"ARISTOTLE'S EUDAIMONIA IN AQUINAS' MORAL PHILOSOPHY: A CRITICAL STUDY"

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DECLARATION

I, Henry Chibuike Ezenwanne....., declare that

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

3. This thesis does not contain other persons' data, pictures, graphs or other information, unless specifically acknowledged as being sourced from other persons.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis intends to explore the argument among scholars as to whether Aquinas merely Christianises (baptises) Aristotle's concept of *eudemonia* in his moral philosophy or whether he substantially develops and transforms it beyond what Aristotle originally presents in his main ethical works of *Nicomachean Ethics, Magna Moralia* and the *Eudemian Ethics.* It is true that Aquinas relies on and uses a number of Aristotle's ethical views, yet he is able to develop and transcend Aristotle. However, the aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that Aquinas does not only adopt or incorporate Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia (happiness) into his moral philosophy, but he goes beyond what Aristotle envisages in his ethics. For Aristotle, happiness is the reward for the virtuous activity of the rational soul, the highest good (end) to which all things aim. However, for Aquinas, happiness is the participation in the *beatific vision* of the First and Final Act, he calls God. Happiness, for Aquinas, in the proper sense of the word, cannot be attained in this life since no created goods can satisfy the unsearchable wants and desires of the human being in this life. Hence, Aquinas transcends Aristotle's moral, socio-political, natural and temporary kind of happiness to develop his metaphysical, ontological, theological and supernatural kind of happiness.

Chapter one introduces and sets the boundaries of the thesis. Chapter two explores the debate among scholars as to whether Aquinas Christianises Aristotle's concept of e*udaimonia* or not. Chapter three examines the fundamental principles in Aristotle's ethics (moral Philosophy) with the emphasis on understanding the human being. Chapter four explores Aristotle's overview of the concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness). Chapter five looks at Aquinas' basic moral philosophical framework with the emphasis on human nature as well as the participation in the "Divine" Nature. Chapter six examines Aquinas' concept of virtue, which is a development of Aristotle's virtue ethics. Chapter seven investigates Aquinas' notion of happiness, as he goes beyond Aristotle's e*udaimonia.* Chapter eight concludes and highlights the standpoint of this thesis.

TRANSLATIONS AND ABBREVIATIONS

(a) The standard translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics, Eudemian Ethics and Magna Moralia* that will be used in this paper is that of Jonathan Barnes as found in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*. The Revised Oxford Translation of Bollingen Series LXXI 2 Princeton University Press, 1984.

(b) *The Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics* that will be used here is the one translated by C.I. Litzinger in 1994.

(c) The *Summa Theologiae* used is the one translated by W.D. Hughes of University of Toronto in 1969.

(d) The *Summa Theologiae* used is also the one translated by Father Laurence Shapcote of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province revised by Daniel J. Sullivan. Volume I in 1993. Great Books of the Western World (ed) by Mortimer J. Adler. As found in Encyclopedia Britannica Inc. 17 and 18.

(e) *The Disputed Questions on the Virtue* of Aquinas that will be used in this paper is translated by E.M. Atkins of Cambridge University Press in 2005.

(f) The translation of the Bible used in this paper is *The African Bible* Pauline Publications Africa.

ABBREVIATIONS

EE - Eudemian Ethics

NE - Nicomachean Ethics

MM - Magna Moralia

SLE- Sentendo Libri Ethicorum

ST - Summa Theologiae

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The mission of every moral philosopher is to discover as well as to study the moral framework in which ethical beliefs are justifiably based. Aristotle has offered us an insight into this mission in three of his main ethical writings, which include: the *Nicomachean Ethics, Magna Moralia* and the *Eudemian Ethics*[1]. In these ethical works, Aristotle has offered us the fundamental reasons why human beings do what they do in life, which is, according to him, to attain the highest *good* in life. Aristotle starts his ethical inquiry by asking the basic ethical question: "What makes life worth living?" For Aristotle, the answer to this question is very simple: *eudaimonia*[2]. *Eudaimonism* is the view that the fundamental intrinsic value in ethics is the human good. In other words, *eudaimonism* is an "attempt to justify ethical conduct in terms of its contribution to an agent's own good" and Aristotle's position on the *Nicomachean Ethics* is the best known example of this approach to ethics (William Prior 2001: 325). However, according to Aristotle, to live a life which can be characterised as *eudaimonia* is the sole aim of morality. From the very outset, this view of Aristotle's about *eudaimonia* has raised an important question for me in this thesis: what precisely does Aristotle mean by *eudaimonia* and how does he arrive at his claim in Books I

[1] Whether these three ethical works are all authentically written by Aristotle himself, is beyond the scope or rather, it is not the aim of this thesis. However, the Aristotelian scholars have all agreed that one thing these three ethical works attributed to Aristotle have in common, irrespective of their authenticity, is that they all contain Aristotelian ethical doctrines.

