and [god] shal haue thy soule"; Russell-Kane, IX.289-90.) In Will's mind, the priest has pit Dowel against prayer, penance, and pardon. Passus IX leaves the Piers, Priest, and dreamer bewildered and restless. The tension between justice and penance continues between IX and XIX.

123 XVII.125-131, see Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*, 38.

witnessed along the way by our wanderer.

Chapter Two. The Fuller Life in the Church: Thomas' "Fuller" Account of the Virtues

Like *Piers Plowman*, the *Summa Theologiae* entails a process intrinsic to its theology.¹ The *Summa* is a pedagogical text whose material is ordered for the gradual perfection of the mind of the reader.² The Christian believer, en route to a supernatural end, requires instruction and training along the way. This formation depends on a model of progression. The *Summa* is an illustration of a sequence of illustrative topics and arguments, leading the student from the beginning of theology to its end.³

Accordingly Thomas begins with the most fundamental doctrines and distinctions. As he progresses, he introduces a range of new authorities which make more complex the understanding achieved thus far. The reader moves from an initial stage toward one more penultimate. This progression constitutes the perfection of the mind of the inquirer. This gradual perfection is not separable from the perfection of the will, because of Thomas' integrative account of the human person. Thomas' claims regarding the virtues in the Second Part of the *Summa* confirm this holistic integration.

1 Aers states his understanding of the processes of *Piers* in *Salvation and Sin*, 83ff.

2 Robert Miner makes clear some questions that a pedagogical ordering might rule out in "Non-Aristotelian Prudence in the *Prima Secundae*," *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 401-22; here 403: The pressing issue for Aquinas is not whether Aristotle's doctrine can or cannot be exhibited as logically consistent with that of, for example, Augustine. His concern, rather, is to compose a text that sets the multiplicity of known doctrines in their proper pedagogical relation – the relation that proves most instructive and useful for the Christian believer en route to a supernatural end. Whether Aquinas's Ambrosian or Augustinian lines of thought are 'consistent' or 'inconsistent' with Aristotelian theses is an essentially modern question. It betrays presuppositions and preoccupations that are antithetical to the teaching of St. Thomas.

3 Mark Jordan, *Rewritten Theology*, 119.

Moreover, Thomas' work on the virtues serves as a display of what that gradual transformation unto perfection looks like.

In this chapter, I show the process intrinsic to Thomas' theology as the reader moves through a few rich questions on virtues drawn from different portions of the Second Part of the *Summa*. I chose the question on the connection of the virtues (*ST 1a2ae q65*) to go first, then charity (*ST 2a2ae q23*), then prudence (*ST 2a2ae q47*). Over the course of these questions, I take Thomas' sequential focus on the *acquired* moral virtues (*q65*), *infused* theological virtues (*q23*) and *infused* moral virtues (*q47*) to culminate in a more determinative distinction between false, imperfect, and perfect virtues. Thomas moves the reader from a basic distinction as to how virtues are caused (acquired, infused) to a distinction regarding their relationship to the supernatural end (false, imperfect, perfect). Thomas' sustained inquiry keeps in sight the same moral matter as seen differently according to shifts in perspective. Through these shifts, Thomas gradually trains the reader to see.

As Thomas displays this process, he offers material that challenges standard assumptions about the virtues. To offer examples: in question 65, the acquired virtues, because they are also dependent upon God, ultimately share properties one thinks of as characteristic of the infused virtues alone; in question 23, even the infused virtue of charity must approximate the habituation of acquired virtue; and in question 47, the previous distinction between infused and acquired reiterated and made more complex in Thomas' holistic account of the perfection of virtue, encompassing all virtue in a synthesis that stops nothing short of friendship with God. As Thomas unfolds this intricate account, he includes the ways in which one may fall short of living into that

friendship by failure or by simulation as threats to one's full participation in the beatitude open to creatures through grace. Thomas' ultimate interest is in the perfection open to us and in Him Who makes such perfection possible. That, he describes in its fullness not in *ST* 1a2ae or 2a2ae, but in *ST* 3a for Christ as the full and final revelation of God and our way to God.

2.1 The “Infused” Acquired

Thomas' deployment of analogical language extends to his attempts to describe virtue.⁴ Analogical language pervades the *Summa* beginning at its outset where Thomas resists univocal or equivocal predication of language properly applied to God.⁵ Analogical predications pertain to those perfections that we predicate literally of both Creator and creatures, who are related intrinsically to one another. In the case of analogical predication, I have in mind attributions like “God is just” and “my sister is just.” Thomas continues this resistance to univocal or equivocal predication as he extends analogical language to his attempts to describe virtue.⁶ In the *Second Part* he

4 Thomas' dependence on the concept of analogy to develop his account of the virtues merits extended consideration; I treat this in Chapter Three, 124ff.

5 *Univocal* predication means that the predicate is a precise expression that has the same, singular meaning in both subjects, like “she is my mechanic” and “he is my mechanic.” To apply *equivocal* predication is to say that a predicate has disparate forms of meaning that are associated with the same linguistic term, like “this is the eye” as you talk to a two-year old while ostensibly pointing to an eye or “this is the eye” as you teach a person how to thread a needle. Analogical predication in terms of proportion means the predication of two forms which are both different yet ordered to one another in a non-accidental way, as with “this is unnatural” when said of Velveeta cheese and “this is unnatural” as said of small chihuahuas. Velveeta and chihuahuas are both scary and in different ways, but the predicates are similarly ordered.

6 Cf. Mark Jordan's extended treatment of the analogical character of virtue in *Rewritten Theology*, esp. 158-163. Jordan argues that the definition of virtue to which all others are analogous appears in *ST* 1a2ae q55 a4 whereas I locate it in Thomas' language regarding God and Christological sections. How Thomas' earlier writings on virtue relate to his later portions is another source of divergence: Jordan frames his inquiries into virtue to offer an example of how Thomas converts “the water of philosophy

turns to the perfection of the image of God in us, a perfection proportioned to the perfection of God. The only way virtue is said of God and of creatures is according to the ordering of creatures to God by way of their participation in God. Yet these perfections exist, to any extent that they exist in us, in a more excellent way in God.⁷

Thomas writes about God's exemplar virtues in Question 61 article 5. He writes “the exemplar of human virtue must pre-exist in God, just as the exemplars of all things pre-exist in Him. In this way, therefore, virtue can be considered as existing in its highest exemplification in God.”⁸ Over the course of this chapter, I draw out analogical language as Thomas applies it to various gradations of creaturely virtue. Thomas begins with lesser forms which are farther away from the exemplar under the auspices of natural reason and over the course of the *Summa* displays what it looks like for one to be drawn more fully into God's life in light of revelation. Through gradual perfection, virtue becomes more proportioned with being truly human. The truest human is Christ. The very language Thomas uses for the virtues finds its fullest and most true expression in God and Christ. The only way we know virtue is that it has been revealed to us; the only way we enjoy virtue is that it is given to us.

In his first question explicitly on virtues, Thomas quotes Aristotle saying virtue is a habit.⁹ He quotes Aristotle again in the second article, and in the third *sed contra* he

into the wine of theology” whereas I offer a model that might be akin to the mixed chalice (*Rewritten Theology*, 158).

7 *ST* 1a q13 a6.

8 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 co.: “Exemplar humanae virtutis in Deo praeexistat, sicut et in eo praeexistunt omnium rerum rationes. Sic igitur virtus potest considerari vel prout est exemplariter in Deo, et sic dicuntur virtutes exemplares.”

9 *ST*, 1a2ae q 55 a1 s.c.; Aristotle, *Categories*, 6, 8b29.

quotes both Aristotle and Augustine as authorities.¹⁰ By the fourth article, Thomas mounts what is often recognized as his most authoritative definition. It is presumably Augustine's: "Virtue is a good quality of mind by which one lives righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us without us."¹¹ Thomas goes on to affirm that virtue is a good quality of mind, used for righteous living, which expresses and begets the good life. Then Thomas does something in the response of the article that significantly modifies both Aristotle and Augustine. He writes:

Finally, God is the efficient cause of the infused virtues, to which this definition applies, and this is expressed in the phrase, *which God works in us without us*. Were this phrase omitted the remainder of the definition will be common to all virtues, whether acquired or infused.¹²

So Thomas accepts the basic definition of virtue while introducing the language of acquired and infused. That is, he affirms the definition inherited from the main school

10 *ST* 1a2ae q55 a3 s.c. (citing Augustine, *De Moribus Ecclesiae*. I, 6; Aristotle, *Ethic.* ii.6, 1106a15). "Augustine says: No one can doubt that virtue makes the soul exceeding good: and the Philosopher says: Virtue is that which makes its possessor good, and his work good likewise." "Sed contra est quod Augustinus dicit, *Nemo autem dubitaverit quod virtus animam facit optimam; et Philosophus dicit quod virtus est quae bonum facit habentem, et opus ejus bonum reddit.*" Aristotle's contribution – that virtue makes its possessor good – means that virtuous activity cannot be thought apart from the agent. It is not virtue if it is good activity that does not make its possessor good.

11 *ST* 1a2ae q55 a4 arg. 1: "Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, qua nullus male utitur, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur." Lottin argues that this definition, although collated from the works of Augustine and customarily attributed to him, more likely originates in Peter of Poitiers' *Sentences* II, I. PL 211, 1041 in "Les premieres definitions et classifications des vertus au moyen age," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, XVIII (1929), 369-89; 371. Jordan attributes the definition to Augustine by way of Peter Lombard's *Sentences: Sententiae* 2.27.1 no1 (CSB 1:480) where Jordan writes that this definition is, "as Thomas knows, a conflation of Augustinian texts and especially of passages from *On Free Choice* 2, which supplies the middle clause of the Lombard's definition" (*Rewritten Theology*, 159).

Individual acts which are properly human are never morally neutral, but either good or evil (1a2ae 18 a1). The same pertains to habits. For some connections on how the "thick and complex descriptions that apply in the realm of human action are the *same descriptions* as those of the realm of morality" thus descriptions themselves have moral import, see Charles Pinches, *Theology and Action*, 91. Pinches draws on David Burrell's *Aquinas: God and Action* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979).

12 *ST* 1a2ae q55 a4 co.: "Causa autem efficiens virtutis infusae, de qua definito datur, Deus est. Propter quod dicitur: *Quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*. Quae quidem particula si auferatur, reliquum definitionis erit commune omnibus virtutibus, et acquisitis, et infusis." See also *In Sent* 2.27.1.2: "Utrum definitio virtutis posita ab Augustino sit conveniens."

of theological thought while at the same time developing his own thought within that definition.¹³ Later in the *Summa*, Thomas iterates his modulation of this definition:

It follows that human virtue, ordained to a good measured by the rule of human reason, can be caused from human acts; inasmuch as they proceed from reason, by whose power and rule such a good is constituted. Whereas virtue ordained to man's good as measured by divine law, not human reason, cannot be caused through human acts originating in reason, but is produced in us by the divine operation alone. And so Augustine's definition of this virtue includes the words, *which God works in us without us*.¹⁴

The variety of virtue alone displays Thomas' resistance to univocal or equivocal predication.¹⁵ Any virtue is only virtue by analogy – acquired but so too infused. The analogy of virtue allows Thomas to define and re-define the virtues throughout subsequent questions.¹⁶

So far Thomas has given two kinds of virtue: acquired and infused. The acquired are “ordained to a good measured by the rule of human reason, can be caused

13 W. D. Hughes, *Summa Theologiae*, Blackfriars edition, vol 23, xxii argues that the main school of thought is well represented by William of Auxerre, who held that the only true virtues are those which God works *in nobis sine nobis*. John Inglis argues that the preceding treatment of *in nobis sine nobis* by William Peraldus in his *Summa de vitiis et virtutibus* informed Thomas' treatment of the same and thus both “parted from the received Augustinian picture by interpreting this phrase as applicable only to infused virtue and not to the virtues that involve voluntary habit” in “Aquinas's Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues,” 9.

14 *ST* 1a2ae q63 a2 co.:
Virtus igitur hominis ordinata ad bonum quod modificatur secundum regulam rationis humanae, potest ex actibus humanis causari, in quantum huiusmodi actus procedunt a ratione, sub cuius potestate et regula tale bonum consistit. Virtus vero ordinans hominem ad bonum, secundum quod modificatur per legem divinam et non per rationem humanam, non potest causari per actus humanos, quorum principium est ratio; set causatur solum in nobis per operationem divinam. Et ideo huiusmodi virtutem definiens Augustinus, posuit in definitione virtutis: *quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur*.

Later I will comment on this same passage alongside Thomas' account of double agency.

15 More directly on this matter, see *ST* 1a2ae q61 a1 co. et ad1.

16 E.g., *ST* 1a2ae q56 a 6 where Thomas considers Cicero's definition of virtue as a habit after the manner of nature, in accord with reason.

from human acts” whereas infused are “measured by divine law, not human reason,” “produced in us by the divine operation alone.”¹⁷ Acquired and infused virtues differ with respect to their origin, development, and end.¹⁸ He holds that moral virtues may be acquired or infused whereas the theological virtues are exclusively infused.¹⁹

As Thomas turns to the connection of the various virtues to one another, he extends even further the logic of the analogy of virtue. He begins the discussion by offering a new basic distinction between virtue: imperfect virtue or perfect virtue.²⁰ Their distinction regards the 'connection' of the virtues – the ostensible subject of the entire question 65 – whether one virtue entails having the others. Imperfect moral virtue is not connected, since it is merely an inclination to do some kind of good deed. Perfect moral virtue, however, is connected since it inclines one to do a good deed well. Yet keeping with what he said earlier, *neither* imperfect *nor* perfect virtue, as long as it is virtue, can be used badly. This new distinction between imperfect and perfect virtue comes to bear on the previous distinction between acquired and infused in the next articles of the same question, where he treats the relationship of the moral virtues to charity and vice-versa.

Thomas’ treatment of this relationship pivots on the existence of a third kind of

17 *ST* 1a2ae q63 a2 co. as quoted above.

18 To be clear, acquired prudence and infused prudence have something in common: their shared objects. Cf. proper objects in *ST* 1a2ae q63 a4 ad1.

19 *ST* 1a2ae q63 a2-4; Thomas follows inherited tradition in distinguishing between intellectual, moral, and theological virtues – distinctions that Thomas also blurs as he develops his arguments.

20 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a1. Some turn to this passage for Thomas’ treatment of the difference between “natural virtues” and “moral virtues,” although this distinction is not explicit in the text and, arguably, is subsumed under the more determinative one of imperfect and perfect.

virtue: infused moral virtue.²¹ He writes:

It is possible by means of human activity to acquire the moral virtues, in so far as they produce good deeds that are directed to an end which does not surpass the natural resources of man, and as acquired thus, they can be without charity, even as they were in many of the pagans. But in so far as they produce good deeds bearing on a supernatural last end, thus they truly and perfectly have the character of virtue, and cannot be acquired by human acts, but are poured forth by God. Such moral virtues cannot exist without charity.²²

With this third new species of virtue, the focus becomes the difference between *acquired moral* virtue and *infused moral* virtue rather than simply acquired virtue versus infused virtue. He concludes in this article that only the infused moral virtues “are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply (*simpliciter*)... The other virtues, those namely that are acquired, are virtues according to something (*secundum quid*), not without qualification.”²³

The distinction at the conclusion of this article between *simpliciter* and *secundum*

21 *ST* 1a2ae q63 a3 et ad2 justify the existence of infused moral virtue:
All virtues, intellectual and moral, acquired by our actions, arise from certain natural principles pre-existing in us, as was stated above (q51 a1). Parallel to these natural principles, God bestows on us the theological virtues, by which we are directed to a supernatural end, as was stated above (q62 a1). And so there should be other habits divinely caused in us corresponding in due proportion to the theological virtues, which habits are to them what the moral and intellectual virtues are to the natural principles of the virtues.

The theological virtues are enough to shape us to our supernatural end as a start, that is to God himself immediately and none other. Yet the soul needs also to be equipped by infused virtues in regard to created things, though as subordinate to God.

22 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a2 co.:
Virtutes morales prout sunt operativae boni in ordine ad finem qui non excedit facultatem naturalem hominis, possunt per opera humana acquiri. Et sic acquisitae sine caritate esse possunt, sicut fuerunt in multis gentilibus. Secundum autem quod sunt operativae boni in ordine ad ultimum finem supernaturalem, sic perfecte et vere habent rationem virtutis, et non possunt humanis actibus acquiri, sed infunduntur a Deo. Et huiusmodi virtutes morales sine caritate esse non possunt.

23 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a2 co.: “sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes... Aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter.” Blackfriars translation uses the contrast between *absolutely* and *in a limited sense* and the English Dominicans translate the same contrast *simply* and *in a restricted sense*.

quid also has a home in logic. To use *simpliciter* in place of *secundum quid* (or vice-versa) constitutes the informal fallacy of equivocation. In maintaining the distinction between *simpliciter* and *secundum quid*, Thomas illustrates a difference in kind while still calling both in some sense 'virtue.' Again this distinction depends on analogy at the heart of the definition of virtue.

When arguing that the acquired virtues are virtues *secundum quid*, *secundum quid* should be translated as “according to something” rather than “in a limited sense” (Blackfriars) or “in a restricted sense” (English Dominicans) because it leaves open their ultimate specification. On their own, i.e., without charity, the acquired are imperfect. If they are accompanied by charity, however, what then? Thomas’ more direct rehabilitation of the role of acquired virtue is delayed because it is a rehabilitation that requires a detailed treatment of charity. I follow that gradual unfolding in the next section of this chapter, “The 'Acquired' Infused.”

Even without charity, the acquired virtues are not without gratuity. Thomas writes:

Thus in the state of intact nature man needs a gratuitous virtue supplementing the virtue of his nature in one respect, namely, to perform and will the supernatural good. But in the state of corrupt nature he needs it in two respects, namely, in order to be healed, and further that he may carry out works of supernatural virtue, which are meritorious. Furthermore, in both states man needs divine assistance so as to be moved by it to act well.²⁴

24 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a2 co.:

Sic igitur virtute gratuita superaddita virtuti naturae indiget homo in statu naturae integrae quantum ad unum, scilicet ad operandum et volendum bonum supernaturale. Sed in statu naturae corruptae quantum ad duo, scilicet ut sanetur, et ulterius ut bonum supernaturalis virtutis operetur, quod est meritorium. Ulteris autem in utroque statu indiget homo auxilio divino, ut ab ipso moveatur ad bene agendum.

This conclusion follows the often remarked upon passage which concerns the state of corrupt nature in which “human nature is not so wholly spoiled by sin so as to be deprived of the whole good proper to nature, man can indeed, even in the state of corrupt nature, perform some particular good actions by his natural powers, such as building houses, planting vines and the like.” An iteration of something similar

Thomas observes that humans require gratuity for moral action, and in other closely associated passages he iterates that the action proportionate to human nature is “not, of course without God's help” and “not without God.”²⁵ Acquired virtue hinges on gratuity, just as infused virtue depends on grace. These two kinds of virtue correspond to the *duplex bonum hominum* as ways in which humans participate in God via the good: (1) according to nature which is a cooperation and (2) according to (supernatural) grace which is a gift.

Thomas treats acquired virtues in terms of cooperation more explicitly in his early writing, *Scriptum super Sententiis*. There Thomas revises the basic framework of Peraldus's *Summa* toward a more sympathetic account of acquired virtue. John Inglis takes up this argument, writing:

Thomas argued that because human nature is received from God, activities that conform with nature represent cooperation with the divine. Since acquired moral virtue is produced according to the natural principles of virtue that have been received from God, the acquired virtues are exercised in cooperation with the highest good.²⁶

Keeping in mind Thomas' earlier definition of virtue where Thomas notes Augustine's inclusion of the words, “*which God works in us without us*” in questions 55 and 63, by

question 65 the picture is fuller.²⁷ In the earlier questions Thomas introduces the occurs later in the same question: “working in the field, drinking, eating, and having friends, and so on, as Augustine says, in his third reply to the Pelagians” (*ST* 1a2ae q109 a5; Blackfriars suggests that this text was probably a follower of Augustine, Marius Mercator.) Many assume that these activities are activities of acquired virtue. Yet the relation of these activities to their ends is underdetermined – and as one of the natural order not moral, it can be both good and evil (*ST* 1a2ae q20 a6). To attribute to them acquired virtue assumes far greater a specification of the concrete action than Thomas gives.

25 “Non tamen absque adiutorio divino” (*ST* 1a2ae q62 a1 co.) and “non (tamen potest ea facere) sine Deo” (*De veritate* 24 a14 co.).

26 Inglis, “Aquinas's Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues,” 11. Inglis cites *Sent.* 3.33.1.2.2. et ad 1.

27 *ST* 1a 2ae q55 a4; q63 a2.

language of acquired and infused, acquired virtues are *not* that *which God works in us without us*. By question 65, I interpret the matter as put positively: acquired are that *which God works in us with us*.²⁸

That said, acquired virtue must further be determined with respect to grace. The relationship of acquired virtue to grace specifies the character of acquired virtue, whether acquired virtue is connected or not.²⁹ Unconnected acquired virtue is merely a beginning in the increase of virtue. Alone it remains incomplete.

In light of this account of grace, virtue, creatures, God, and agency, I turn to Rudi te Velde for another gloss. Te Velde maintains traditional Thomistic distinctions of nature and grace and of natural and supernatural happiness while orienting them toward discourse that elucidates the relationship of God and creature according to love³⁰. Love is in fact a “twofold divine love”: creative love according to nature and elective love according to grace.³¹ In its fullness, this dual movement is of *love* and of

28 In my treatment of charity later in this chapter, I explore what it means for Thomas to claim that an infused virtue is that *which God works in us without us*.

29 See Eberhard Schockenhoff, *Bonum Hominis: die anthropologischen und theologischen Grundlagen der Tugendethik des Thomas von Aquin*. (Mainz : Matthias-Grünewald-Verlag, 1987), 327:

Weder die ‘*virtus acquisita*’ noch die ‘*virtus infusa*’ prägen den praktischen Vollzug guten Handelns in der Reinform, die sich im Gedankenlaboratorium der Wesenanalyse erkennen lassen. Einer theologischen Betrachtung, wie Thomas ihr in der STh folgt, zeigt sich die erworbene Tugend wie jedes natürliche Vermögen des Menschen nicht mehr in einem naturalen, hinsichtlich der Gnade noch unentschiedenen Status. Sie ist vielmehr in einem konkreten Menschen gegeben, der sich dem Anruf der Gnade in freier Entschiedenheit oder unbewußter Antwort seiner geistigen Kreatur von Ewigkeit her suchenden Liebe Gottes gibt es für keinen Menschen den Stand der Unentschiedenheit. Gott ist im Leben sein vernünftigen Geschöpfe immer im Modus liebender Bejahung oder der Ablehnung zugegen.

30 Charles Journet reminds readers at the beginning of his classic treatment of grace: “The very first thing, one which must never be forgotten, which we shall never adequately grasp, is that the Judeo-Christian revelation is the revelation of *the love of God for us*” and proceeds to delineate the essence grace in this light in *The Meaning of Grace*, trans. A.V. Littledale (Princeton, NJ: Scepter Publishers, 1960), 15.

31 Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 152. Journet's two kinds are “common” and “special” (18-19).

charity. The acquired virtues are of love and the infused are of charity. The nature/grace distinction parallels the love/charity distinction.³² This set of descriptions renders it difficult to conceive of the acquired virtues – movements of love – as independent of the creature's relationship with a gratuitous and loving Creator.

Thomas develops further the traditional thesis of the connection of virtues when he turns to whether charity can be without the moral virtues in article 3. In *ST* 1a2ae question 65 articles 1 and 2, Thomas treats the moral virtues as connected with one another, yet possible without charity. Those which are not connected are imperfect; those which are connected are perfect. The objections and questions of these articles are formulated using the language of moral and theological virtues. Yet more importantly the *respondeo* of articles 1 and 2 rely heavily on the distinction between imperfect and perfect virtues. Furthermore, it is not as if the moral virtues are imperfect and the theological virtues perfect. For in article 3, Thomas will claim that if the moral virtues are infused, they are connected, thus perfect. Thomas prioritizes the role of charity as the hermeneutic key for discerning whether or not the virtues are connected.

Thomas' argument for the connection of the virtues has not always been supported by his interpreters.³³ I look to two twentieth-century interpreters who place

32 See Cessario on acquired and infused virtues in *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), c. 95. For a more general treatment of these distinctions see also Romanus Cessario's "Is Aquinas's *Summa* only about Grace?," in *Ordo Sapientiae et Amoris*. Hommage au Professeur Jean-Pierre Torrell OP a l'occasion de son 65e anniversaire, ed. Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveria (Fribourg: Editions Universitaires, 1993): 197-209; see also Jean Porter's critique of Rahnerian grace in favor of retaining the traditional distinction between nature and grace in *Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theology of the Natural Law* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2004), esp. 378-98.

33 My characterization may be understated. Peter Lumberras begins his article, "Notes on the Connection of the Virtues": "Few points in moral doctrine have been given more importance by theologians writing on the virtues in general than the connection of the virtues and few points have

themselves in the tradition of Thomas: Peter Geach and Alasdair MacIntyre. In *The Virtues*, Peter Geach begins with faith, hope, and love.³⁴ Then he turns to the cardinal virtues, ending with courage. Throughout, Geach appears to hold a strong interconnection between the virtues. Toward the end of his full treatment of the virtues, he asserts that it takes a brave man to be prudent, although it takes a prudent man to see this. It appears that to have one virtue, you have to have them all. What is more, any ascription of virtue can be undermined by an ascription of cowardice.³⁵ It may be that in not having one, you lack them all so that loss or lack of any one virtue carries with it loss or lack of all the others.³⁶

Yet Geach does not maintain this thesis and by the end of *The Virtues*, he has actively campaigned against it. His treatment of the “so-called unity of the virtues”

caused greater disagreement in the interpretation, acceptance, and defense of St. Thomas’ teaching.” (*The Thomist* 11 (1948): 218-40; 218) Lumbreras also regards Thomas’ treatment as “definitively expressed” in *ST* 1a 2ae q65 (Quaestio 65: “De Connexione Virtutum”). Lumbreras may have had in mind Thomas’ doctrine in Question 65 in light Thomas’ other treatments in *ST* 2a2ae q23; *III Scriptum in IV Libros Sententiarum* distinctiones 27 et 36; IV, 33; *Sententia libri Ethicorum* VI, lectio 11; *Quaestio Disputata de Virtutibus Cardinalibus* 2; et *Quaestiones quodlibetales* XII, quaestio 15; Lumbreras cites *ST* 2a2ae; *III Sent.*; et *De virt. Card.*

Andrew Dell’Olio surveys the recent secondary scholarship in a footnote in *Foundations of Moral Selfhood: Aquinas on Divine Goodness and the Connection of the Virtues* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 2003), 9 fn 23:

For a criticism of this thesis, see George Von Wright *The Varieties of Goodness*, James Wallace *Virtues and Vices*, Alasdair MacIntyre *After Virtue*, and Bernard Williams *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*. Peter Geach *The Virtues* and Julia Annas *The Morality of Happiness* defend forms of the connection thesis but not the unity thesis. Philippa Foot *Virtues and Vices* and John Casey *Pagan Virtue: An Essay in Ethics*, and John Lemos “The Unity of the Virtues and Its Defenses” in *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* defend the unity thesis, and Gary Watson “Virtues in Excess” in *Philosophical Studies* defends some aspects of the unity thesis while offering a thorough treatment of both versions... A useful historical account of the general issue may be found in James Walsh “Buridan on the Connection of the Virtues” in *Journal of the History of Philosophy*.”

34 Peter Geach, *The Virtues: Why Men Need the Virtues* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977).

35 *Ibid.*, 160–61.

36 *Ibid.*, 162–164.

begins with whether or not the cardinal virtues are unified.³⁷ He admits that corrupt habits of practical reasoning in one area may corrupt practical reasoning in other areas. Yet unsound judgment in one area does not always threaten judgment in the others. We are not consistent. “There is a tacit assumption,” Geach writes, “that if a man’s habit of sound moral judgment is vitiated anywhere it is vitiated everywhere. This would follow only if men formed their judgments with rigorous consistency; but notoriously they do nothing of the kind, and we may thank God that they do not. The main line of thought they are on may lead to Hell, but providentially they are shunted off onto a side-line.”³⁸ This intractable problem, Geach calls “human inconsistency” in judgment.³⁹ (It seems reasonable, in my view, to name our ability to know only incompletely as we know only through embodied, limited experience.) Geach takes this further in connecting inconsistency to virtues, suggesting that because of inconsistency we may practically reason rightly in one case and not in others. It would appear then that on occasion one would have prudence but would have the other virtues. The virtues are not unified after all.⁴⁰

Alasdair MacIntyre echoes Geach when he calls into question the unity of the

37 *Ibid.*, 162. That is to say, Geach intentionally leaves out the theological virtues when using such expressions as ‘(all) the virtues.’ He reintroduces them later when he considers whether moral virtue without theological has merit, to which he responds more along Thomas’ lines which he connects later to Catholic tradition (168-9).

38 *Ibid.*, 164-5.

39 *Ibid.*, 165.

40 Geach is clear: “No prudence, then, if any one behavioural virtue is lacking; if prudence is lacking, no behavioural virtue is still a virtue; so all the virtues stand or fall together. The conclusion is, I have said, both odious and preposterous; and it is easy to detect the flaw in the reasoning.” (*The Virtues*, 164.) Romanus Cessario takes exception to Geach’s exception to the thesis, since Geach “considers the acquired virtues from a philosopher’s point of view” (*The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics*, 192 fn 1).

virtues in *After Virtue*. MacIntyre offers the example of a devoted and intelligent Nazi to whom we would like to attribute courage.⁴¹ Following Geach's line of argumentation, MacIntyre writes that those Thomists committed to the unity of the virtues must say that the Nazi's courage is either (i) not courage in this case or (ii) not a virtue. MacIntyre rejects either option, reasoning that to accept either entails denying what is necessary in the moral re-education of such an individual. In such re-education, for MacIntyre, the Nazi would find that humility and charity would be something new, but avoidance of cowardice and intemperate rashness are *not* new. The courage of the Nazi provides "something on which to build" when re-educating him into the virtues.⁴² MacIntyre concludes that any moral theory seriously committed to a strong thesis concerning the unity of the virtues is defective.

By way of Geach and MacIntyre, we arrive at a penultimate description of the problem of the unity of the virtues: acquired virtues are not expected to be unified, infused are. Acquired virtues can exist in the piecemeal way that Geach and MacIntyre suggest, and of course are the ones to which we refer when talking about Nazis. In contrast, the infused virtues are instilled along with the gifts in one graced package. When one sins mortally, all is lost. The distinction between the acquired and infused appears to be the explanatory distinction between those virtues which need not be unified and those which are. I regard this as a penultimate description, however, because I have yet to consider Thomas' own treatment in articles two and three of question 65.

41 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 179.

42 *Ibid.*, 180.

In an argumentatively-rich *sed contra*, Thomas writes:

The whole law is fulfilled through charity, for it is written *He that loveth his neighbour hath fulfilled the Law*. It is not possible, however, to fulfill the whole Law without having all the moral virtues, since law contains precepts about all acts of virtue, as is stated in *Ethics* V. Whoever has charity, therefore, has all the moral virtues. Moreover, Augustine says in one of his letters that charity contains all the cardinal virtues.⁴³

Thomas links law, love, and virtue to one another, and the virtues to one other. He enlists the help of Aristotle on the law and Augustine on charity.⁴⁴ In the *respondeo*, he focuses on the divine activity of infusion in charity:

All the moral virtues are infused together with charity. The reason for this is that God operates no less perfectly in regard to works of grace than in those of nature, where we do not find the sources for certain types of activity in a thing without there being present also whatever is necessary to carry them out.⁴⁵

It is clear that since “the moral virtues are infused together with charity,” the infused moral virtues go together with the infused theological. What does this mean for the acquired virtues? Does this mean that the infused are connected but the acquired are not? Or is it possible instead that God, operating no less perfectly in regard to works of grace, also works perfectly in works of nature? Is it possible that the acquired may be connected?

43 ST 1a 2ae q65 a3 s.c. “Quod per caritatem total lex impletur: dicitur enim *Rom.*, quod *qui diligit proximum, legem implevit*. Sed tota lex impleri non potest nisi per omnes virtutes morales, qui lex praecipit de omnibus actibus virtutum, ut dicitur in *Ethic.* Ergo qui habet caritatem, habet omnes virtutes morales. Augustinus etiam dicit in quadam epistola quod *caritas includit in se omnes virtutes cardinales.*”

44 N.B.: *Quaestio Disputata de Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, 2. Thomas cites as authorities for the connection of the virtues Ambrose, Gregory, Aristotle, and Ezechiel in the *sed contra* and Augustine, John, Job, Romans, Wisdom, and I Corinthians in the *respondeo*.

45 ST 1a2ae q65 a3 co. “Cum caritate simul infunduntur omnes virtutes morales. Cujus ratio est, quia Deus non minus perfecte operatur in operibus gratiae quam in operibus naturae. Sic autem videmus in operibus naturae quod non invenitur principium aliquorum operum in aliqua re quin inveniantur in ea quae sunt necessaria ad hujusmodi opera, perficienda.”

Thomas takes up these distinctions of moral and theological, acquired and infused, imperfect and perfect at greater length in *Quaestio Disputata de Virtutibus Cardinalibus*, Question 2.⁴⁶ Rather than the distinction between the moral and theological virtues or the acquired and infused, his response initially focuses on imperfect and perfect and takes this distinction to a new level of specification by expanding it. Speaking “about the virtues in two ways,” imperfect and perfect, gives rise to “three levels of virtues”: wholly imperfect, perfect in one way, and unqualifiedly perfect.⁴⁷ These three levels are explained this way: wholly imperfect virtues “exist without practical wisdom, and so do not achieve right reason, for example, the inclinations that some people have even from when they are born to act in a way characteristic of a certain virtue.”⁴⁸ Such inclinations do not possess the character of a virtue because, among other reasons, they are open to misuse; according to Augustine no one can misuse a virtue. Thomas concludes on such inclinations that they “do not possess the character of a virtue in a perfect way.”⁴⁹ Yet they are still described as “virtue,” whatever the sense. That they are so underscores the range of the analogy of virtue.

The second level of virtue consists in virtues which achieve right reason, “but

⁴⁶ These disputed questions were thought to have been written at the same time as Thomas was working on the corresponding parts of the *Summa*, 1268-72. Although the critical edition of the Leonine Commission on *Quaestiones Disputatae* is still underway, the Cambridge translation relies on their provisional text.

⁴⁷ *Quaestio disputata de virtutibus cardinalibus*, 2, in *Quaestiones disputate*, Marietti edition, eds. P. Bazzi, M. Calcaterra, T.S. Centi, E. Odetto, P.M. Pession. Vol 2. (Turin-Rome: Marietti, 1965); English translation: *Thomas Aquinas: Disputed Questions on the Virtues* trans. E.M. Atkins (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

⁴⁸ *De virt. card.* 2: “quae sine prudentia existunt, non attingentes rationem rectam, sicut sunt inclinationes quas aliqui habent ad aliqua virtutum opera etiam ab ipsa nativitate.”

