

Practical Knowing about Ends and Means in Aquinas

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To grow in our understanding about how our purely speculative knowing differs from our practical acts of human cognition whose ulterior or further object is the realization or the instantiation of some kind of concrete good in order for us to move toward a better understanding of what exactly is the form or species that is distinctive of the kind of order which belongs to our ethical, practical acts of human knowing and thinking, Aquinas clearly distinguishes between the knowing of an architect which can be purely speculative and a knowing that can be ordered toward constructing a particular building.¹ In purely speculative knowledge, the form or species of a house serves as the means by which we can understand a house: what a house is or why a given building exists as a house and not as some other kind of building. However, in our purely practical, productive acts of knowledge, or when our speculative knowledge moves toward a practical, productive kind of knowledge as this refers to the same point of reference as regards, for instance, the form of an imagined, postulated house, a form or species ceases to refer only to an *intelligible nature* which already exists and which belongs to the nature of things as these things already in fact exist within our understanding since this nature now becomes a nature which is to be brought into being and existence through a proactive relation which is to exist with respect to a suitable constellation of spiritual and material parts and elements.² This nature now exists as an *exemplar*, a plan, an ideal, or a model that we now use to guide the work of building and construction which we want to begin, and the depth and the extent of our own understanding measures the intelligibility and appropriateness of what we can now produce.³ In our practical knowing, some kind of order must be grasped both in terms of how disparate parts fit together into a new whole and in terms also about how everything should be joined together in a relation which moves through a number of different stages toward eventually realizing and constructing an order which emerges as an instance of realized, concrete good.

In other words, as our practical human acts of reasoning begin to function and as they operate to bring into being something which had not previously existed, through our practical acts of reasoning, we must learn how to distinguish ends and means from each other,⁴ and also how to coordinate and relate ends and means to each other in shifts which, at times, turn a means into an end. Willing as this is ultimately directed towards specific ends is to be distinguished from any willing that is ordered towards any means even if these two forms of willing are related to each other in a way which indicates how the meaning of one is strongly influenced by the meaning of the other.⁵ Means are certainly defined by our

1 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 16; q. 15, a. 2.

2 *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 12, 11, 2619.

3 *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 6, 1, 1153; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 93, a. 1.

4 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 8.

5 David M. Gallagher, “The Will and Its Acts (Ia IIae, qq. 6-17),” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 78.

Gallagher distinguishes between *acts of desire and love* (cited as *simple willing, intention, and enjoyment*) which are directly ordered toward ends and *choice, consent, and use* that are ordered to means and so only indirectly are they ordered toward ends. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 3a, q. 18, a. 3. For a brief summary in one paragraph of Aquinas’s teaching about how the structure of our human willing consists of two interrelated acts (willing an end and willing a means), see J. Michael Stebbins, “What Did Lonergan Really Say About Aquinas’s Theory of the Will?” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 12 (1994): 284-5. See also Bernard Lonergan’s *The Incarnate Word*, unpublished manuscript

intended and desired ends (as we work from ends to define our means) and the meaning of an end can be clarified or obfuscated as persons select which means will reach which ends. The relation between means and ends and the need to find a right relation or balance between ends and means accordingly shows and proves to us that our human acts of willing are not understood if they are defined purely in terms of a simple notion of freedom (of an ability to do anything, whether this or that), or if they are defined purely in terms of some kind of nature which exists as a given and which determines all of its proper acts. The human will, our human willing, is best understood, instead, if it is seen as something that is somewhat restricted and limited in its various operations.⁶ As a compound of two related acts of willing, a willing of ends (understood as an *voluntas mota et non movens*; a will moved and not actively moving) and a willing of means (understood as a *voluntas mota et se movens*; a will moved and moving itself),⁷ the human will or our human willing exists thus respectively as “a compound of nature and of freedom.”⁸ It exists as a compound of necessity and freedom if we attend to the kind of normative structure which exists within us with respect to our different acts of human willing and a lack of determination which also belongs to our willing of either this or that act.⁹

To explain all this a bit more fully: first, with respect to desired ends, in our practical acts of human knowing, we must come to understand exactly what kind of good should be realized within a context which must acknowledge the fact that every object is chosen in the belief that it will lead us toward some form of good as a further, more or less, ultimate end.¹⁰ The end is the rule or the measure of whatever is being ordained toward this end.¹¹ The end or the purpose of an activity brings other causes into a condition of being and effect in a way which shows how final causality emerges as the rule of all our other causes.¹² In the order of our human decision making, the willing of an end necessarily precedes the willing of any means since no means can be willed if no end or goal is desired by us as

translated 1989 by Charles C. Hefling, Jr. from the Latin of the *De Verbo Incarnato* (Rome: Gregorian University Press *ad usum auditorum*, 1964), p. 131.

⁶Stebbins, “What Did Lonergan Really Say About Aquinas’s Theory of the Will?”: 302.

⁷Frederick E. Crowe, “Thomas Aquinas and the Will: A Note on Interpretation,” *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 8 (1990): 134, n. 16.

⁸Stebbins, “What Did Lonergan Really Say About Aquinas’s Theory of the Will?”: 301, citing Bernard Lonergan, *Gratia Operans: A Study of the Speculative Development in the Writings of St. Thomas of Aquin*, pp. 299-300, n. 147. See also Lonergan, *Gratia Operans*, p. 77.