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*: “non habent perfecte rationem virtutis.”

do not reach God himself through charity.”⁵⁰ They are perfect in relation to the human good, “but do not attain the first standard, which is our ultimate end.”⁵¹ Thus these virtues are “perfect in one way,” but not unqualifiedly.⁵² Unqualifiedly perfect virtues are combined with charity. They “make a human action unqualifiedly good, in that it is something that attains our ultimate end.”⁵³

Thomas is clear what this threefold grade of virtues means for their connection:

If, then, we take the virtues as unqualifiedly perfect, they are connected because of charity, because no virtue can be of this sort without charity, and once you possess charity you possess all the virtues. However, if we take the virtues as perfect at the second level, with reference to the human good, they are connected through practical wisdom, because no moral virtue can exist without practical wisdom and we cannot possess practical wisdom if any of the moral virtues are lacking. On the other hand, if we take the four cardinal virtues as implying certain general criteria for virtues, they are interconnected in that one of these criteria alone is not enough for virtuous action: all need to be present.⁵⁴

A better distinction for talking about the connection of the virtues is the one that Thomas now settles on: the distinction between wholly imperfect, perfect in one way, and perfect virtue. The virtue that concerns Geach and MacIntyre is either *wholly*

50 *Ibid.*: “non tamen attingunt ad ipsum Deum per caritatem.”

51 *Ibid.*: “non attingunt ad primam regulam, quae est ultimus finis.”

52 *Ibid.*: “perfectae per comparisonem ad bonum humanum, non tamen sunt simpliciter perfectae.”

53 *Ibid.*: “faciunt actum hominis simpliciter bonum, quasi attingentem usque ad ultimum finem.”

54 *Ibid.*:

Sic ergo, si accipiamus virtutes simpliciter perfectas, connectuntur propter caritatem; quia nulla virtus talis sine caritate haberi potest, et caritate habita omnes habentur. Si autem accipiamus virtutes perfectas in secundo gradu, respectu boni humani, sic connectuntur per prudentiam; quia sine prudentia nulla virtus moralis esse potest, nec prudentia haberi potest, si cui deficiat moralis virtus. Si tamen accipiamus quatuor cardinales virtutes, secundum quod important quasdam generales conditiones virtutum, secundum hoc habent connexionem, ex hoc quod non sufficit ad aliquem actum virtutis quod adsit una harum conditionum, nisi omnes adsint.

imperfect or perfect in one way – the acquired without charity – and so naturally they lack the unifying principle charity provides. Even though they are called virtues only secondarily or analogously, there is still some measure in which they possess the character of virtue. Returning to MacIntyre's example of Nazi courage, we affirm that this virtue is indeed not connected and conclude that we call such courage either wholly imperfect courage or courage that is perfect in one way. So Geach and MacIntyre can rest with the idea of there being virtues albeit wholly imperfect or perfect in one way that exist without being unified.

Geach wrote more on the thesis concerning the unity of the virtues in his later *Truth and Hope*, revisiting also the problem of “inconsistency.”⁵⁵ Inconsistency yields morally questionable behavior and false judgments. As such, it poses a genuine harm to the human good. However much inconsistency is to be expected, it is a clear instance of our missing the mark. There is plenty of room in Geach's scheme to make the mark too. That is, there is a place for virtue which is, better yet, unified and perfect. Whereas in *The Virtues*, Geach's treatment on the connection of virtues concentrates on the negative formulations, his turn is positive in *Truth and Hope*. He turns from consistency to charity – that real source of unity. He describes charity, the form of the virtues, as alone forging unity of mind and heart to, as Kierkegaard puts it, ‘will one thing.’⁵⁶

55 Peter Geach, *Truth and Hope* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), esp. Chapter 3, “Consistency,” 35-45. MacIntyre also revisits his criticism of Thomas in to disavow it: “I now, for example, think that my earlier criticism of Aquinas's theses on the unity of the virtues was simply mistaken and due in part to a misreading of Aquinas” (*Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*, x). I have tried to offer an account here of in what this “misreading of Aquinas” consists as well as why MacIntyre initially espouse such an interpretation.

56 Geach, *Truth and Hope*, 45.

For Thomas, *unqualifiedly perfect* virtue enjoys that unity which only charity can bestow. For infused virtues alone are connected in a manner that makes us perfect. As for the acquired, if they are accompanied by the infused, they also enjoy that perfect unity forged by charity. Perfect virtue includes the infused virtues and may extend to acquired virtue as well in a literally graced unity which brings together virtues of all kinds.⁵⁷ The connection between virtues – whether moral and theological, acquired and infused – perfects the complete self. “A complete self,” Dell’Olio writes, “consists not only of the harmony between the different parts of its own nature and their different activities, activities that create stable dispositions to act further in that way, but the complete self also consists of the openness to deeper influences beyond its natural limits which further perfect it.”⁵⁸ The perfection of the complete self is the work of grace.

A more precise understanding of the way in which the virtues are unified entails explanation of whether the vices are unified. If one insists on the unity of the virtues, must one also insist on the unity of the vices? If one kind of good habit entails all the others, does one kind of corrupting bad habit entail the corruption of all habits?⁵⁹ Vice may take such root that it becomes an expression of an almost second

57 For now I bracket what I assume – there is an absolute continuing need for acquired virtue even in the lives of Christians despite their moral virtues operating on a new horizon.

58 Andrew Dell’Olio, *Foundations of Moral Selfhood*, 102-103. Rather late in the writing process I discovered a sympathetic account of the strong unity of the virtues in Dell’Olio. Dell’Olio reads Thomas as preserving the wholeness of the perfected moral self through the connection of the virtues, virtues oriented according to the twofold nature of the human good by which human beings participate in divine goodness.

59 Although vice is not compatible with virtue, sin is, in *ST 1a2ae q71 a4 s.c.* Here Thomas draws on the distinction between habit and act (to distinguish vice and sin) and concludes in the *respondeo*: “mortal sin is incompatible with the infused virtues, but is consistent with acquired virtue”! For more see page 174.

Augustine addresses the apparent paradox of the Christian life as one marked by both charity and the continuing presence of sin in a letter to Jerome in “Letter to Jerome,” Letter 167.

nature.⁶⁰ Does this second nature entail all vicious habits befitting that nature?

One version of the thesis regarding the unity of the vices runs that the vices are not unified *per se*, but since morally significant situations draw upon more than one virtue, the presence of any vice will make the other virtues harder to attain and sustain.⁶¹ For any given vice is likely to lead to other modes of corruption. For example, “it is not that cowardice involves injustice. Rather, the coward, on account of his cowardice will find it harder to perform (at least some) just acts.”⁶²

A more robust version of the unity of the vices is given by Jonathan Jacobs and John Zeis, who argue that “*any* vice already involves manifold corruption... One vice not only makes virtue harder, it really does include defects across the other moral dimensions.”⁶³ Jacobs and Zeis offer a counter-example: “cowardice is not just an impediment to being just; injustice is ingredient in cowardice, in that the latter prevents one from facing reasonable risks and the service of justice often requires that we do just that” so that succumbing to fear involves turning away from what is owed to others and oneself.⁶⁴ Rather than obliging the tendency to compartmentalize

Thomas' conclusion is clear in *ST* 1a2ae q73 a1 ad3: “self-love disunites man's affections among different things, in so far as man loves himself, by desiring for himself temporal goods, which are various and of many kinds: hence vices and sins, which arise from self-love, are not connected together.” Because secondary literature purportedly dependent on Thomas' commitments develops strongly divergent conclusions from Thomas' own, I infer it is still needful to explore the logic of Thomas' claim. Moreover, this treatment will begin to square Thomas' commitments with what might seem are contrary Scriptural passages such as James 2:10 (the prompt for Augustine's reflections in the above letter) and 1 Timothy 6:10.

60 *ST* 1a2ae q71 a2.

61 An argument Jonathan Jacobs and John Zeis find objectionable in “The Unity of the Vices,” *The Thomist* 54.4 (October 1990): 641-653; 648-49.

62 This example is also found objectionable in Jacobs and Zeis, “The Unity of the Vices,” 648.

63 Jacobs and Zeis, “The Unity of the Vices,” 648-49.

64 *Ibid.*, 649.

character, Jacobs and Zeis regard it as a complex whole. The presence of any one vice will degrade the virtues that are present and potentially lead to their failure. (Such a unity may be felicitous in some instances, as Thomas allows and Philippa Foot notes, in the example that it is better for a blind horse if it is slow. Defects may cancel one another out.⁶⁵)

Geach's earlier argument for the inconsistency in human judgment implies that a particular defect, e.g., imprudence, need not affect the other virtues.⁶⁶ For the vices are not unified in Geach's account. Yet his material lends support to the common commitment to the only force of unity in the moral life being charity's. Without charity a moral life will be hopelessly disunited as one makes proximate or worse yet ultimate goods out of diverse objects.

I see merits for both sides of the arguments regarding the unity of vices. What I think is more important than one's conclusions in this regard – regardless of whether one regards vices as unified (in a common movement away from genuine goods or the ultimate good) or disconnected (as oriented toward scattered objects) – is that one hold that vices express and are constitutive of a divided self. Solution of such a self is available through the unifying movement of grace. Such divine intervention is needful, for moral reform is a complex process impossible to sort on our own.

The genuine interconnection of virtues that Thomas insists upon generates a perceived difficulty: it seems we see charity without other virtues. Thomas notes the objection: "Bede says that the saints are more humbled on account of their not having

⁶⁵ Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices – and other essays in moral philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16 citing *ST* 1a2ae q58 a4 [sic] referring to ad3.

⁶⁶ Geach, *The Virtues*, 164-5.

certain virtues, rather than elated at the virtues they have. It is not necessary, therefore, that a person who has charity has also all the moral virtues.”⁶⁷ Thomas’ reply? “Certain saints are said not to have certain virtues, in so far as they experience difficulty in the acts of those virtues, for the reason stated; although the habits of all the virtues are possessed.”⁶⁸ As long as one possesses the habit, one possesses the virtue. Habituation is central to the moral life of the saints, meaning that the character of acquired virtue marks the infused virtues as well.

Now it begins to emerge more clearly that Thomas' use of language regarding habit parallels that of virtue, meaning that in fact there is an analogical range of habit. Both acquired and infused virtues are by definition good habits. Yet it is possible to distinguish between kinds of habit. The kind of habit characteristic of acquired virtues differs from the kind of habit characteristic of infused virtues. The acquired virtues are habits in a fuller sense as they issue in an act with ease and joy. By contrast, the example regarding certain saints shows that a saint may have an infused habit and yet experience difficulty in the acts of those habits. (In such cases, as the gap between act and habit increases, so too Thomas' distance from Aristotle.) What this looks like becomes more clear in the next section as I further explore habituation in relationship

67 *ST* 1a 2ae q65 a3 arg 3: “Beda quod sancti magis humiliantur de virtutibus quas non habent, quam de virtutibus quas habent, gloriantur. Ergo non est necessarium quod qui habet caritatem, omnes virtutes morales habeat.”

68 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a3 ad3: “Aliqui sancti dicuntur aliquas virtutes non habere, inquantum patiuntur difficultatem in actibus earum, ratione jam dicta, quamvis habitus omnium virtutum habeant.” Cf. *Disputed Questions on the Cardinal Virtues*, 2, arg 1 and its reply.

Rather important to my reading, I assume that the saints have all the virtues necessary for salvation – i.e., infused. I see no reason for Thomas to assert that they all have the acquired virtues as well. In fact, many Thomistic interpreters have written on this matter; see Sherwin, “Infused Virtue and the Effects of Acquired Vice.”

to the increase of infused virtue.⁶⁹

2.2 The “Acquired” Infused

Thomas continues to develop his account of the good life as a journey back to God in the Second Part of the Second Part of the *Summa*. Parts One and Three of the *Summa* describe the way (*via*) and Part Two, the way of virtue for wayfarers (*viatores*).⁷⁰ Charity is the beginning, way, and end of that journey.⁷¹ In this section, I draw attention to the aspects of Thomas’ treatment of charity which liken charity to an

69 I also take up the distinction between *habitus* and *actus* in Chapter Four.

Note that I say “increase” of infused virtue rather than “growth in...” In earlier drafts, I frequently used what I took to be Thomistic descriptions “growth in virtue” and “growth in charity.” Paul Griffiths drew my attention to a potential problem with the metaphor of growth for hampering homologies that the Church bears to the *depositum fidei*. When I went back to the text, I learned that Thomas himself very seldom uses the language of growth (*incrementum, auctus*), rather on occasion uses something like the verb grow (*creasco*) which could better be translated increase (*augeo, intumescio, increbresco, amplio, cresco*). For an illustrative example, see *ST* 2a2ae q24 a6 c.o.:

Augmentum spirituale caritatis quodammodo simile est *augmento* corporali. *Augmentum* autem corporale in animalibus et plantis non est motus continuus, ita scilicet quod, si aliquid tantum *augetur* in tanto tempore, necesse sit quod *proportionaliter* in qualibet parte illius temporis aliquid *augeatur*, sicut contingit in motu locali, sed per aliquod tempus natura operatur disponens ad *augmentum* et nihil *augens* actu, et postmodum producit in effectum id ad quod disposuerat, *augendo* animal vel plantam in actu. Ita etiam non quolibet actu caritatis caritas actu *augetur*, sed quilibet actus caritatis disponit ad caritatis *augmentum*, in quantum ex uno actu caritatis homo redditur promptior iterum ad agendum secundum caritatem; et, habilitate *crescente*, homo prorumpit in actum ferventiorum dilectionis, quo conetur ad caritatis profectum; et tunc caritas *augetur* in actu.

See too *ST* 1a2ae q66 a2. I infer that Thomas did not use the language of growth in connection to the virtues for a reason very like Griffiths'. Instead, Thomas follows Aristotle by reserving 'growth' for the lower faculties. For other misunderstandings that the language of growth can engender see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington D.C., Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 353-54 and the virtues as 'seeds' in Langland, *Piers*, XXI.200ff and Chapter Four, pages 185ff.

70 See the Appendix for more on *via*, *viatores*, us, and Christ.

71 Much worthwhile has been written on charity. The following studies have enabled this chapter, cited here collectively but also individually in the footnotes to follow: Paul Wadell's *Friends of God: Virtues and Gifts in Aquinas* and *Primacy of Love: An Introduction to the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas*; Michael Sherwin's *By Knowledge and By Love*; Schockenhoff's "The Theological Virtue of Charity," in *Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 244-258 and "Die Liebe als Freundschaft des Menschen mit Gott: Das Proprium der Caritas-Lehre des Thomas von Aquin," *Internationale katholische Zeitschrift Communio* 36 (2007): 232-46.

acquired habit through which we become friends with God, a habit which always inclines to its greater perfection.

In the Second Part of the Second Part, Thomas comes to charity by following the Biblical sequence of 1 Corinthians 13:13, starting first with faith, then hope, then love. He begins with 1 Corinthians 13:12: “We see now through a glass in a dark manner; but then face to face,” which for the wayfarer describes the initial ordering of the mind to God which is called faith.⁷² Faith names the beginning of the journey whereby eternal life is begun in us.⁷³ The object of faith includes the mystery of Christ’s Incarnation and Passion, the “way” by which we obtain beatitude.⁷⁴ Faith is not an individual achievement but a gift handed on through a community by its practices, the community of the Church which practices the Sacraments.⁷⁵ Next Thomas treats the entering of eternal happiness into the heart of the wayfarer such that a movement towards it arises – this movement being hope itself.⁷⁶ Hope is crucial

72 *ST 2a2ae q1 a5.*

73 *ST 2a2ae q4 a1.*

74 *ST 2a2ae q2 a7 co.*: “*Illud proprie et per se pertinet ad obiectum fidei per quod homo beatitudinem consequitur. Via autem hominibus veniendi ad beatitudinem est mysterium incarnationis et passionis Christi, dicitur enim Act. IV, non est aliud nomen datum hominibus in quo oporteat nos salvos fieri.*” See also *ST 2a2ae q18 a3 co.*: “*Sed in viatoribus sive sint in vita ista sive in Purgatorio, potest esse spes, quia utrobique apprehendunt beatitudinem ut futurum possibile.*”

75 *ST 2a2ae q1 a9.*

76 *ST 2a2ae q17 a2 ad1*: “*Beatitudo aeterna perfecte quidem in cor hominis non ascendit, ut scilicet cognosci possit ab homine viatore quae et qualis sit, sed secundum communem rationem, scilicet boni perfecti, cadere potest in apprehensione hominis. Et hoc modo motus spei in ipsam consurgit.*” Compare the Blackfriars translation to the English Dominicans: “While it is true that there is no clear cognizance of what eternal beatitude is in the sense that one still in this life could know its exact nature and conditions, yet some vague idea of it is possible in the concept ‘the limitless good.’ Indeed this is exactly the way that the longing of hope arises in us.” (Blackfriars) versus “Eternal happiness does not enter into the heart of man perfectly, i.e. so that it be possible for a wayfarer to know its nature and quality; yet, under the general notion of the perfect good, it is possible for it to be apprehended by a man, and it is in this way that the movement of hope towards it arises.” (English Dominicans) The English Dominicans’ translation retains the sense of *viator* as wayfarer.

to sustain movement back to God, for it sustains the presence of the ultimate end throughout the journey.

Despite all that, Thomas' systematic interrelations between these virtues defy a single sequential ordering. Faith and hope both lead to charity, but also presuppose charity.⁷⁷ Eberhard Schockenhoff proposes that in charity, faith and hope are taken a step further as Thomas thinks of "friendship" as the union between the human being and the God of his faith and hope.⁷⁸ As God gives Himself to be known under the determinative aspects of faith (as first truth) and hope (as powerful aid), charity aims at God without restriction on Him. Charity "attains God himself."⁷⁹ Through love, the human beings now surpass themselves by participation in the Triune life.⁸⁰ Unlike the other virtues, charity alone remains in glory.⁸¹ Charity alone makes other virtues what they are. Without charity, faith and hope are not virtues.⁸²

77 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a5; 2a2ae q4 a7 et q17 a8.

78 Schockenhoff, "Die Liebe als Freundschaft des Menschen mit Gott": "In seiner theologischethischen Theorie der Liebe geht Thomas noch einen Schritt weiter, indem er die Verbindung des Menschen mit dem Gott seines Glaubens und seiner Hoffnung als Freundschaft denkt." (238)

79 "Gibt sich Gott dem Menschen im Glauben und in der Hoffnung jeweils unter einer bestimmten Rücksicht (als erste Wahrheit oder als machtvolle Hilfe) zu erkennen, so richtet sich die Liebe ohne jede Einschränkung auf ihn: 'Die Liebe erreicht Gott, wie er in sich selbst ist.'" Schockenhoff, "Die Liebe als Freundschaft des Menschen mit Gott," 238 quoting *ST* 2a2ae q23 a6: "caritas attingit ipsum Deum" which according to Schockenhoff's German is rendered: "The love reaches God as He is in Himself."

80 "In der Liebe wird Gott des Menschen Freund und der durch einen unendlichen Abstand von ihm getrennte Mensch zum Freund Gottes. Durch die Liebe wird der Mensch schon jetzt über sich hinaus in 'eine gewisse Gemeinschaft des Menschen zu Gott' (*aliqua communicatio hominis ad Deum*) geführt, die dadurch entsteht, dass der dreieinige Gott den Menschen zur Teilnahme an seinem göttlichen Leben beruft." Schockenhoff, "Die Liebe als Freundschaft des Menschen mit Gott," 238.

81 *ST* 1a2ae q67 a6.

82 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a4 co.: "Et ideo fides et spes possunt esse sine caritate, sed sine caritate, proprie loquendo, virtutes non sunt."

In the first article on charity, Thomas' language expresses God's longing for His people in the intimacy characteristic of friendship: *convivere, conversatio, communicatione*.⁸³ This fluctuant and substantial language is guarded by a careful use of *communicatione*.⁸⁴ Divine charity is ours in "a communication between man and God, inasmuch as He communicates His happiness to us."⁸⁵ Thomas specifies it in terms of a Scriptural condition: "St. Paul refers to it, *God is faithful by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son*."⁸⁶ This *communicatione* is God's and as such calls into being a genuine fellowship impossible apart from it. It springs from God's desire, not ours. And it is uniquely transformative. This same *communicatione* marks the mystery of the Incarnation and calls creatures into the fullness of the Triune life. Charity qualifies the very faculty it has had 'a hand' in making. Unlike the other virtues – for example temperance, which perfects the sensuous appetite or justice which perfects the will – charity creates its own reception.

Thomas pulls together charity, happiness, and *communicatione* to revisit his earlier treatment of happiness in the first questions of the First Part of the Second

83 *ST* 2a2ae q23 a1; cf. *societas, convivere, et conversatio* in *In III sent.*, d 32, a 2. The etymological connection between these characteristics is instructive – living together, speaking with one another – and may show the integral bond between the realities of community and communication through communion.

84 This is a substantive revision from friendship as developed in *The Commentary on the Sentences (In III Sent.*, d27 q2 a1) where "Thomas does not offer a deeper reflection on the basis for such an exchange of life between God and human beings, or on how friendship between both, attested to by Aristotle only in a mythical mode of speech, can be conceived of at all. God's charity is simply a friendship of human beings with God, in the same way that any friendship appears as an outstanding variation of love," argues Schockenhoff, "The Theological Virtue of Charity." The argument which follows is deeply indebted to Schockenhoff's insistence that as the first medieval theologian to bring the Aristotelian idea of friendship to bear on analysis of God's charity, he had to relinquish quite a bit from this line of thought to synthesize it with Christian doctrine (esp. 246-48).

85 *ST* 2a2ae q23 a1 co. "Aliqua communicatio hominis ad Deum secundum quod nobis suam beatitudinem communicat, super hac communicatione oportet aliquam amicitiam fundari."

86 *Ibid.*, "Dicitur *I Cor.*, *Fidelis Deus, per quem vocati estis in societatem Filii ejus.*"

Part. Reading the earlier and later treatments together, Thomas holds that God is the end of all happiness and God is happiness' way. The principle of happiness, God, is charity.⁸⁷ Charity is the activity of God's sharing God's happiness in friendship.⁸⁸

For all of that, charity is *ours*.⁸⁹ For it is something created in the soul. Charity arises from the inner principle infused into the created structure of the human being, obviating the idea that the Holy Spirit moves the mind as if by an extrinsic power. Equally unpalatable is the idea that the Holy Spirit moves the will as if it were an instrument. Rather, the will must actuate its own effectiveness. Charity, like all other virtues, proceeds from habit: "therefore it is most necessary that, for us to perform the act of charity, there should be in us some habitual form superadded to the natural power, inclining that power to the act of charity, and causing it to act with ease and pleasure."⁹⁰ Acting from habituation 'readily' and 'with delight' is Thomas' naming of charity as a kind of 'pull' rather than 'push.' Thomas searches for the conceptual

87 *ST* 2a2ae q26 a1. Wadell argues: "When Thomas thinks about happiness in light of charity, his conclusion is not only that we are most happy in God, but, more pointedly, that we cannot be happy unless we are friends of God. If God is our happiness, to whatever extent we have happiness we must have God. The difference, though subtle, is important because when Thomas thinks of happiness in terms of charity he sees the happiness of God not as something that awaits us at the end of a life of other types of happiness, but as precisely that from which all happiness flows." (*Friends of God*, 17)

88 David Burrell argues that Thomas' 'being' is best construed as 'activity' rather than a contribution to substantive metaphysics in *Analogy and Philosophical Language* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973).

89 Cf. Thomas' argument for the power to know and love rightly in the Holy Spirit, a gift which becomes *ours* in *ST* 1a q38 yet remains distinct. So Thomas does not hold, as Lombard does, that charity is nothing more than the Holy Spirit. Wadell treats Thomas' usage as highlighting two distinct senses of charity: one as the virtue expressive of active friendship with God and the other as the Spirit expressive of that friendship's perfection (*Friends of God*, 23). Wadell also treats the connections between the virtues and gifts, esp. 121-139.

90 *ST* 2a2ae q23 a2 co.: "Unde maxime necesse est quod ad actum caritatis existat in nobis aliqua habitualis forma superaddita potentiae naturali, inclinans ipsam ad caritatis actum, et faciens eam prompte et delectabiliter operari." English Dominicans' translation is preferred to the Blackfriars' rendering, "that some form reside habitually in the will."

resources to depict charity as the ‘good use’ of *pondus meum amor meum*, a finally God-gearred *pondus* of which Augustine writes.

Thomas’ fullest treatment of habituation comes in the First Part of the Second Part where he draws heavily on ancient thought to characterize these intrinsic principles of action. As I mentioned at the end of the previous section, by construing *habitus* as a “second nature,” Thomas appears to be continuing in the Aristotelian vein.⁹¹ But he soon departs from it by introducing a new category altogether: infused habits.⁹² As infused, they are from God; as virtues, they are habits marked by perfected ease and joy. Yet these latter characteristics are exactly what the infused virtues may *lack*. Infused virtues lack the defining characteristic of the acquired: *delectatio*.⁹³

The infused virtues lack the perfection that the acquired already enjoy. (The acquired virtues lack the inner-directedness to the last end that the infused enjoy.) That infused virtue has a kind of non-habituated-ness is an unexpected characteristic often noted in secondary scholarship. Less often noted is that this lack *likens* infused to

91 For more on habit in terms of nature, see Bernard Ryosuke Inagaki’s “Habitus and *Natura* in Aquinas,” *Studies in Medieval Philosophy*, ed. John F. Wippel, Vol. 17 (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1987), 159-175. Inagaki argues that “when Aquinas says that habitus is primarily and essentially related to nature itself, nature is taken in the sense of the end, the final cause. When he maintains that habits proceed from some preexisting natural principles, however, he seems to take the natural principles or nature itself as the efficient cause. The picture which emerges here is certainly paradoxical.” (174)

92 Bonnie Kent notes the same in “Habits and Virtues,” *Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays* ed. Brian Davies (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 223-244; 224-226 citing *ST* 1a2ae q51 a4. Kent does not go far enough, however, in reckoning the difficulties that this later addition of infused habits introduces to Thomas’ initial definition.

93 Schockenhoff notes the same in *Bonum Hominis*, 291-320; I have little to add to Schockenhoff’s magisterial treatment. A small curiosity, however, is Schockenhoff’s treatment of *virtus infusa* coming before *virtus acquisita* even as he aims to follow Thomas’ own movement through the ‘organic’ process of virtue (*Bonum Hominis* 554, n289).

acquired. That is, just as the acquired virtues enjoy a kind of incomplete perfection, so too the infused virtues. Both are incomplete though differently. The incompleteness of the infused indicates a gradual, rather than instantaneous, acquiescence to the movement of grace:

The efficacy of divine grace in the psychological structures of the human is not immediately given as a mental quality... Precisely the '*delectatio*' of virtue is still not the case... [*Virtus infusa*] are not given the motivating power of good as an experience of joy; at least in the beginning actions arising from mere '*virtus infusa*' must make do without the '*delectatio*' that belongs to acquired virtue.⁹⁴

Until it is moved by the joy of acquired virtue, infused virtue remains incomplete.

Without the ease of operation that properly characterizes a habit, Robert Sokolowski notes, the infused virtues concern the struggle for self-mastery rather than character.

The infused virtues alone seem to render a person self-controlled or continent rather than virtuous.⁹⁵ Or, as Antoninus Finili puts it: "although a good moral action is

possible without any habitus in the power from which it proceeds, a moral *life* is not."⁹⁶

The categories of infused habits and infused virtues may appear puzzling –

94 This is Schockenhoff's characterization: "Die Wirksamkeit der göttlichen Gnade in den psychischen Strukturen des Menschen nicht unmittelbar als seelische Erlebniqualität gegeben ist... Genau dies [die '*delectatio*'] aber ist bei den eingegossenen Tugenden noch nicht der Fall... Es ist ihnen nicht gegeben, die Motivkraft des Guten als erlebbar Freude verspüren zu lassen; zumindest im Anfang entbehrt ein nur der '*virtus infusa*' entspringendes Handeln der '*delectatio*' die der erworbenen Tugend zu eigen ist." in *Bonum Hominis*, 312-313.

95 Robert Sokolowski, *The God of Faith and Reason: Foundations of Christian Theology* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982), 75-80. In a further contrast between the two kinds of virtue, Sokolowski observes:

This contrast of the two kinds of virtue, the natural and the theological, is often the theme of literary treatments of Christianity. Very often such works will describe someone who is weak in self-control, someone who cannot master the inclination to alcohol or to sensuality, but who struggles with these inclinations and in this struggle still serves as an example of faith, hope, and charity. The very paradox of combining weakness with theological virtue in the same agent is a literary device that writers could not possibly resist, especially writers who live within the axioms of modernity. (76) This treatment is not confined to literary ones – see Knobel, *The Infused and Acquired Virtues*.

96 Antoninus Finili, "On the Virtue of Religion and the Infused Moral Virtues," *Dominican Studies* 3 (1950): 78-88; 85. Cf. *ST I-II.49.4*.

habits that are not fully habits, virtues that are not fully virtues – but this is not accidental.⁹⁷ Their descriptions' range is predicated upon another deployment of analogy that reaches back to Thomas' initial definition of virtue. To render positively what I just covered: infused virtue becomes more fully virtue and thus more fully itself when more fully habituated. Charity, the first among virtues, operates readily and with delight thereby rendering the other infused virtues more perfect.⁹⁸ Charity as a virtue inclines and delights in a movement that will take Thomas from virtues to gifts, for the perfection of the virtues is named in the Gifts of the Spirit.

Without charity, however, no true virtue is possible. To unpack this claim, Thomas invokes a threefold distinction between virtues: counterfeit, imperfect, and true virtue.⁹⁹ If a particular good is merely apparent, the corresponding virtue is counterfeit. If a particular good is true but limited, then the virtue is imperfect.¹⁰⁰ If the particular good is truly good and by its nature capable of being directed to the principal good which is the ultimate end, the virtue is true. The threefold distinction makes more complex the previous distinction between false and true virtue.

Setting this claim in *ST 2a2ae q23 a7* regarding charity and true virtue alongside the distinctions Thomas uses in *ST 1a2ae q65 a2 co. (simpliciter and secundum quid)*, Thomas writes:

97 For example, in her "Habits and Virtues," 243 fn32, Kent notes Odon Lottin's "admirably candid reservations" about the positing of the infused moral virtues in *Principes de Morale*, vol. 2 (Louvain: Éditions de l'Abbaye du Mont César, 1947) 213-25, contrasting Lottin's forthrightness with other twentieth-century authors who either ignore or pass over this aspect of Thomas' ethics.

98 "Prompte et delectabiliter operari," *ST 2a2ae q23 a2*.

99 Falsa similitudo virtutis, imperfecta, et virtus vera (simpliciter) in *ST 2a2ae q23 a7*.

100 Here imperfect is open to "further reference to the final and perfect good," *ST 2a2ae q23 a7* so that imperfect virtue may be rendered perfect.

It is therefore clear from what has been said that only the infused virtues are perfect, and deserve to be called virtues simply, since they direct man well to the ultimate end simply. The other virtues, those namely that are acquired, are virtues according to something, not simply. They direct man well in respect to what is final in some particular field, not in the whole of life. Accordingly, on the text, *All that is not of faith is sin*, the Gloss comments from Augustine, *He that fails to acknowledge the truth has no virtue, even if his conduct be good*.¹⁰¹

The infused and perfect and *simpliciter* virtues are distinguished from acquired and *secundum quid* virtues and from no true virtue. Thomas thus quotes approvingly Augustine's rather strict condemnation of the activity of *infideles*: *falsa est virtus*.¹⁰² Is Thomas now returning to a dichotomy between true and false virtue?

Thomas makes his case more complex than simple oppositions when he revisits *infideles* in question 23. He deploys a threefold grade of virtue. The *infideles* may be one of two depending the act's relation to charity. If the act of the *infidelis* is in accordance with a lack of charity, the act is sinful. If, however, the act is referable to some other gift of God, there can be an act which is good of its kind though not fully good. (This would be the case of one who is without charity but who acts in

101 Patet igitur ex dictis quod solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter. Aliae vero virtutes, scilicet acquisitae, sunt secundum quid virtutes, non autem simpliciter, ordinant enim hominem bene respectu finis ultimi in aliquo genere, non autem respectu finis ultimi simpliciter. Unde Rom. XIV super illud, *omne quod non est ex fide, peccatum est*, dicit Glossa Augustini, *ubi deest agnitio veritatis, falsa est virtus etiam in bonis moribus*.

The Blackfriars translation of 'no virtue' differs from the text, which reads: "*falsa est virtus*;" the English Dominicans remain faithful to the Latin, translating it: "no true virtue."

102 Etienne Gilson glosses this passage, *ST 1a2ae q65 a2*:
An extreme expression, which departs from St. Thomas's usual terminology. He prefers, as we have seen, to say that these are virtues, albeit imperfect virtues. That they are false in the order of supernatural merit, and that this is what St. Augustine means, St. Thomas readily admits. When St. Thomas speaks of them as relatively true, or true in a certain sense or under a certain relationship (*secundum quid*), he is maintaining, on a plane which does not interest St. Augustine, that they deserve the name of virtue in the exact measure in which they satisfy the definition of virtue. To the extent that each of them realizes this, it is a virtue.

The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas (New York: Random House, 1956), 489 fn25.

accordance with one's natural good.) If the *infidelis* acts uncharitably, any virtue is counterfeit. If the *infidelis* acts simply without reference to charity, any virtue is imperfect. Thus Thomas offers two possible characterizations of the virtue of *infidelis*. The previous problematic tension – between acquired and infused virtue or false and true virtue – becomes more complex when juxtaposed with a threefold grade of virtue. Thus Thomas qualifies his view of *infidelis* as he binds charity more closely to the perfection of virtue.

Moreover, Thomas' definition of virtue – a good quality of mind by which we live rightly, of which no one makes bad use – has built into it the very conditions which make inauthentic either compromise or mere appearance.¹⁰³ For by either we do not live rightly, can make bad use, etc. The analogical range of virtue *includes* counterfeits and semblances because of what they share with actual virtues: shared objects, origin, development, or end. Counterfeit virtues are directed at false ends and semblances merely appear to be virtues.¹⁰⁴ Thomas quotes Augustine quoting Horace:

The prudence of misers by which they think up all sorts of ways to make a little money is not true virtue, nor their justice when fear of heavy losses for themselves makes them despise the rights of others, nor again their temperance which makes them restrain their lust because it costs too much to indulge, nor their courage which drives them, as Horace says, to cross oceans, scale rocks and go through flames to avoid poverty.¹⁰⁵

103 *ST* 1a2ae q55 a4. Not making 'bad use' also has to do with the interrelation of the virtues, such that if you make bad use of one virtue then it is likely though not necessary that all will be compromised. See the treatment of the connection of the vices earlier in this chapter.

104 For more on the simulation of virtue, see Thomas' treatment of hypocrisy in *ST* 2a2ae q111 and Jennifer Herdt's treatment of the same in *Putting on Virtue*.

105 *ST* 2a2ae q23 a7 co. quoting *Contra Julianum* IV, 3: "Non est vera virtus avarorum prudentia, qua excogitant diversa genera lucellorum; et avarorum iustitia, qua gravium damnorum metu contemnunt aliena; et avarorum temperantia, qua luxuriae, quoniam sumptuosa est, cohibent appetitum; et avarorum fortitudo, qua, ut ait Horatius, per mare pauperiem fugiunt, per saxa, per ignes, ut Augustinus dicit."

Counterfeit virtues lack orientation toward true but limited goods (of imperfect virtues) or final and perfect goods (of perfect virtues). In contrast, semblances are mere simulation of virtue, and one “in making a show of virtue does not adopt it as end in its reality, as though intending to possess it, but in its appearances, intending to be thought to possess it, but in its appearances, intending to be thought to possess it... As to virtuous acts, [one] employs them not for their own value but for the sheer expediency of their being signs of virtue.”¹⁰⁶ Semblances do not directly oppose virtue according to this description. These new grades of virtue, counterfeit and semblance, mark the vulnerability and potential inherent to all virtue.

Counterfeits and semblances bring to the forefront potential failures for virtue to conform to Aristotle’s dictum that virtuous activity is done with respect to the right things, for the right end, in the right way, at the right time for the right reasons.¹⁰⁷ ‘In the right way’ entails the conformity of the passions to the activity, ‘for the right end’ entails orientation to the human good, and ‘for the right reason’ entails virtue done for virtue’s sake; MacIntyre, Yearley, and Herdt (respectively) focus on these failures in connection to semblances. MacIntyre writes that the proper effect of morality on passion is never mere inhibition and regulation of passion, rather morality is meant to educate the passions.¹⁰⁸ Until the passions are tutored, one cannot be virtuous. But for

106 *ST 2a2ae q111 a3 ad1*: “simulans aliquam virtutem, assumit eam ut finem non quidem secundum existentiam, quasi volens eam habere; sed secundum apparentiam, quasi volens videri eam habere... Opera autem illius virtutis non assumit quasi per se intenta, sed instrumentaliter, quasi signa illius virtutis. Unde ex hoc non habet directam oppositionem ad illam virtutem.”

107 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1115b12, 17. For an extended treatment of Aristotle on the semblances as connected to the puzzle of habituation, see Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, Chapter 1.

108 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 241. His text sparks the question: how does one come to know when presentation of self exceeds self in importance? One can never be sure, but friendship may help. I

those who have a mere outward appearance of morality, their passions are disguised. Their flourishing harms the self and the other. The presentation of self has become more important than the self.

Lee Yearley contrasts the truly virtuous and conventionally virtuous, the latter having a mere semblance of virtue.¹⁰⁹ For “conventional people often mistake semblances of virtue for real virtues by not understanding that a virtuous person chooses virtuous action for itself, not for its consequences... not because of some second-hand support such as custom or authority.”¹¹⁰ The difference between virtue and its semblance lies not about the means to an end, but about the very components of the human good. About this good, virtuous agents are particularly reflective in discrete acts of attention, the intelligent activation of dispositions, and a cultivation of the desired state. The differences are not incidental.

return later in this chapter to add to MacIntyre his “How to Seem Virtuous Without Actually Being So,” *Centre for the Study of Cultural Values*, Occasional Papers Series No.1 (Lancaster University, England, 1991), 1-20. Reprinted in *Education in Morality*, J. Mark Halstead and Terence H. McLaughlin, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 118-31.

109 What Yearley finds so definitive remains ambivalent, in my judgment. For if they are not true virtues, the virtues of the conventionally virtuous could be either semblances *or* counterfeit. One has to presume certain kinds of cases for them to be semblances (i.e., that the goods that the conventionally virtuous aim at are not contrary to genuine goods or they would be counterfeit, or that the goods that the conventionally virtuous aim at are not done for their own sakes’ or they would be imperfect virtues). Yearley’s reading derives from textual support where he conflates the semblances with imperfect virtues (*Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Conceptions of Courage* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1990), 80). By semblance, Yearley appears to mean anything less than perfect virtue. Again, Yearley’s move collapses Thomas’ tripartite distinction (perfect/imperfect/counterfeit). Blurring these distinctions is a mistake because imperfect virtues are directed at doing some kind of good deed (*ST* 1a2ae q65 a1) whereas semblances are the mere appearance of doing so. Moreover, Yearley’s thesis is formulated even more strongly on page 33 where he argues that the acquired are mere semblances of virtue when infused are used as the standard of measurement.

Because of the existence of infused virtues, Yearley describes Thomas as having a “modified version of a developmental model of human nature” (*Mencius and Aquinas*, 79). Yearley is right to resist a “pure developmental model” of virtuous activity and to posit the semblances of virtue as a threat to that progress, but he maintains too neat a conception of the movement which characterizes the moral life particularly in “The Nature-Grace Question in the Context of Fortitude,” where he depicts a “sequential development” in the virtues (*Thomist* 35 (1971), 557-580).

110 Yearley, *Mencius and Aquinas*, 20-21.

Herd t treats the semblances in terms of a short-circuiting or corruption of the process of habituation into virtue. Semblances account for the gap between purity of intention and actual intention. Not all failures are semblances. Some deficiencies in actions reflecting intentions are expected in the process of learning to perform characteristically virtuous actions. Only those which are done expressly for the sake of appearing virtuous are semblances. A concern for semblances need not dominate the development of habits into virtue:

Confessing at every instant how our characters fall short of the actions we are performing, insisting on the deceptiveness of our activity, obsessing over our lack of purity of intention would short-circuit our movement toward perfection... For Aquinas, habituation in a virtue requires that we learn to focus more on our exemplars than on ourselves, imitating their actions as well as we can, keeping our eyes on the prize and trusting that our character will be transformed through our action.¹¹¹

111 Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 82. The ellipses signal this omitted sentence: "There is here a subtle but significant divergence from Augustine, for whom achieving purity of intention, a perfect match between character and action, is a more pressing concern." Yet Augustine, in *De Catechizandis Rudibus* Paragraph 9, opens the space for those who struggle to bring together character and action in a developmental model that more closely accords with Thomas' than Herdt suggests. Herdt describes what Catholic manuals name a vice: scrupulosity. James McCue tracks the development of confessional manuals. He writes:

From about the beginning of the fourteenth century, the scrupulous or sin-anguished conscience seems to have become a mass phenomenon in the Latin world. From about that time we see a piety that is more and more introspective, more and more threatened with despair, as people (and perhaps especially the devout) try to carry out in practice the directives so laconically expressed by theologians and in books of pastoral counsel. So far as I know, scrupulosity was not a widespread phenomenon before around 1300. ("Simul iustus et peccator' in Augustine, Aquinas, and Luther: Toward Putting the Debate in Context," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 48, 1 (March 1980): 81-96, 90).

To make sense of what I regard an odd claim by McCue, however widespread the conviction and the false narrative upon which it depends, I draw on MacIntyre's insight as a corrective – that the individuation of the virtues is largely an empirical matter – so that we understand that the vice predates the particular historical contingencies which created the conditions for the identification of consciences immobilized by scrupulosity. Additionally contrast to McCue's characterization of this "phenomenon" Eamon Duffy's *Stripping of the Altars* and William Langland's *Piers Plowman*.

In my opinion, Herdt rightly shifts her discussion from 'habituation' to 'agency,' which reflects Thomas' development of his framework for virtues.

How education in the virtues is transformative is one of MacIntyre's concerns in "How to Seem Virtuous Without Actually Being So." He describes this process in terms of the motivations of persons who are educated such that their initial appetites and passions are redirected toward ends worthwhile in and of themselves: goods as goods and virtues as virtues.¹¹² Failing to make this transition yields either moral immaturity or misunderstanding of virtue. What is required to avoid failure is, "from the standpoint of the genuine virtues, true judgments about what virtues are required in some particular situation, and about what those virtues require by way of action," which always either presupposes or is explicitly derived from some conception of the human *telos* as being the achievement of a type of life of which the virtues are necessary constitutive parts.¹¹³ This capacity for practical judgment is prudence. It requires training embedded within a tradition and this tradition may be the source of an articulate understanding of it as such. Above all, prudence is essential for initiation into and sustenance in virtue. In the next section, I turn to Thomas' account of this 'mother' of the cardinal virtues. In accounting for prudence Thomas does not abandon the other virtues including, most crucially, charity.

Fundamentally, false and seeming virtues relate to Thomas' writing on friendship. Individuals themselves seldom know the character of their own virtue. They need the help of friends to identify what may or may not be virtue. The knowledge gained from this activity is retrospective and constantly undergoes testing in the present. Friendship helps them discover how to go on when they see that their

112 MacIntyre, "How to Seem Virtuous Without Actually Being So," 123.

113 *Ibid.*, 124. Because of these presuppositions, the very identification of virtues and counterfeits invites conflict. Of this, MacIntyre is certainly aware, and explicitly so on page 126.

virtue may not be what they thought it was. The naming of a virtue as counterfeit or semblance is often a difficult and communal achievement. Friendship with others in Christ helps individuals confess sin as together they navigate the way forward.

To return to the dominant metaphor of the moral life – the journey of the soul to God with humans as wayfarers – the charity of a wayfarer can always increase.¹¹⁴ This increase looks something like what we would recognize as intensity.¹¹⁵ The inexhaustible potentiality for charity's increase is crucial otherwise all advance along the way would cease. Progress toward perfection is always possible because it is always possible to increase in charity. Thomas writes that charity in the wayfarer is perfect (i) when the whole heart is always actually borne towards God, (ii) when one makes an earnest endeavor to give all one's time to God, and (iii) when one gives one's whole heart to God habitually.¹¹⁶ The latter case, (iii), is a kind of perfection common to all who have charity; the middle case, (ii), a possible perfection for some wayfarers; and the first, (i), a perfection not possible in this life. The perfection of the way can always increase such that even the perfect may progress. The stages of perfection mark the gradual, greater participation in the Triune life made possible by this great gift.

A hierarchy of moral virtues adumbrated early on in the *Summa* – political, perfecting, perfect, and exemplar – entails the “the bond of perfection” for its progress.¹¹⁷ This bond, which is charity itself, also enjoys degrees of perfection:

114 *ST* 2a2ae q24 a4.

115 *ST* 1a2ae q66 a1.

116 *ST* 2a2ae q24 a8.

117 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 co.; Colossians 3:14 quoted in *ST* 2a2ae q184 a1.

beginning, progressing, and perfect.¹¹⁸ Whatever the specific interplay of these distinctions, the material point is Thomas' preoccupation with the wayfarer's increase in charity as friendship with God.¹¹⁹ The assimilation to God named by charity always has room for increase as inferior analogues come to resemble more closely the exemplar virtues, i.e., the virtues that exist in God Himself. The *fullness* of this life is perfection forged by grace to include the infused theological virtues, the infused moral virtues, and the acquired virtues made perfect in charity as I argue next.

2.3 A Fuller Account of Virtue: The Acquired and Infused Give Way to Perfection

When Thomas first develops his account of the virtues, he distinguishes between the intellectual, moral, and theological virtues. Those distinctions blur as his arguments develop, and this is particularly clear in the case of prudence.¹²⁰ That these distinctions become less distinct contributes to Thomas' project in the *Secunda Secundae*

118 *ST* 2a2ae q24 a9.

119 Dell'Olio makes a constructive argument for the reading of the Neoplatonic hierarchy of moral virtues alongside the stages of the perfection of charity in *Foundations of Moral Selfhood*, 138-142. In so doing Dell'Olio argues against Yearley since Yearley minimizes Thomas' analysis of the 'Neoplatonic' ladder as a mere dutiful attempt to offer some representation to one of many traditions in *Mencius and Aquinas*, 210, fn 9; see also 32-36.

Yearley cites MacIntyre in his support when Yearley writes: "The intricacies of the schemes to organize virtues, in fact, may be one of [Thomas'] lesser interests. I am indebted to, if not always agreeing with MacIntyre's comments on the problems that arise in Thomas' structuring of the virtues in *After Virtue*, 178-9" (*Mencius and Aquinas*, 210, fn9).

120 This argument can be found in skeleton form in "The Virtues," Stanley Hauerwas & Sheryl Overmyer. In this section I also draw on Robert Miner's "Non-Aristotelian Prudence in the *Prima Secundae*" and Josef Pieper's *Prudence*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (NY: Pantheon Books, 1959). I have little to amend in Miner's masterful "Non-Aristotelian Prudence" and take myself to be extending his interpretation into the *Secunda Secundae*.

of specifying how the acquired and infused virtues can become more perfect *together* in a life marked by the increase of charity.

Robert Miner's careful exegetical work tracks Thomas' variable conception of prudence in the *Prima Secundae*. Miner follows Thomas as Thomas begins with prudence as an intellectual virtue and moves to prudence's dependence on the moral virtues, a development that undermines the strict distinction between moral and intellectual virtues.¹²¹ Thomas then develops various levels of prudence in a hierarchy. At last, he turns to infused prudence and its relation to acquired prudence, both depending on charity.¹²² Differences between acquired and infused prudence, rather than producing strong independence, are held together in the unity of charity. That is, acquired prudence becomes more of a virtue – more complete, more perfect – when accompanied by infused prudence.

My argument here takes its cues from Thomas' treatment of charity, which makes more complex the stages of virtue's perfection. In connection to prudence, Thomas iterates a new tripartite distinction between counterfeit, imperfect, and perfect virtues.

Having prepared the way in the *Secunda Secundae* for the moral virtues by way of the theological, Thomas starts with the 'mother' of the cardinal virtues, prudence.

121 See *ST* 1a2ae q58 a4 for prudence as *both* an intellectual and moral virtue, having to do with both the judgment and perception of particulars.

Miner is concerned with just this multifaceted identity of prudence as he tracks an initial endorsement of the 'Aristotelian doctrine' of prudence in questions 56-57 as then enriched and qualified in questions 58-61 by doctrines from other authorities including the 'Augustinian linkage' of *prudentia* and *ars*. (Miner's "Non-Aristotelian Prudence in the *Prima Secundae*," 402-411.) Miner encourages his readers not to be distracted by the invocation of authorities, for recall that at the outset of this chapter, Miner's larger project is framed as a rejection of adjudication of authorities as a modern question whereas Thomas' concern is to instruct the Christian believer en route to a supernatural end (403).

122 Miner, "Non-Aristotelian Prudence in the *Prima Secundae*," 402-3; 411-422.

Thomas' programmatic treatment of the various kinds of prudence occurs first in article 13, question 47: "Prudence has a triple sense."¹²³ This is by now the familiar breakdown between *falsa, imperfecta*, and *vera et perfecta* prudence. Common as it has become, even here Thomas' treatment on the kinds of prudence is remarkable, adding a new complexity to previous invocations of the same tripartite distinction. I attend to them by turns.

Thomas' treatment of the first kind of prudence, *falsa* prudence, derives from the *sed contra* of the article: "Aristotle holds that it is impossible to be prudent without being a good man."¹²⁴ One can be prudent only if one is good. *Falsa* prudence is practical intelligence divorced from the other virtues and in their absence, MacIntyre writes, and its activity "degenerates into or remains from the outset merely a certain cunning capacity for linking means to any end rather than to those ends which are genuine goods for man."¹²⁵ Without the proper exercise of practical intelligence, dispositions fail to become virtues of character and this intelligence is directed to false ends.

Falsa prudence is counterfeit though it does bear similarity to a semblance.

Thomas now brings together concerns about falsity with concerns about *similitudinem* (likeness, resemblance).¹²⁶ False prudence is false because it bears *similitudinem* to

123 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a13 co.: "prudentia dicitur tripliciter." The Blackfriars text supplies what the text implies, "Prudence has a triple sense, sham prudence, genuine but incomplete prudence, genuine and complete prudence."

124 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a13 s.c.: "Philosophus dicit, in VI Ethic., impossibile prudentem esse non entem bonum."

125 MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 154. For more on cunning as a special sin proceeding from false prudence, see *ST* 2a2ae q55 a3.

126 Thomas' more systematic treatment of *de vitiis oppositis prudentiae secundum similitudinem* is the subject of question 55 (*ST* 2a2ae q55); again *opposition* and *resemblance* appear closely correlated.

prudence:

There is a false prudence, which takes its name from its likeness to true prudence. For since a prudent man is one who disposes well of the things that have to be done for a good end, whoever disposes well of such things as are fitting for an evil end, has false prudence, in so far as that which he takes for an end, is good, not in truth but in appearance. Thus a man is called *a good robber*, and in this way we may speak of *a prudent robber*, by way of similarity, because he devises fitting ways of committing robbery.¹²⁷

A prudence is false for its false ends, for being effective reasoning directed at that which merely bears *similitudinem* to a good end. (Before, I interpreted Thomas to hold counterfeit virtue as directed at a false end and a semblance merely appears to be a virtue.) Thomas' new coupling entails the judgment that all counterfeits are semblances but not all semblances are counterfeits.

Thomas eventually returns to the opposite vices of prudence as contraries and resemblances. However fruitful that distinction may be, rather than dwelling on it he uses the semblances to open up yet another way in which we may go wrong. He writes:

127 *ST 2a2ae q47 a13 co.:*
Est enim quaedam prudentia falsa, vel per similitudinem dicta. Cum enim prudens sit qui bene disponit ea quae sunt agenda propter aliquem bonum finem, ille qui propter malum finem aliqua disponit congruentia illi fini habet falsam prudentiam, in quantum illud quod accipit pro fine non est vere bonum, sed secundum similitudinem, sicut dicitur aliquis bonus latro. Hoc enim modo potest secundum similitudinem dici prudens latro qui convenientes vias adinvenit ad latrocinandum." I prefer the English Dominicans' translation to Blackfriars' since the latter omits one of the invocations of *similitudinem*.

The modern counterpart of the 'good robber' is, perhaps, the 'good bureaucrat'? MacIntyre writes: Those characters so essential to the dramatic scripts of modernity, the expert who matches means to ends in an evaluatively neutral way and the moral agent who is anyone and everyone not actually mentally defective, have no genuine counterpart in Aristotle's scheme or indeed within the classical tradition at all. It is indeed difficult to envisage the exaltation of bureaucratic expertise in any culture in which the connection between practical intelligence and the moral virtues is firmly established. (*After Virtue*, 155)

Prudence is right reason in actions to be done, as scientific knowledge is right reason in conclusions to be drawn. A mistake against correct science in the field of theory comes about in two ways. First, when the reason is led to a false conclusion which has the appearance of truth. Second, when from false premises which appear to be true it leads to a conclusion, whether that in fact be false or true. So, by a parallel, a fault against prudence, though it bear a resemblance to it, can come about in two ways.¹²⁸

We fault against prudence when we serve a specious end or when we take specious ways to pursue an end. Both are classified under the vices opposed to prudence by way of resemblance.¹²⁹ So again Thomas complexifies his account of potential failure. One should regard his treatment of contraries or semblances as fruitful to the extent that it clarifies his preceding concern with the virtues. Thus whatever his naming – the semblances and counterfeits, or resemblances and contraries, or likenesses and false virtues – these remain distinct from both imperfect and perfect prudence. The differences of kinds of prudence are constituted by their relationship to charity. This claim looks forward to Thomas' next article, where he develops the argument that true and perfect prudence is in all who have grace.

Meanwhile, in this article Thomas also develops his description of *imperfecta* prudence. He calls it “truly genuine, because it finds out ways of lending themselves to

128 ST 2a2ae q55 a3 co.: “Prudentia est recta ratio agibilium, sicut scientia est recta ratio scibilium. Contingit autem contra rectitudinem scientiae dupliciter peccari in speculativis, uno quidem modo, quando ratio inducitur ad aliquam conclusionem falsam quae apparet vera; alio modo, ex eo quod ratio procedit ex aliquibus falsis quae videntur esse vera, sive sint ad conclusionem veram sive ad conclusionem falsam. Ita etiam aliquod peccatum potest esse contra prudentiam habens aliquam similitudinem eius dupliciter.”

129 ST 2a2ae q55 pr.: “de vitiis oppositis prudentiae quae habent similitudinem cum ipsa.” In my opinion, based on the arguments above, Blackfriars' translation is misleading and inadequate, titling it instead: “sham prudence.”

a genuinely good end” and yet it remains qualified (“yet is incomplete.”)¹³⁰ The reasons for its being so may be twofold:

One, because the good it sets itself to is not the universal end for the whole of human life, but the end for some specialized employment, as, for instance, when a man versed in the methods of commerce or navigation is called a prudent trader or sailor. Two, because it falls short in respect to the chief act of prudence, which is to command, as, for instance, when a man is well-advised and comes to a sound judgment even on matters touching the whole of life, yet lacks effective and imperative decision.¹³¹

This prudence may be imperfect from two sources: one, in respect of its end and two, in respect of its command. The latter imperfection is newly articulated. It consists in failing to command properly – the chief act of prudence! (Prudence consists in right deliberation, decision, and command.) In such cases of imperfect prudence, one has right deliberation but in failing to effectively command, lacks effective and imperative decision. By drawing out both sources for the imperfection of prudence, either in its end or in its act, Thomas delineates diverse ways in which prudence can be genuine yet remain incomplete.

To whom does imperfect prudence belong? It depends. Imperfect prudence is “common to the upright and the wicked alike.”¹³² That which is incomplete on account

130 *ST 2a2ae q47 a13 co.*: “Prudentia est quidem vera, quia adinvenit vias accommodatas ad finem vere bonum; sed est imperfecta, duplici ratione.”

131 *ST 2a2ae q47 a13 co.*:
Uno modo, quia illud bonum quod accipit pro fine non est communis finis totius humanae vitae, sed alicuius specialis negotii, puta cum aliquis adinvenit vias accommodatas ad negotiandum vel ad navigandum, dicitur prudens negotiator vel nauta. Alio modo, quia deficit in principali actu prudentiae, puta cum aliquis bene consiliatur et recte iudicat etiam de his quae pertinent ad totam vitam, sed non efficaciter praecipit.

132 *ST 2a2ae q47 a13 co.*: “Prudentia autem imperfecta est communis bonis et malis,” see also “maxime illa quae est imperfecta propter finem particularem. Nam illa quae est imperfecta propter defectum principalis actus etiam non est nisi in malis.”

of its end may belong to the upright; that which is incomplete because it falls short of effectively commanding is only found in those at fault. Different imperfections are differently held in each. It now appears that there are *two kinds of imperfect prudence*, one kind which belongs to the wicked and the other to the upright! Rather than stress Thomas' introduction of a strict new distinction to imperfect virtues, I emphasize the continuity of his interest in accounting for the various ways in which we fail to be fully that which we are called to be.

Additionally, Thomas offers a fresh articulation of *vera et perfecta* prudence. He describes it as the prudence which, "with a view to the final good for the whole human life, rightly deliberates, decides, and commands."¹³³ *Vera et perfecta* prudence, as a counterpoint to *imperfecta* prudence, enjoys an orientation to the universal end *and* its proper execution. "*Et haec sola dicitur prudentia simpliciter*" – and this alone is called simply prudence.¹³⁴ Thomas invokes his earlier distinction between virtues *simpliciter* and *secundum quid*. But here in *Secunda Secundae* q47 a13, Thomas goes beyond simple *secundum quid* prudence to name *imperfecta* of two kinds, *similitudinem*, and *falsa*. Their common contrast with *vera et perfecta* prudence yields a rendering of *vera et perfecta* prudence that much more clear. *Vera et perfecta* virtue describes creatures' activity with reference to the final good for the whole of human life.

In the next article, q47 a14, Thomas turns to that prudence which is in all who have grace. Thomas' response, in its entirety, depends on the connection of the

133 ST 2a2ae q47 a13 co.: "Vera et perfecta, quae ad bonum finem totius vitae recte consiliatur, iudicat et praecipit."

134 ST 2a2ae q47 a13 co.

virtues!¹³⁵ In his replies, Thomas brings to bear his work in questions *ST* 1a2ae q65, 2a2ae q23, and 2a2ae q47 a13 as this article concerns the connection between charity and prudence.

For “all who have grace” (a perhaps intentionally imprecise formulation), prudence may be of two kinds.¹³⁶ The first is merely “sufficient for matters necessary for salvation; it is given to all who abide in grace.”¹³⁷ It is caused by God’s imparting and abides in all, even baptized children “who have not yet come to the use of reason have prudence as a habit, though not as an activity; this is also the case with those out of their mind.”¹³⁸ All who have grace have this kind of infused prudence present as a habit.¹³⁹ What especially distinguishes this infused prudence from acquired prudence is that one may possess it without its expression in activity. Such prudence lies closer

135 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 co.: “As we have shown, it must needs be that the virtues are connected, so that whoever has one has them all. Now whoever has grace has charity, and so must needs have all the other virtues. Since prudence is a virtue, as we have seen, that person must possess prudence;” “Necesse est virtutes esse connexas, ita ut qui unam habet omnes habeat, ut supra ostensum est. Quicumque autem habet gratiam habet caritatem. Unde necesse est quod habeat omnes alias virtutes. Et ita, cum prudentia sit virtus, ut ostensum est, necesse est quod habeat prudentiam.”

136 The actual wording is *duplex*, twofold. What Thomas initially calls *duplex* in the response is eventually becomes two: *una* and *autem alia*. Whether or not he means there is *one* prudence which is *twofold* or *two* remains unclear. I go with the latter interpretation for my purposes, to distinguish them as *two*. By my interpretation, they are unified by the end of Thomas’ article anyway.

137 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 ad1: “Una quidem quae est sufficiens ad ea quae sunt de necessitate salutis. Et talis industria datur omnibus habentibus gratiam.”

138 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 ad3: “Sed prudentia gratuita causatur ex infusione divina. Unde in pueris baptizatis nondum habentibus usum rationis est prudentia secundum habitum, sed non secundum actum, sicut et in amentibus.”

139 Jean Porter comments: “The prudence in question is an odd virtue. It is present only potentially in those who lack the use of reason, and it is present only in a minimal degree even in some of those who possess the use of reason (II-II 47.12 *ad* 2, 3) [sic.]” and this, an indication that “there is some incongruity between his basic account of virtue and certain of his theological convictions” (“The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the *Summa Theologiae*,” *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics*, 17 (1992): 19-41; 30). I find Porter’s latter point inaccurate, for by my lights Thomas’ definitions keep Thomas open to the possibility of gradations of virtue without (Porter’s perceived) tension and along with that make plausible, for example, the actuality that not all possess true and perfect prudence equally.

to potential than act in the cases of baptized infants and the mentally ill. Thus not all habits must be acted upon in order to be possessed.¹⁴⁰

Even though this habit is characteristic of those who have grace, it is not a habit which is expressed in activity with ease and delight. Such a habit is something less than the fullness than 'habit' can designate. Again, readers see that habit is invoked analogically and so too virtue. For the prudence which is a habit caused by God's imparting and exists *without activity* is infused prudence *without acquired prudence*, and is thus also something less than the fullness 'virtue' can designate.

Next Thomas directs readers' attention to yet another kind of prudence – the second kind in this question – writing, “the second is fuller; it enables one to provide for oneself and others in respect not only of what is necessary for salvation, but also of whatever relates to human living. Such diligence is not found in all who have grace.”¹⁴¹ Whence does this prudence come? When Thomas first introduces infused habits in the *Prima Secundae*, he considers the objection that it is impossible to have two habits of the same species in the same man: one acquired, the other infused. He replies: “Acts produced by an infused habit, do not cause a habit, but strengthen the already existing habit; just as the remedies of medicine given to a man who is naturally health, do not cause a kind of health, but give new strength to the health he had before.”¹⁴² This may

140 Therefore the saints might be said to be childlike for both may possess infused habits without acting upon them (see too the end of Section I). And yet we can be confident that they do indeed possess these habits.

141 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 ad1: “Alia industria plenior, per quam aliquis sibi et aliis potest providere, non solum de his quae sunt necessaria ad salutem sed etiam de quibuscumque pertinentibus ad humanam vitam. Et talis industria non est in omnibus habentibus gratiam.”

142 *ST* 1a2ae q51 a4 ad3: “Quod actus qui producuntur ex habitu infuso, non causant aliquem habitum, sed confirmant habitum praeexistentem, sicut medicinalia remedia adhibita homini sano per naturam, non causant aliquam sanitatem, sed sanitatem prius habitam corroborant.” The English Dominicans' translation retains *habit* (*habitus*) over Blackfriars' *disposition*.

clarify how Thomas relates infused habits to acquired and how Thomas' introduction of the infused virtues comes as a redirecting and strengthening of extant virtue.¹⁴³ For now, Thomas shows particular concern for a virtue: the prudence of grace, caused by divine infusion, "by practice merits increase, until it becomes perfect, even as the other virtues."¹⁴⁴ Those who have grace receive infused prudence but retain the potential for its gradual perfection. By the practice of infused prudence, it becomes perfect in fuller prudence, which entails the accompaniment of its acquired counterpart.¹⁴⁵

143 Other texts of note include *ST* 1a2ae q92 a1 ad1 ("Duplex est virtus, ut ex supradictis patet, scilicet acquisita, et infusa. Ad utramque autem aliquid operatur operum assuetudo, sed diversimode, nam virtutem quidem acquisitam causat; ad virtutem autem infusam disponit, et eam iam habitam conservat et promovet.") and *Disputed Questions on the Virtues* q10 a4.

Inglis interprets infused virtue as not replacing acquired virtue, but building upon it in "Aquinas's Replication of the Acquired Moral Virtues," esp. 19-20. Inglis also argues "this is a point that is not pursued in the literature... yet it is important for reconstructing Aquinas's view of the role played by acquired virtue in the life of the Christian," and cites to this effect Romanus Cessario, *The Moral Virtues and Theological Ethics*, 125.

144 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 a3: "Sed per exercitium meretur augmentum quousque perficiatur, sicut et ceterae virtutes." Thomas cites Hebrews 5:14 in his support. The English Dominicans' translation is preferable to the Blackfriars for its rendering of *exercitium* as *practice* (over *exercising*) and *perficiatur* as *becomes perfect* (over *grows complete*) because the diction appears more consistent with other parts of the *Summa*; and also for reasons mentioned on page 86, footnote 73.

For those whose virtue does not become complete in this way, Thomas provides consolation: "Illi qui indigent regi consilio alieno saltem in hoc sibi ipsis consulere sciunt, si gratiam habent, ut aliorum requirant consilia, et discernant consilia bona a malis." (*ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 ad2). Porter couches her appreciation of this consolation in terms of subsequent interpretative traditions developed regarding the *Summa*:

The prudence of the really dull saint may extend only as far as an ability to recognize that one needs to submit to the judgment of others, combined with an ability to discriminate between good and bad advice. In other words, infused prudence may well be manifested in an attitude of conformity to others' guidance and to the rules of one's community; contrast Aristotle's description of the man of practical wisdom, whose hallmark is his capacity for self-directed, independent judgment. It is easy to see how Aquinas's subversion of an Aristotelian conception of prudence both reflects and tends to support an institutional framework in which conformity to laws and submission to authorities is central to the life of the institution. Correlatively, we must acknowledge that those who subsequently appropriated Aquinas's work as the basis for a rule-oriented theory of morality were not simply mistaken in their reading of him. ("The Subversion of Virtue," 34) Porter's version of subversion differs markedly from MacIntyre's, e.g., "Natural Law as Subversive: The Case of Aquinas," discussed in Chapter One, 22-28.

145 Cf. Knobel's treatment of this reply to *ST* 2a2ae q47 a14 ad1 as "important insofar as it serves to drive a wedge between infused and acquired prudence" (*The Infused and Acquired Virtues in Aquinas' Moral Philosophy*, 109).

Both prudences of grace contrast to acquired prudence, which “comes from practice, and so, as remarked in the *Ethics*, time and experience are required to produce it. Accordingly the young possess it neither as a settled quality nor as an activity.”¹⁴⁶ Whereas acquired prudence is produced in the young by teaching and experience, the prudence of grace relies on God’s activity. Insofar as God’s activity becomes our own, that activity is infused prudence. Infused prudence becomes more fully our own as good habits more fully inhere with perfected ease and joy. This happens as contrary vicious dispositions are eliminated, constituting the very work of the acquired virtues.¹⁴⁷

There are three kinds of prudence, at least, that constitute the subject of this article. The latter kind, *plenior* prudence, describes the coupling of initial prudence of grace as it merits increase and perfected acquired prudence. This coupling names the cooperation between forms of prudence made possible by the one work of charity. In fuller prudence, “the natural *and* the supernatural, the acquired *and* the given, are combined in a felicitous, in a literally ‘graced’ unity” according to Josef Pieper.¹⁴⁸ Pieper counsels against prioritizing natural and acquired prudence over supernatural and infused or perhaps more commonly vice-versa. Simply put, fuller prudence is

146 *ST 2a2ae q47 a14 ad3*: “Prudentia acquisita causatur ex exercitio actuum, unde indiget ad sui generationem experimento et tempore, ut dicitur in II Ethic. Unde non potest esse in iuvenibus nec secundum habitum nec secundum actum.”

147 Knobel sees the role of acquired virtues in the life of a Christian as eliminating vicious dispositions rather than their being oriented toward any genuine good (see *The Infused and Acquired Virtues*, 189ff). Although this marks the role of the acquired virtues in the incipient stages of the increase of charity, it seems plausible that acquired virtues enjoy an enhanced priority the more one inclines toward perfection. For this, I follow the trajectory charted in *ST 2a2ae q184 a2*; see too Dell’Olio, *Foundations of Moral Selfhood*, 138-142.

148 Pieper, *Prudence*, 31.

best.¹⁴⁹

Rather than taking Thomas' article 14 as a multiplication of kinds of prudence – an increasing complexification of schematized forms – I read Thomas as tracing the increase in virtue in those whose friendship with God is intensified. Article 14 is another expansion of virtue according to analogy. The perfection of prudence is likened to that of the other virtues, so we may surmise that all virtues incline toward perfection in the same way. That *via* remains the subject and object of the *Summa*. Throughout, Thomas remains committed to displaying how God's goodness transforms every aspect of our lives. On this transformation every virtue depends. That the virtues themselves, including initially infused prudence of this article, are just the beginning of God's work should not come as a surprise for readers of the *Summa* as Thomas rounds his treatment of the virtues with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

If one subscribes to this holistic model for the powers of the human person, perhaps the most difficult forms of prudence to account for are those offered some time back in the *Prima Secundae*. In question 61 article 5 on the cardinal virtues, Thomas divides virtues according to Macrobius, Plotinus, and Plato: political virtues, purifying virtues (*virtutes purgatoriae*), virtues of an already purified spirit (*virtutes purgati animi*) and exemplar virtues.¹⁵⁰ The social virtues are ours according to our nature and the exemplar virtues God's according to the divine nature. The virtues between the human and divine – the purifying and purified virtues – also receive specification.

149 For clarity's sake: acquired prudence is good, prudence *sufficiens ad ea quae sunt de necessitate salutis* better, and *plenior* prudence best.

150 Kent comments on this article, "Far from dismissing the suggestion that there are very different kinds of prudence, justice, and so on – not only different species but possibly different genre – Thomas supports it" ("Habits and Virtues," 232).

The purifying and purified virtues are gauged in relation to Divine similitude, and “are distinguished by the difference between moving and having arrived.”¹⁵¹ Purifying virtues are virtues of *viators* tending towards God. Purifying prudence, “by looking at the things of God, scorns the things of the world, and directs all its thoughts only to divine truths.”¹⁵² Purified virtues are virtues of those who have already attained Divine similitude, the summit of perfection. Purified prudence “sees only the things of God.”¹⁵³ How do purifying and purified forms of prudence stand to *plenior* prudence? Is it possible that ‘seeing only the things of God’ (purified prudence) entails a form of acquired prudence? It may seem the inverse – that ‘seeing only the things of God’ has nothing to do with acquired prudence. But if one jettisons acquired prudence, then one undermines the case Thomas has been building for the integrity of acquired and infused prudence.

Thomas articulates this worry in connection to Macrobius’ claim that the purifying virtues “are those of the man who by a kind of withdrawal from human affairs devotes himself exclusively to things of God.”¹⁵⁴ Is this the movement of virtue Thomas intends? Or is this withdrawal wicked? Thomas gives an ‘it depends’ response: “to desert from the human world and its just claims is wicked. Otherwise it is virtuous.”¹⁵⁵ Quoting Augustine, Thomas adds that if a burden is imposed upon us it

151 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 co.: “distinguuntur secundum diversitatem motus et termini.”

152 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 co.: “omnia mundana divinorum contemplatione despiciat, omnemque animae cogitationem in divina sola dirigat.”

153 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 co.: “sola divina intueatur.”

154 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 arg 3: “qui quadam humanorum fuga solis se inserunt divinis.”