⁹Crowe, “Thomas Aquinas and the Will,” *Method*: 132-133. As Crowe explains this combination of necessity and freedom in a parallel with the structure of our human cognition, he argues that, if we examine the structure of our human willing, we will find that it consists of different parts and each part differs from other parts. “Freedom and necessity are compatible in the whole process, but not in the one and same act; they are qualities of different acts in the integral process: the will of the end is not free, however spontaneous it may be, but willing the means is free and not necessitated.” We should not “attribute freedom and necessity in the same way to every activity.”

¹⁰For some persons, in their moral philosophy, the ends justify the means. A story is told about Heinrich Himmler (the head of the German SS during the Second World War) who once gave a talk to an SS death squad who were charged with the responsibility of applying a “final solution” to the so-called “Jewish question.” Himmler bluntly admitted that what they were doing was terrible. But, in bringing about the death of many thousands and even millions of Jews, he argued that a good was being accomplished which would benefit the human race.

¹¹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 2.

¹²*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 17, 9.

active human subjects as, necessarily, we work from a desired goal or objective before considering how certain actions can adequately or legitimately lead us toward realizing a desired end or goal. The end always functions as a first principle to determine our subsequent acts and operations.¹³ All of our desires are necessarily related to some form of good as a desired end where, ultimately, ends cannot be either freely chosen or freely rejected *purely at will* or *arbitrarily* since our desires for any term or goal exists as desires which also possess a degree of rationality that are grounded in our prior acts of understanding and judgment which must always seek ends which are believed to be good and right and so not evil and wrong.¹⁴ Good is always intended even if it is not always effected or successfully brought about.¹⁵ In our lives as human beings, a common presumption points to a degree of rationality which somehow always exists within the structure of our desires and our acts of desiring since every

¹³*In 2 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 1, q. 2, a. 1, as cited by Philip J. Donnelly, “Saint Thomas and the Ultimate Purpose of Creation,” *Theological Studies* 2 (1941): 69.

¹⁴*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 9, 1; 10, 4; *Sententia Libri De anima*, 3, 15, 821-24; *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 2, 1131; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 3; q. 19, a. 3, ad 2; q. 19, a. 7, ad 3. As Martin Rhonheimer proffers an explanation in his *Natural Law and Practical Reason: A Thomist View of Moral Autonomy*, trans. Gerald Malsbary (New York: Fordham University Press, 2000), p. 250, in Aquinas, human beings cannot freely put aside an orientation which exists within them that always directs them towards some kind of good which is to be achieved because, prior to the natural ordering of our reasoning which exists and occurs in our human life, a set of natural inclinations and desires is already constitutive of our human life and existence. These desires which have been created by God are basic to the nature and the structure of our human existence and so, for this reason, it can be properly said that they “participate in the ‘directive power’ (*vis directiva*)” of God’s eternal law as this exists as the term of God’s self-understanding. These desires *qua* desires express the “plan of divine providence.” They reveal an ordering and a wisdom which already belongs to God and which exists in God. Hence, when later these desires are ordered by us through actuations of our natural acts of human reasoning and understanding, an ordering occurs *within these natural desires* which already exist with an ordering which belongs to them. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 2. For this reason, our natural inclinations which are constitutive of our human life and its existence cannot be freely cast aside or disposed of at will. All of our natural, human desires and inclinations are naturally ordered toward reason because of origins which point to a grounding act of meaning and intelligibility which is to be identified with an act which exists as an act of understanding. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 81, a. 3; 1a2ae, q. 56, a. 4.

With respect to the ordering of our human understanding, when, through lack of understanding, a deficient, defective meaning or form is apprehended, an end will be intended which should not be intended since this intended end will exist as an evil and not as a good even if it is regarded as a good in light of a prior, defective act of understanding. An evil will be intended under the guise of its alleged good. On the other hand however, if a person knows that his or her understanding is in fact defective and yet he or she does nothing about it even if a good end is being intended and desired in some way despite one’s self-knowledge of bad reasons, then it cannot be said that a person’s willing is properly functioning as a good. In the long run, lack of desire to move from defective to sound acts of reasoning will fatally corrupt the direction or the intentionality of our human willing since lack of development in our understanding will encourage purely accidental or coincidental relations between desires for good as an end and desires for means that will appropriately lead to the ends which we could be desiring.

¹⁵*De Malo*, q. 1, a. 3.

end is desired or intended under an assumption which, to some degree, imputes measures of goodness to the being of every desired end.¹⁶ Hence, if we should desire something which, in fact, is evil and which is not good, it is because we mistake the evil as a good where, here, the evil would exist as the absence of a right and proper objective which should be the term of our acts of desiring when we begin to seek goods through an ordering of subordinate ends (as means) which cannot be properly or rightly ordered if the rationality of a given ordering of means, as a good, cannot be matched with an end that is itself lacking in goodness because it is lacking in the rationality which should properly belong to it.¹⁷ As a general principle and rule: “no one acts for the sake of something with evil in view.”¹⁸ In such a situation, the end which is being desired exists as a compound which consists of a good that is joined with the absence of something else which is good.¹⁹ The rationality of our human consciousness or, in other words, the rationality of our human souls as a principle of intelligibility which accounts for the movements that belong to us as human subjects explains or it accounts for the fact that, in us as human beings, all desires must exist within an intentionally desired context that cannot entirely be lacking in degrees of reason and rationality.²⁰ Some kind of understanding is somehow present, however limited could be the reality of this reception and experience of understanding.