155 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 ad3: “deserere res humanas ubi necessitas imponitur, vitiosum est, alias est virtuosum.”

should be borne “because of the demand of charity.”¹⁵⁶ Developing appropriate responses to the world requires *both* prudence and charity, virtues whose universal demands depend on the particular. Charity is the only way in which contempt for the world is prudentially exhibited; this particular contempt is deeply different from its other forms because it is charitably construed.¹⁵⁷

The familiar iteration of the connection of the virtues suggests that a virtue without the others will eviscerate what fuller virtue remains into counterfeits or semblances. Alternatively, a virtue accompanied by the others will render it more fully that which it is intended to be. Prudence eventually becomes that which “does not consist in knowing alone, but also in loving.”¹⁵⁸ And by charity, “man may become one with God to such an extent that he receives, so to speak, the capacity and the right to see created things from God’s point of view and to ‘relativize’ them and see them as nought from God’s point of view, *without* at the same time repudiating them or doing injustice to their nature.”¹⁵⁹ The more the vision is perfected by God in charity, the more prudence will make manifest the truth of created and uncreated reality.

That vision is described in the gift of counsel, which complements prudence and brings it to completion.¹⁶⁰ It is sought after in a prayer attributed to Thomas, *Pro*

156 *ST* 1a2ae q61 a5 ad3: “si autem imponitur, suscipienda est, propter caritatis necessitatem.”

157 Pieper outlines its inverse, which I note although I am more interested in exploring its positive cast:

All contempt for the world which springs from man’s own judgment and opinions, not from the supernatural love of God, is simple arrogance, hostile to the nature of being; it is a form of pride in that it refuses to recognize the ordinary obligations which are made visible to man in created things. (*Prudence*, 73)

158 *ST* 2a2ae q47 a16 co.: “non consistit in sola cognitione, sed etiam in appetitu.”

159 Pieper, *Prudence*, 73. Pieper’s own rounding off of his *Prudence* with a treatment of charity reminded me of the need to do the same.

160 *ST* 2a2ae q52 a2.

Obtinenḁis Virtutibus:

Plant deep in me, Lord, all the virtues,
that I might be
devout in divine matters,
discerning in human affairs,
and burdensome to no one
in fulfilling my own bodily needs.¹⁶¹

The prudence which discerns human affairs is not left behind as one becomes more devout in divine affairs. Devotion and discernment are coupled as they become one of many different aspects of a unified increase in charity. The attempt here to account for this with respect to prudence alone yields *plenior* prudence. Even in this context Thomas sees through to other needful connections. This prayer is preoccupied with the right use of the goods of creation as named by the virtues and all of creation being prayerfully directed back toward the source, sustainer, and rewarder of virtues.¹⁶²

As much as infused prudence requires charity, charity depends on infused prudence.¹⁶³ Charity disposes us well to the ultimate end, but we also need the infused moral virtues by which we are disposed to whatever is referred to the end.¹⁶⁴ Sherwin writes of the ‘ordering’ of charity:

161 Thomas Aquinas, *The Aquinas Prayer Book: The Prayers and Hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas* trans. and ed. Robert Anderson and Johann Moser (Manchester, NH: Sophia Institute Press, 2000), 33-39; 36-39: Planta in me, Domine, virtutes,
ut circa divina sim devotus,
circa humana officia providus,
circa usum proprii corporis nulli onerosus.

162 “Qui es virtutum donator, et conservator, et remunerator,” 32.

163 See Michael Sherwin’s *By Knowledge and By Love*, esp. 176-182 for more generally charity’s relationship to knowledge in human action. The following footnotes are evidence that Sherwin’s treatment has been formative for this paragraph.

164 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a3 ad1.

Charity's act is measured according to the real value of the objects of its love, but this ordered measure is placed in charity's acts by human reason elevated by the infused virtue of prudence. Human reason measures charity's acts according to the divine rule placed in the practical intellect by infused prudence.¹⁶⁵

Thus charity's acts depend on the infused moral virtues, in particular infused prudence. The end of loving God through particular charitable acts requires the elevation of the practical intellect in infused prudence.¹⁶⁶ As charity *commando* in a loving act of the intellect, it requires the antecedent judgment of infused prudence. Such prudence specifies while charity exercises in priority.¹⁶⁷

In Thomas' skillful synthesis of charity with prudence, he does not lose the distinctiveness of either. As he adumbrates the activity of infused virtue, he does not forfeit potential contribution of the accompanying acquired virtue. That Thomas prioritizes the directedness of infused prudence over acquired prudence, despite these inclusions, is not surprising. That Thomas retains the necessity of acquired prudence alongside infused prudence is remarkable. For Thomas never abandons the project of following God's all-encompassing reach through the structure of the human being.

God Himself has not and will not forsake us in the journey. That God does not is

165 Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 178 drawing on *ST 2a2ae q26 a1, 6, et 7*.

166 *Ibid.*, 179.

167 Sherwin cites Carlos-Josaphat Pinto de Oliveria, "*Ordo rationis, ordo amoris*: La notion d'ordre au centre de l'univers éthique de s. Thomas," in *Ordo sapientiae et amoris* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1993), 296-7.

Charity, as a kind of explanatory principle, accounts for what it is about infused prudence that renders its activity infused. By these lights, if there is prudence without command it is not infused but instead *imperfecta* (I reference my own interpretation of *ST 2a2ae q47 a13* above). Knobel, however, renders the requirement for command more strict, arguing that without it prudence is destroyed altogether. She emphasizes that prudence "is more dependent upon the rectitude of the will and less dependent on intellectual acuteness than most realize" (90). I want to pull Knobel's more stringent requirements into the scheme I interpret in Thomas to suggest that where rectitude of will meets intellectual acuteness, the more fully prudence is a virtue; the less, the inverse.

attended to by Thomas as he commands our attention toward the multifarious aspects of God's sanctifying work.

Chapter Three. Form Matters

In Chapter Two, I charted Thomas' movement in the *Summa Theologiae* from acquired moral virtues (especially in *ST 1a2ae q65*) to infused theological virtues (esp. *ST 2a2ae q23*) and the corresponding infused moral virtues (esp. *ST 2a2ae q47*) which finally culminate together, if at all, in 'fuller' virtue which holds the acquired and infused alongside one another as distinct, related habits of the sanctified creature. I couple attention to Thomas' distinctions with an argument that Thomas describes and re-describes the same virtues such that his earlier distinctions are made subordinate to later distinctions. I read Thomas as unfolding the meaning of virtue over the course of the text. The progressive, sequential ordering of the material means that readers begin with an initial conception of the virtues and are then enabled through the text to perfect that understanding. The latter sections of the text are indicative of the most mature understanding of Thomas on the virtues and reveal the fullest moral perfection of the creature, and yet these latter sections are best understood according to the whole scope of Thomas' process.

In this chapter, I retain focus Thomas' treatment of the virtues while attending more closely to some of the conceptual ancilla that undergird his treatment of the principal questions cited in the previous chapter. I focus on how Thomas uses the 'concepts' of participation and analogy, motion and causality, and sin to progressively develop his theses and strengthen his claims regarding the virtues. More specifically I treat participation and analogy with respect to *ST 1a2ae q65*, motion and causality in *ST 2a2ae q23*, and sin according to *ST 2a2ae q47*. What emerges from this chapter is

twofold: one that the processes intrinsic to the text for the virtues as ordered pedagogically includes material other than the virtues, e.g., the virtues' conceptual ancillae; two that analysis of the conceptual work yields worthwhile conclusions regarding participation, analogy, motion, causality, and sin. As Thomas gives attention to moral claims (my focus in the previous chapter) and elaborates conceptual ancillaries (my focus in this chapter) according to a shared structural pattern, both are displayed in progression which is itself ordered by his inquiry into the perfection of the human person in friendship with God.

3.1 Participation, Analogy, and the Acquired Virtues

ST 1a2ae q 65: The Form of the “Infused” Acquired Virtues

Using *ST 1a2ae q65* in the previous chapter, I drew out the (surprisingly) distinctively theological character of Thomas' treatment of the acquired virtues; Thomas' treatment of the acquired virtues constitute some of his earliest teaching on virtues in the *Summa*. And even earlier in my Introduction I alluded to MacIntyre, Boyle, and Jordan to make the case for the ostensive pedagogical form of the *Summa*. Now I want to display this form in relationship to *ST 1a2ae q65* by choosing a few of Thomas' earlier crucial insights – likeness and analogy, participation – that prepare the reader to better understand virtue as Thomas approaches *ST 1a2ae q65* and in turn prepare the reader for the more complex treatment of virtue to follow. Thus this section brings together Thomas' substantive teachings regarding acquired virtue and the form of the *Summa* in three movements, first of couching the insights of question 65

in portions of the text which precede it, second of re-describing question 65 building on the work of Chapter Two, and third of elaborating the significance of these teachings for the material that follows question 65.

First, the preceding portions of the text. Thomas' now famous theory of analogical predication is formative for his early questions of the First Part. Invocation of analogy implies that one, there is a relation between the two things named in such a way that *one is named from the other* and two, a name properly used within the range of its genus is used analogously to designate something *belonging to a different genus*.¹ Creatures, as they bear a certain likeness to God by participation in the divine nature, enjoy perfections that are named according to a certain analogy – where likeness is qualified by analogy and where analogy specifies difference. (Said differently, creatures take on double likenesses to God: likeness according to participation and likeness according to proportion/analogy.²) Later I take up analogy. For now, I concentrate on likeness.

Thomas' explicitly theological aim of covering in outline *sacra doctrina* is maintained and modulated as he turns in the Second Part of the *Summa* to the human person, who according to sacred doctrine is created in the image of God. Thomas writes:

Since, as Damascene states, man is said to be made in God's image,

1 Because the primary analogate (God) does not belong to a genus, discourse regarding analogy must be chastened. My treatment of analogy is derived from te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 109-112 who advocates the connection between Thomas' use of analogy and its metaphysical embedment and presuppositions. Te Velde's claims on this point render his work singular in the small cottage industry surrounding questions of analogy and metaphysics.

2 See Gregory Rocca, *Speaking the Incomprehensible God: Thomas Aquinas on the Interplay of Positive and Negative Theology* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2004).

insofar as 'image' signifies what is intellectual and free in choosing and has its power in its own right; now that we have talked about the exemplar, *i.e.*, God and of those things that proceed from God's power in accordance with His will, it remains for us to consider His image, *i.e.*, man, insofar as he himself is the principle of his own works as he is free in choosing and has power with respect to those works.

Thomas notes the material he just covered – “we have talked about the exemplar, *i.e.*, God and of those things that proceed from God's power in accordance with His will.” Thomas emphasizes the continuity of this part with the First Part – holding at its core God's image and God as exemplar. But the prologue also posits a new work in that he will next move his reader to see man as the image of God. As “the principle of his own works as he is free in choosing and has power with respect to those works,” man images the divine. It may go without saying, but Thomas' rhetorical framing of the Second Part of the *Summa* eclipses any understanding of the human without reference to God. One only knows what the human *is* in reference to and in relationship with God. 'The human' is couched in what Thomas takes to be definitive for any extant metaphysical realities: God's revelation of Godself in history.

The Second Part also extends the work of the First. Te Velde remarks on this development in passing:

The treatment of the free movement of man towards his end transcends the perspective of creation, which dominates the *Prima Pars*... The moral exercise of man's freedom presupposes God's creative action (since it concerns a *created* freedom), but it also occasions a new presence of God, a new kind of guiding action on the part of God in relation to human freedom in its historical reality. The new kind of guiding action must be understood as a specification of the general *gubernatio* under which creatures fall. So one can say that the whole *Secunda Pars* takes up the theme of *gubernatio Dei* and continues the investigation of the *Prima Pars*, but now focused on a special creature, whose freedom requires a new

and different way of divine guidance which cannot be thematized from the perspective of creation.³

Having treated of God in the First Part, Thomas shifts to the rational creature's movement towards God. This movement towards God is endowed with a special significance insofar as man is in the image of God. Of course, and te Velde also notes this, the creature's movement toward God remains radically incomplete without the work of the Third Part – of Christ, who, as man, is our way to God.⁴ In treating the creature's movement toward God, te Velde only draws especial attention to Thomas' treatments of law and grace in the *Secunda Pars* – I find this peculiar.⁵ Te Velde's emphasis on the movement of the rational creature towards God sidesteps those internal helps creatures have been given in order to make this journey. Granted, an understanding of the virtues are incomplete without the subsequent treatments of law and grace – something I take up in my next section on charity. But for all of te Velde's attention to *sacra doctrina* and form, he appears to miss exactly that which specifies how

3 Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 17; te Velde also cites the programmatic prologue of *ST* 1a q2, which I treat next in part to emphasize differences, alongside continuities, that I have with te Velde's perspective on the *Secunda Pars*.

Johnson argues that *imago Dei* is chosen as “a perfect tool for linking the consideration of human morals with the rest of the theological enterprise. Sacred theology is about God as its determining characteristic, its subject, its formal notion, and Thomas works to ensure the unity of the discipline by insisting that all the many and various things considered by the theologian are considered only insofar as they have some relationship to God, either coming from God as their cause, or ordered to God as to their end.” (“An Accomplishment of the Moral Part of the *Summa Theologiae*,” 91). Johnson also observes that for Thomas, *sacra doctrina* is primarily a speculative enterprise rather than practical – a position supported by tradition – and his specific speculative conclusions issue in a theological anthropology which is at its heart practical. I wager that the *structure* of the *Summa* might also be used to illustrate Thomas' denial of the plausibility of a practical/speculative dichotomy alongside affirmation of a necessary interrelationship. For a sustained inquiry along these lines, see William Wallace, *Role of Demonstration in Moral Theology: A Study of Methodology in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, D.C.: Thomist Press, 1962).

4 Paraphrasing of the prologue of *ST* 1a q2.

5 Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 17.

man enjoys likeness to the divine as expressed in *imago Dei* theology.

A more full recovery of what it is for the rational creature to move toward God must needs be complemented with Thomas' doctrine of participation.⁶ A minor cottage industry run by careful and astute interpreters is devoted to participation in Thomas. A.N. Williams concentrates on Thomas' treatment of deification in *ST* 1a q12 followed by its iteration in *ST* 1a2ae q62 et q65, which as direct references extend “beyond their value in pointing us to other parts of the *Summa*.”⁷ Williams notes that grace is not an unspecified gift but comes in a specific form, which just is the theological virtues. The theological virtues are called such because they direct us to God (1a2ae q62), thus built into the heart of Thomas' definition of virtue is Thomas' intimation of his doctrine of deification.⁸ Because creatures remain creatures in deification, the human subject possesses divine nature in a manner other than by essence: participation.⁹ But creatures are genuinely partakers of divine nature (only) “after a fashion.”¹⁰ The qualification of how subjects possess divine nature by participation is qualified by the chastening of analogy. In deification, both poles are

6 Te Velde treats participation in *Aquinas on God* in the chapters on “God's Proper Action” in Ch. 5 and “A God of Grace” in Ch. 6. See too his *Participation and Substantiality in Thomas Aquinas* Studien und Texte zur Geistesgeschichte des Mittelalters 46 (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

7 A. N. Williams, *The Ground of Union: Deification in Aquinas and Palamas* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999), 34. Williams makes further helpful intra-partitive connections when she treats *imago Dei* language as crucially important not in how we are ordered to this life or what we were intended, but how we are ordered to our end, telling us what we will be not what we are for continuities between 1a and 2a (69; 68-72).

8 Williams, *Ground of Unity*, 35.

9 Williams uses these terms interchangeably, as far as I can tell, and consistently with her project to read the late Middle Ages as the actual inception of divide between East-West, rather than the conventional 1054.

10 *ST* 1a2ae q62 a1 ad1; cited in Williams, *Ground of Unity*, 36.

invoked: likeness and difference.

Most importantly for my purposes, this prologue is read alongside the prologue of *ST 1a*, that is, informed by the pedagogical function of the entire text. What Thomas does here in *ST 2a* is itself a continuation of the project with which he first started. The Second Part becomes a reflection upon the image of God and its final destiny to *participate* in the divine initiation of movement of the will. This happens through the transformation of desire, a motion which the second part of the *Summa* may help bring about.¹¹

The fullness of this movement is delayed until *ST 3a*. What readers encounter in the *ST 1a2ae* is at its beginning an only inchoate grasp of participation. For Thomas treats happiness, a participation in uncreated beatitude, as ours through human operations. He must explain these human operations, and as he turns to voluntary operations and the passions, readers come to grasp “responsibility and control.” Once operations are understood at their most general level, Thomas initiates his discussion of the virtues.

As for analogy, Thomas treats virtue as an explicitly analogous word.¹²

11 See Otto Bird, “How to Read an Article of the *Summa*,” *The New Scholasticism* 27 (1953): 129-59: “Learning supposes a certain motion or process on the part of the student, and teaching can at most help to bring that motion about; it cannot actually constitute the motion” (149). See, too, Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* for the same.

12 *ST 1a2ae q61 a1 ad1*:
When a univocal genus is divided into its species, the members of the division are on a par in the point of the generic idea; although considered in their nature as things, one species may surpass another in rank and perfection, as man in respect of other animals. But when we divide an analogous term, which is applied to several things, but to one before it is applied to another, nothing hinders one from ranking before another, even in the point of the generic idea; as the notion of being is applied to substance principally in relation to accident. Such is the division of virtue into various kinds of virtue: since the good defined by reason is not found in the same way in all things.

Quando genus univocum dividitur in suas species, tunc partes divisionis ex aequo se habent secundum rationem generis; licet secundum naturam rei, una species sit

Therefore the language of virtue is marked by the characteristics named above: (i) denomination from something else, namely God, and (ii) transgeneric predication as used beyond its proper domain to signify something belonging to another. Although the treatment of virtue begins formally in question 55, it is not until question 61 that Thomas clarifies the primary instance of virtue is God's. Thomas asserts that virtue exists originally in God. This instance pre-exists any human virtue. Thomas illustrates this crucial pre-existence of virtue in reference to the cardinal virtues: "We speak of 'exemplar' virtues: so that in God the Divine Mind itself may be called prudence; while temperance is the turning of God's gaze on Godself, even as in us it is that which conforms the appetite to reason. God's fortitude is God's unchangeableness; God's justice is the observance of the Eternal Law in God's works, as Plotinus states."¹³ Such a discussion of virtue qualifies what Thomas has laid out previously in ST 1a2ae qq49-54 by centering all virtue as relative to a primary instance in God. I expand on this point below. That the language of virtue is itself transgeneric predication underscores the difference between virtue in God and virtue in humans, and ultimately preserves

principalior et perfectior alia, sicut homo aliis animalibus. Sed quando est divisio alicuius analogi, quod dicitur de pluribus secundum prius et posterius; tunc nihil prohibet unum esse principalius altero, etiam secundum communem rationem; sicut substantia principalius dicitur ens quam accidens. Et talis est divisio virtutum in diversa genera virtutum, eo quod bonum rationis non secundum eundem ordinem invenitur in omnibus.

In *Rewritten Theology*, Jordan traces Thomas' definition of the virtue and its range by marking his inheritance from a number of authoritative sources, i.e., Cicero, Aristotle, Peter Lombard, and Augustine (158ff). Jordan's work is crucial on this point, and a full treatment would also include these sources Jordan identifies.

13 ST 1a2ae q61 a5 co.:

Ita scilicet quod ipsa divina mens in Deo dicatur prudentia; temperantia vero, conversio divinae intentionis ad seipsum, sicut in nobis temperantia dicitur per hoc quod concupiscibilis conformatur rationi; fortitudo autem Dei est eius immutabilitas; iustitia vero Dei est observatio legis aeternae in suis operibus, sicut Plotinus dixit.

the Creator/creature distinction. This definitive rule for virtue establishes a hierarchy in which the various kinds of virtue find their place. This hierarchy becomes particularly clear in q65, when Thomas considers the connectedness of the virtues.

In Thomas' initial discussions of virtue, which are shortly before q65, he distinguishes between two kinds: acquired and infused. The two differ on the basis of operations: those virtues which proceed from reason and are caused from human acts are acquired, those produced in us by the divine operation alone are infused.¹⁴ As Thomas considers questions of whether the virtues must be connected to one another, in q65, he develops a new basic distinction: imperfect or perfect. The two differ on the basis of which deserves to be virtue *secundum quid* and those called a virtue *simpliciter*.¹⁵ Imperfect virtues bear less resemblance to exemplar virtues than perfect. The hierarchy implicit in this ordering is oriented in reference to the primary instance of virtue. Thus the acquired/infused distinction is made more specific by a more determinative set of descriptions with reference to the final human good: imperfect/perfect. And the latter set of distinctions lends itself more readily to the language of analogy that Thomas employs for virtue. As it becomes clear that Thomas' provides a theological cast even for acquired virtues, which renders them more perfect, one comes to describe this movement as charting the fuller participation of the rational creature in God. Unity of the virtues is a marker for virtues which are made more perfect in and through participation.

The set of distinctions initially offered to the reader, acquired and infused, give

14 *ST* 1a2ae q62 a2; quoted and discussed in Chapter Two.

15 *ST* 1a2ae q65 a1 et 2; see too pages 70, 94, and 102.

an initial sense of the work that lies within the realm of our operations and that which lies within God's. But Thomas goes on to clarify that the acquired are better understood as the work that God does *in us with us* (versus the infused, which are *in us without us*).¹⁶ As the reader takes on as her own this more nuanced version of God's work *with us*, she understands that Thomas never means for acquired virtue to stand on its own apart from participation in the life of God. In making more definitive the distinction between imperfect and perfect, Thomas begins to demonstrate the range of the analogy of virtue. It instills in the reader a conception of perfect virtue as more closely approximating its true exemplar form.

In the meantime, Thomas' pedagogical interests are not set aside but work throughout these moral claims. His shifts in distinctions show the reader that any acquired virtue she initially understood to be her own is in fact primarily God's and only then her own as gift. She comes to interpret the all-encompassing grasp of God's activity reaches even to her own created faculties. Any achievement she once claimed is hers, she now knows better to name it as God's in which she participates. This radical shift in perspective also entails the relativization of acquired virtue by the distinction of imperfect/perfect. Acquired virtue in Thomas is not dismissed as it is by many interpreters of Thomas, but is given an appropriate subordinate role in light of the movement of the creature toward God. The imperfect/perfect distinction is exactly the naming of the stages of that progress. As regards the way forward from here, more perfect descriptions of participation as the participation becomes fuller come only by way of a superadded capacity. Naturally, then, Thomas' next treatment of virtue

16 My wording from Chapter Two, page 73.

concerns the theological virtues.

As far as it is from a sequential march from the Prologue of *ST 1a2ae* to question 65, equally foreign to the text is a sequential narrative from question 65 onward. Yet there is a macro pattern in the ensuing dialectic, in which sin-law-grace mirrors God's revelation of Godself in history.¹⁷ What does this addendum mean for the previous narration? From the explorations of virtue in the middle parts of the *ST 1a2ae*, the reader is moved to the power of the internal inclinations – vices – which threaten to frustrate any increase in likeness to God. The reader is left without the internal capacities to resolve this dilemma, in two senses: (i) the reader herself does not have resources to overcome sin, which can become a kind of second nature, according to the text's moral claims and (ii) the text itself has not yet provided resources for the reader to understand what assistance is given the rational creature to contend with sin. Finally, the external helps which ensue – law and grace – are given as her only way out of a life of sin. The ordering of the latter sections of the *ST 1a2ae* continue Thomas' complex dialectic inquiry, guided by exploration of the human person's operative powers which unfolds in light of the dramatic narrative given in revelation. In keeping with this history, its climax is combined with its resolution in Thomas' treatise on

17 Thomas Hibbs, "Creation, Gratitude and Virtue in Thomas Aquinas," *Conference on Common Morality for a Global Age*, Catholic University of America, March 28, 2008; 181-195; 185. Revised in print as "Creation, Gratitude, and Virtue in Thomas Aquinas," *Journal of Law, Philosophy, and Culture*, vol. III., no. 1, Spring 2009, 50-60. Cf. Brian Johnstone, who distinguishes between interpreters who understand the structure of the *Summa* in terms of some metaphysical notion (e.g., *exitus-reditus*) and divide among those who see (i) the metaphysical account as pertaining to the structures of reality or (ii) the (metaphysical) structures of understanding, or (iii) as derived from an interpretation of the events of "salvation history" in "The Debate on the Structure of the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas Aquinas: from Chenu (1939) to Metz (1998)" in *Aquinas as Authority*, ed. Paul Van Geest, Harm Goris, and Carlo Leget, (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), 187-200. Johnstone admits a mixture of these approaches, arguing for (ii) as emerging from (iii). Whatever one thinks on this issue is logically connected to one's understanding of the analogous nature of language, which by the my lights analogy has implications for (i) as well.

grace. More on that in the next section.

Once again, this stage of the pedagogical project of the *ST* concerns “man as the source of actions which are his own and fall under his responsibility and control.”¹⁸ Thomas remains committed to seeing issues of the freedom of the rational creature as exhibited in the creature's free consent to sin and free consent to justification. Moreover, Thomas' ruminations on the virtues in *ST* 2a proceed, not from the necessity of metaphysical speculation, but out of a discursive inquiry into the activity of God who creates and sustains creatures' freedom. Both acquired and infused virtue are developed along these lines, as the creatures' free response, as a willing participation in the life of God made open to us.

Whereas interpreters commonly elaborate these complex divine-human relationships in light of Thomas' subtle understanding of divine-human causation, I argue that Thomas' next move is crucial. This move may even rewrite the provisional understanding achieved thus far in *ST* 1a2ae. For instead Thomas uses a novel mode to move the reader more deeply into consideration of the virtues as he shifts from language of causation to motion, thus stretching his and his reader's ability to explain the – nearly – inexplicable.

18 *ST* 1a2ae Prol.: “Ipse est suorum operum principium, quasi liberum arbitrium habens et suorum operum potestatem.”

3.2 Motion, Causality, and Charity

ST 2a2ae q 23: The Form of the “Acquired” Infused Virtues

I turn again to charity in *ST 2a2ae q23*. In Chapter Two, I devoted the section on *q23* to describing Thomas' project of likening the infused moral virtues to the acquired moral virtues inasmuch as both *lack* something (2.2 The “Acquired” Infused). The acquired moral virtues lack the inner-directedness to the final end; the infused moral virtues lack the *delectatio* that the acquired naturally enjoy. Both are incomplete. To become complete, the infused must be moved by the joy of the acquired. The movement needed for the completion of the infused virtues is charity. Charity is the virtue which operates readily, which inclines. Charity operates with delight thereby rendering the other virtues more perfect.

My argument for this section concerns Thomas' descriptions of this activity of charity in *q23* using the language of motion and causation. Prior to this account of agency in *q23*, Thomas relies on the language of causation alone to name the perfecting activity of the virtues. Thomas depends on causality to the point of its exhaustion. Then he takes his account further by adding motion. Therefore, coupling these languages of motion and causation is a tool to name the diverse elements constitutive of a complex account of agency. The coupled categories offer readers new, more robust claims regarding agency and the character of that perfecting friendship into which agents are called by Charity Itself.

The ostensive pedagogical project of the *Summa* includes Thomas' moves in *2a2ae* regarding charity, motion, and causation. Thomas introduces readers to motion and causation in the first questions of the *Summa* (the “Five Ways”) as related

vocabularies, logically and ontologically ordered to one another. As for their subsequent uses in the *ST* 1a and 1a2ae, despite their conceptual dependence on one another, by and large Thomas keeps them distinct.¹⁹ For example, causation is featured in Thomas' earlier discussions of acquired and infused virtues – including the material of the previous section, *ST* 1a2ae q65 – foregoing motion altogether in his account of agency. Yet Thomas brings them together once again in the treatise on grace to close the *ST* 1a2ae and in the material that ensues in the 2a2ae. As he turns to the treatise on grace and its complement, the treatise on charity, Thomas features motion once again and subordinates the language of causation to that predominant idiom.²⁰

19 A notable exception is Thomas' introduction of the language of motion in a swath of questions on the intellect, will, and free-will (*ST* 1a q79ff esp. 79-83, 105). This usage is distinct from the relationship in *ST* 1a2ae q109ff. In the last paragraphs of this section, I note what distinguishes motion-causation with respect to intellect, will, and free-will (*ST* 1a q79ff) from motion-causation with respect to grace and charity (*ST* 1a2ae q109ff). On the elements of motion, Aristotle, and analogy in the latter questions of *ST* 1a, and their bearing on a substantive understanding of Thomas and on formal issues of the *Summa*, see the interesting study of Eileen Sweeney, "From Determined Motion to Undetermined Will and Nature to Supernature in Aquinas," *Philosophical Topics* 20, 2 (Fall 1992): 189-214.

See too Robert Miner's appreciation of Thomas' resistance to univocal use of the language of *motus* as applied to passions, drawing on Thomas' *Commentary on Aristotle's Physics*, 5.4.2-6, in *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 22-48* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 38-46.

20 This project differs subtly from a characteristic preoccupation of readers of Thomas this past half century. Many concern themselves with the division between the *ST* 1a2ae and the 2a2ae, and indeed this is one of the *Summa's* most basic divisions as regards moral science. There are many points in this partition which merit careful attention, including the relationships of orders of reflection (*ST* 1a2ae's more general considerations in relation to 2a2ae's more particular), the relationship of the ordering of the inquiries of each of the parts (1a2ae's moral material from the perspective of the human person's operative powers in relation to 2a2ae's turn to the sub-domains with which the human person is concerned), and the relationships of sets of questions to one another (for instance, 1a2ae's closure with the external helps of law and grace in relation to 2a2ae's leading with the theological virtues). I.e. the basic division is: *ST* 1a2ae vs. *ST* 2a2ae.

I contrast this to my project. More than the difference between the 1a2ae and 2a2ae, I am interested in the difference between virtues in 1a2ae question 65 and 2a2ae question 23. To be sure, q65 and q23 are exemplifications of the differences between the 1a2ae and 2a2ae. Rather than marking the point of difference as the division between parts (1a2ae and 2a2ae), the disparity is better attributed to Thomas' extended treatment on grace in questions 109-114 that conclude the 1a2ae. The language Thomas uses prior to the questions on grace operates one way, and as the vocabulary is augmented Thomas proceeds in another. The more important distinction as regards the virtues is material-that-precedes-1a2ae-q109-114 (the "Treatise on Grace") and material-that-follows-1a2ae-q109-114. I.e.: *ST*

Why this might be the case is the subject of the reflection that follows.

I take Thomas' insight on this matter to be that there are limitations to explanations which depend on causality that can be overcome, at least in part, by recourse to motion. My claims have less to do with to what extent Thomas 'knows what he is doing' when he marshals the vocabularies and more to do with attending to the different parts of speech Thomas finds most useful at different points and discerning why that might be the case. Reading alongside Thomas, I follow the pattern of rhetorical form as I unpack his claims.²¹ In this section, I start with Thomas' first introduction of motion and causation as discrete modes of explanation in the Five Ways, then I turn to his outright dependence on causation in the mid-1a2ae to its exhaustion at the end of q65, and then I track his final return to motion and causation in the questions on grace and charity. Over the course of the *Summa*, I understand Thomas to be using whichever idiom will do the work he requires.

In short, what is the difference between these vocabularies? Thomas uses the language of *causation* to capture the habituation of the acquired virtues. But the fuller habituation of the infused requires that 'something more' than the language of *motion* provides.²² Motion turns out to be the language that indicates how the habituation of the infused virtues fundamentally differs from the habituation of the acquired virtues.²³

1a2ae q1-108 vs. ST 1a2ae q109ff.

21 See Mark Jordan, "Rhetorical Form in the Historiography of Philosophy," *New Literary History* 23 (1992): 483-504.

22 Here I assume what I have argued previously in Chapter Two, that the habituation of the infused is open to fuller habituation in finally being marked by that joy and ease characteristic of the acquired. Charity's role in this fuller habituation is crucial. So too charity itself is open to various degrees of perfection, such that it makes sense to talk of the increase in perfection of the infused virtues.

23 The questions I treat on grace and motion emphasize one particular kind of the twofold understanding grace. Between (i) the habitual gift of God and (ii) the preparation for the gift, my

Motion is Thomas' way of indicating that at the heart of the human person's turn to God is God's turning that person. God's movement of the creature, a perfecting movement, is logically prior to the creature's embrace of that movement which affects the creature's causality. Motion remains important for vocabulary regarding the infused virtues because of charity's crucial role as the mother of them all.²⁴ Charity is the *mover* of the infused, completing them by *moving* them to the joy natural to the acquired. Charity is that virtue which *moves* the infused virtues to a perfection not known to the habits before.

3.2.1 The Five Ways: Motion and Causality are Related yet Distinct

As he begins, Thomas invokes motion and causality as logically and ontologically ordered to one another. They are related yet distinct. Thomas helps the reader to achieve this conceptual distinction in the Five Ways, a question very early on in the *Summa: ST 1a q2 a3*.

In the Five Ways, Thomas begins with *sacra doctrina* and then introduces a range of philosophical sciences to illustrate its intelligibility. The pedagogical movement is meant to lead the embodied intellect by way of natural reason from sensible things. Thus a reader progresses to knowledge of intelligible principles and

treatment focuses on the latter, (ii). It would be informative to read more closely the former, (i) the habitual gift, to further discern the relationship between *motio* and causation. There I imagine one might discover more of the characteristic language of *habitus* and causation, and naturally so for according to my treatment motion precedes cause and preparation precedes gift.

²⁴ In secondary scholarship it is often noted that charity has a similar effect on the acquired virtues in directing them to the final end. I aim to complement this common thesis (i.e., charity/acquired) with my own regarding charity with respect to the other infused virtues, theological and moral (i.e., charity/infused).

causes of sensible reality.²⁵ Starting from *sensibilia* known to us in physical reality and passing to *intelligibilia* known in itself in metaphysics, the intellect transcends its initial orientations. Motion and causality play their part in this movement, as these philosophical concepts are invoked in the Five Ways in order to help the reader to understand better the nature of *sacra doctrina*.

Thomas begins the First Way with the Aristotelian argument on the basis of motion. The existence of motion in the world requires an immobile principle of motion.²⁶ As such, motion is “a secondary and derivatory mode of being,” depending on an unmoved kind of being.²⁷ Te Velde shows that Thomas follows Aristotelian analysis of the concept of motion, and in order to avoid non-circular definition, defines it as “the act of that which exists in potency insofar as it is such.”²⁸ Motion has the character of being between. It is partly act and partly potency. This conceptual character means that for things in motion there are two factors: (i) the thing which undergoes the motion and which accordingly is in the process of being reduced from potency to act, and (ii) another thing which determines the motion in the thing moved by reducing it from potency to act.²⁹ Thus it is not possible for something to be mover

25 Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 48.

26 It would augment my case to draw a more full characterization from its source, Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, and then to qualify how Thomas' appropriation of Aristotle in his commentaries, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, *Compendium theologiae*, and then in the *Summa* becomes strikingly non-Aristotelian in important respects. For now, perhaps less fruitfully, I restrict myself to the inner-logic of the *Summa*. Such an account should detail how although Aristotle restricts motion to a limited number of categories, Thomas uses *movetur* in its widest sense to include any change produced by another including the coming into being of a substance. See James Weisheipl, “The Principle *Omne quod movetur ab alio movetur* in Medieval Physics,” *Isis* 56, 1 (1965), 26-45; 29.

27 Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 55.

28 *Physics* III, c. 1; quoted in te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 56.

29 Te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 57.

and to be moved by the same motion; it cannot be (i) and (ii) simultaneously. There is no self-mover. Motion is essentially reactive.³⁰ Thomas concludes in the Five Ways that ultimate explanations regarding motion lie beyond the realm of nature.