Hence, as our speculative acts of reasoning function from first principles that are naturally given to us and which are constitutive of us in our human nature (as we have already noted), in the same way too, our naturally given ends (which initially we do not entirely understand or know)²¹ exist within our practical acts of human reasoning as the basis from which our later acts operate in a perfectly natural and proper way (as, in both cases, an actuation of natural law as all of our natural acts of human understanding move us from first principles toward different conclusions and consequences; we move from a knowledge that is already somehow naturally given to us, whether prior to any acts of inquiry and investigation or as a result of our acts of inquiry and investigation).²² The naturally given ends,

16 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 103, a. 8: “since every inclination, whether natural or willed, of any entity, is nothing other than an *impressio* of the first mover...wherefore everything that behaves naturally or voluntarily arrives as it were spontaneously at that to which it has been divinely ordered,” as quoted by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 250.

17 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 9, 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1, ad 2; Francis Selman, *Aspects of Aquinas* (Dublin: Veritas, 2005), p. 92.

18 *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 3, 781. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 4, 1-6; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 117.

19 *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 48, a. 1, ad 2.

20 *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 4, 3; 3, 10, 7 & 9.

21 *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 7.

22 *In 3 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 4, sol. 4, cited by Frederick E. Crowe, “Practical Knowledge and Its Application,” *Three Thomist Studies*, supplementary issue of *Loneragan Workshop*, vol. 16, ed. Fred Lawrence (Boston: Loneragan Institute, 2000), p. 128, n. 31. Also see Rhonheimer in *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 300, n. 55, and how he cites this text of Aquinas in the following terms:

...thus in the practical reason are inborn connatural ends for man [*sunt innati fines connaturales homini*]; in regard to them there is neither an acquired nor an infused *habitus*, but a natural one, such as the *synderesis*, in the place of which the Philosopher [Aristotle] (at VI *Ethics*) posits an *intellectus* in things done [*in operativis*].

which are immediately given to us within our human understanding and which exist for us as first principles – these exercise a kind of final causality which exists within us, within our acts of human willing through how our desiring of ends as goals functions as a general theological principle which accounts for the functioning of all our human acts and how our different human acts are to be properly related to each other in ways which points to our humanity and which maintains or which keeps us within that which exists as our humanity.

An ordination exists whose source and point of origin is ultimately God who, as a First Mover and First Cause,²³ is to be understood as an external agent: as an extrinsic, efficient cause²⁴ who initiates the movements of our human willing since, in and of itself, our contingent human willing is not able to account for the existence of all of its operations whenever we speak about some kind of transition which must move from a condition of potency to a condition of act.²⁵ Necessarily, our created human willing relies on some form of exterior moving or willing which transcends all forms of contingency and which must precede all of our contingent, created acts of willing as a prior willing that always exists and is bereft of any need of having to bring itself into some kind of being or existence. This prior willing must be always fully in a condition of act or operation if it is to account for the realization of any potency which exists within the contingent, created order of things through the transformation of a given potency as it moves into a condition of act.²⁶ In the contingency of our human willing, two

Cf. Rhonheimer, p. 279; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 79, a. 12.

²³*De ente et essentia*, 4. See also Aquinas, *On Separated Substances*, c. 3, as cited by *An Aquinas Reader*, ed. Mary T. Clark (Garden City, New York: Image Books, 1972), p. 71.

²⁴*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 17, 3; 2, 23, 6-13; 3, 17, 7; 3, 66, 1-7; 3, 67, 1-7; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3; q. 3, a. 2; a. 7; q. 4, a. 1; q. 14, a. 8 & ad 3; q. 82, a. 4; q. 105, a. 5. God functions as the first efficient cause through His act of understanding, His act of understanding and knowing. Cf. Crowe, “Thomas Aquinas and the Will,” *Method*: 130-131.

²⁵*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 5; 1a2ae, q. 109, a. 1; a. 2, ad 1; *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1. Aquinas distinguishes three principles of action: end, agent, and activity. Desire for an end moves an agent who, as a second principle, can begin to function as an efficient cause to bring about an action or an activity which, when operative, serves as a third principle of action. One principle or cause comes after the other in a seriation which begins with an end that is consciously or unconsciously intended but which then concludes with an end that has been achieved. The end, however, which initiates any willing within our human willing exists as a first cause which exists externally to our acts of human willing since our human willing does not ultimately cause or move itself and so it can only act as an initiator of movement within itself if it is first caused or moved by an act which it receives from something that is outside of it.