I draw two general conclusions regarding the conceptual character of motion: one, the nature of the thing being moved requires a nature that is a passive and material principle (versus an active and formal principle). Being moved entails the thing's passivity. Motion is *received* as being generated or produced.³¹ Leo Elders writes, "The potency which is actualized cannot actualize itself, but requires a cause distinct from itself or at least from that part or organ in which this potency is present."³² The thing must be given its fulfillment, rather than fulfilling the potency itself. The potency actualized cannot actualized itself; it must be actualized by something else. In being actualized, this potency is brought to fulfillment. Second, motion effects perfection as a movement from potentiality to actuality. Motion is the perfection of the recipient, belonging to the recipient as an existing actuality. The same motion is an actuality produced by the agent, so it also belongs to the agent. "Thus the process of constructing a building belongs both to the builders and to the building, but it is the builders who *build* and the building which *is built*," observes James Weisheipl.³³ As creatures go, *movetur* entails that creatures cannot effect such

30 Te Velde is careful to distinguish Thomas' conceptual *ontological* structure of motion with persistent misinterpretations that re-describe this Aristotelian principle as a *physico-mathematical* in te Velde, *Aquinas on God*, 58-59.

31 See Weisheipl, "The Principle *Omne quod movetur*," 43.

32 Leo Elders, *The Philosophical Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas* (Leiden; New York: E. J. Brill, 1990), 91.

33 Weisheipl, "The Principle *Omne quod movetur*," 27.

activity themselves and when such activity is produced in them by the First Mover, the very movement perfects them. The efficient influence brings out of and in this potency a perfection similar to what it is itself.³⁴ Together these conclusions regarding motion entail certain conceptual guidelines for Thomas' usage. Motion is received and motion entails the perfection of the thing being moved. The corresponding guidelines established by Thomas' use of causality come next, where I conclude that the language of motion requires passivity whereas causation assumes activity.

Causality is the subject of the next few arguments in the Five Ways – that each efficient cause depends on a prior cause, that there is some being having of itself of its own necessity that causes in others their necessity, that there must be something which is to all things the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection – which amount to three of the five! Causation becomes a recurring if not prevalent theme through the rest of the *ST* 1a and into the 1a2ae. With causation, Thomas invokes a polymorphic concept whose range is much more generous than the reduced mechanistic model dominant in modernity.³⁵ Instead, causality is predicated on the analogy of personal agency, where causation is pictured by way of analogy with one's experience. As I set out in the previous section, an analogous character emphasizes the relation of denomination from something else and transgeneric predication. Creaturely causality is named from divine causality and designates that it belongs to a different genus. As perfections are named according to a certain analogy, so too creaturely

34 *Ibid.*

35 And then often assumed by contemporary theologians, according to Fergus Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2002), 40. More on what I take to be the polymorphism later, as I outline Thomas' various usages.

causation.

The First and Final cause is the Triune God, who as a “self-conscious and intentional agent” causes the world “as originating it *ex nihilo* and as attracting it as *telos*.”³⁶ The first and most universal cause is God. By participation in God, creatures have secondary causality. Yet – and this we know from experience – there are limitations to what creatures can cause. Thomas makes such allowances for limitation in his treatment of creation where he is careful to respect God's unique power to create (that is, to cause the being of things). Creatures cannot create; only God can create in the proper sense.³⁷

That God is First Cause on Thomas' account actually preserves and protects creaturely causality. For God causes creatures to be and preserves them in being. “God is in all things, and innermostly.”³⁸ Moreover, God is in all things by essence, presence, and power and gives all things being, power, and operation.³⁹ God causes creatures to cause. For all of this, God's causation that finally makes creatures' causation their own. Creatures become the agents of their own return to God. Ultimate perfection in activity does not occlude God from the picture, on the contrary, in creatures who have grace God is present more familiarly as the object of their operations and the desired of their desires.⁴⁰

In sum, the language of causation is everywhere in the *ST* 1a and into the 1a2ae

36 Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 41.

37 *ST* 1a q45 a5.

38 *ST* 1a q8 a1 co.: “Deus sit in omnibus rebus, et intime.”

39 *ST* 1a q8 a2 et a3.

40 *ST* 1a q8 a3.

for it stands at the heart of Thomas' treatment of Creator, creatures, and creation. Thomas deploys causation in a range of uses: divine or creaturely, its fourfold Aristotelian senses (formal, final, efficient, material), the particular versus the universal, of the univocal or non-univocal kinds (i.e., equivocal or analogical). That a treatment so wide-ranging might finally reach its limits is remarkable and might serve as an instructive or pedagogical moment. I suggest that it does when readers reach the treatise on grace.

3.2.2 Causation Used to its Exhaustion in *ST 1a2ae q65*

Thomas maintains causation as explanatory language throughout *ST 1a2ae*. It appears in characteristic form early on in that the virtues are good habits. Habits are caused by acts and though it is not specified as to the number, it is more than one single act. Nature causes some habits and God causes others.⁴¹ In the increase of habits, the subject is caused to partake more perfectly of a pre-existing form or extending the form further.⁴² Conversely, Thomas adds, "And since they increase through the same cause as that which engenders them, so too they diminish by the same cause as that which corrupts them: since the diminishing of a habit is the road which leads to its corruption, even as, on the other hand, the engendering of a habit is a foundation of its increase."⁴³

41 *ST 1a2ae q51.*

42 *ST 1a2ae q52 a2.* That is, an increase in habits does not cause a *new form*.

43 *ST 1a2ae q53 a2 co.:* "Et sicut ex eadem causa augentur ex qua generantur, ita ex eadem causa diminuuntur ex qua corrumpuntur, nam diminutio habitus est quaedam via ad corruptionem, sicut e converso generatio habitus est quoddam fundamentum augmenti ipsius."

Thomas' use of causation becomes more specific as turns to the virtues in question 63, "Of the Cause of Virtues." Thomas reasserts that virtue is caused by good acts, but he adds specification as he distinguishes between kinds of virtue:

It follows that human virtue directed to the good which is defined according to the rule of human reason can be caused by human acts: inasmuch as such acts proceed from reason, by whose power and rule the aforesaid good is established. On the other hand, virtue which directs man to good as defined by the Divine Law, and not by human reason, cannot be caused by human acts, the principle of which is reason, but is produced in us by the Divine operation alone. Hence Augustine in giving the definition of the latter virtue inserts the words, "which God works in us without us" (Super Ps. 118, Serm. xxvi).⁴⁴

Shortly thereafter Thomas goes on to specify how "Divine operation" works in subjects whose virtues are not caused in them by habituation. He uses the language of infusion. It appears that agents *cause* acquired virtue and God *causes* infused virtue.

The language of causation might be creatively extended from these early questions on the virtues. Inglis undertakes this project by applying Aristotle's language of causality (namely material, efficient, and final) to Thomas' extant vocabulary of the virtues (acquired/infused) to explain how there can be two virtues in one action.⁴⁵ Inglis wants to analyze how acquired and infused virtue can both be at

44 *ST 1a2ae q63 a2 co.:*
Virtus igitur hominis ordinata ad bonum quod modificatur secundum regulam rationis humanae, potest ex actibus humanis causari, in quantum huiusmodi actus procedunt a ratione, sub cuius potestate et regula tale bonum consistit. Virtus vero ordinans hominem ad bonum secundum quod modificatur per legem divinam, et non per rationem humanam, non potest causari per actus humanos, quorum principium est ratio, sed causatur solum in nobis per operationem divinam. Et ideo, huiusmodi virtutem definiens, Augustinus posuit in definitione virtutis, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operatur.

45 Inglis primarily draws on 1a2ae questions 51-63 in "Aquinas's Reduplication of the Acquired Moral Virtues." As helpful as it is at this nascent stage of Thomas' work in the *Summa*, Inglis' account remains incomplete because of Thomas' subsequent shifts in vocabulary.

work in a single concrete deed. By his analysis, the material cause is the same for both. What differs between acquired and infused are the efficient and final causes. For the efficient cause, infused virtue “builds upon, but does not destroy, virtuous characteristics acquired through human effort.”⁴⁶ Thus different efficient causes can be at work when the infused moral virtue corresponds to an acquired virtue already possessed. For the final cause, according to Inglis, the final good of the infused virtues can and often should complete the good corresponding to the acquired virtues. In this relationship, the higher end “directs the work of the acquired virtue and transforms its final cause.”⁴⁷ Causality helps explain how acquired and infused virtue might work together as Thomas argues in question 51: “ Acts produced by an infused habit, do not cause a habit, but strengthen the already existing habit; just as the remedies of medicine given to a man who is naturally healthy, do not cause a kind of health, but give new strength to the health he had before.”⁴⁸

Yet the distinction between acquired and infused virtue, whose crucial difference is captured by language of causality, is not Thomas' final description. For in question 65, as I suggested in the previous chapter, Thomas brings to the fore the distinctively theological aspects of acquired virtue, making it clear that agents' powers to cause virtue must be heavily qualified by God's activity. An account of double agency clarifies what kind of mistake it is to overestimate human power to *cause* acquired virtue. An easy dichotomy between acquired and infused and 'caused by

46 Inglis, “Aquinas's Reduplication,” 21.

47 *Ibid.*

48 *ST* 1a2ae q51 a4 ad3; also quoted in Chapter Two, page 109.

humans' and 'caused by God' will not work. Rather than focusing on another description of causation as it pertains to acquired and infused, Thomas switches his language to imperfect and perfect virtue. *The language of causation drops out of question 65 altogether.*

Thus readers see the limits of the language of causation as applied to acquired and infused virtues and by extension, the limits of human agency. Both are delimited by a gift – charity – that interrupts the extant, limited conceptual scheme. The reader's understanding of causation and agency is recast in this shift to a different set of distinctions: imperfect and perfect virtue. Charity itself constitutes the difference between these kinds of virtue. Readers cannot understand this difference without a fuller account of charity.

3.2.3 Causality Complemented with Motion: Grace and Charity

Thomas' treatment of grace and charity, of causation and motion as language proper to both, is a continuation of Thomas' pedagogical project first stated in the prologue. Thomas' invocation of different vocabularies throughout the *Summa*, as I trace them, key the reader in to different modes of explanation. In the questions on grace (and next, charity), Thomas attempts to describe the complex phenomenon of double agency, including a resistance to univocal understandings of causation, by coupling his conceptual resources. I look now to the treatise on grace to note how the language of motion expands Thomas' extant vocabulary regarding agency.

It may be of some use to look at differences in emphases between Thomas' earlier and later writings on grace. According to Schockenhoff, Thomas' earlier

writings emphasize Thomas' resistance to any unidirectional understanding of the movement of the sinful creature back being reconciled to God by grace.⁴⁹ Between God's grace and the free consent of the human being, Thomas develops a complementary and mutual relationship. For this, the language of causality suffices, God's grace being the material cause and human consent the material. Then, argues Schockenhoff, in his mature writings in the *Summa* Thomas drops the language of formal and material causality to describe the workings of grace. Instead, he uses motion. Motion emphasizes God's primacy in the process.

The infusion of grace is now understood to be entirely an outgoing movement of the divine mover, the '*infusio*' is strictly identified with the '*ipsa Dei moventis motio*,' preserving God's absolute primacy even more strongly in the whole process of movement than the relationship of form and matter. The turning of the '*liberum arbitrium*' to God is ranked second as '*motio ipsius mobilis*' is itself borne from the grounding movement of grace.⁵⁰

Schockenhoff is careful to preserve Thomas' appreciation for human freedom by re-tooling the idioms with which it is described. In Thomas' later writings, according to Schockenhoff, he accents God's motion as essential to understanding how *liberum arbitrium* becomes really and genuinely free.

Thomas' first question on grace, *ST* 1a2ae q 109, begins with its necessity.

49 *Bonum Hominis*, 333.

50 *Bonum Hominis*, 341:
Die Eingießung der Gnade wird nun als ganz von dem göttlichen Beweger ausgehende Bewegung verstanden; die '*infusio*' wird in strenger Identität zur '*ipsa Dei moventis motio*,' die noch stärker, als es in der Überlegenheit der Form über die Materie zum Ausdruck kommt, den absoluten Primat im ganzen Bewegungsvorgang bewahrt. Die an zweiter Stelle stehende Hinwendung des '*liberum arbitrium*' zu Gott ist als '*motio ipsius mobilis*' selbst von Grundbewegung der Gnade getragen.

I am obliged to William McDonough's article on Schockhoff for the attention to the same matter ("Caritas as the *Prae-Ambulum* of All Virtue: Eberhard Schockenhoff on the Theological-Anthropological Significance and the Contemporary Interreligious Relevance of Thomas Aquinas's Teaching on the *Virtutes Morales Infusae*," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 27 2 (2007): 97-126).

Thomas outlines its role with respect to knowing and doing the good. Throughout the entirety of this initial question on grace, motion is dominant. God *moves* creatures: divine power moves the intellect to its act⁵¹, the First Mover moves one to act well⁵², God leads one to himself in love⁵³, God's motion moves one to fulfill His commandments⁵⁴, the gratuitous gift of God moves the soul inwardly to allow it to prepare itself for the light of grace⁵⁵, the internal motion of God helps one rise from sin⁵⁶, that God must move even those with habitual grace to act⁵⁷ (and as such grace is to some extent imperfect because it does not fully heal man!⁵⁸).

To identify the perspicuity of motion in this question may seem to point out the obvious. Yet it differs from the emphases often derived from these questions that feature natural and supernatural powers and natural and supernatural ends. These latter sets of distinctions surely relate to the language of motion. For example, motion helps account for the differences between the acts of natural and supernatural virtues. “The acts developing natural virtues are like the motion of a natural body toward its natural place, fulfilling a natural potency;” writes Sweeney, but “theological virtue reverses this model since its acts do not produce the virtue, fulfilling a natural potency,

51 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a1.

52 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a2.

53 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a3.

54 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a4.

55 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a6.

56 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a7.

57 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a9.

58 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a9 ad1.

but rather flow from a habit beyond nature and directly produced by God.”⁵⁹ Thus Thomas' language surrounding the acquired virtues depends more heavily on causation; Thomas' language regarding the theological virtues indicates some gap in the language of causation. Motion is Thomas' way of explaining God's activity as it affects creaturely activity, powers, and ends elevating it to its supernatural form. That Thomas finally resorts to motion when describing grace is but another indication that his novel account of 'infused habits' merits unpacking.⁶⁰

The language of causality is not left behind but stands alongside motion. In question 109, article 6 Thomas invokes both concepts in a seamless explanation of how God prepares the human for the gift of habitual grace. The preparation for the human will is twofold: first through the habitual gift of grace and secondly through the preparation for the gift itself. The most basic and needful condition is that the soul be prepared for the gift itself; this second way is the occasion for Thomas' extended invocation of motion:

Now that we need the help of God to *move* us, is manifest. For since every agent acts for an end, every *cause* must direct its effect to its end, and hence since the order of ends is according to the order of agents or *movers*, man must be directed to the last end by the *motion of the first mover*, and to the proximate end by the *motion of any of the subordinate movers*; as the spirit of the soldier is bent towards seeking victory by the motion of the leader of the army--and towards following the standard of a regiment by the *motion* of the standard-bearer. And thus since God is the *First Mover*, simply, it is by *His motion* that everything in accordance to the shared intention of the good seeks to be likened to God in its own way.⁶¹

59 Sweeney, 202.

60 Again, because they lack the characteristics of habits, i.e., performed with ease and delight. See Chapter Two, 91ff.

61 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a6 co.:

In this description, motion remains the framing concept and causation a secondary one. By stressing motion, Thomas holds to the primacy of God's activity in the creatures' turn to God. God's movement of creatures enables the various forms of creaturely causality. The description lends itself well to the simile with which Thomas ends the response of article 6:

Now to prepare oneself for grace is, as it were, to be turned to God; just as, whoever has his eyes turned away from the light of the sun, prepares himself to receive the sun's light, by turning his eyes towards the sun. Hence it is clear that man cannot prepare himself to receive the light of grace except by the gratuitous help of God moving him inwardly.⁶²

This question of Question 109, article 6: "Whether a Man, by Himself and without the External Aid of Grace, Can Prepare Himself for Grace?" is followed sometime later with question 112, article 2, "Whether Any Preparation and Disposition for Grace is Required on Man's Part?" That Thomas revisits the topic is crucial, first under the aspect of necessity and second under the aspect of causality (Question 109 treats "Of the Necessity of Grace" and 112, "The Cause of Grace"). In this latter article q112, a2 Thomas turns to an explicit consideration of causality. Here

Quod autem ad hoc indigeamus auxilio Dei moventis, manifestum est. Necessesse est enim, cum omne agens agat propter finem, quod omnis causa convertat suos effectus ad suum finem. Et ideo, cum secundum ordinem agentium sive moventium sit ordo finium, necesse est quod ad ultimum finem convertatur homo per motionem primi moventis, ad finem autem proximum per motionem alicuius inferiorum moventium, sicut animus militis convertitur ad quaerendum victoriam ex motione ducis exercitus, ad sequendum autem vexillum alicuius aciei ex motione tribuni. Sic igitur, cum Deus sit primum movens simpliciter, ex eius motione est quod omnia in ipsum convertantur secundum communem intentionem boni, per quam unumquodque intendit assimilari Deo secundum suum modum.

62 *ST* 1a2ae q109 a6 co.:

Hoc autem est praeparare se ad gratiam, quasi ad Deum converti, sicut ille qui habet oculos aversum a lumine solis, per hoc se praeparat ad recipiendum lumen solis, quod oculos suos convertit versus solem. Unde patet quod homo non potest se praeparare ad lumen gratiae suscipiendum, nisi per auxilium gratuitum Dei interius moventis.

he iterates the language of motion from the earlier question – every preparation is by the help of God moving the soul to good, God principally moves the free-will⁶³ – or as he says later: “man's preparation for grace is from God, as Mover, and from the free-will, as moved.”⁶⁴ Alongside motion Thomas employs the language of causality: God *causes* in the thing caused by the matter and *causes* the due disposition for the form.⁶⁵ God is the first cause of the bestowal of grace.⁶⁶

As the questions on grace progress, Thomas couples these framing concepts to such an extent that a reader may even be tempted to conflate the two. Why not? After all, God is both the First Mover and the First Cause. What differences remain between these framing concepts such that it remains worthwhile to distinguish them? Thus far it appears that causation is a useful complementary concept to motion. Causation is useful in explaining agency but is insufficient on its own as it may tend toward a univocal model. Causation's fuller rehabilitation is to come. For now, motion is prioritized as it preserves the radical difference between First Mover and the moved; it asserts difference while positing relationship.⁶⁷

63 *ST* 1a2ae q112 a2.

64 *ST* 1a2ae q112 a3 co.: “Praeparatio ad hominis gratiam est a Deo sicut a movente, a libero autem arbitrio sicut a moto.”

65 *ST* 1a2ae q112 a2.

66 *ST* 1a2ae q112 a3.

67 Or in terms of the previous section, as likeness is to analogy, causation is to motion.

3.2.4 Motion in *ST 2a2ae q23 a2*

In the *sed contra* of *2a2ae q23 a2*, Thomas quotes Augustine's *De Doctrina Christiana* affirmatively: "'By charity I mean the movement of the soul towards the enjoyment of God for His own sake.' But a movement of the soul is something created in the soul. Therefore charity is something created in the soul."⁶⁸ Thomas' gloss draws upon *motio* vocabulary and implies the language of causation. (As the movement is created, the movement is caused.) To wit, the double invocation makes it clear that only God can bring about such an effect. God does this through movement.

In the response of *q23 a2*, moreover, Thomas couches the rest of his claims regarding charity in terms of motion, arguing with Lombard's invocation ("*this movement is from the Holy Spirit without any intermediary habit*"⁶⁹), qualifying how motion ought to be invoked ("*but if we consider the matter aright, which would be, on the contrary, detrimental to charity. For when the Holy Spirit moves the human mind the movement of charity does not proceed from this motion in such a way that the human mind be merely moved, without being the principle of this movement*" and "*neither can it be said that the Holy Spirit moves the will to the act of loving as though the will were an instrument*"⁷⁰), coupling motion and causation

68 *ST 2a2ae q23 a2* s.c. quoting Augustine, *De Doctrina Christ.* iii.10.16: "caritatem voco motum animi ad fruendum Deo propter ipsum. Sed motus animi est aliquid creatum in anima. Ergo et caritas est aliquid creatum in anima."

69 *ST 2a2ae q23 a2* co. contesting Lombard's view: "iste motus dilectionis est a spiritu sancto non mediante aliquo habitu."

70 *Ibid.*:

Sed si quis recte consideret, hoc magis redundat in caritatis detrimentum. Non enim motus caritatis ita procedit a spiritu sancto movente humanam mentem quod humana mens sit mota tantum et nullo modo sit principium huius motus

Similiter etiam non potest dici quod sic moveat spiritus sanctus voluntatem ad actum diligendi sicut movetur instrumentum quod...

(“given that the will is moved by the Holy Spirit to the act of love, it is necessary that the will also should be the efficient cause of that act”⁷¹) and concluding with allusions to previous configurations (“God, who moves all things to their due ends, bestowed on each thing the form whereby it is inclined to the end appointed to it by Him... Therefore it is most necessary that, for us to perform the act of charity, there should be in us some habitual form superadded to the natural power, inclining that power to the act of charity”⁷²). The language of causation is present, though subordinate to the governing motion vocabulary; of the two times it appears, both are from passages cited (above) in the context of Thomas' emphasis on motion.⁷³

In continuity with the preceding analysis of motion, one may note the iteration of the three emphases anticipated for the 2a2ae: one, the inward movement of the Holy Spirit enables the will to actuate its own effectiveness; two, in accordance with being moved by God to its due end, the form of charity is superadded to the natural power inclining it to act with ease and pleasure; and three, this movement of the Holy Spirit is expressive of the perfection of friendship with God.⁷⁴ *Motio* primarily describes the activity of the Holy Spirit to creatures, activity which for creatures is non-violent, enabling, and perfecting.

71 *Ibid.*: “Sed oportet quod sic voluntas moveatur a spiritu sancto ad diligendum quod etiam ipsa sit efficiens hunc actum.”

72 *Ibid.*: “Deus, qui omnia movet ad debitos fines, singulis rebus indidit formas per quas inclinantur ad fines sibi praestitutos a Deo...Unde maxime necesse est quod ad actum caritatis existat in nobis aliqua habitualis forma superaddita potentiae naturali, inclinans ipsam ad caritatis actum.”

73 I.e.: “given that the will is moved by the Holy Ghost to the act of love, it is necessary that the will also should be the efficient cause of that act” and “for us to perform the act of charity, there should be in us some habitual form superadded to the natural power, inclining that power to the act of charity, and causing it to act with ease and pleasure.” In a careful reading of Thomas' corpus, Sherwin in *By Knowledge and By Love*, esp. 192ff, covers Thomas' shifts in describing the type of causality exercised by the intellect and will.

74 Paul Wadell, *Friends of God*, 23.

Charity becomes that which *moves* the other virtues to act and completion. Charity *moves* the acquired virtues to the ultimate end and *moves* the infused virtues to delight and joy.⁷⁵ Charity's movement is a perfecting movement, enabling the other virtues to enact a perfection not possible before. Thomas' invocation of motion indicates to the reader that the accomplishments of charity are God's. That is not all.

For in describing how charity enacts this movement, Thomas resorts to charity as an efficient *cause* giving the form to all other acts of virtue. Charity informs acts, causing them to be meritorious as the principle of motion toward God.⁷⁶ Finally, Thomas reinstates the vocabulary of causation! Why? Motion is most often invoked in transgeneric relations, primarily between the Holy Spirit and creature. Causation is most often reserved for describing intergeneric activity. Because charity becomes fully creatures' own (though we do not possess it perfectly), the language of causation becomes appropriate. Causation is possible because God's charity becomes creatures' own. Together these categories allow Thomas to articulate this new and more robust account of agency at the heart of the increasing perfection of the creature. In the treatment of charity, Thomas narrates God's perfection of the imperfect creature. His careful use of language serves as a warning against overarching explanations offered by any one idiom, sensitive to the difficulties of describing Christian realities in any philosophical parlance however transformed.

75 Sherwin notes the continuities in Thomas' early and later works in describing charity's action in terms of motion and perfection; by contrast Thomas changes his way of describing charity's causal action upon the virtues in *By Knowledge and By Love*, 193-194.

76 The whole of Sherwin's book, *By Knowledge and By Love*, is an argument that in Thomas charity's action is thoroughly integrated with the intellect. That seems right – though far from obvious given the confusion in secondary literature.

3.2.5 Ways Forward

Thomas' theses on motion should be read alongside his work on analogy. As reduction of a thing from potentiality to act, motion is an activity proper to God alone as *actus purus*. The exemplar form of motion is God's motion. God alone moves in a perfect manner. Motion is more properly said to be the 'analogy of motion' in creatures as it fulfills the two conditions for analogy outlined in the previous section: denomination from another and transgeneric predication. Creatures' capacity for motion is named from God's prior motion and 'motion' properly designates God's but insofar as it depends on God's it signifies creatures'. Readers should fully expect that wherever Thomas describes the movements of creatures – the will moving the intellect, the sensitive appetite moving the will, the will moving itself – such movements are of creatures *and* of God but differently.⁷⁷ Movement within the creature issues from a moved mover and the Unmoved Mover. 'Motion' becomes another illustration of the doubleness of agency.

Thomas' usage of motion with respect to charity and grace reminds readers of the primacy of God's activity in creatures' return. The fluctuating relationship between the perfect exemplar and imperfect likeness is most determinatively shaped by God's perfect movement. This special movement of God for creatures is grace. Thus 'motion' helps explain how imperfect creatures are reduced from potentiality to act in a movement which constitutes their perfection. This movement is a non-violent work *with us* that enables us for the movement that is virtue's perfect and perfecting activity. Only as God moves us may charity move the rest of the virtues toward perfection. The

⁷⁷ My claims intend to bear upon Thomas' language of 'movement' as creaturely activity in *ST* 1a q79ff and 1a2ae q9, 10 – two of the few places that Thomas couples language of motion and causality!

perfection of the infused virtues relies most fundamentally on their being moved by charity.

In sum, Thomas invokes the vocabularies of motion and causation for various purposes, but never are these purposes cross with one another. That there is an organic synthesis at the heart of Thomas' *Summa* may become even more clear in the last chapter. There, I turn at last to ST 2a2ae q47 to discern material which ultimately points to the healing, integrative power of the sacraments. But for now, I turn to that which makes those sacraments so necessary: sin.

3.3 Sin and Imperfection

ST 2a2ae q 47: Toward The Form of Fuller Virtues

In his treatment of prudence in ST 2a2ae q47, Thomas describes how the acquired and infused virtues cooperate to issue in the perfection of the creature or fall short of this cooperation. There are two ways open to us: *the way of becoming more than we are* by participating in the life of God in perfect virtue and *the way of falling short* of living into full friendship with God through false or imperfect virtues. The courses of these different paths are explained by the realities of sacraments and sin, which finally come to bear on Thomas' account of the virtues. Thomas forges for the reader connections between parts of the *Summa* in the very articles where he most clearly integrates the acquired and infused virtues.

In this last section of this chapter, I treat sin in ST 2a2ae q47 article 13 and reserve for the next chapter my treatment of sacraments drawing heavily on ST 2a2ae q47 article 14. My model for reading in this chapter so far is to trace a continuous line

of inquiry through the *Summa* guided by a conceptual ancilla, as with analogy or motion. In this section, I shift. Instead of following the concept into the question, I start with the question and follow it out. I show how this article is a mere part which demands the whole for intelligibility. This movement, alongside the previous two sections, confirms the judgment that the questions of the *Summa* are inseparable from one another, the previous two confirming the suspicion that the First Part (*ST 1a*) is crucial to the Second Part (*ST 1a2ae et 2a2ae*) and this section a display that the understanding achieved thus far finds its necessary complement in the Third Part (*ST 3a*). Thomas' integrative ingenuity at the elemental level mirrors his account of God's activity which leaves no part of the human person untouched by grace. First, sin.

Sin appears throughout the *Summa* and may become a qualifier to a number of themes in Thomas discussed so far: participation, motion, charity, perfection. Sin prevents our being full participants in the life of God open to us and threatens to undermine any progress on the part of the creature in coming to do God's doing. Nature is created as oriented toward God's will and its movement back toward God is interrupted by sin. Sin lacks due order with respect to human flourishing, a *telos* intrinsically related to God as Charity Itself is its goal. Sin names everything that we do or suffer that is not yet perfected.

Sin in *ST 2a2ae q47* also bears directly upon my previous conclusions regarding the coupling of the acquired and infused virtues. In sum, Thomas' commitments regarding sin make that coupling *more* needful. The reality of sin makes *more* necessary the creature's need for the countering effects of both kinds of virtue, acquired and infused.

Article 13 of *ST 2a2ae q47*, the article on prudence that initiates Thomas' expressly theological inquiry, asks whether it is possible for there to be prudence in sinners. "Aristotle holds that it is impossible to be prudent without being a good man," Thomas writes in the *sed contra*, "This no sinner is, and hence no sinner is prudent."⁷⁸ Thomas' reply makes more complex any simple negative answer by detailing the triple sense of prudence. Prudence may be false (*falsa*) because of its resemblance to the virtue though directed to a wrong end; prudence may be imperfect though genuine (*imperfecta, est quidem vera*) in two ways: it falls short either in respect of its end or in respect of its command; and prudence may be complete as true and complete (*vera et perfecta*) which alone is called simply prudence ("*et haec sola dicitur prudentia simpliciter*") as it enjoys an orientation to the universal end *and* its proper execution.⁷⁹ Thus Thomas defines all virtue according to the horizon of the supernatural end of the human being. A virtue is false, imperfect, perfect with respect to this end.

Thomas finally adumbrates sin to kinds of prudence by offering a final gloss on the three senses of prudence. He starts with the third sense and then covers the first and second:

[True and perfect prudence] alone is prudence *simpliciter*, and it cannot be in sinners. The first kind of prudence, however, is sinners alone. Imperfect prudence, however, is common to the good and wicked alike, especially that which is imperfect through being directed to a particular end, for that which is imperfect on account of failing the principle act [of prudence] is only in the wicked.⁸⁰

78 *ST 2a2ae q47 a13 s.c.*: "Philosophus dicit, in VI Ethic., impossibile prudentem esse non entem bonum. Sed nullus peccator est bonus. Ergo nullus peccator est prudens."

79 Recall earlier treatments of this passage on page 105ff.

80 *ST 2a2ae q47 a13 s.c.*:
[Prudentia vera et perfecta] sola dicitur prudentia simpliciter. Quae in peccatoribus esse non potest. Prima autem prudentia est in solis peccatoribus. Prudentia autem

According to a hierarchy of kinds of prudence, sinners have false or imperfect prudence. The good have imperfect or true prudence. As I covered earlier (pages 105-107), imperfect prudence is divided into two kinds: one kind is imperfect because of its end and the other for its ineffective command. Sinners claim both kinds of imperfect prudence whereas the good may have only the first kind. Restating the kinds of prudence according to who may possess them: sinners may have false prudence, imperfect prudence which is imperfect for its *finem particularem*, and imperfect prudence which is imperfect for *defectum principalis actus*; the good may have imperfect prudence which is imperfect for its *finem particularem* and perfect prudence. Ironically, it appears that Thomas' schematization of prudence means that more kinds of prudence are open to sinners than to the good! And yet false prudence is not really prudence at all.

This strange development merits attention. Why might Thomas emphasize this variety? His accounting for the many and diverse ways in which we go wrong, through tracing all these kinds of prudence which fail to be true and fully prudence, finally gives the reader sharper tools to locate the sources of failure and error which threaten a wayfarer's progress toward the good. The ways away from God are multiple. Sin introduces fragmentation to the moral life. Sin is a pursuit of many ends that in turning away from Unity Itself fractures into disunity.⁸¹ Its many avenues defy

imperfecta est communis bonis et malis, maxime illa quae est imperfecta propter finem particularem. Nam illa quae est imperfecta propter defectum principalis actus etiam non est nisi in malis.

81 Again I footnote *ST 1a2ae q73 a1 ad3*: "self-love disunites man's affections among different things, in so far as man loves himself, by desiring for himself temporal goods, which are various and of many kinds: hence vices and sins, which arise from self-love, are not connected together." See the longer argument regarding the unity of the vices versus their disconnectedness, pages 82-84.

easy classification. Thomas' report of its multiplication need not be comprehensive, after all he has several questions devoted entirely to the vices opposed to prudence. Article 13 is an initial attempt in the treatise on prudence in the 2a2ae to describe the ways in which sinners fall short of true and complete virtue.

Moreover this construal of sin pertains to the potentially problematic depiction of the highest human form of virtue as marked by contempt for the world according to *ST 1a2ae q61 a5*, Macrobius, Plotinus, and Plato. Toward the end of the previous chapter, I consider what this contempt means for an appropriate love of the world, namely whether one can entertain both contempt and love.⁸² I asked whether this poses a difficulty for Thomas' holistic model in offering a contempt regulated by the infused and a love regulated by the acquired. I answered that Thomas so qualifies this contempt with charity that contempt is in fact a certain form of love toward goods that are genuine but not ultimate. In construing contempt charitably, Thomas does not move far from prudence whose judgments apply the universal to the particular. Both are regulated forms of love.

As pertains to sin in article 13, I take Thomas to be following through on Augustine's construal of the good life as the right regulation of loves. Augustine writes in *De Trinitate*:

For the soul loving its own power, slips onwards from the whole which is common, to a part, which belongs especially to itself. And that apostatizing pride, which is called "the beginning of sin," whereas it might have been most excellently governed by the laws of God, if it had followed Him as its ruler in the universal creature, by seeking something more than the whole, and struggling to govern this by a law

82 Pages 112 to 114.

of its own, is thrust on, since nothing is more than the whole, into caring for a part; and thus by lusting after something more, is made less.⁸³

Thomas iterates the Augustinian line using language of false, imperfect, and perfect.

Thomas' variants lend themselves to naming how in the particulars one loves God either falsely, imperfectly, or perfectly. This argument extends to how one loves the goods of the world either falsely, imperfectly, or perfectly. Sin is itself a false or imperfect love of the world for it makes worldly goods out to be something they are not. The only true love is for something for what it truly is.

True love is the activity of perfect prudence alone. In the perfection of prudence, which by my understanding finally includes both acquired and infused prudence, the virtues are at last unified in pursuit of the universal end. All subordinate and proximate ends cooperate together to achieve that final end fixed by charity. Whereas sin compromises unified orientation, freedom from sin is the requisite condition for perfect integration.

With regard to this most practical matter, the reader learns how to identify the many and various ways in which sin wounds her capacities for fuller participation. In finally seeing sin as her choosing of lesser and competing goods, she sees the ways in which she has limited herself. In relearning how to love goods properly, she is open to the possibility of receiving a more robust account of goods. The coupling of the

83 Augustine, *De Trinitate*, Book XII, Chapter IX, Paragraph 14:
Potestatem quippe suam diligens anima, a communi universo ad privatam partem prolabitur, et apostatica illa *superbia*, quod *initium peccati* dicitur, cum in universitate creaturae Deum rectorem secuta, legibus eius optime gubernari potuisset, plus aliquid universo appetens, atque id sua lege gubernare molita, quia nihil est amplius universitate, in curam partilem truditur, et sic aliquid amplius concupiscendo minuitur.
De Trinitate, Patrologiae cursus completus, Series Latina, ed. J.-P. Migne, Vol. XLII, (Paris, 1877): Cols. 819-1098. Thomas cites extensively Augustine's *De Trinitate* in his account of vice and sin, *ST* 1a2ae qq71-89, esp. Augustine's Book XII in Thomas' q74.

acquired and infused virtue finally orients all her activity to these genuine goods, and in so doing allows her to participate more fully in that which she is not: the Divine. For Thomas' readers, it should be informative that Thomas follows 2a2ae q47 q13 on sin with q14 on sacraments.⁸⁴ The form of Thomas' treatment helps readers understand how progress in the moral life might work, even as it includes sin.