²⁶*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 1, 13, 1-3; 1, 16, 5; 3, 66, 2; 3, 66, 7; *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1; *Super Librum De causis*, props. 9 & 18; *Compendium theologiae*, 1, c. 3; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 2, a. 3; q. 3, a. 4; q. 3, a. 7; q. 4, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 4, quoted and translated by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 89, n. 35; cf. q. 9, a. 6. See also Bernard Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of St Thomas Aquinas*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 96; J. Michael Stebbins, *The Divine Initiative: Grace, World-Order, and Human Freedom in the Early Writings of Bernard Lonergan* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), pp. 86-87; pp. 246-247, who, on p. 86, quotes from Lonergan’s *Grace and Freedom* and its reference to two first movers of our human acts of willing: our acts of understanding and the kind of act which refers to God’s existence and being.

causes or two agents thus must always work together to effect a given act of human willing:²⁷ a human proximate cause or agent which experiences acts of understanding and which tries to find ways to achieve desired ends;²⁸ and a divine remote cause or agent which has so created things that certain ends are naturally and properly willed when they are properly and rationally desired.²⁹ Because the human will or our human willing, in the rationality of its desires, tends towards a universal good of some kind or good in all its unrestrictedness (the good as *bonum universale*), it exists as an inclination and tendency which cannot exist as the effect of any particular, specific cause.³⁰ Its cause is ultimately God who functions as an all embracing universal, active cause;³¹ hence, as the universal cause, source, and point of origin for every kind of good, reasonable, rational realization of anything which can possibly exist within our world, it itself exists as the universal good. It already fully exists in its own right and,

²⁷*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 19, a. 4, & ad 2; q. 68, a. 1; q. 71, a. 6: “the rule of the human reason is twofold: one, nearby and of the same kind [homogeneous], namely, the human reason; the other is the first rule: namely, the eternal law, which is the divine reason,” as quoted by Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 287, n. 3. See also Patrick H. Byrne, “The Thomist Sources of Lonergan’s Dynamic World-view,” *The Thomist* 46 (1982): 117.

²⁸While, in an inchoate way, the ends or purposes of our human activity are all given to our human nature in a pre-existent kind of way as if they exist as indemonstrables (as principles of human activity which are given to our human activity and which not brought into being by any kind of human activity), at the same time, it has to be said that the specification or the determination of these ends in our human life is not given to us by nature (*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 7; q. 24, a. 7, ad 6). It is not simply given to us by nature since ends as ends need to be understood before any thought can be given to engaging in any acts that would want to do anything at all (*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 1), and so, it is only by engaging in our subsequent acts of inquiring, reasoning, understanding, and judging that we can come to know the nature of ends and the role that they play in the dynamic of our lives (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, a. 2). A self-reflective perusal of our desires and appetites (which, by resolution, try to determine causal principles of explanation for complex operations) leads us toward an understanding of the proper ends to which we should give to our lives and, from this understanding of ends, we can then begin to ask about how we can work compositely toward the ends that our understanding has come to know, acknowledge, and accept (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 6, a. 2). Rightness or rectitude in the orientation of our desires towards ends accordingly emerges as an essential prerequisite if any rightness or rectitude is to exist in the acts which follow in the wake of our desires (see Gregory M. Reichberg, “The Intellectual Virtues (1a 2ae, qq. 57-58),” *Ethics of Aquinas*, p. 139). See Aquinas, *Quaestiones disputate De uirtutibus* 12, ad 17, cited by Selman, p. 147, n. 42. As apprehensions of truth or fact in our reflective judgments had elicited pleasurable affective responses in us that delight in the goodness of knowing a truth or a fact as a reality, these elicited experiences of goodness in turn suggest other ends in terms of other forms of goodness which transcend earlier, limited experiences of it and to which we can possibly give the striving of our whole lives with respect to their possible actuation and realization. Judgments about value or goodness only emerge in the context of a knowing that is now sought with respect to the ends of our human life and, from these judgments, a concrete goal or mission presents itself to us to become the organizing principle for all else that we do in the course of our lives.

²⁹*Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 113, 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 5; 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 6 & ad 3. In his “Thomas Aquinas and the Will,” *Method*: 134, n. 16, Crowe outlines Bernard Lonergan’s understanding of how, in Aquinas’s mature thought (as given in the *De Malo* and the *Summa Theologiae* 1a2ae), Aquinas had understood the structure of our human willing as it moves from an apprehension of ends toward a decision about means that can then be put effect. Initially, a judgment of good or value is made which clearly specifies an end which is naturally willed by us as human

yet, it exists as something that has yet to be reached as we refer to the being of other things which happen to exist.

However, since it can be said that, because God alone creates the soul (the soul being a purely spiritual principle which cannot come from a cause that is lacking in any spirituality or immateriality), it can also be said that God alone can directly operate *within the human will or within our human willing*.³² The divine causality is both remote and proximate since, through the instrumentality of created nature or, alternatively, through unmerited bestowals or gifts of grace that are freely given to us as human subjects,³³ God can sometimes act immediately within our acts of willing as an internally operative cause to change, convert, and redirect us toward a specific end that has not been previously understood and known as an end that is worth seeking and which we should seek and acquire.³⁴ In the created order of things and our acts of willing exist as created things, God always acts externally to us to initiate and to encourage our human willing as the willing that, in fact, we do. But, within this same order of willing, God acts in a strictly internal way to effect changes within us, within our acts of willing, which cannot be explained by our past history of desiring and willing and any lack of understanding that has previously attended our prior order and acts of desiring and willing. To us as human beings, at times which cannot be known in any kind of prior way, God gives gifts of understanding which touch on ends and objectives and which, as somehow glimpsed and known, begin to act on us as moving, motivating causes: encouraging us, moving us into new possible acts of human willing and doing³⁵ and so, as we receive acts of understanding as gifts which ultimately come to us from God,³⁶ in the same way, by a kind of extension or application, we are being directed toward ends and objectives which emerge in a way which points to their goodness; hence, their desirability. We begin to know and sense about how differently we should live as human subjects as God acts within us