Despite its ostensive subject, it should not be lost in this particular article sin does not remain the focus but the kinds of *virtue* open to us.⁸⁵ Article 13 is nothing other than a display of the analogical range of virtue with respect to prudence. This range, which includes *vera et perfecta* prudence, witnesses to the crucial perfecting role of charity. As Thomas treats the fullest range of prudence, he gives no hint of leaving its lesser forms behind.

Thomas appears more concerned with the relationship of sin to sanctity than with the oppositional vice to virtue in this article. I note this not to downplay the role of sin in alienating creatures from God but to acknowledge what Thomas appears to acknowledge: sin is expected. Although it is possible not to sin, we sin. Rather than dismissing the need for grace, this reality further underscores the needfulness for the sacraments to help fix us against the onslaught of sin. Whereas sin disintegrates, the sacraments integrate. Thomas' turn first to sin and then to the sacraments means that sin need not have the last word. I turn to the next article, from sin to salvation, in the

84 And so too the 1a2ae the questions on vice come before the questions on grace. These statements regarding the architectonic of the Summa are elaborated in Chapter Four once a fuller account of sacraments is in place (c. 174).

85 Sin is also not Thomas' focus when at last he turns to Christ as the full and final revelation of God in the Third Part. His treatment of the Incarnation is primarily motivated by the divine response to sin, focusing on the former rather than the latter.

next chapter.

From Questions 65 to 23 to 47, I follow Thomas from participation and analogy, to causation and motion, to sin. I trace a sustained line of inquiry between the three questions. I doubt that the attendant conceptual ancillaries of participation, analogy, and so on, are invoked in pattern or neat delineation. By my reading, this is not a problem for Thomas. His model is different. Thomas “does not desire that his writing should spare his readers the trouble of thinking.”⁸⁶ His readers are to be fellow inquirers. He does not strip down his complex dialectic which displays the multiform perfection of the creature in all its faculties and powers. He explores a range of definitions of virtue, cites various authorities as to the kinds of virtue, and moves seamlessly among sets of distinctions between virtues. He uses whatever conceptual resources the tradition provides in order to advance his inquiry, at times modifying the use of these concepts to suit his purposes thereby advancing the tradition by using its elements in new contexts. The aim is that the inquiry, whatever its composition, advances understanding – that our use of virtue language is better understood when we grasp its analogical character, that something is gained for one's account of agency if one turns to language of causation and motion together rather than invoking one singly, that arguments for virtue are augmented if advanced alongside theses concerning sin and – what will come in Chapter Four – salvation.

Thomas' progression from analogy to motion to sin and sacrament are developed as he develops his work on the virtues. Thomas' shifts and ordering of

⁸⁶ Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 31. Miner's thesis is in defense of Thomas' not having offered a complete definition of passion at the outset. Miner likens this move to Wittgenstein.

material and concepts are based on the common thread of inquiry. The shared object of inquiry, who is God, is better apprehended as the understanding of the inquirer is perfected. The ordering principle is determined according to the order of perfecting the understanding of the inquirer.

The inquirer begins with an imperfect understanding of the degree and kind of perfection belonging to herself, and the degree and kind of perfection which belongs to God. Her movement toward apprehensions of these perfections is a progress which itself is a kind of perfection.⁸⁷ Moreover, this perfection of the mind does not escape Thomas' driving integrative thesis. For the perfections of which the mind learns, it is called to enact. Its perfection is virtuous activity because for Thomas, "all meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action for the sake of friendship."⁸⁸ Thomas names this friendship charity.

87 Here I paraphrase MacIntyre: "the enquirer engaged in such activity moves from an initial stage, in which it does not know either itself or other finite beings or God as exhibiting the degree and kind of perfection which belongs to each of these, towards such apprehensions as it is capable of, of the perfection of each; and in achieving this progress it also perfects itself." (*Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*, 95.)

88 John MacMurray, *The Form of the Personal*, Vol 1: *The Self as Agent* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1957), 16.

Chapter Four. Christ, the Church, and Us

The course of true virtue never did run smooth. Nor is the way easy. Taken as a whole, the moral life is constituted by fits and starts and sometimes progress, by digression and deterioration and unraveling of progress. These moral processes are the subject of Langland's *Piers Plowman* and Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologiae*. Insights from different points in this journey have been the principal subject of the previous chapters. Langland displays how different forms of virtue are possible in different contexts (Chapter One), and Thomas explains how the same moral matter can be seen differently according to shifts in perspective (Chapter Two). More generally they share the conviction that virtues are bound up with communities and practices. More specifically their ultimate treatment construes virtues as intimately related to and inseparable from sacramental practice. This ultimate treatment is finally the subject of this chapter. The virtues and sacraments are constitutive elements of creatures' time-bound wayfaring whose end is identified with the person of Christ, the Way.

In addition to moral processes, pedagogical processes in Langland and Thomas lead the reader from an initial understanding of the virtues to a revision of this understanding with penultimate or ultimate horizons. Readers are drawn into active learning as they are given lessons in how to formulate questions, participate in discoveries, and articulate a better understanding of a shared world. This process presumes an essential quality of the reader and wayfarer: that he or she is always open to a greater understanding of the Christian faith and more faithful exemplification of it.

These pursuits are possible only for readers who have received a certain kind of training.¹

Different though these processes may be – moral and pedagogical – in Langland and Thomas they are twin aspects of a singular movement. To abstract a moral insight from its placement in these texts runs the risk of distortion; to describe their pedagogy while truncating moral orientation makes the journey of these texts surd. Rather, they are inextricable. In Langland, the allegorical figure of Will moves toward some understanding and disciplining of desire, the character of his quest is ultimately determined by the command that he remain in the Church and 'learn to love.' In Thomas, the reader is gradually trained to see all aspects of creation as related to its Creator and Redeemer, a relation actively expressed in love and all its forms.

In this fourth and final chapter, I explore in greater detail how the pedagogical features of these texts dovetail with the depiction of the moral life as a journey of a specific character, in this case a sacramental character. I display the relationship between virtues and sacraments using heuristic principles, which I call 'dynamism' and 'unraveling,' to illustrate their pedagogy. Pairing virtues with sacraments means that meaningful progress and learning in the moral life cannot be understood apart from the sacraments. Neither the sacraments nor increase in virtue are understood without the training that Langland and Thomas have in mind.²

1 My understanding of being trained in a craft is shaped by Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* and *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry*. See Chapter Two.

2 Although this integral relationship between sacraments and virtues might only seem to concern Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Baptism, I intend to include all seven sacraments. Created grace equally issues in virtues for Holy Orders, Holy Matrimony, Confirmation, and Anointing of the Sick. That said, I regard of special significance and thus focus on those sacraments that are common and repeatable.

For all of that, there remain illuminating differences between *Piers* and the *Summa* that add to the inquiries in this dissertation regarding the virtues. I have yet to explore these. I also attend to some differences in this chapter that build upon the sacramental character of one's wayfaring. By my reading, the moral vision of *Piers* is furthered by the *Summa*, only to be augmented by *Piers*. The last section of this chapter draws on the tradition's wisdom, hovers between authorities, and finally offers a perspective that blends the riches of two authors. In sum, it illustrates process of arriving at understanding guided by Langland and Thomas.

4.1 Dynamism and Unraveling

Theological mooring for the sacraments is anchored in the plan of the Triune God, as recounted in the Old Covenant, fully accomplished in the Passion and Resurrection of Christ, and continued in the gift of the Holy Spirit. The whole of the divine plan is sacramental.³ The plan is pedagogical and the pedagogy of God continues in and through the sacraments given for our salvation.

For our part, we may see what salvation looks like by attending to Langland's and Thomas' shared view of the sacraments.⁴ They describe sacraments as the

This treatment of Thomas and Langland has many easy affinities – almost exact parallelism in fact – with a treatment of Thomas and Augustine on the same matters. I presented a paper along these lines titled “Baptized into the Virtues” at the New Wine, New Wineskins Symposium held at the University of Notre Dame on August 2, 2009.

³ *Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, Dei Verbum* (Vatican City: Second Vatican Council, November 18, 1965); paragraph 2: “This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having in inner unity: the deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them.”

⁴ See Aers' singular engagement on the sacrament of the altar in Langland and Thomas: “The Eucharist is the sacrament of the Church's unity (*ST 3a q73 a2, s.c.*), the sacrament which signifies the unity of 'the mystical body of Christ which is an absolute prerequisite for salvation' (*ST 3a q73 a3 co.*).

embodied helps we have been given to heal our wounded nature – medicinal balm and wayfarers' food. These strongly material descriptions of the sacraments are accompanied by their recipients' new and renewed capacity for embodying the virtues. Christ has provided the means by which His promises become actually incarnate.

Although the virtues and sacraments are indeed *means* of grace, Langland and Thomas give us good reason to also think of them as ends and beginnings in the story of the wayfarer's journey back to God.⁵ These ends and beginnings are interrelated and inextricable – for beginnings become ends and ends, beginnings. The process of beginnings becoming ends and ends, beginnings is captured by two principles which describe this movement: “dynamism” and “unraveling.”⁶

It *signifies and causes* this unity, the communion [communio] through which believers are joined to Christ (*ST 3a q73 a3, co.*). To the Church is entrusted 'the goal and consummation of all the sacraments,' and, as Aquinas summarizes the teaching of his and Langland's tradition, 'what it contains within itself is Christ' (*ST 3a q63 a6, co.*).” *Sanctifying Signs*, 40-41; see more generally chapters 1 and 2.

5 To use Thomas' language from *ST 3a q60 a3 co.*
A sacrament properly speaking is that which is ordained to signify our sanctification. In which three things may be considered: the very cause of our sanctification, which is Christ's passion; the form of our sanctification, which is grace and the virtues; and the ultimate end of our sanctification, which is eternal life.

Sacramentum proprie dicitur quod ordinatur ad significandam nostram sanctificationem. In qua tria possunt considerari, videlicet ipsa causa sanctificationis nostrae, quae est passio Christi; et forma nostrae sanctificationis, quae consistit in gratia et virtutibus; et ultimus finis nostrae sanctificationis, qui est vita aeterna.

I focus on the form of our sanctification, specified by Thomas' binding together of the virtues and sacraments. In addition to baptism as treated in this chapter, see *ST 3a q73* for Eucharist and charity and especially *3a q85* in which penance is a virtue as well as a sacrament. Moreover, it is implied that all virtues are connected with all the sacraments. Unpacking this medieval theological commonplace appears worthwhile since most contemporary treatments of medieval sacramental practice are hyper-focused on sacraments' corruption and its social significance rather than the reality they signify.

This paper presumes the continuity of Thomas' thought between *ST 2a* and *3a*. Servais Pinckaers, Romanus Cessario, and Matthew Levering all identify a lacuna in scholarship concerning the connection between his moral thought and Christology. One scholar begins to fill the gap with an ambitious synopsis on the moral life, Christ, and the sacraments; see Thomas Harmon, “The Sacramental Consummation of the Moral Life According to St. Thomas Aquinas,” *New Blackfriars* (August 2009): 1-16.

6 In Thomas' terms, the sacrament of baptism entails (1) a new beginning and new end as orientation toward one's supernatural end and (2) a series of beginnings and ends as reorientation of one's finite ends toward their supernatural goal, thus our attaining or failing to attain these (newly

Dynamism and unraveling are heuristic terms that bear out the particulars of the more general thesis regarding beginnings and ends.⁷ They help capture something of the vagaries of life, whether unexpected, instantaneous, anticipated, or gradual. They stand in relationship to increase and remission, yet dynamism is not strictly equivalent to increase nor unraveling to remission. Dynamism and unraveling are principles relative to the fixed realities of the moral life, sacraments, sanctification, and sin. Dynamism is a movement that remains indeterminate to an end; unraveling is a mere undoing. These principles assume a determinative character by being taken up into the context that charity provides. For beginnings, ends, dynamism, and unraveling are all commentary on the wayfarer's return to God by the *via caritatis*, sustained and made manifest in the sacraments.

I begin with Langland's depiction of the virtues and sacraments. Langland is preoccupied with the virtues throughout *Piers*. The two episodes that are the subject of Chapter One range over the first several and last several passus of the twenty-two passus long poem. In this chapter, I build on the interpretation of Passus XIX from Chapter One. There, I treat the narrational setting for the sacraments' entering the poem and the decisive change the sacraments effect on the character of the virtues.

Decisive as they are, the sacraments do not conclude Will's quest for salvation. Rather

oriented) natural ends.

⁷ Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger/Pope Benedict XVI speaks of the sacraments themselves with respect to dynamism: "the Blessed Sacrament contains a dynamism, which has the goal of transforming mankind and the world into the New Heaven and New Earth, into the unity of the risen body," (87) and "think of the great saints of history, from whom streams of faith, hope, and love really came forth, we can understand these words and thus understand something of the dynamism of Baptism, of the promise and vocation it contains" (223); moreover he speaks of the "dynamism of the liturgy as a whole" (122) in *Spirit of the Liturgy*, trans. John Saward, (San Francisco, CA: St. Ignatius Press, 2000). This paper's invocation of the same principle of dynamism would be well complemented by engaging and drawing out Cardinal Ratzinger's treatment to offer a broader treatment of the Christian life.

the sacraments initiate a *new* set of inquiries and a *new* set of struggles. At the heart of the moral life is a *dynamism* which demands the activity of virtue and continual recourse to the healing power of the sacraments. The sacraments mark Will's entry into a community whose common property conferred to all its members is a special type of union with God, expressed in the life of virtue and sustained in the life of the sacraments.

The second moment for the reader in this episode is ironic: Will's encounter with the Samaritan and the sacraments is the very mechanism by which Will recognizes that he is *not* formed in the virtues. Only now can he finally see sin.⁸ This encounter constitutes an *unraveling*. At the same time as the sacraments endow new identity, they teach Will the character of his misdirection preceding this encounter. They clarify agency, robbing him of the illusion of independence. They pull apart his previous progress. Moreover, they reconstitute his orientation and alter his manner of journeying. They require the assumption of new practices and habits, namely, the dynamism of which I speak of above.

To read Thomas along these same lines requires these same two principles: dynamism and unraveling. By the time I get there, I invert the order of these two principles so that I identify in Thomas first the unraveling and then the dynamism. I look to his work in the *Second Part of the Second Part*, question 47 where he treats baptism in the context of infused prudence. Specifically with respect to baptism, Thomas provides the reader the resources to resist naming incompleteness as something

⁸ Only in Passus XVIII.270ff does Will come to see the suffering created by sinful practices. He waits alongside Abraham for the "right way" later revealed by the Samaritan in XIX. See Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 99ff.

more than it is. For perfection is often only partial and always only relative. Progress is punctuated by sin. *Unraveling* – what it is and what it looks like – depends on the kinds of sin to which one is tempted. All must become unraveled before God.

And in a *dynamic* move, Thomas opens the reader up to the multiple ways in which we have yet to be perfected by the virtues in all the virtues' various kinds. He brings to light the various ways in which God's work perfects the human 'all the way down,' leaving no part of His creature unredeemed. This sanctifying work happens through the creature's final recourse to the sacraments.

These two heuristic terms, dynamism and unraveling, are crucial only as they assume a role in the more determinative narrative provided by charity. These moments on the way of love mark its complex contours and defy its being characterized as one of straightforward, sequential progress. Never did the course of true virtue run smooth. Dynamism and unraveling are two descriptions of that fact.

As much as Langland and Thomas share these insights, in this section I focus primarily on the exposition of virtues and sacraments given in Thomas. I begin briefly with Langland and then treat Thomas at length, reserving for the last section of this chapter Langland's further developments in later passus. I recover the display of the relationship between virtues and sacraments that finally points to the paradox at the heart of any saint's account of the moral life: that saints know best and most of all that they are sinners. Their recourse is to the sacraments. My aim in this section is to illustrate this practice of reading Thomas.

4.1.1 Langland

Langland places the salvific sacramental moment with Christ the Samaritan late in the poem in the *semyuief* episode of Passus XIX.⁹ This complex allegorical passage is set in a wilderness where a sick man lies by the side of the road, ignored, not even seen by some passersby. The Samaritan, however, sees the sick man and goes to him. He washes his wounds. He provides salve. He bandages him. He carries him away to *lavacrum-lex-dei*. His care is distinctly sacramental as he exercises the vocabulary and imagery of baptism, penance, and the Eucharist. The character of the sacraments is shown as medicinal, curative, and healing for the recipients, who literally cannot do anything without them.

These bodily helps, the sacraments, remain even when the Samaritan leaves. These sensible signs make the absent Samaritan present, though not wholly so. His absence remains palpable. In the meantime, the sacraments provide salve for those wounded. Exegetical tradition extends the wound from *semyuief* to all Christians who have sinned. This condition which encompasses all wayfarers entails that all have sinned and stand in need of the sacraments' curative power.

Moreover, alongside the sacraments 'poultice' is needed. Langland identifies it as the virtue of patience. The sacraments provide healing and the virtues relief. These bodily narrations of the restorative work of the Samaritan and his sacraments disclose the manifold processes involved in *semyuief*'s and all wayfarers' full recovery. Such processes are necessarily incomplete on this side of the eschaton. As the body is

⁹ As stated at the outset, more extended quotations and notes on Passus XIX appear in the corresponding section in Chapter One. This section is specifically written to elaborate Passus XIX according to the heuristic principles of dynamism and unraveling, and to prepare the reader for the last section on Langland as a development of the insights shared by Thomas and Langland.

inherently vulnerable – open to threats, illness, and deterioration – so too our moral capacities. They are not only vulnerable, they are wounded. That is why the Samaritan entrusts *semyuief* to the care of the inn to house the infirm throughout the life-long process of gradual healing. Langland later goes on to address what happens when the sacraments and virtues are severed – a topic which demands sustained attention in the last section of this chapter. Here I concentrate on the character of the Christian life as witnessed to by the Samaritan as spelled out in Langland's theology of sacraments and account of conversion.¹⁰

I begin with the theology of sacraments displayed in Passus XIX. Langland includes in his account of the sacraments a refusal to separate liturgy from the form of life it entails. He draws on scripture and tradition to spell out implications for those who receive the sacraments. That is to say, the form of life entailed by the sacraments is a living out of the Gospel giving both intelligibility. In XIX, the Samaritan identifies at least two such practices: forgiveness and kindness. Forgiveness is woven into the Samaritan's metaphors for the Trinity: “And as wax and nothing more upon a warm coal/ Will burn and blaze, if they're together/ And console those who, sitting in darkness cannot see,/ So will the Father forgive folk of mild heart/ Who ruefully repent and make restitution,/ Inasmuch as they can amend and repay.” (XIX, 196-201).¹¹ The Samaritan explains that those who can amend and repay will receive the

10 See too Aers' “Augustinian Prelude,” Chapter 1, in *Salvation and Sin* on Augustine's account of agency, sin, and salvation bound up in Augustine's writing about conversion.

11 “And as wex withouten more vpo[n] a warm glede
 Wol brennen and blasen, be they togyderes,
 And solacen [hem] þat mowen nat se, sittynge in derkeness[e],
 So wol þe fader forþeue folke of mylde hertes
 That reufulliche repenten and restitucion make,
 In as moche as they mowen amenden and payen.” (Russell-Kane, XIX.201-206)

Father's mercy.¹² Amending and repaying are practices that involve making restitution for one's debts of sin. Forgiveness wrought in this manner requires that the sinner make good with the community by embodying Christ's witness.

Kindness is another form of life necessary for sacramental recipients. Langland takes the etymological connection between kindness and kinship and extends it to kind. Kindness signals a kinship with God made possible to us through the Incarnation; the grace of the Holy Ghost is described as God's own kindness. Unkindness destroys love and charity, undoes Christ's doing, and uncreates creation. Unkindness coupled with sacramental practice is futile ("The Holy Ghost won't hear you or help you, you can be sure./ For unkindness quenches him so that he can't shine/ Or burn or blaze clear because of unkindness' blowing." XIX, 219-221). Kindness is its opposite in the upbuilding love and charity and extending Christ's doing.

Forgiven and kind folk form a special kind of community. Thus there are certain communal features implied by Langland's theology of sacraments. This community is an ecclesial community founded in grace and enabled by the Spirit and Christ to incorporate the outsider by way of the sacraments. Incorporation entails corporate practices. As the community is *corpus Christi*, its onus is to witness to Christ's virtues and Christ's practices, not the least of which is the love so powerfully demonstrated in the *semyuief* episode. All its communal practices – forgiveness, kindness, and charity – are inexhaustible. Its identity must be constantly performed. *Piers Plowman* is instructive on this point as it enacts the ostensible subject of its message. The Samaritan's activity shows the claims that the Samaritan is called upon

12 I have written at length on forgiveness in Chapter One, pages 36-38.

to articulate for Will. This episode makes manifest the drama of living the Gospel and sets high stakes for the community predicated on the Samaritan's witness.

The sacraments themselves do not provide any final solution to Will's search but implicate him in an entirely new network of relationships, dependencies, and practices. The Samaritan has laid out the path to salvation for all travelers, and has made this journey possible through the gracious assistance of the sacraments, confirmed in the virtues and sustained by a eucharistic community. There is an inherent *dynamism* to this account of Christian belief and practice. For there is always room to progress. The crucial means for virtue's increase are given to wayfarers. The new relationships, dependencies, and practices travelers have been given constitute a new way of going on.

Dynamism has fundamentally to do with Langland's account of conversion. Here conversion implies continual reform. For Langland's account of sin would not relegate sin to anyone's past. Its habitual hold always remains a serious matter for concern. In XIX, the Samaritan's presence itself enables readers to see what had previously been invisible: sin.¹³ The Samaritan provides an epistemological achievement possible only through his mediation. In the Samaritan's ministry to *semyuief*, the Samaritan finally reveals what sin is and its effects. *Semyuief* also reveals our desperate need for God's intervening help.

The sin disclosed in connection to *semyuief* is carried over into the Samaritan's account of community practice. The community requires the sacraments in order to maintain God's forgiving presence and kindness among them. All are in desperate

¹³ See Aers, "Remembering the Samaritan, Remembering Semyuief," Chapter 4 in *Salvation and Sin*, 83-131.

need of healing, and “his body will heal us all in the end” (XIX, 93). The emphasis in XIX lands on God's forgiving kindness and our sin. It is finally divine activity that saves us. It is finally God Who finds a way to heal us.

Langland's account of conversion can be described as an *unraveling*. Unraveling has multiple senses – clarification, disentangling, disintegration. Several are appropriate with respect to *semyuief*. Now Will sees what sin looks like and sees his implication in the social fabric that sustains his patterns of habitual resistance. One must first clearly see sin before one can identify it in the self and in relationship with others. The Samaritan brings clarity to the situation. Clarity brings indictment. Clarity regards the self's disintegration, the self's unraveling.

Unraveling is inescapably linked to dynamism. For the unraveled self must take recourse in the sacraments. This *semyuief* moment confirms Will's previous failures, and becomes the means by which he sees the wound of sin and the way forward. Aers writes: “acknowledgment of the figure [of Semyuief] is inextricably bound up with the way, the mediator between God and mankind: 'As God, he is the goal; as man, he is the way' [quo itur Deus, qua itur homo].”¹⁴ This sacramental encounter does not bring an end to the need for penitence and charity, rather it does quite the opposite in underscoring their continued necessity. God's patience and charity found the sacraments given to us in our utter dependence finally heal us for virtuous action.

¹⁴ Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 101; quoting Augustine, *City of God Against the Pagans*, XI.2; extended quote by Augustine also in *Salvation and Sin*, 87.

4.1.2 Thomas

Thomas shares these crucial insights of Langland regarding the virtues and sacraments, and I focus on his doing so in the *Second Part of the Second Part* of the *Summa*, *Question 47 (ST 2a2ae, q47)*.¹⁵ In this question on prudence, article 14, he asks whether prudence is in all who have grace? He agrees with Gregory that all having grace also have prudence. Even the young may have a form of prudence, according to the objection and reply to objection 3. And nestled in this reply, Thomas reaches for a new theme of baptism:

Acquired prudence comes from practice, and so, as remarked in the *Ethics*, time and experience are required to produce it. Accordingly the young possess it neither as a settled quality nor as an activity. The prudence of grace, however, is caused by God's imparting, and consequently baptized children who have not yet come to the use of reason have prudence as habit, though not as an activity... Whereas in those who have their faculties it is also present as an activity concerning the things necessary for salvation. Then by by practice merits increase, until it becomes perfect, even as the other virtues. The Apostle tells us that *strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, those who by reason of we have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil*.¹⁶

Even the young may be prudent because of baptism. Baptism's effects are manifold – death to one's old life, rebirth, conformity to Christ, entrance into a community that is the Church. One way to describe how the young receive prudence is through their membership in this community that is given prudence as gift. The Church is given the

15 In Chapter Two, pages 108ff., I use this same article to discuss Thomas' two kinds of prudence for those who have grace: the prudence sufficient for salvation and *plenior* prudence.

16 *ST 2a2ae q47 a14 ad3* quoted in Chapter Two; see too *ST 3a q69 a6* including the *sed contra*: Augustinus dicit, in Enchirid., *parvuli renascendo moriuntur illi peccato quod nascendo contraxerunt, et per hoc ad illos etiam pertinet quod dicitur, consepulti sumus cum illo per Baptismum in mortem, (subditur autem) ut, quomodo resurrexit Christus a mortuis per gloriam patris ita et nos in novitate vitae ambulemus. Sed novitas vitae est per gratiam et virtutes. Ergo pueri consequuntur in Baptismo gratiam et virtutes.*

knowledge and friendship with God that makes salvation possible.

Children who become members of the Church are given what the Church has. When things go rightly, children increase this habit, turning it from potency to act. When things go wrongly, the children may reject this endowment though they never fully lose it. At worst, such children become prodigal sons. They never lose their identity – this claim is primarily about God and baptized Christians' relationship to God than it is about Christians themselves. Christians always retain access to what is not rightfully theirs in the first place. It becomes theirs only through gift.

Thomas is careful to distinguish this prudence of baptized children from its complete forms. For its complete forms entail the *activity* of prudence which in turn merits its increase. Baptism may mark the infusion of a form of virtues not available to the creature apart from it, but baptism is only a start. The creature must act upon the virtues endowed by the sacraments for the virtues' perfection. Thomas mentions baptism to mark the important difference that it introduces to the moral life and to furthermore signal that the virtues it confers must be made complete through their exercise.

Thomas' allusion at the end of this passage – “The Apostle tells us that *strong meat belongs to them that are of full age, those who by reason of use have their sense exercised to discern both good and evil*” – gives the reader a sense of the progression Thomas intends for those who are to increase in virtue. Children may have prudence as a habit though not as an activity. The young begin to act on this habit. Those who finally have their faculties and are acting on the habit are called to even further activity. Yet Thomas would not overestimate our actual increase in virtue. Along with formation in the

virtues comes a sharpened capacity to recognize how we are *not* formed in the virtues. Increase in virtue makes us childlike and thus we must constantly make recourse to the sacraments.

In fact, the larger architectonic of the *Summa* can be said to witness to the same kind of *unraveling*. It is no coincidence that Thomas introduces the virtues in the *ST* 1a2a, followed by sin later on in the same part, and then finally follows with the infused virtues and sacraments in the next parts. Thomas' sequence is instructive. Progress we attempt to make on our own – as named in the acquired virtues – may make us more sinful rather than less.¹⁷ This recognition must be learned. By the time the reader makes her way through the two parts of the Second Part of the *Summa* – through virtue of various kinds and sin – she ought to see that there is no recourse for the wayfarer but to turn to the sacraments which alone will produce the graced habits concerning the things necessary for salvation.

It is illustrative to revisit the relationship between *ST* 2a2ae q47, Article 13 on sin from the previous chapter and Article 14 on sacraments here. In these two articles Thomas concentrates his energies on making more complex his scheme for the virtues. He adumbrates the fullest kinds of prudence open to us alongside compromised and incomplete kinds in Article 13. And in Article 14, he describes the fullest kind as

17 This rhetoric is best tempered with qualification, but qualification renders the claim more grave rather than less since it has specifically to do with mortal sin. Thomas writes: "Mortal sin is incompatible with the infused virtues, but it is consistent with acquired virtue: while venial sin is compatible with virtues, whether infused or acquired" (*ST* 1a2ae q71 a4; see too *ST* 1a2ae q63 a2 ad2). The difference between infused and acquired virtue on this point has a few explanations. Here Thomas concentrates the character of acquired virtue as neither generated nor destroyed in a single action.

I should add that I do not think the point for Thomas is that we are sinful without infused virtue, for in fact his emphasis lands somewhere else in q71 – that acquired habits enjoy a kind of stability in the face of sin. This is not to downplay the role of sin in alienating creatures from God but to acknowledge what Thomas appears to acknowledge: sin is expected. Chapter Three addresses this theme at length.

'fuller' prudence whose fullness is due to the cooperation of acquired and infused prudence. His account of the virtues is unintelligible without reference to these most basic Christian mysteries. As he treats the virtues – even the acquired virtues – Thomas does not neglect God's gratuitous assistance (sacraments) or our refusal of that assistance (sin). There is a remarkable consistency between Thomas' logic regarding the internal and external helps we are given for our perfection alongside our own willed resistance to that help. In sum, the form of these articles is itself as integrative as his theses regarding the perfection of the human person.

So much for Thomas' *unraveling*; now, his *dynamism*. For both Thomas and Langland, we always have room to increase in charity. The moral life is constantly in flux, moving from potentiality to act. Christians either increase in charity through participation in the sacraments and in the life of God open to them, or they vitiate and even relinquish their gifts through sin. (For most Christians, this either/or is in fact a both/and!) Baptism plays a crucial role in this movement toward or away from God. So too the other sacraments. Yet baptism is crucial as the first sacrament. It marks the end of sin and the beginning of a new life, the first significant beginning yet. The hopeful recovery of this same new beginning and end will loop the Christian into a cycle of sacraments. Baptism enjoys this unique role as an invitation to the other sacraments and the fullness of life made possible through them.

Thomas' invocation of baptism shows simultaneously its power and its limitation with respect to the agents who receive them. Its power is to confer the infused virtues, which in turn perfect the acquired. Its limitation is that it may not effect our full perfection. Its limitation is essentially *our* limitation, as limited creatures

wounded by sin. To the extent that sin compromises the virtues conferred by baptism, the sacrament is incompletely received.

Perhaps a better way to navigate the relationship between the sacraments and the virtues comes by language that I introduced earlier in Chapters Two and Three and that Thomas offers elsewhere in the *Summa* – imperfect and perfect. To receive the sacraments in good faith but fail to increase in virtue may name an *imperfect* participation in the perfection open to us creatures through the sacraments. (Of course we bring inherent limitation to the sacraments by the very fact that we need them in the first place.) Beyond the limitations of nature are the limitations we choose ourselves. We choose limitation by sin which comes to bear on our reception of them. As we choose sin, we choose our own imperfection.

The power of the sacraments should not be underestimated, a power displayed when we fully and perfectly participate in the sacraments.¹⁸ When we participate perfectly, the sacraments are that by which we are enabled to overcome our limitation by sin. When received perfectly, the grace of the sacraments issues in its own completion in the virtues. The sacraments have the power to issue in the perfection of all aspects of the human person, conferring graced unity to the virtues in participated likeness of the Divine Nature.¹⁹ The most complete and perfect participation in the sacraments entails the perfection of both the acquired and infused virtues. Nothing

18 Incomplete participation has gradations of partial perfection, e.g., infused virtues alongside acquired vice. One species of false participation entails the damnation of 1 Corinthians 11: 27 (“Therefore whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord.”); Aers would underscore the prevalence of this grave concern and darkest possibility among medieval authors. Later in this chapter I use Langland to illustrate these other invocations of participation.

19 *ST* 1a2ae q110 a3 et 4; 3a q62 a2. One could strengthen this thesis by way of Thomas' identification of the sacramental character with the character of Christ in *ST* 3a q63.

remains untouched by charity. Describing our perfection, Thomas leaves no part of the human person behind because he understands that neither does God.

In this rendering, Thomas' relative lack of focus on sin means that sin does not determine salvation. Charity wins the day. Quite naturally what sin does for Langland and for Thomas is mark a stifling in the wayfarer's progress. By God's grace sin finally leads to increase in virtue. For to recognize sin is an achievement which requires that one go back and relearn the things one has learned so far regarding the virtues.²⁰ This real progression rather than the simulacra that preceded it finally leads to the fullness of life open to us in the sacraments. Creatures rather than determining themselves are finally are determined by God's love. The process of *Piers* shows readers of the *Summa* how it might be that increase in virtue is coupled with increase in sin.

Another lesson that Langland offers readers of Thomas' *Summa* is perspectival shift. Langland helps readers see that one's progression in the moral life is not always seen by the self who embodies that narrative and if it is, it is often only glimpsed retrospectively. The very notion of beginning and ends are retrospective notions

20 Cf. Nicolette Zeeman, who argues that the dynamic of failure, rebuke, and renewal has at its heart volitional failures which are "illuminating" for Will. "Temptation and sin are very difficult to keep apart," she writes, and "we have already noticed some biblical passages which come notoriously close to recommending sin itself" in *Piers Plowman and the Discourse of Desire* (Cambridge, UK ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2006), 44. I share Zeeman's understanding that Will's preliminary questions and emphases undergo dialectical revision over the course of the poem. I differ from Zeeman on creation, Christology, the virtues, sin, and agency. By my reading Will's sin is not a means of illumination, but a result of his being reoriented. The advances Will *does* make are not of his own making. Rather than the dominant concern structuring the poem being the interior life of Will, I understand the poem as concerned with both social and institutional questions as inseparable from Will's affective habits. And contrary to the goal becoming identified with the logic of renewal through self-knowledge – in this case of knowing that one is a sinner – I see the later passus' treatment of Christ/Charity/Samaritan and the sacraments as crucial and interdependent.

A more fruitful complement to Langland on this matter is found in Julian of Norwich's *Showings* and Augustine's *City of God*, XX.

projected onto events. One can only be sure of naming one's beginnings because one is confident in the story by which one measures them.²¹ The Samaritan episode is a display of the Way itself, Charity Himself. The *viator in via* is finally given a standard by which to measure and identify the fragmentariness of his/her activities.²² Likewise readers of Thomas might finally employ this perspectival shift as they read the initial work on the virtues from the ultimate standpoint of Christology and the sacraments. All virtue has a theological character, even if it is not technically 'theological virtue.'

Thus *Piers* can help readers of the *Summa* see that a set of its formal distinctions (e.g., 'imperfect' and 'perfect') can be read as stages in a narrative. The movement from imperfect to perfect participation is a narrative which can only be told from the perspective of more perfect participation. Those who are imperfectly participating will not have a sense of that imperfection, and if they come to recognize it they have already moved toward perfect participation.

As I draw this section to a close, I ought to subject my own conclusions to the same scrutiny that I have turned on other readings of Thomas. For I have valorized

21 Cf. Vance Smith, who writes:

The poem's theology is voluntarist. Its most potent uses of beginning are derived from the semi-Pelagian notion, widespread in the fourteenth century, that the will is responsible for inaugurating salvation... I show that the debate between 'semi-Pelagian' and 'orthodox' theologians over the circumstances of salvation is a debate about the delimitations of beginnings. *Piers Plowman* appropriates aspects of both sides of the debate, putting the radically different and opposed kinds of beginning to different purposes. For the most part, however, the poem explores the consequences of an individual will that is capable of inaugurating meaningful action.

Book of the Incipit: Beginnings in the Fourteenth Century (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001), 172; see also 174 where "the actions of the will precede those of grace" and the whole of chapter seven titled "Beginning Perfection: The Theology of Inception." For Aers' response, see *Salvation and Sin*, 84-88 esp. 85.