agents but which, before, was not understood and known in the willing towards ends which necessarily occurs in our every act of willing in our human volition. Once this specification occurs within our willing through our understanding, the willing towards ends begins to operate although this willing is not to be understood as an activity that causes itself. Our human willing, at this point, does not really move itself. The will or the willing is not yet free in its operations since its willing is directed towards ends and goals that have been already determined by God who has created the will and our willing and so has given it a normative orientation toward certain ends and goals: as is the case with our human desire for happiness or a perfect good whose enjoyment would make us supremely happy (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 2, a. 8). Hence, at the beginning of things, God moves our human willing from without as if it were a species of effect. The willing of the end is determined. In this willing, it can be said that our practical human reasoning and understanding participates in first principles which already exist in God in the same way that, in the life of our theoretical acts of human reason, our human reasoning and understanding also participates in the understanding and knowledge which belongs to God. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 3, ad 1. However, as our deliberation begins to emerge about how we should reach certain ends and as this deliberation makes a selection or free choices about what means should be employed to reach certain given ends, a free act which is constitutive of our free willing in us as human beings emerges as an act which is joined with an act that is not itself free. The free act serves a higher act of willing which, in its willing, wills ends. Cf. Lonergan, "On God and Secondary Causes," *Collection*, eds. Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), p. 63.

³⁰*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 6; 1a, q. 54, a. 2.

³¹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 6, ad 3; Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 103.

³²Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, p. 103.

to incline us toward ends which He desires for us, God's desires existing as permanent, enduring, active things to the degree that we can think about a type of intentionality which exists entirely in a condition of act (bereft of any kind of potency).

Secondly and most importantly for us to the degree that we can make choices and decisions about how we are to live as human beings, after a judgment of value has determined what should be the purpose or the goal of our individual lives in the context of our human living (our judgment exists as a species of ratification), we must then determine that which exists as the *medium ad finem*: the means that we should use if we are to attain the good or the objective toward which our desires are moving and inclining us: through desires that have been aroused and elicited from us in some way and which exist

33 *De Veritate*, q. 22, aa. 7, 8; q. 24, a. 14; q. 27, a. 5; *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, aa. 4, 6; q. 111, a. 2; q. 112, a. 1; 3a, q. 85, a. 5. Operative grace here designates the kind of grace which is here pertinent and which initiates the conversion of our human willing from doing evil to doing good as this is discussed, for instance, by Aquinas in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 111, a. 2, where Aquinas recalls the theological insight of St. Augustine who had first distinguished between operative and co-operative grace. Operative grace, as an initial gift from God, works from within our human will to suggest a change in its orientation with respect to its desires for certain ends and goals, and co-operative grace works with our human willing as it begins to respond and to try and do good deeds. With operative grace, “our mind is moved and does not move” and with co-operative grace, “our mind both moves and is moved” (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 111, a. 2). The self-determination of our human willing which reveals the freedom of its operations is a reality that is fully congruent with the reality of divine causality since co-operative grace seeks to assist and to strengthen us in our human willing as it begins to respond in a positive manner to the initial gift of operative grace that had suggested other ends that might be desired. More options are revealed than would otherwise be known. The emphasis that is placed on the giving of assistance immediately derogates from an undue emphasis on the determination of our human acts of willing since, to employ a human analogy, when one person assists another to do what the other wants, the person helped experiences and enjoys a greater degree of freedom than would otherwise be the case.

34 *De Veritate*, q. 24, a. 15 [“a divine instinct by which God operates in the souls of men”], as cited and translated by Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 129. See *Quaestiones de quodlibet*, 1, q. 4, a. 2, ad 2; *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 88, 5; *De Malo*, q. 16, a. 5; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 6, ad 3; q. 109, aa. 2, 6; q. 111, a. 2; Lonergan, *Grace and Freedom*, pp. 41-42; Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, p. 247. See *De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 7; a. 8; q. 24, a. 12; a. 14. In *Grace and Freedom*, p. 42, n. 68, Lonergan argues that the context for our understanding both the interior and exterior causality of God is the point of Aquinas’s argument, given in the *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 149, which avers that all initiative in the world is to be attributed to God since all creatures are to be understood as His tools and instruments. The explanation is a philosophical principle which simply states that “the movement of the mover precedes the movement of the movable thing in reason and causally” (*SCG*, 3, 149, 1). In referring to God’s actions within both our willing and our understanding and which operate to incline us toward experiences of conversion, Lonergan refers to this type of grace as “internal actual grace” which brings about a “second act” or operation within us as human subjects (Stebbins, *Divine Initiative*, pp. 129-130).