22 See Alasdair MacIntyre, "Who Needs to Learn...," 28. Of course Augustine endeavors on a retrospective narration and re-narration in the *Confessions*. Along the same lines as Thomas and Langland, Augustine sees himself in light of the Gospel and defies characterizations of sin or virtue in nontheistic or even vaguely theistic terms because the only terms appropriate are Trinitarian.

what I find Thomas' fruitful distinction between 'perfect' and 'imperfect' to a degree that even exceeds Thomas' own use. Does this defy the dynamism of the text itself (dynamism which seems to include moving from describing the virtues according to causality to describing them in reference to the ultimate end, from describing agency according to causality to describing agency according to motion)? Is there another way forward that does not depend so heavily on this one distinction?

Instead of concentrating on 'imperfect' and 'perfect,' it may be better for me to conceive of how Langland makes a difference for reading Thomas. Thomas stands with Langland regarding sin and sanctity. Dynamism and unraveling are ways of naming the complexities of greater participation in that friendship with Charity Itself, God Himself. This movement does not end in ever greater specification of kinds of virtue – acquired virtue, infused virtue, infused moral virtue, imperfect virtue, and so on – but, as Langland signals, it ends in a *Christological moment*.

The road to fullness in virtue begins with baptism, which again turns the gaze upon Christ and His work wrought on our behalf. Renewal in baptism is not our final beginning but we are made new again in the renewal of our baptismal vows and in the celebration of the Eucharist. Dynamism leads each new beginning ineluctably to its end; unraveling points to the penultimacy of every end and every beginning. Far from a linear progression, increase in virtue looks more like a loop back to the confessional, the font, and the altar as one returns to one's beginnings again.

4.2 Langland Augments Thomas

My treatment of Langland and Thomas on the sacraments takes for granted that they are ready conversation partners. Indeed the portions of the texts I draw

upon confirm this assumption. But readers of Langland understand that the above reading of the sacraments is far from Langland's last. For in the portions of *Piers* that ensue, Langland unravels this initial account.

Although the well-worn path for the Christian life is available in and through the sacraments of the Church, Will is "lost, found, and lost again and again."²³ What follows his encounter with the Samaritan is *not* the life of virtue as nurtured and sustained by the sacramental community. Rather the poem runs: "I may stay no longer,' [the Samaritan] said, and spurred his mount/ And went away like the wind, and with that I awoke." (XIX.330-1)²⁴ Without the Samaritan's full presence – in His absence – Will returns to his habitual resistance to what he has learned thus far. Will wanders again, astray in the wild wilderness. He must learn, relearn, and re-relearn the way. Christian circularity never becomes overfamiliar because it barely becomes

23 From Aers, *Salvation and Sin*, 97: Freedom of the will comes from charity of God poured into our hearts, and on this [Augustine] quotes a text to which he so often turns; "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us" (Rom. 5:5). Such, then, is the outcome of the encounter between the Samaritan Christ and fallen humanity, Semyuief, living under the powers of sin. It is a vision of what Langland's searching Wille has lost and found and lost again and again. In the mode of allegory, deployed with such theological profundity in *Piers Plowman*, "The hint half guessed, the gift half understood, is Incarnation."

24 "Y may no lengore lette,' quod he, and lyard a prikede/ And wente away as wynd, and þerwith y awakede" (Russell-Kane, XIX.335-6).

This episode is connected with the liturgical season of Pentecost (as it is contained in the gospel for the twelfth Sunday after Pentecost) and with the second coming of Christ in judgment (Luke 10:35); interpreting it along the lines of the latter, Smith writes "it is here that the traditional associations of the Parable of the Good Samaritan with the second coming are especially significant, the joust at Jerusalem will not immediately procure the final restoration of mankind; the struggle with Antichrist continues in this world. But, at the second coming, the consummation of the ages, the ultimate and eternal restoration of the faithful will take place... In the meantime, it is the responsibility of the church and her priests to continue the work begun by Christ of redeeming the world" in *Traditional Imagery of Charity in Piers Plowman*, 92.

Earlier I noted that Aers couches the significance of Langland's eschatological perspective alongside his sacramental theology – but with rather material consequences for sacramental communities (Chapter One, page 37)!

familiar before Will loses his bearings once more. Thus Langland amplifies the sense in which sin alienates and continues to alienate wanderers from their true orientation toward Christ, specified in the sacraments. But that is not all.

Langland illustrates what moral consequences result for Will and all other wanderers who remain possessed by sin's habits. Whereas dynamism and unraveling were key to understanding progress in the moral life, they appear set aside. Under the weight of sin sacraments no longer serve as beginnings or endings. In a community that refuses Charity's call, its members may effectively shut themselves off from the sources of grace offered for their sustenance. Without this sustenance, the virtues are also askew. The once happy bond between the sacraments and virtues nears profound disintegration in its ecclesial and social dimensions. Langland illustrates how severing one from the other whatever its manifestation, be it ecclesial from social, sacraments from virtues, virtues from ecclesial, results in deterioration of the created order. This final treatment of Langland may present a likely rejoinder to Thomas' compelling vision of a deepening of friendship with God.

It may make sense, then, to read Langland alongside Thomas on the sacraments if one is going to pit them in a dialectical relationship with one another. It appears that Langland proposes a profound challenge to Thomas' confident linkage of sacraments and virtues. Yet a more constructive reading of these texts is available to their readers. My constructive reading asserts synthesis rather than dialectic. My interpretation insists on a reciprocal elucidation of the texts. In this final section, I draw on the texts' power to explicate one another. I retain the chapter's focus on the sacraments, attending to Langland's treatment of sacraments and sin while holding on to Thomas'

magisterial moral and sacramental vision. This Langland-Thomas amalgam issues in aspects of a unique understanding that has a steady foothold – two steady footholds – in the tradition's masters.

This last section is the locus for potentially expanding Thomas' account by way of Langland in three ways. I derive these contributions by taking up *Piers* where I left off in the the first section of Chapter One (“Law and 'Lady' Meed”) and follow it through the second section of Chapter One (“If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments”) to the poem's end – including the founding of the Church and Grace's pouring out of the virtues, sin beseiging a community and agents rejecting the gifts offered them, and the Church accommodating Herself and the communal effects of this accommodation. Embedded in this narrative sequence are Langland's three potential contributions. The first way is Langland's augmentation of Thomas' account of incomplete infused moral virtues. Thomas already treats the incompleteness of infused virtues where infused virtues lack the perfection that the acquired already enjoy (*delectatio*) as covered in Chapter Two. Langland adds to this account by displaying what various degrees of incompleteness look like. Langland's second contribution is showing what happens to those who refuse the gifts they are given, effectively offering an account of what 'non-participation' in the sacraments means for the moral life. Non-participation is simply not addressed in the *Summa*. And with the third contribution, Langland enlarges Thomas' conception of participation in the sacraments by Langland's offering an account of what I call 'false participation.' In fleshing out these three gradations of conversion – the outright rejection of the sacraments in favor of continued enslavement to sin, and an accommodated Church

and its practices – Langland may offer an edifying supplement to Thomas' overall account as he adumbrates the darkest of prospects for those who sever themselves from the fullness of Christ and His sacraments.

4.2.1 More Incomplete Infused Virtue

Passus XIX treats the Samaritan's gifts and the graced community needed to receive those gifts in their fullness. After encountering the integrity of sacraments and virtues in XIX, in XXI Will witnesses for a second time the founding of the Church and penitential practice. The second time the work is done by the risen Christ.²⁵ The Church is comprised of a repentant and repenting people.²⁶ Forgiveness is the premier ecclesial practice captured at the heart of a refrain throughout the poem, *reddere quod debes*, whose meaning has been unclear up to this point. According to the tradition Langland inherits, 'returning what you owe' in the sense of repentance is a part of justice.²⁷ Agents become just, in part, by acknowledging their lack of perfection. This

25 Cf. Passus V-VIII, where a community struggles to observe this crucial practice without its source, Christ. These earlier passus depict Christian culture at times willingly cut off from its own resources.

26 Augustine offers a description of such a community:
Our righteousness also, though true righteousness insofar as it is directed towards a good end, is in this life such that it consists only in the remission of sin rather than in the perfection of virtue. This is borne out by the prayer of the whole City of God during its pilgrimage on earth; for it cries out to God with the voice of all its members: 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.'

Ipsa quoque nostra iustitia, quamvis vera sit propter verum boni finem, ad quem refertur, tamen tanta est in hac vita, ut potius remissione peccatorum constet quam perfectione virtutum. Testis est oratio totius civitatis Dei, quae peregrinatur in terris. Per omnia quippe membra sua clamat ad Deum: 'Dimitte nobis debita nostra, sicut et nos dimittimus debitoribus nostris.'

Augustine, *City of God against the Pagans*, XIX. 27.

27 See Thomas' *Summa Theologiae* (2a2ae qq57-122; 3a q85) and Aers, "Justice and Wage-labor after the Black Death: some Perplexities for William Langland," *Faith, Ethics, and Church: Writing in England, 1360-1409* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2000). Aers also draws on Thomas' *De Regimine*.

lack implies a debt of transgression and a need to ‘return what you owe.’ Confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation are linked to the theological virtues which accompany them – all of which are learned in virtuous relationships with virtuous others in a virtuous community – all of which depend on grace.²⁸

As forgiveness and mercy are themselves conditional upon *reddere*, the community is deeply dependent on Christ.²⁹ For only Christ’s own strenuous activity on our behalf will effect merciful pardon. Only Christ’s deed can link pardon, forgiveness, and that cardinal virtue of justice.

Christ is with His community through the Holy Spirit, poured out at Pentecost.

Will narrates this pouring out: “and then came, it seemed to me, / One *Spiritus paraclitus* to Piers and his followers. / In likeness of lightning it alighted on them all /

28 *ST* 3a q85 a6. Augustine, a consummate theologian of grace, explains the need for the mercy of God to lead us to repentance: “Therefore God’s mercy is needed not only while penance is being done, but also that it may be done,” in *Enchiridion*, trans. Ernest Evans (London, SPCK, 1953), Chapter XXII, 82 citing 2 Timothy 2:25; “Unde non solum cum agitur paenitentia, verum etiam ut agatur, Dei misericordia necessaria est.”

29 “And when this dede was doen, dobest he thouhte
 And **3**af [peres pardoun] and [power] he graunted [hym],
 Myhte men to asoyle of alle manere synnes
 To alle manere men mercy and for **3**euenesse;
 In couenaunt þat they come and knolech[e] to pay
 To Peres pardoun þe ploughman *Redde quod debes*.
 Thus hath Peres power, be his pardoun payed,
 To bynde and to vnbynde bothe here and elles
 And assoile men of alle synnes, saue of dette one.” (Russell-Kane, XXI.182-190)

“Except for their debts” in *Economou* is better translated “save of one debt.” The traditional language of debts and sin invoke Langland’s depiction of the Atonement and the Incarnation. Moreover, according to the MED the number ‘one’ may mean ‘oneness’ or ‘unity,’ a usage that can be drawn out alongside models of Church including that of Unity (XXI-XXII). This unforgivable sin is unkindness (XIX.215-73), by Aers’ reading, to invoke a violation of kynde/Kynde/kindness. Characters in XXI thus prove themselves habitually unkynde in a damnation of their own making by their outright rejection of the sacramental gifts of the One Church from Kynde.

Cf. In *Reform and Cultural Revolution* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), James Simpson sees this line as offering full absolution, which “involves not merely the contrition and confession of the sinner, but also the satisfaction of good works – the ‘dette’ that remains even after absolution” (362-3). His reading reflects his rather strong emphasis on good works as salvific. By my reading, Simpson’s reading is troubling because “saue of dette one” in the text is meant to indicate a remaining problem rather than its full resolution, sin rather than satisfaction.

And made them understand and know all kinds of languages” (XXI.200-203)³⁰ In sharing posture, song, and prayer, “an event from another place and time which is being remembered, believed, re-enacted, continued, and to some extent understood and ‘seen’ within one’s own place and time.”³¹ Remembering, believing, re-enactment, and continuation just is the extension of and kinship from the person of Christ to the community. The extent to which this community becomes the one Christ intends is the extent to which they conform to the demands of *reddere*.

Langland is shifting his mode of figurative expression from Passus XIX to XXI. In XIX, the descriptions are concrete; the virtues themselves are personified. In the founding of the Church in XXI, however, the newly introduced realities finally possible in a post-Pentecost age are abstract and the practices of the community are spiritualized in the name of loyalty and love (XXI.232, 237, 250).³² Although Piers is now establishing the visible Church in the world (cf. VII), the imagery associated with the Church is subsumed into an inner domain, e.g., the virtues are 'seeds' which are sowed in man's soul. The new allegorical mode of XXI invites a re-writing of the

30 “And thenne cam, me thouhte,
Oen *Spiritus paraclitus* to Peres and to his felawes.
In liknesse of a lihtnyng a lihte on hem alle
And made hem konne and knowe alle kyne langages.” (Russell-Kane, XXI.200-203)

31 Davlin, *Place of God*, 15-16. Davlin cites Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1992): liturgical “ceremonies were designed to summon up the scenes they commemorated” (20). Davlin goes on to write that the ‘moral space’ of this episode is set within a liturgical place. It does not appear to me to make Thomistic sense to talk about ‘moral space’ as different – one gathers – from any other kind of space. I take it Davlin instead intends to denote a specific *kind* of moral space, qualitatively different from others given the work of the Holy Spirit in this episode.

32 Cf. Chapter One, page 37, the end of the section on Meed in which ideals lacked concretization; these abstractions avoid the difficult questions which Langland has raised up to this point as a utopian corrective to Passus II-IV. On the multiplicity of modes of allegory see Chapter 5, “Piers Plowman: Allegorical Modes and Visionary Organization” in Aers, *Piers Plowman and Christian Allegory*, 71-131 with respect to the agricultural imagery throughout the poem which is now realigned through Christ (129-130). On the Church, see Aers, *Sanctifying Signs*, 39, 48.

community, its associated practices, and its virtues.

Accordingly, when Langland re-introduces the virtues in XXI, they extend rather than resolve previous difficulties. Grace gives intelligence and truth which lead to loyal and loving living, the evangelists, the Church Fathers, and the “cardinal virtues,” (*Spiritus prudencie, Spiritus temperancie, Spiritus fortitudinis, and Spiritus iusticie*).³³ *Creator Spiritus* is invoked as part- author of these virtues. Initially these virtues *seem* promising as this is the first time that ‘cardinal’ is reconciled to ‘virtue’ in the poem, a relationship which has been estranged since the Prologue. Furthermore they are embedded in the action of the poem which brings together law and grace in the context of loving community. The “cardinal virtues” appear in an ecclesial, Scripturally-rooted form of life. Their coming together marks a new moment not previously possible in the poem. This new reality appears connected to the narratives of the life, death, and Resurrection of Christ, and has as its bookends treatments of Grace and the Old & New Law. Langland glosses the cardinal virtues with this on the law: “These four seeds Piers sowed and afterwards harrowed them/ With Old Law and New Law so that love might grow/ Among these four virtues and destroy vices.” (XXI.310-12)³⁴ The law of love first displayed with the Samaritan in XIX has become a real potential for those in whom Grace works. This work of Grace also issues forth the virtues and love grows among them. The ‘cardinal virtues’ are finally connected to love.³⁵

33 “Cardinales vertues” in XXI.274, 276, 281, 289, 298.

34 “Thise foure sedes [Peres] sewe and sennes he dede hem harewe/ With olde lawe and newe [lawe] that loue myhte wexe/ Among th[e] foure vertues and vices destruye.” (Russell-Kane, XXI.309-11)

35 In a short aside, Morton W. Bloomfield reflects on Langland’s “puzzling” emphasis on the cardinal virtues (*Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse*, 134.) He notes that these cardinal virtues are normally a part of natural law and are not particularly or uniquely Christian, but in some cases they can be infused by God and there is “no doubt that Langland is here thinking of the infused

Are the cardinal virtues eschatologically-fulfilled promises available to us now? Do they, as one interpreter expects, signal the “great renewal and return to the pristine status of apostolic purity”?³⁶ Importantly this reconciliation of cardinals and virtue, wrought by the work of Christ, does *not* issue in works of perfection.

Rather the virtues which appear are of a curious quality:

Spiritus prudencie the first seed was called,
Which whoever ate, he would have foresight,
Before he did any deed devise the end well;
And it taught men to buy a long-handled ladle
Who mean to stir a crock and save the fat on top. (XXI.276-280)³⁷

Spiritus prudencie – has little to do with Christ either with regard to its end or its activities. *Spiritus temperancie*, treated next, does not fare much better though it does

cardinal virtues” (ibid.). Why does Langland treat the infused cardinal virtues in particular? The thrust here is essentially a social one, Bloomfield explains, and the cultivation of the cardinal virtues is essential for the Christological reformation of society. This characterization of Langland is rooted in Bloomfield’s apocalyptic reading of the poem. Indeed, Bloomfield may stand out in his emphasis on the role of the virtues for an apocalyptic mode since many apocalyptic thinkers – particularly of the Joachite persuasion – leave the virtues behind. Bloomfield’s hermeneutic subordinates the work of the virtues to a larger good – apocalyptic realization. What if the virtues are, instead, a proleptic work? The virtues might rather be a foretaste of eschatological finality given in this space and time, here and now. See the work of the Holy Spirit, XXI.199-212.

Another reader who does not leave the virtues behind, Wendy Scase, argues that apocalypticism derogates from the temporal authority of clerics and therefore confirms the authority of anticlerical theorists whose political action was defined in terms of charity. “Charity provided authority for this assertion of power,” writes Scase, “not merely because it authorised a disposition of dominion within the church, but also because it gave the temporal assertion of political power a place in salvation history” (84) in “Charity: the ground of anticlericalism,” Chapter 4 in *Piers Plowman and the New Anticlericalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989). An example of this charitable work is the disendowment of the clergy by secular lords. To engage Scase’s cluster of concerns would involve not only extending my treatment of charity and sacraments, but also including friars, priests, poverty, power and Conscience. A good start for a reply is Kate Crassons’ forthcoming *The Claims of Poverty: Literature, Culture, and Ideology in Late Medieval England* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

36 Bloomfield, *PP*, 121; see also Chapter One, page 37.

37 “*Spiritus prudencie* the furste seed hihte,
[And] hoso ete þat, ymageny he sholde,
Ar he dede eny dede deuyse wel þe ende;
And lered men a ladel bugge with a longe stale
That caste for to kele a crok [to] saue þe fatte aboue.” (Russell-Kane, XIX.276-280)

include spurning worldly riches (XXI.285).³⁸ *Spiritus fortitudinis* comes third:

The third seed that Piers sowed was *Spiritus fortitudinis*
And whoever ate of that seed was hardy forever
To suffer all that God sent, sickness, and troubles.
There may no liar's lying or loss of property
Make him, for any mourning, lose his cheerful outlook
And his bold and abiding ability to endure slanders;
And he pleaded all with patience and *Parce michi, domine*,
And took cover under counsel of Cato the wise:
Be strong of spirit when condemned unjustly. (XXI.289-297)³⁹

Spiritus fortitudinis is explained in relationship to God and thus appears somewhat more Christologically-formed than the previous two cardinal virtues. Langland echoes Job in XXI.295 as well as incorporates conventional Greek wisdom into this expression of fortitude.⁴⁰ *Spiritus fortitudinis* is a virtue that concerns both the life of this world and

38 "The seconde se[d]e hihte *Spiritus temperancie*;
He þat eet of that seed hadde such a kynde:
Sholde neuere mete ne meschief maken hym to swelle,
Ne sholde no scornare out of skille hym brynge
Ne neuere wynnyng ne wel[e] o[f] wordliche richesse,
Wast[e] word of ydelnesse ne wikede speche meue.
Sholde no curious cloth comen on his rugge
Ne no mete in his mouth þat maister iohann spyced." (Russell-Kane, XIX.281-88)

39 "The thridde seed that Peres sewe was *spiritus fortitudinis*
And hoso eat of þa[t] seed hardy was euere
To soffre al þat god sente, seeknesse and angeres.
Myhte no lyare with lesyng[e] ne losse of worldly catel
Makyn hym, for eny mornynge, þat he ne was murye in soule,
And bold and abidyng busmares to soffre
And ple[ieþ] al with pacience and *parce michi domine*
And keuered hym vnder consayl of Caton the wyse:
Esto forti animo cum sis dampnatus inique." (Russell-Kane, XIX.289-97)

40 The Vulgate: "Parce mihi, nihil enim sunt dies mei." Job 7:16b, *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam Clementinam*. Douay-Rheims: "I have done with hope. I shall now live no longer. Spare me, for my days are nothing." Langland's echo of Job is based on a hierarchy of goods to explain fortitude. This treatment is similar to Gregory's *Morals on the Book of Job*, yet Gregory further connects this to pardon in a way that Langland may have been interested to include. Gregory writes:

For neither do the two words agree together, 'I have given over hope' and 'spare me.'
For he that 'gives over hope' no longer begs to be spared; and he who is anxious to be spared, is surely far from 'giving over hope.' It is on one sort of grounds then that he 'gives over hope' and on another that the holy man prays to be spared; in the whilst he abandons the good things of the transitory life in 'giving over the hope' thereof, he rises more vigorous in hope for the securing of those that shall endure. So that in

the next, all of which is taken up the redeemed and redemptive activity of virtue. The fourth and final virtue is justice:

The fourth seed that Piers sowed was *Spiritus iusticie*,
And he that ate of that seed should be squarely true
With God, and afraid of nothing but of guile only
(For guile goes so secretly that sometimes good faith
Cannot be detected through *Spiritus iusticie*).
Spiritus iusticie spares no punishment for the guilty
And to correct the king, if the king's a guilty party.
For he takes account of no king's wrath when he sits in court,
To make judgments like a judge; he was never afraid
Neither of duke nor of death that he wouldn't distribute justice,
Despite presents or prayers or any prince's letters;
He did equity to all to the best of his ability. (XXI.298-309)⁴¹

Spiritus iusticie is pit against guile, the king, others in power and authority, death, and versions of meed thus making clear how a life of virtue can set one at odds with dominant socio-political arrangements. It is "squarely true with God," an ally to truth.

'giving over hope' he is the more effectually brought to the hope of pardon, who seeks the things to come so much more determinatively, in proportion as he more thoroughly forsakes those of the present time in giving up hope.

Gregory, *Morals on the Book of Job*, trans. John Henry Parker (London, J.G.F. and J. Rivington, 1844) Vol. 1, Pt. 1-2: Book 8.27.46.

Neque enim duo sibi haec uerba conueniunt, *desperauit et parce*. Nam qui desperat nequaquam iam sibi parci postulat, et qui adhuc sibi parci desiderat profecto minime desperat. Aliunde ergo est quod desperat, aliunde uero quod parci sibi sanctus uir postulat, quia nimirum dum bona uitae transeuntis per desperationem deserit, ad obtinenda quae permanent in spe robustior exsurgit. Desperando itaque melius ad spem ueniae ducitur qui eo certius uentura appetit quo praesentia ueris ex desperatione derelinquit.

Gregorii Magni and Marcus Adriaen, *S. Gregorii Magni Moralia in Iob* (Turnholti: Brepols, 1979).

41 "The ferthe seed that [Peres] sewe was *spiritus Iusticie*,
And he þat ete of þat seed sholde be euene trewe
With god, and nat agast bote of gyle one.
For gyle goth so priueyly at goed fayth oer-while
[Shal] nat be aspyed thorw *spiritus iusticie*.
Spiritus iusticie spareth nat to spille [the] gulty
And for to corecte the kyng, and the kyng falle in [g]ulte.
For counteth he no kynges wreth when he in Court sitteth;
To demen as a domesman adrad was he neuere
Noþer of deuk ne of deth þat he ne dede þe lawe,
For presente or for preyere or eny prinses lettres;
He dede equite to alle eueneforth his knowyng. (Russell-Kane, XXI.298-309)

Spiritus iusticie is more determinative for action than human law. Only as *iusticie* abides in love – the law of love – does it conform to and complement a version of law that exceeds the law of kings and courts (XXI.310-311). This justice is something new: a grace-filled, Christologically-shaped justice.⁴²

The agricultural imagery Langland uses to frame his introduction of these four new cardinal virtues could itself signal difficulties ahead. In the first passus of *Piers*, Langland plays on the language of the cardinal virtues and *cardo* (“hinge”) as these virtues are the hinges on which the gates of heaven open and close.⁴³ In XXI, Langland rewrites them as seeds, a revision rooted in the tradition in which Thomas also stands. In fact, Thomas uses the same language to describe the relation of nature to the development of virtue: *seminalia virtutum*.⁴⁴ For Thomas, these virtues of intellect are natural by way of a beginning (*secundum quandam inchoationem*) and must be brought to completion (*consummatio*).⁴⁵ The 'seeds' are a mere beginning for both Thomas and Langland.

42 Contrast the uses of the word thus far, *iustice*, and its variants which only appear in Passus XX-XXII as referring to judge or justices: “The iewes and þe iustic[e] aȝeyns Iesus þey were” (Russell-Kane, XX.37), “Ne ouer Iewes iustice as iesus was, hem thouhte” (Russell-Kane, XXI.139), and “He iogged til a iustice and iustede in his ere” (Russell-Kane, XXII.134). This form of justice is made possible by the Samaritan – and hence charity – who precedes it. And it is an integral virtue for being and building the community which Christ establishes, overseen by Piers, and supported by the sacraments. Readers can expect that from here on out, whatever its failings, the faithful Church community depends on the practices of *reddere*. One might carry through along these same lines by investigating the poet’s use of the Middle English *charite* versus Latin’s *caritas*. That justice enjoys this particular form should strain against the semi-Pelagian readings offered by Bloomfield and others, which would assume the possibility of this virtue apart from its ‘particularly or uniquely Christian’ aspects. (Bloomfield, *Piers Plowman*, 134)

43 Chapter One, page 15.

44 *ST* 1a2ae q63 a1 co.: “In ratione homini insunt naturaliter quaedam principia naturaliter cognita tam scibilium quam agendorum, quae sunt quaedam seminalia intellectualium virtutum et moralium.”

45 Thomas concerns himself with the apprehensive powers whereas Langland is focused on the appetitive.

Yet both insist on the ultimate shortcoming of such a model for the whole of the moral life – Thomas illustrates the limits of *seminalia virtutum* by introducing their counterparts of the infused cardinal virtues later in the same question (*ST* 1a2ae q63 a3);⁴⁶ Langland's spiritualized interiorization of the virtues strains against their concrete, communal character. The placement of the material on 'seeds' in each text is instructive – Thomas clarifies it as a nascent habit; Langland registers an alteration of the definitive preceding episode that identifies Christ, Charity, and the Church. This inadequate model of seeds as virtues provides the natural home for the language of growth as synonymous with increase in the virtues. By extension, we see the limits of 'growth.'

At the same time, Langland's treatment is illuminating for his four 'Spirited' forms extend the range of this kind of virtue by illustrating its diverse forms. According to the Thomistic lexicon, Langland moves from a version of infused moral virtue incomplete for its lack of orientation toward its final end (*Spiritus prudentie*) to infused moral virtue which resembles acquired virtue (*Spiritus temperancie*) to an admixture of acquired virtue and infused virtue which is perhaps fully neither (*Spiritus fortitudinis*) to finally the fullness of infused virtue (*Spiritus iusticie*). What may explain these diverse forms is the influence of acquired vice and sin on infused virtue. Langland might be understood to illustrate the extent to which acquired vice compromises infused virtue and how sin poses a stumbling block for the infused

46 *ST* 1a2ae q63 a3 co.: "Omnes autem virtutes tam intellectuales quam morales, quae ex nostris actibus acquiruntur, procedunt ex quibusdam naturalibus principiis in nobis praeexistentibus, ut supra dictum est. Loco quorum naturalium principiorum, conferuntur nobis a Deo virtutes theologicae, quibus ordinamur ad finem supernaturalem, sicut supra dictum est. Unde oportet quod his etiam virtutibus theologicis proportionaliter respondeant alii habitus divinitus causati in nobis, qui sic se habeant ad virtutes theologicas sicut se habent virtutes morales et intellectuales ad principia naturalia virtutum."

virtues to become that which they are intended to be. By this reading, Langland's ordering of lesser to greater works pedagogically in moving from the most devastating effects of vicious habits to their remedy in charity. Langland rehearses the move from false to imperfect to perfect.

In Chapter Two, I concentrated on Thomas' preoccupation with the incompleteness characteristic of infused virtues – incomplete in that they lack the *delectatio* which defines the acquired virtues. Here Langland can be understood to augment Thomas' account of incompleteness of infused virtues. For Langland explores the possibility that the infused virtues might be incomplete in ways that challenge their status as 'true virtues.' Habits of sin in Langland effectively render the infused virtues false or imperfect. These categories describe infused virtues that are given sacramentally but remain inactive because the recipient refuses to turn potency to act. All that remains in act are acquired virtues. This is what we see in Langland: gradations of activity of virtues endowed by the sacraments.

The different kinds of infused virtues in Langland add a new sense of 'incompleteness' through inactivity and thus show that infused virtues may be 'more incomplete' than they are in Thomas. Langland's forms of incompleteness make manifest the powers which hinder the infused virtues from their perfection. Sin does not go away easily in Langland, indeed it strikes with a new vengeance in the next narrative sequence.

4.2.2 Non-Participation

Perhaps most formative for this newly founded community is what happens

next. As soon as Piers is to the plow, Pride threatens him. The imagery, “blow them down and break them and bite in two their roots,” signals that anarchy looms around the corner for the Church.⁴⁷ The cardinal virtues are explicitly threatened in XXI.343-4: “they’d have to part with/ The seeds that Sir Piers sowed, the cardinal virtues.”⁴⁸ Again, discernment is frustrated. Again, justice is obscured. The grim news for the Christian people is spoken by Pride’s henchmen, Sir Ego-trip and Kill-love: ““That Conscience will not know (by contrition or confession) who’s Christian or heathen,/ Nor any manner of merchant who deals with money/ Whether he earns rightly, wrongly, or with usury.” (XXI.349-351)⁴⁹ *Spiritus iusticie* just sown seventy-three lines earlier is again difficult to discern. The organic unity forged by Grace between labor and the just life – whatever that might have looked like – is severed (see XXI.229-251). The community, besieged by sin, is the Church militant.

Kynde Wit’s response to the attack of Pride becomes determinative:

And then [Kynde Wit] came to teach Conscience
 And cried and commanded all Christian people
 To dig a deep ditch around Unity
 So that Holy Church stood in holiness as if it were a fort. (XXI.361-364).

Whatever the potential or extant form of the community before, Kynde Wit intervenes, crying and commanding the people to dig a deep ditch. The defensive work of closing off the Church begins with the activity of exclusion. Piers’ initial inclusion “to all

47 “Blowe hem doun and [r]eke hem and b[y]te ato þe mores” (Russell-Kane, XXI.338), which also recalls the imagery from the Tree of Charity in XVIII.

48 “Þat tynne thei sholde/ Þe sedes that sire [Peres] sewe, þe cardinale vertues” (Russell-Kane, XXI.342-3).

49 ““That Conscience shal nat knowe [ho is cristene or hethene]/ Ne no manere Marchaunt þat with moneye deleth/ Where he wynne with riht, with wrong or with vsure!” (Russell-Kane, XXI.348-350)

manner of men” (XXI.184) now becomes a list of exceptions: “except for the streetwalkers... except for them– and...” (XXI.368-70).⁵⁰ How and when and what to do is dictated by the discursive reasoning of kynde wit, which all Christians seem to have.⁵¹ Are these rightful claims to kynde wit? Is the community acting as it ought? Does *Spiritus prudencie*, along with the other cardinal virtues, govern their activity? Are the cardinal virtues now those “on which the gate hinges/ By which Christ in his kingdom closes off heaven” (Prol., 132-3)?⁵² On the contrary, the community struggles with the penitential practice which was established so lately as integral for its identity.⁵³

The rebellion from these practices becomes clear in the next sequence:

“I sure don’t care,” said Conscience, “if Pride comes now;
The lord of Pleasure will be blocked all this Lent, I hope.

50 Davlin notes in *Place of God* that those excluded in *Piers* are not the typical ‘other’ for thirteenth-century Europe: Jews, Saracens, heretics, ancient pagans, prostitutes, homosexuals, or souls of the damned. They are, rather, a cast of personifications and types representing sinful activity. (133)

51 Cf. early on in the poem, Will claims: “I’ve no natural knowledge,’ I said, ‘you can teach me/ How it grows and if it’s part of my mind.” (I.136-7). Holy Church immediately responds to the contrary. “All ” participate (I.159-167).

52 The C-version mentions closing, but not opening, the gates. Contrast the B-version: “closynge yates/ There Crist is in kyngdom, to close and to shette,/ And to opene it to hem and hevene blisse shewe” (Prol.104-6).

53 “There was no Christian creature who had [kynde wit]
That didn’t help holiness grow to some degree,
Some through praying and pilgrimages
Or others by private penances and some through alms-giving.
And then water welled up for wicked deeds,
Stinging as it’s running out of men’s eyes.” (XXI.373-78)

The premier importance of penitential practice is even iterated in the passages following the excerpt above, for it enables them to live into the claim of “holiness” by Holy Church (XXI.380) and ‘oneness’ at the heart of XXI-XXII. The poem’s iteration of themes of oneness and unity evoke the compelling vision of a way of life described in Ephesians, Chapter 4 especially the exhortation: “Careful to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. One body and one Spirit; as you are called in one hope of your calling. One Lord, one faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all” to spell out a life unified in charity (v. 2, 15, 16) made possible by the grace of Jesus Christ (v. 7) marked by reconciliation and forgiveness (vv. 25-32).

Come," Conscience said, "you Christians, and eat,
 Who have labored loyally all this Lenten time.
 Here is a blessed bread and God's body there-under.
 Through God's word Grace gave Piers plowman power,
 Might to make it and men to partake of it
 In help of their health once a month
 Or as often as needed, those who had paid
 To Piers the plowman's pardon *Redde quod debes.*"
 "Come again?" said the common people, "you counsel us to give back
 All that we owe anybody before going to communion?"
 "That's my advice," said Conscience, and the cardinal virtues';
 Or each man forgive the other, as the *pater noster* asks,
And forgive us our debts.
 And so to be absolved and afterwards take communion." (XXI.381-395)⁵⁴

Conscience invites those Christians who have "labored loyally all this Lenten time" to receive the Eucharist. 'Loyal labor' is exactly that work of Grace – however abstract – detailed in XXI.229-251. Its continuance depends on resisting the undermining work of Pride in XXI.351. Nowhere does Langland suggest that these Christians have avoided sin. Even those called to the altar are in need of healing. Indeed, the virtues increase the wound sin makes.

The imagery of Conscience's speech calls upon the same imagery as the Samaritan's speech on the sacraments and their healing power. The wound by sin of

54 "Y care nat,' quod Conscience, 'thow Pryde come nouthe;
 The lord of lust shal be ylette al this lente, y hope.
 Cometh,' quod Conscience, '3e cristene, and dyneth,
 That haen labored lelly al this lenten tyme.
 Here is bred yblessed and goes body þervnder.
 Grace thorw godes word gaf [Peres] power,
 Myhte to make hit and men to eten hit [aftur]
 In helpe of here hele ones in a monthe
 Or as ofte as they hadden nede, tho þat hadden payed
 To [Peres] pardoun þe [plouhman] *Redde quod debe[s].*"
 "How? quod alle þe comune, "thow conseylest vs to 3elde
 Al þat we owen eny wyhte or vat we go to hosele?"
 "That is my conseil," quod Conscience, "and cardinale vertues;
 Or vch man for 3eue oþer, and þat wol þe *pater noster*,
 Et dimitte nobis debita nostra &c,
 And so to ben assoiled and sennes to be hoseled." (Russell-Kane, XXI.381-395)

semyuief, a condition extended to all Christians, is made healthy again only with the intervention of this blessed bread. Conscience imparts this pressing need for this healing by his encouragement of eucharist monthly, or “as often as needed.”⁵⁵

Important conditions pertain to receiving the sacrament of the altar as one must fulfill the strict demands of *reddere* or forgiveness of one another’s debts. Penance becomes a mandate for the practices of justice for the Christian life. This act of justice is both reunion and union, mediated through the healing sacrament of love.

The particular prominence of justice in the Christian life is underscored in Conscience’s insistence that it is the “chief seed that Piers planted.”⁵⁶ Individual salvation is bound up with a life that embodies justice, a life shared with others. The answer to Will’s individualistic quest for salvation is finally social. All individuals need communities which enable and safeguard the virtues. This eschatological community is marked by forgiveness and restitution.

As inviting as this vision of social unity marked by the flourishing of the virtues is, it is demanding and for many too demanding.⁵⁷ Individuals from various walks of

55 This in itself is more frequent than medieval practice, in which the faithful received once a year. So, again, Langland follows Thomas against late medieval norms. Duffy writes:

Frequent communion was the prerogative of the few. Lady Margaret Beaufort received only monthly, and even so was considered something of a prodigy. For most people receiving communion was an annual event, and it was emphatically a communal rather than individualistic action. In most parishes everyone went to confession in Holy Week and received communion before or after high Mass on Easter Day. (*Stripping of the Altars*, 93).

Duffy also links this reception with “the ideal of parochial harmony and charity,” thought it “was often just that, an ideal. It was, however, a potent one, carrying enormous emotive and ethical weight” (95). See Chapter One, page 56.

56 “Cheef seed þat [Peres] sewe,” (Russell-Kane, XXI.406).

57 Such a unity is inhospitable to the forms of unity forged through coercion. Cf. Miri Rubin in her magisterial *Corpus Christi* documents the exploitation of *corpus Christi* and its accompanying discourse of unity and hierarchy: “the mystical body had become so public, so exposed, so much a locus of desire and power, that it was a sort of public good, which patricians hastened to appropriate, at least occasions which they controlled” (270).

life – the brewer, uneducated vicar, lord, and king – rebel. As soon as the Prologue-Passus IV are rewritten Christologically (XVII-XXI) and located in Piers (XXI), their collective rejection sends the reader on an imaginative return to that corrupted, unchanged world. The agents are too ensnared in sin to see it, too tied to the practices of the market to see its effects. They revert to habits of resistance to grace.

The literally gracious offering is met with rejection in XXI.396-476. By turns, all the “common people” turn the other way (XXI.391).⁵⁸ The brewer first rejects *Spiritus iusticie* preferring accommodation to the market: “as long as I can sell/ Both dregs and swill and draw at one hole. Thick ale or thin ale” (XXI.398-400). “**3e?** Bawe!” he boasts, amounting to an ontological claim regarding his own ‘kynde,’ willfully closed to the possibility of reform (XXI.400). The lewd vicar conflates the cardinal virtues with their appearance in the cardinals in a cleaving of cardinals and virtue that recollects the anarchy of the Prologue. Because the vicar cannot discern real virtue, he rejects *Spiritus prudencie*. The lord embraces a self-interested, distorted *Spiritus fortitudinis*. The king likewise embraces *Spiritus iusticie* only as he identifies himself with law.⁵⁹

The hard-won reconciliation of cardinals and virtue (for “cardinal virtue”) linked to pardon, Eucharist, and reconciliatory social practice comes at too high a cost. The common people refuse to separate virtue from its worldly forms. Their refusal bespeaks their own distorted vision of the good. Substituting the power that Piers is given (XXI.183) for the power from the Prologue (Prol.135), they deform the virtues.

58 Even more encompassing is the original: “alle þe comune” (Russell-Kane, XXI.391).

59 Mary Carruthers treats in detail the folk's rebellion in *The Search for St. Truth* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 157-160.

This rejection is a willful turning away from the good disclosed in the life of Christ, made real in Easter joy and the Pentecostal vision. The close of XXI dims this possibility, returning readers to the dark world of the Prologue without Christ (and *with* cardinals). The narrative follows through the effects of this subversion and rejection.⁶⁰

These last few passus of *Piers* show what happens to those who are offered the sacraments but refuse to participate. The brewer, uneducated vicar, lord, and king are a diverse people who share a willful rejection of the sacraments. They refuse to participate in the sacraments altogether, reserving their participation for the more familiar habits of sin. Social, ecclesial fabric deteriorate and the vices flourish. This is

60 The consequences of this rejection comes by way of Need, initially. "So Need in great need can fend for himself/ Without counsel of Conscience or cardinal virtues" (XXII.20-1). Mary Carruthers points out that Need plays a part in the gradual distortion of language in the people's rejection. For Carruthers, the redeeming Word in Christ in Passus XX allows the Conscience in XXI to speak in a redeemed manner. Conscience's redeemed speaking overcomes the limits of human speech – a speaking only possible through Christ. The ending of XXI, in contrast, is sophistry and distortion by the people who, by turns, empty words of their meaning (Carruthers, *Search for St. Truth*, 157-8; e.g., death equals life, shame victory such that redeemed language stretches the meaning of words, sometimes into their opposite. Parodic versions used by the folk, however, render a word meaningless.). The cardinal virtues of *Spiritus iusticie*, *Spiritus fortitudinis*, and *Spiritus iusticie* are corrupted in use. As powerful as her argument is, Carruthers needs to go further in showing that the consequences of this corruption are not merely linguistic (cf. Mann's astute characterization in *Langland and Allegory* (Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1992), 23 and more generally "The Nature of Need Revisited" *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 18 (2004): 3-29).

More generally see Aers, "The Sign of Poverty," Chapter 5 of *Sanctifying Signs*. Aers couches his discussion in terms of Langland's supersession of Franciscan tendencies in a dialectical process which takes on Langland's theology of poverty and its relations to his inherited tradition(s). Simpson cites in his support Aers, Pearsall, and Wittig in *PP: An Introduction to the B-Text* to advocate a wariness toward Need. Cf. Adams' "Nature of Need," *Traditio* 34 (1978): 273-302, where Need is a believable personification. Adams grounds his appreciation in the Scriptural warrant of Need's claims and its accompanying glosses; Bloomfield in *Piers Plowman as a Fourteenth-Century Apocalypse* extols temperance as pre-eminent among the cardinal virtues, i.e., prudence more than justice, and thus contrary to Thomas' hierarchical ordering for this eminently believable character who would lead Will to perfection in *status* (137-42); perhaps the most strongest advocate for Need is Lawrence Clopper, "*Songes of Rechelesnesse*": *Langland and the Franciscans* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1997) who argues against the many misreadings of Need as a sinister deceiver when he, in fact, is "absolutely orthodox" and posits "the very terms that should comfort the Wanderer and insure his salvation" (93 fn 49, 71). Clopper goes so far as to interpret the ending of the poem as a projection of the renewed order of friars whose needs are providentially provided by the gifts placed at their disposal (292-97). At best, Clopper's argument exceeds the text.

what happens when folks refuse the sacraments – a possibility Thomas never explores.

Moreover, this second set of concerns in Langland appears to issue in the third way in which Langland may augment Thomas' account. For the non-participation of Christians in the Church animates the Church to change – to accommodate – to make its practices more palatable in “false participation.”

4.2.3 False Participation

Next the Antichrist threatens *all* the cardinal virtues:

Antichrist thus had hundreds soon at his banner
And Pride bore it boldly about
With a lord that lived for the pleasure of his body,
Who came against Conscience, who was keeper and guide
Of all kindred Christians and cardinal virtues. (XXII.69-73)⁶¹

The cardinal virtues are coupled with Conscience, meaning that whenever the virtues appear afterward they accompany Conscience (XXII.122, 303). Meanwhile, penitential practice is problematic, a source of controversy, and now a catalyst for compromise. Soon Conscience is accommodated and the justice of *reddere quod debes* is undermined (XXII.318-323). That which is meant to be a source of healing and succor for the people, “those who were sick and wounded by sin,” becomes a drug which makes them “fear no sin” (XXII.305, 379). That which should be a source of conversion yields spiritual torpor. The Church, besieged, becomes home to its enemy and bears unfortunate resemblance to the subject of satire from earlier in the poem.

61 “Antecrist hadde thus sone hondredes at his baner
And Pryde [baer] hit baer badly aboute
With a lord þat lyueth aftur likyng of body,
That cam aȝen Conscience, þat kepar was and gyour
Ouer kynde cristene and cardinale vertues.” (Russell-Kane, XXII.69-73)

These consequences are too serious to be satirized. The practices of the Church now frustrate the very virtues they are meant to cultivate and sustain.

In this manner, the sacraments become the site for what I call 'false participation.' Earlier in this chapter I used Thomas' language of imperfect and perfect to refer to one's participation in the sacraments. Imperfect participation names a failure to increase in virtue after one's right reception of them; perfect participation entails the grace of the sacraments issuing its own completion in the virtues. 'False virtue' entails that one is participating for either a specious end or when specious ways are taken to pursue that end. By extension, false participation indicates the abuse of the Church in observing the sacraments or an unwillingness on the part of the recipient to realize the ends of the sacraments in virtue. The former sense, which is on the part of the Church to practice rightly, emerges most clearly here. In the final sequences of *Piers*, the sacrament of penance becomes a drug which makes its recipients fear no sin. False ecclesial practice frustrates the virtues it is meant to cultivate as it actively encourages vice contrary to the sacrament of penance. Thus Langland may extend Thomas' account of sacramental practice using Thomas' distinctions between virtues (false, imperfect, perfect) to clarify the relationship between sacramental practice and virtue.

In the last lines of the poem, Conscience loses its moral bearings moves outside the Church:

“By Christ,” said Conscience then, “I’ll become a pilgrim,
And walk as wide as the world reaches
To seek Piers the plowman, who might destroy Pride,
And ensure that friars find a living, who flatter out of need
And contradict me, Conscience. Now Kind avenge me,
And send me good favor and health till I have Piers plowman.”

And then he cried out loud for Grace until I began to awake. (XXII.380-7)⁶²

So too, readers may surmise, go the cardinal virtues.

Our pilgrim Will does not accompany Conscience but is instead ordered by Kind to stay in Holy Church:

“If you want revenge, make your way into Unity
And keep yourself there till I send for you,
And make sure you learn some craft before you come from here.”
“Counsel me, Kind,” I said, “what craft’s best to learn?”
“Learn to love,” said Kind, “and forget all the rest.” (XXII.204-8)⁶³

Will is to enter the Church and remain with the sacraments, signs of love left for his healing and sustenance by Christ. Although Conscience will leave him, Will is charged to stay and learn the best of crafts. Love is linked to the other gifts of Grace, which are “treasure/ And weapons to fight with when Antichrist assails you” (XXI.225-6).⁶⁴

The Church remains an eschatological community whose fundamental ambivalence

62 “By Crist,’ quod Conscience tho, ‘y wol bicom a pilgrime,
And wenden as wyde as þe world re[n]neth
To seke [Peres the plouhman], þat pruyde myhte destruye,
And þat freres hadde a fyndyng þat for nede flateren
And countrepledeþ me, Conscience; now Kynde me avenge,
And s[e]nde me hap and hele til y haue [Peres plouhman].’
And sethe he gradde aftur Grace tyl y gan awake.” (Russell-Kane, 380-7)

63 “Yf thou wolde be wreke, wende into vnite
And halde the there euere til y sende for the
And loke thou conne som craft ar thou come thennes.’
‘Consailleth me, Kynde,’ quod y, ‘what craft be beste to lere?’
‘Lerne to loue,’ quod Kynde, ‘and leef all othere.’” (Russell-Kane, 204-08)

Clopper also focuses on this crucial command to ‘lerne to louye’ in his “*Songes of Rechelesnesse*.” Clopper calls this exhortation “the very essence of Franciscanism, since they were to become so unsolicitous with regard to self that all actions would be directed outward in the form of charity that is a ‘chilyssh thing’” (100). The gloss Clopper offers on the counsel given Will is that he must learn “to exercise the will that absolves him of taking the goods of others, for the exercising of a charitable will places him beyond men’s laws and in the hand of God.” (305) Clopper’s reading requires the exaltation of the role of Need, who I indicated a few pages earlier is a problematic character.

64 “Tresor/ And wepne to fihte with when Auntecrist **3**ow assaileth.” (Russell-Kane, 225-6).

rests with its constitutive members.⁶⁵ Those who cooperate with the forces of the Antichrist and the world stand under judgment.

Will's remaining in the Church has the potential to become a double act of edification, for himself and for the community. This fruitful act depends on coupling XIX and XXI, charity and its practices, Eucharist and penance. His act in staying is rooted in faith, with hope of Christ's Second Coming, undertaking the arduous task of learning to love. His is a living 'now in a dark manner, then face to face,' and the way of going on cardinally depends on the work of three virtues that remain: faith, hope, and love.⁶⁶

In the end, the besieged Church may become home to its enemy in the case where its performance indistinguishable from the Antichrist's. Christ's community can become indistinguishable from the rest, holding in common corrupt practices and unchanged agents. But the Church too may become something else through members such as Will, and at the poem's end this alternative is laid before him. He is commanded to remain in the accommodated Church in an act of faith, hope, and love. His going on will require that he embody the virtues of which Langland writes, and endeavor to couple sacraments with virtues again as a possibility that Langland does

65 For an eschatological characterization of the Church which differs from Milbank's Augustine (and Milbank for that matter), see Aers' "Visionary Eschatology" cited on page 37. Aers also puts Langland's eschatology in dialogue with other eschatological traditions in the late medieval Church including neo-Joachite strands.

66 1 Corinthians 13:12-13. Passus XVI gives a preliminary configuration of the moral life under the influence of charity in 284-312. This happens when Will says that he has not seen charity and wonders whether it is purely eschatological. The version of charity Holy Church advances "can't conceive that anybody would lie under oath," (XVI.304), somewhat consistent with the resistance of Holy Church to offer a model of how to deal with deceit in Passus II-IV. Will is not satisfied with her answer and presses on for what embodied charity looks like, perhaps not taking sufficiently to heart Holy Church's lyric on the Incarnation (I.146ff)? Such questions are taken up and answered definitively in the life of Christ in XIX and XX, only for Will's discernment gained to be clouded by Pride's interference in XXI.336ff.

not rule out entirely. The Church's wide range of potential hinges on its observance of sacramental practice.

However fruitful Thomas' descriptions of sacramental practice and increase in virtue, they might well be enriched with Langland's descriptions. At the outset of this last section, I argue for Langland's potential contributions to be cast in a threefold manner. One, Langland's *Spiritus prudencie*, *Spiritus temperancie*, *Spiritus fortitudinis*, and *Spiritus iusticie* provide an idea of what more incomplete forms of Thomistic infused moral virtue might look like. This range also advances the possibility of continuity between acquired virtue and infused virtue. Rather than reading Langland as helping Thomas multiply distinctions between virtues – here full forms of infused moral virtues versus lesser forms – Langland reminds readers of Thomas that the focus is on Christ and Charity. Fuller forms of the virtues, wherever they are finally found, are closely bound to sacramental practice.

Two, Langland depicts the consequences for a community constituted by individuals who refuse the sacraments. This is illustrated in the sequence that moves from an eschatological community marked by forgiveness and restitution to the brewer, uneducated vicar, lord, and king. In rejecting the sacraments' demands, they unravel the social fabric fashioned by Christ and the Holy Spirit. Interestingly, non-participation by these individuals tempts the Church to compromise sacramental practice to make it more palatable and less rigorous. The Church enables a *new* kind of participation: false participation.

Three, Langland's depiction of the sacraments can be said to portray false participation if one draws upon Thomas' distinctions to take them further. False

participation is a category that derives from Thomas' conception of the virtues as related to ultimate ends (false, imperfect, and perfect). This exploration of the sacraments in a dimension unexplored by Thomas (false participation) can be construed as building upon the first section of this chapter focused on Thomas (imperfect and perfect participation). False participation is a characterization generous enough to include at least two kinds of failures both of which Langland addresses: on the part of the recipient to become what s/he receives and on the part of the Church to practice rightly.⁶⁷ In both cases, the sacrament as means and end is vitiated and so too the virtues. False participation in the sacrament means that one's partaking in sacrament is the occasion for viciousness. Viciousness may serve as both the cause and the result of false participation.

A dimmed vision of the moral life of the last passus of *Piers* just is the path for those who sever the sacraments from the social embodiment they are intended to affect. This vision appears a modest if ambivalent improvement over earlier in the poem, when Will could not even discern Charity when confronted with it. At the end of the poem, having coursed through the various configurations of the spiritualized cardinal virtues and having reckoned with corrupted practice, the moral scope is reduced to the theological virtues alone. At that, Langland names only one: love.

What remains is our increase in charity, which is all that matters. It is cultivated by the familiar loop from confessional, the font, and the altar (as derived from Thomas) and depends upon a baptismal, penitential, and eucharistic people (as described in Langland). Langland makes it clear that one may continue to retrace that loop as a part of

⁶⁷ The parallel account of "false virtue" by Thomas as treated in Chapter Two allows for both these kinds.

In such a case, the past provides little succor. For the process of reflecting on the past supplies no future orientation because all previous directions are opaque.⁶⁸ What little self-knowledge may be gained from introspection – perhaps consisting in the insight that gains little self-knowledge from introspection – is no help for finding one's way. One may be confident of few things, but one of them is this: the future is likely to unfold in a way similar to the past in that it too will be discursive and fragmentary.

Moreover one is not sure of where one stands because the dynamism and unfolding previously associated with the sacraments is absent. The dynamism which leads the new beginning to its new end through increase in virtue is missing; so too the unraveling which allows these ends and beginnings to be written by the sacraments. With no fixed sense of dynamism and unraveling, one is deprived of the beginning and ends constitutive of the wayfarer's way. Such a traveler is lost in wilderness wanderings.

4.3 Two Guides for the Journey

Piers and the *Summa* concern increase and remission in virtue over the course of a lifetime, the practices which encourage us in either direction, and the institutions

68 See Aers, Preface, *Salvation and Sin*: "But gradually Langland discloses the opacity of the converted will to the introspective powers of the soul and its unacknowledged resistance to the gifts of redemption" (x) and Chapter 4, *Salvation and Sin*: "Such conversion and confession, however, does not dissolve all the consequences of dispositions cultivated by sinful habits, consequences that include opacity to ourselves, old compulsion and great inventiveness in our self-deceptions, both collective and individual. The tenth book of Augustine's *Confessions* had explored these aspects of the bishop's experience after the account of his conversion in Book VIII. And Wille's conversion here will not prevent a long journey 'into þe lond of longyng' where the will is driven 'by self-love reaching the point of contempt of God' (XI.164-185; *City of God* XIV.28)" (111).

which nurture and sustain these virtues and practices. This chapter ends where Langland and Thomas end for both treat the sacraments the last lines of their texts. This placement of the sacraments is fitting, for true virtues finally find their end in the sacraments and find their way only as connected to them. For all of that, our didactic authors do not leave pedagogy behind. Christ our Teacher has given us the sacraments as our way to participate in His life.

It is paramount that we must learn to receive the sacraments rightly. We who resist identification of our sinfulness as genuine self-knowledge, who prefer to deceive ourselves, who retain our continued habits of resistance to grace including the vices in their many forms – we deny that transparency and orientation sacraments may make finally available for enjoyment as proleptic participation in our final end where we have nothing to focus on other than Godself.

Although Langland and Thomas teach their readers moral matters, they also tutor readers in certain habits of mind including the skill of remaining open to revision. This capacity may be formed by attentive reading, for these authors revise and rewrite their works as they progress and the pedagogical processes of the texts are configured to develop their reader's capacity to embody what they see. Achieving this reflective capacity enables one to evaluate oneself in light of what one has learned about a proper ordering of intellect and will. Through the “process of learning, making mistakes, sometimes but now always correcting those mistakes and so moving towards achievement,” MacIntyre writes, “the individual comes to understand her or himself as *in via*, in the middle of a journey.”⁶⁹ Being open to revision is accompanied by a sense

69 MacIntyre, “Narrative Ethics,” 6.

of journey and may enable one to name one's own ends and beginnings constitutive of actual progress.

It is a moral achievement to name the journey's stages as false, imperfect, and perfect. Although there is only one final good, there are diverse ways in which subordinate goods relate to it and thus how we relate to it. To see this and to impose distinctions on virtues as we discriminate between these relations is a learned skill. Christening different kinds of virtue including 'perfect,' 'imperfect,' and 'false' is our imperfect, human way of articulating what it means to participate in God.

This moral achievement is a retrospective one – as stated before – and provides clarity as to failures and progress on charity's way. Retrospection's importance is compounded by its prospective counterpart.⁷⁰ Prospectiveness is the recognition of alternative possibilities for continuing our story. It is the imaginative power necessary to live into a future not bound by sins past. It maps out a new path forward guided by hope and charity. It propels us on by anticipated delight.

Charity commands a life made perfect in community. Langland depicts a score of communities of heterogeneous kinds – ones torn by errant desire and habits of sin, a fleeting one founded in Easter joy, one of uncertain future. For the community of believers woven through time, his text is edification. So too the *Summa* makes clear the communal dimensions of embodied learning, bodily sacraments, and intensifying friendship. That being so, *Piers* and the *Summa* may become for us two companions for the journey. They give insight into and in limited ways enable those fuller virtues they describe. They offer us mediated friendship meaning we are not without fellow

70 *Ibid.*, 7.

wayfarers. And as all good friendships do, they point beyond the two who are involved. They point to the beauty of the *via caritatis* given us by Christ that we might become eucharist for the world.

Appendix

“Behold the Bread of Angels, For us Wayfarers' Food”

Thomas' use of the language of *via* designates the moral life as a journey.

Although the place of the virtues in this journey is clear, the virtues are subordinated to a larger movement that the plasticity of the language of *via* signifies.² The prologue of

1 Thomas Aquinas, “Lauda Sion Salvatorem,” sequence from the mass of Corpus Christi: “Ecce panis angelorum/ Factus cibus viatorum.”

2 I provide this overview of *via* from the *Summa* and draw from it variously in this section's argument:

E.g., God as the *via* in the First and Third Parts – Christ as man *is* our *via* to God, *ST* 1a q2 pr.: “Christo, qui, secundum quod homo, *via* est nobis tendendi in Deum.” In happy alliterative Latin, 1a q16 a5 s.c.: “Sed contra est quod dicit dominus, Ioan. XIV, ego sum *via*, veritas et vita.” The fittingness of certain divine things as commanded, 3a q70 a2 ad2: “Unde et dominus dicit de Abraham, scio quod praecepturus sit filiis suis et domui suae post se ut custodiant *viam* domini.”

Christ as *viator* – That Christ is unique in perfection, 1a q62 a9 ad3: “Sed melius est ut dicatur quod nullo modo aliquis beatus mereri potest, nisi sit simul *viator* et *comprehensor*, ut Christus, qui solus fuit *viator* et *comprehensor*.” That Christ should have ministering angels on account of his passible body as wayfaring, 1a q113 a4 ad1: “Et iterum secundum animam erat *comprehensor*; sed ratione passibilitatis corporis, erat *viator*.” Again for the same reasons, 3a q30 a2 ad1: “Sed quia tamen Christus fuit *viator* et *comprehensor*, quantum ad cognitionem divinorum non indigebat ab Angelis instrui.” On the fruition of Christ's soul during the Passion as the higher part is not hindered by the lower, 3a q46 a8 c.o.: “Dum Christus erat *viator*, non fiebat redundantia gloriae a superiori parte in inferiorem, nec ab anima in corpus.” (An argument that where there is no wayfaring, there is no merit, 3a q56 a1 arg3: “Quia Christus resurgens iam non erat *viator*, et ita non erat in statu merendi.”)

Christ as showing the *via* – *ST* 3a prol; Christ's Ascension as the cause of our salvation, 3a q57 a6 c.o.: “Et primo quidem, *viam* nobis praeparavit ascendendi in caelum.”

Our *via* – Our present knowledge of God as limited, 1a q12 a2 ad2: “dicendum quod Augustinus ibi loquitur de cognitione Dei quae habetur in *via*.” Again, the limitedness of our present knowledge of God as derived indirectly using the simile of a mirror, 1a q56 a3 c.o.: “Tertiae autem cognitioni assimilatur cognitio qua nos cognoscimus Deum in *via*, per similitudinem eius in creaturis resultantem.” Human nature as gradually perfected in contradistinction to angelic nature which occurs at once, 1a q62 a5 ad1: “Et ideo homini longior *via* data est ad merendum beatitudinem, quam Angelo.” The way in which the movement of free-will presupposes the help of God, 1a q83 a1 ad4: “Ad quartum dicendum quod dicitur non esse in homine *via* eius, quantum ad executiones electionum, in quibus homo impediri potest, velit nolit. Electiones autem ipsae sunt in nobis, supposito tamen divino auxilio.” The appropriateness of guardian angels during this life for all except Christ, 1a q113 a4 c.o.: “Respondeo dicendum quod homo in statu vitae istius constitutus, est quasi in quadam *via*, qua debet tendere ad patriam. In qua quidem *via* multa pericula homini imminet, tum ab interiori, tum ab exteriori; secundum illud Psalmi CXLI, in *via* hac qua ambulabam, absconderunt laqueum mihi. Et ideo sicut hominibus per *viam* non tutam ambulantis dantur custodes, ita et cuilibet homini, quando *viator* est, custos Angelus deputatur.” The gate of heaven being blocked by sin and reopened to us through the Passion and conformity to Christ's way, 3a q49 a5 c.o.: “Prohibebantur autem homines ab ingressu regni caelestis propter peccatum, quia, sicut dicitur Isaiae XXXV, *via* illa sancta vocabitur, et non transibit per eam pollutus.” Quoting Augustine (De Consens. Evang. iii), Christ's way as preparation for our own, 3a

the *Summa*'s First Part lays out the pedagogical purpose of the text. He carries this teaching and the language of *via* into prologues of the First Part, Question 2 and the Third Part. These quintessential moments function as trailmarkers in the *ordo disciplinae*. The prologue of question two adumbrates *sacra doctrina* in two aspects: God Himself and God as the beginning of things and their last end. Consequently Thomas segments the *Summa* into three parts: of God, of the journey to God of reasoning creatures, and of Christ (“*quod homo, via est nobis tendendi in Deum.*”)³ In the prologue of

q55 a3 ad4: “In Galilaea enim, secundum transmigrationis significationem, intelligendum occurrit quia de populo Israel transmigraturi erant ad gentes, quibus apostoli praedicantes non crederentur, nisi ipse viam in cordibus hominum praepararet.” The way of salvation as connected to determinate things – the sacraments, 3a q60 a5 ad3: “Nec propter hoc arctatur via salutis, quia res quarum usus est necessarius in sacramentis, vel communiter habentur, vel parvo studio adhibito haberi possunt.” The way in which grace and the character of the soul differently inhere due to present changeability, 3a q63 a5 ad1: “Et quia anima est mutabilis secundum liberum arbitrium quandiu est in statu viae, consequens est quod insit animae mutabiliter. Sed virtus instrumentalis magis attenditur secundum conditionem principalis agentis. Et ideo character indelebiter inest animae, non propter sui perfectionem, sed propter perfectionem sacerdotii Christi, a quo derivatur character sicut quaedam instrumentalis virtus.” (The way of salvation as connected to baptism, 3a q68 a1 arg 1: “Per Christum enim non est hominibus arctata via salutis.”) The merits of infant baptism showing the way, 3a q68 a9 c.o.: “Fuit etiam conveniens pueros baptizari ut a pueritia nutriti in his quae sunt Christianae vitae, firmiter in ea perseverent, iuxta illud Prov. XXII, adolescens iuxta viam suam, etiam cum senuerit, non recedet ab ea.” (That which the English Dominicans render: “All the sacraments bring us help on our journey through this present life, which is the notion conveyed by ‘Viaticum,’” bringing together our journeying and the means by which this journey is sustained, 3a q73 a4 arg 2: “Omnia etiam sacramenta remedium nobis afferunt in via praesentis vitae, quod pertinet ad rationem viatici.”) The sacraments as the way to attain heaven, 3a q73 a4 c.o.: “Et secundum hoc dicitur viaticum, quia hoc praebet nobis viam illuc perveniendi.” (Whether the Paschal Lamb is the most significant figure of the Eucharist, 3a q73 a6 arg3: “Praeterea, potissima virtus huius sacramenti est quod introducit nos in regnum caelorum, sicut quoddam viaticum.”; whether the form for consecration is needful, 3a q78 a3 arg5: “Praeterea, occasiones erroris sunt hominibus subtrahendae, secundum illud Isaiae LVII, auferte offenticula de via populi mei.”) The sacrament which bestows upon us the power of coming into glory, 3a q79 a2 ad1: “Et ideo viaticum dicitur.” That man is preserved from sin by the Eucharist, though the possibility is not removed, 3a q79 a6 ad1: “Homo autem in statu viae est huius conditionis quod liberum arbitrium eius potest flecti in bonum et in malum.”

And us as *viatores* – Angels in contradistinction to us, 1a q62 a9 s.c.: “Sed contra est quod mereri et proficere pertinent ad statum viae. Sed Angeli non sunt viatores, sed comprehensores.” That the glorified eye alone sees Christ in the sacrament of the altar, 3a q76 a7 c.o.: “Ab intellectu autem hominis viatoris non potest conspici nisi per fidem, sicut et cetera supernaturalia.” (Viaticum belonging to viatoribus, 3a q79 a2 arg1: “Effectus enim proportionatur suae causae. Sed hoc sacramentum competit viatoribus, unde et viaticum dicitur. Cum igitur viatores nondum sint capaces gloriae, videtur quod hoc sacramentum non causet adeptionem gloriae.”)

3 ST 1a q2 Prol. “So because, as we have shown, the fundamental aim of holy teaching is to make God known, not only as He is in Himself, but as the beginning and end of all things and of reasoning creatures especially, we now intend to set forth this divine teaching by treating: first, of God;

the Third Part, our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ “*viam veritatis nobis in seipso demonstravit, per quam ad beatitudinem immortalis vitae resurgendo pervenire possimus.*”⁴

Christ, the *Via*, shows us *viatores* the *via*.⁵ Christ is the first sacrament.

The *sacramenta ecclesiae*, derived from Christ and given us in the Church, are the means by which we are drawn into eternal friendship with God through his Incarnate Son. Only because of this character is the language of *via*, which is first identified with God, is appropriate when treating the sacraments. Thomas' variations on *via* – *viaticum*, *via salutis*, and *viatores* – construe sacraments of the New Law as Christ-endowed helps on our journey through this present life, as the means to heaven by way

secondly, of the journey to God of reasoning creatures; thirdly, of Christ, who, as man, is our road to God...” “*Quia igitur principalis intentio huius sacrae doctrinae est Dei cognitionem tradere, et non solum secundum quod in se est, sed etiam secundum quod est principium rerum et finis earum, et specialiter rationalis creaturae, ut ex dictis est manifestum; ad huius doctrinae expositionem intendentes, primo tractabimus de Deo; secundo, de motu rationalis creaturae in Deum; tertio, de Christo, qui, secundum quod homo, via est nobis tendendi in Deum...*”

For a similar treatment of the prologues, see Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin, Maître Spirituel, Initiation 2*, (Fribourg Suisse: Éditions universitaires, Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1996), esp. 69-75.

4 *ST 3a Prol.*

Our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, as he was, according to the angel's witness 'saving people from their sins,' (Matt. 1:21), showed in his own person that path of truth which, in rising again, we can follow to the blessedness of eternal life. This means that after our study of the final goal of human life and of the virtues and vices we must bring the entire theological discourse to completion by considering the Saviour himself and his benefits to the human race. Such a consideration comprises three main headings: first, the Saviour himself; secondly, His sacraments, through which we attain salvation; thirdly, the goal of life without end that we attain through Christ by our resurrection...

Quia salvator noster dominus Iesus Christus, teste Angelo, populum suum salvum faciens a peccatis eorum, viam veritatis nobis in seipso demonstravit, per quam ad beatitudinem immortalis vitae resurgendo pervenire possimus, necesse est ut, ad consummationem totius theologicis negotii, post considerationem ultimi finis humanae vitae et virtutum ac vitiorum, de ipso omnium salvatore ac beneficiis eius humano generi praestitis nostra consideratio subsequatur. Circa quam, primo considerandum occurrit de ipso salvatore; secundo, de sacramentis eius, quibus salutem consequimur; tertio, de fine immortalis vitae, ad quem per ipsum resurgendo pervenimus...

5 Of course Christ is distinct from wayfarers because in his person he contains wayfarer as well as comprehensor (*ST 3a 15, 10*).

of Christ.⁶ The sacraments are “the means by which Christians join themselves to and benefit from what God was doing in the life, death, and resurrection of God the Word Incarnate.”⁷ As union with and participation in Christ, the sacraments are the fruition of Christ's outpouring of love. Thus the language of charity cannot be left behind. In short, to understand the fullest meaning of virtue is to point to Christ. Thomas writes: “There is no virtue that did not have its example on the Cross.”⁸

The sacraments, seven in number, “constitute certain sensible signs of invisible things by which people are sanctified.”⁹ This sanctification just is the virtues and gifts explored at length in both parts of the *Secunda Pars*. Also sacraments are the cause of glory for Christ's members, and so Christians enjoy eschatological reality. Yet the perfection of the virtues and gifts *and* future glory is retained for heaven.¹⁰ Thomas writes this qualification into his treatment of Eucharist, ‘the goal and consummation of all the sacraments’:¹¹

6 See especially *ST* 3a q60; q73 a4.

7 Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 358.

8 Thomas Aquinas, *The Catechetical Instructions of St. Thomas Aquinas*, trans. Joseph B. Collins (Baltimore: The Catholic Primer, 1939, 2004), 30.

9 *ST* 3a q61 a3; Davies is particularly interested in the fittingness of this mode of salvation (sacramental) and our constitution as human beings in *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 356-361.

Thomas counts the sacraments as seven in number according to inherited tradition and complementarity to the anthropological structure of the creature. It was not until the Council of Trent that the Church officially defined these seven.

10 Yocum notes that “each successive stage [of divine revelation and union with God] has something significantly prognostic about it, then, including the state of the New Law. This crucial aspect of Thomas' sacramental theology is often left out of accounts of it; the sacraments are not ends in themselves, and their adaptation to the human condition is an adaptation to the weakness of the human being in this age, and not a permanent form of human beings' relation to God” in “Sacraments,” *Aquinas on Doctrine: A Critical Edition*, ed. Thomas Weinandy, Daneil Keating, and John Yocum (New York, T&T Clark Ltd, 2004), 164. Yocum offers as a contrast Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*, 345-76; *Aquinas* (London: Continuum, 2002), 174-80.

11 *ST* 3a q63 a6; citing Dionysius.

Christ's Passion, in virtue of which this sacrament works, is indeed the sufficient cause, not, nevertheless, that we are at once brought thereby to heaven, for beforehand we must, as St. Paul States 'suffer with him' that afterwards we may be 'glorified with him' (Rom 8:17). And so the sacrament does not immediately usher us in, but gives us the strength to journey to heaven. That is why it is called the "viaticum."¹²

The sense of being 'on the way' is inexorable. As perfect as our virtues may become now, there is always room for virtues' increase. They will not – they cannot – be fully perfected until the next life. For now, we remain *viatores* whose recourse for greater sanctification remains *viaticum*.

¹² ST 3a q79 a2 ad 1; English Dominicans: "So this sacrament does not at once admit us to glory, but bestows on us the power of coming unto glory..."

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Biography

Sheryl Overmyer (Grubb) was born in South Bend, IN in 1979. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy from the University of Notre Dame in 2001 and her Master of Theological Studies from Duke Divinity School in 2005.