35 In his “What Did Lonergan Really Say About Aquinas’s Theory of the Will?” *Method*: 285, n. 20, Stebbins summarizes Aquinas’s teaching in the following way: “whenever the will begins to will - for we are not constantly in a state of active willing (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 3, ad 2) - God must move the will to its act of willing whatever good is its end in that instance (*Summa Theologiae*,

within us within the order of our subjectivity. In willing, seeking, or desiring any end, our human willing must reduce itself to willing the means which lead and bring about the desired end that is to be reached.³⁷ A desire for a given end indeterminately specifies which means will likely lead to it without precisely determining which means are to be used as the best and proper way to achieve a given, desired end.³⁸ Willing here ceases to be only an elicited term as it now begins to function as a new principle of movement within the context of our individual lives.³⁹ How do we determine or to bring into being the good or goods which we wish to realize and to make concrete? By what activities or operations can a determined effect be made to follow from a determined cause?⁴⁰ The decisions which are pending all require reflections and deliberations about means leading to ends which, as a combination of inquiry, reasoning, understanding, and judgment, form and constitute the general fabric of our practical acts of human cognition.

To choose any means which are needed in order to achieve a desired end, we must first think about the desired end as an intended, desired effect which is to be brought about through an understanding and judgment that can rationally affirm what can be reasonably and rationally done as a fit means for achieving a desired, hoped for end. In order to move into an order of execution that can move toward ends through a causality of means, we must first engage in an analysis which, as a principle of movement, can begin to move us from an intended end toward a sequence of means which can lead us from an initial mean or operation to a last mean or operation that immediately effects or gives to us our long sought, desired end. “What is last in the process of dissolution must be first in the process of composition.”⁴¹ In the gathering together and composition of our practical acts of human reasoning, our analysis exists as an inner moment within a larger dialectic which links both forms of thinking and reasoning into a mutually dependent form of relation.⁴²

1a2ae, q. 9, a. 4).”

36*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 105, a. 3.

37*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 9, a. 4; *De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1.

38*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 1, Prologue; 2, p. 583: “the end is the rule of whatever is ordained to the end.”

39*De Malo*, q. 6, a. 1; Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 89.

40*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 255.

41*Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 5, 4, 799.

42See Edmund Dolan, “Resolution and Composition in Speculative and Practical Discourse,” *Laval Théologique et Philosophique* 6 (1950), p. 55. While Aquinas usually speaks about the composition and the analysis of our practical acts of human reasoning with reference to procedures that are denotive of practical acts of *moral* reasoning, the like relation of composition and analysis in our practical acts of *technical* reasoning clearly evidences a similarity which transcends these two forms of practical reasoning. Our moral reasoning admittedly requires more deliberation than our technical acts of reasoning since the mastery of a technical proficiency is to be clearly distinguished from any growth in personal maturity which can lead us toward any kind of personal moral development. Technical skills tend to be routines that are more easily taught and learned and they exist for the sake of limited goals. However, as we look at technical reasoning as it functions in any given art or profession, we will find that the finding of means that leads to a desired end requires a form of inquiry which also works through an analysis that moves from an intended goal through a sequence of causes toward a first cause which is to be implemented as a first act within an order of execution. When, for instance in the *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 7, 6, 1406-1410, Aquinas speaks about how a good physician practices his medical skills, as with his moral acts of deliberation and reasoning, a physician must

The necessity of our acts of questioning, thinking, understanding, and judging which are proper to the life of our acts of practical, human reason accordingly suggests that we begin to grasp the normative structure of our practical reasoning by noticing or beginning with a parallel which exists between it and the normative structure that belongs to our speculative acts of human reasoning.⁴³ Our practical reasoning begins also with questions although with questions which ask about what should be done (given what we should already happen to know and what we might need more to know). On the basis of a relation that we already understand to some extent, we seek to move toward another type of relation that we can also understand: a relation which also exists as a meaning to the degree that something of intelligibility exists within it where, here, a relation reveals something about the good which needs to be realized through activities and actions that, in themselves, have not to be intrinsically cognitive or, more accurately and precisely, they are not intrinsically cognitive even as they are understood by us as acts, actions, or activities that we should do or accept. Our practical acts of reasoning embark on a journey which moves through its own process of discovery before this same process is not only concluded by its own acts of reflective understanding and judgment since, now, the greater, better, or proper good is not only the good of a truth as an apprehension and expression of our understanding but, instead, it is the good or the perfection of an actuating deed which transcends our cognitive acts.⁴⁴ If the communication of understanding through words that we speak and write to others exists as one form of self-transcendence, another kind of communication as also another form of self-transcendence exists as, through our external actions and deeds, we implement and effect changes within an order that is already constituted by determinations of space and time.

Our practical acts of reasoning first move through our questions and understanding toward judgments about ends and then through our questions and understanding toward judgments about means. In the way of composition as a form or order of our acts of reasoning (as opposed to the analysis of our theoretical acts of human thinking and reasoning),⁴⁵ through forms of derivation and deduction that operate synthetically by eliciting the good of receiving new acts of understanding, our practical reasoning moves from initially receiving a form or meaning in our understanding toward making a particular application of it within a given set of material conditions⁴⁶ or, in other words, as it moves from meaning to application, it moves from universals to particulars (from universals that are known to particulars which are done).⁴⁷ In the context of an order of determination which also exists for our practical acts of reasoning, its form of reasoning moves from general principles toward specific conclusions:⁴⁸ from first principles and derivative first precepts which initially specify the general ends

engage in an analysis that moves from the present condition of a patient toward some element which is judged to be missing from a patient's health and whose absence is the cause of a patient's ill health.

An appropriate treatment can then be identified which makes up for the element which has gone missing and which needs to be restored if a patient's health is to improve and so be restored.

⁴³*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 100, a. 1. See also *Summa Contra Gentiles*, 3, 97, 12.

⁴⁴*In 3 Scriptum super libros sententiarum*, d. 33, q. 3, a. 1, sol. 3, cited by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 44, n. 26.

⁴⁵*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 1, 3, 35.

⁴⁶*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 14, a. 16: "operation means the application of form to matter."

⁴⁷*In libros De caelo et mundo*, proem., n. 2, as quoted by Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 46, n. 33.

⁴⁸*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 91, a. 3; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6; *De Veritate*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 3, 2ae ser. Please note, however, that Aquinas distinguishes between two modes or two forms of

of our human behavior in terms of the goals or goods that we should realize in the actions which we should do and undertake and which our self-examination and reflections brings to some form of explicit self-knowledge.

These ends that we move towards grow in specificity and determination when, as human beings, we work from first principles within a context of different inclinations and desires which we happen to experience as human beings and as we become more conscious of relations and connections that link different inclinations with each other in a way which reveals a hierarchy or a scale of ends and values.⁴⁹ Our inclinations or desires rely on each other in ways which indicate when one desire should be preferred to some other desire when, in a given context, a given desire loses the primary or the importance which it had once had. Desires for material specifications of good can be sidelined by desires for other kinds of good. By attending to ends which accordingly exist as first principles within the life of our practical acts of understanding, the means whereby we can begin to realize these different ends gradually present themselves to us in terms of a plurality of a variety of options,⁵⁰ and so the validity or the aptness of these different means can be checked in a way which resembles how, in our understanding, we would try to verify the truth of a proposed theorem or hypothesis. A means is more apt and proper if it can be reduced to the ends or first principles that it seeks to serve or to meet.⁵¹ A connatural relation must always exist between means and ends since, performatively, the end, as a good, is defined by what acts and operations bring it about.⁵² The same goodness which exists in an end must somehow also exist in the means that we use to try and realize a given end. When, in our

determination in the *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 95, a. 2 and a. 4 when he speaks about the derivation or the specification of human laws. While some human laws (the laws of nations, *ius gentium*) are derived as if they exist as logical conclusions from a given set of basic premises which refer to laws of nature (*per modum conclusionis*) and so these conclusions exist as part of the natural law as components of it (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 95, a. 4 & ad 1; 2a2ae, q. 57, a. 3 & ad 3; Rhonheimer, *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 275; pp. 297-298, n. 47), other laws however (the civil law, *ius civile*) are derived more loosely (*per modum determinationis*) in a creative fashion, by way of *inquisitio* or *inventio*, since the derivation does not proceed in a purely deductive fashion as we work from basic precepts which exist within a law of nature. A possibly apt paradigm here could be the work of an artist or a builder. An artist or builder begins with a general idea which exists in the understanding, but in the making which follows, more insights are needed in terms of what needs to be done if a finished product is to be successfully made. At times, we will discover that we will have to act in ways which had not been expected or anticipated. Most especially, as we turn to moral problems and questions and as we try to determine a responsible course of action, our natural sensibilities will often urge us to desist from a certain possible course of action but, with careful inquiry and thought, we will wisely change our judgements and so realize that it would be best for us to follow a course which, for a lesser set of reasons, our natural sensibilities had initially revolted against. Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 3. See Matthias Lutz-Bachmann, "The Discovery of a Normative Theory of Justice in Medieval Philosophy: On the Reception and Further Development of Aristotle's Theory of Justice by St. Thomas Aquinas," *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 9 (2000): 12-13, about how the difference of derivation can be used as a principle for distinguishing between different types of human law in Aquinas, a point which Aquinas speaks about in q. 95, a. 4.

⁴⁹*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 92, a. 2.

⁵⁰*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 6.

⁵¹*De Veritate*, q. 15, a. 3.

⁵²*De Veritate*, q. 3, a. 3, ad 9. See Dolan, p. 18.

practical acts of human reasoning, a judgment is made about something which should be done, it “affirms that something is *bonum* (good), *conveniens* (suitable), *operandum* (to be done), and its truth likewise depends on correspondence with an objective situation”⁵³ as is the case when we make judgments which affirm the truth of a belief or the truth of an idea.

However, in contrast with conclusions that are reached by judgments which pertain to our speculative acts of human reasoning,⁵⁴ in the judgments which belong to our practical acts of human reasoning, no one course of action as a means to effect a given end necessarily presents itself as the only intelligible, rational course of action which can be put into effect.⁵⁵ Courses of action are not necessarily demonstrative.⁵⁶ They cannot be simply deduced from any given first principle or from precepts that are derived from the first principles of our practical acts of human reasoning since the truth of a practical conclusion is defined by its fittingness or its suitability which, in turn, depends on conditions which are informed by a flux of changing, contingent circumstances which, themselves, have to be properly understood in terms of their own concreteness.⁵⁷ Truths which we must all assent to as human beings need to be distinguished from truths whose validity depends on how we each must relate him to a differing set of conditions and circumstances. With respect to any given set of circumstances, our individual human experience will differ from somebody else's and so, in order to find an appropriate just response, we must each find a response that is apt and right for ourselves and what we are able then to do. In dealing with particular goods, a prescribed course of action could be entirely appropriate for a given person but not so for another individual.⁵⁸ In any given situation, we must each decide about what would be truly appropriate if a given situation is to be adequately addressed and a particular problem, properly solved.⁵⁹

⁵³Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 49. See also *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 21, a. 2.

⁵⁴*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 47, a. 1, ad 3.

⁵⁵*De Veritate*, q. 22, a. 6; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 83, a. 1; 1a2ae, q. 14, a. 6, ad 1; q. 94, a. 4; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 2, ad 3.

⁵⁶*Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 6, 7, 1214; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 13, a. 6, ad 2. As Crowe so aptly puts it in “Law and Insight,” *Developing the Lonergan Legacy: Historical, Theoretical, and Existential Themes*, ed. Michael Vertin (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), p. 278, citing Aquinas, “speculative truth is the same for all, though it may not be known by all; but practical truth is just not the same for all.” As Lonergan explains it in his *Phenomenology and Logic: The Boston College Lectures on Mathematical Logic and Existentialism*, ed. Philip J. McShane (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003), p. 237, “intellect does not determine what the will will do” since our human willing exists as a faculty or activity which presumes the prior existence or the prior activity of an understanding intellect which first understands and knows things before any decision must be made about what it is that we will or should do in a given situation. The same body of knowledge in a given case can be used to do one thing or something which is quite contrary to the first. Demonstrative syllogisms do not exist in the life of our practical acts of human reason.

⁵⁷*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 94, a. 4; q. 100, a. 8, ad 3; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 2, ad 3; q. 57, a. 2, ad 1. See Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 57, n. 62, citing Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 258-9, and Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2, 1104a7.

⁵⁸See Crowe, *Three Thomist Studies*, p. 56. As Crowe states it: “That I should act in a certain way is true for everyone, but it is not true that everyone should act that way.”

⁵⁹Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 2, 1104a 7-9; Aquinas, *Sententia libri Ethicorum*, 2, 2, 258-259.

The relation between means and ends and the differences which distinguish different kinds of ends from each other together help to demarcate and to relate why two forms of practical inquiry can be distinguished from each other (one about ends and one about means) within a general structure which reveals why a normative structure exists which is endemic to us within the operations of our practical acts of human reasoning. Where our speculative acts of inquiry function through settled, habitual forms and a commonly known procedure of inquiry and understanding which is directed toward a knowledge of truths which, in themselves, do not shift or change, our practical acts of inquiry function through two modes, habits or virtues whose common, ultimate object is the right, good, or virtuous use of our human acts of understanding (its habits of intellect, science, and wisdom) if we are to work with things which themselves frequently change and which we can also change through intervening kinds of action which point to the subjectivity of our human agency.⁶⁰ The object is always some species of use, exercise, or application which takes us beyond the good of merely knowing toward a larger, general, concrete type of good which would exist as an overall betterment or an improvement of our human lot with respect to how its external and internal conditions exist.⁶¹ “Through art and virtue, man makes use of natural things for his own benefit.”⁶² Goodness in knowing either truths of reality or techniques for producing or making things ultimately pales before goodness or virtue in being and existence since, as human beings, we can change ourselves (as we attempt to create a better, a good human world from within which we can live a good human life) as we become persons who can be properly regarded as good in a more complete or absolute sense.⁶³ A person who is good at knowing is not necessarily someone who is him or herself good (who is him or herself virtuous) and who could be accordingly interested in using his or her knowledge in order to contribute to the overall bettering of our general or our overall human condition.⁶⁴ Hence, as important and as essential as is the goodness of our knowing for the sake of our good living or being, goodness or virtue in terms of being, existence, and realization ultimately surpasses and completes any kind of goodness or virtue which had previously existed only in a rather limited or qualified sense.

⁶⁰*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 4, ad 2. See also Reichberg, “The Intellectual Virtues,” p. 138.

⁶¹*De Veritate*, q. 14, a. 3; *Sententia super Metaphysicam*, 1, 1, 34; *Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 21, a. 2, ad 2; q. 57, a. 1. As Rhonheimer quotes Aquinas (*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 16, a. 1) in *Natural Law and Practical Reason*, p. 417: “to use [apply or exercise; *uti*] is properly an act of the will.”

⁶²*Summa Theologiae*, 1a, q. 22, a. 2, ad 3, my translation. See also *Sententia Libri Politicorum*, Prologue.

⁶³*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 56, a. 3; 2a2ae, q. 47, a. 4; cf. *De Veritate*, q. 1, a. 1.

⁶⁴*Summa Theologiae*, 1a2ae, q. 57, a. 3, ad 1.