[2] In view of this, we need to carefully translate this word, *eudaimonia,* since it is the key word around which the bulk of this thesis will revolve, both for Aristotle and Aquinas. *Eudaimonia* is a Greek word, which is almost always translated as "happiness" in English. In addition to this, *eudaimonia* can also be translated as "a fulfilled life", "blessedness", "living well" or "doing well". It is true that I will employ in this thesis, the most commonly used translation of *eudaimonia,* which is "happiness", yet care must be taken in translating *eudaimonia* as 'happiness' because 'happiness' in English could also suggest "a feeling of one kind or another, perhaps a feeling of contentment or delight or pleasure" (Hughes 2001: 22). The truth of the matter is that Aristotle makes it crystal clear that he is not using the word e*udaimonia* as a "feeling" or "amusement" or "pleasure", but as an "activity" or action in accordance with the highest excellence of "achieving one's full potential" (*NE* 1177^{a}10-18) . Hence, 'happiness' becomes somehow, for Aristotle, "living well" or "doing well" (*NE* 1095^{a}19). So, it means that 'happiness' as will be seen later in this thesis, is a kind of action, not a feeling. That is why Aristotle writes, that it is for the sake of this *eudaimonia* "that we all *do* all that we *do*" (*NE* 1102a2-3, *my italics*).

and X of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, that *eudaimonia* is the "human highest good" and "human ultimate end"? However, in his effort to answer this complex question about Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, Aquinas provides one with an in-depth analysis of Aristotle's ethics, especially as it pertains to his concept of *eudaimonia*. Based on this, Aquinas consequently develops his own notion of happiness to the extent that it goes beyond what Aristotle originally presents in his ethical works. In other words, in his effort to answer some challenging questions posed by the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia,* Aquinas does not only provide satisfactory answers to these questions, but he significantly broadens the horizon of the general understanding of happiness as something not only natural, but supernatural.

In other words, it will suffice to say here that Aquinas, in his moral philosophy, offers a more systematic and comprehensive insight into the nature of happiness, which goes beyond Aristotle's virtuous, social-political and natural concept of happiness. Hence, Aquinas challenges the stereotypical understanding of happiness as a "feeling" and something temporary, pleasurable and limited to the life on earth. However, not all modern writers agree that Aquinas does not just replicate what Aristotle provided in his ethical works, especially, in regard to Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness) in his (Aquinas') moral philosophy, but extensively expands it beyond what Aristotle envisages. Such writers as Jörn Müller (2013), Ralph MacInerny (1999), Lee Oser (2007) and a host of other writers argue that Aquinas simply "baptised" or Christianised" Aristotle's ethical concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness). In other words, there is nothing found in Aquinas' concept of happiness, which is not "precisely" part of the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia* put in a "Christian mold". For a writer like Jörn Müller in a book he co-authored with Tobias Hoffmann and Matthias Perkams entitled, *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics* (2013), he strongly argues that right from the start, Aquinas does not add anything new in his ethics of happiness, but he only constructs a kind of "metaphysical framework" for the Aristotelian concept of happiness. In other words, Aquinas only "baptised" or "Christianised" Aristotle's ethics of happiness by putting it into a Christianised framework. In a similar vein, Thomas Nagel, in his article, "*Aristotle on Eudaimonia*" as found in the *Essays on Aristotle's Ethics* (1980) argues that Aristotle provides Aquinas with all the philosophical and ethical tools he needs for understanding human beings as moral, social-political and rational beings as well as their aspirations towards their ultimate good/end called "happiness". Therefore, Aquinas did not

add anything new to Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia,* but only "Christianised" and re-framed it.

There are also a good number of writers like Joseph Owens, Stephen Wang , Gerard Hughes (2003), Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (1993), Susanne DeCrane (2004), who argue that, though Aquinas does rely on Aristotle's ethical and philosophical concepts of happiness, yet he goes beyond Aristotle. However, this thesis will seek to argue that even though Aquinas uses Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy, yet he goes beyond Aristotle's *eudaimonistic* concept of happiness, by developing a concept of happiness, which encompasses the human and divine, natural and supernatural, philosophical and ontological kind of happiness. Therefore, the aim of this thesis remains to argue that Aquinas did not merely "Christianise" or "baptise" Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, but he also philosophically developed it beyond what is contained in Aristotle's ethical works. Of course, this raises a complex, but vital question, which is at the heart of this thesis, namely: if Aquinas does not *"Christianise"* or *"baptise"* Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy, *to what extent* does he rely on it in developing his own moral philosophy (ethics of happiness)? It must also be accepted as an obvious fact, as will be seen later, that in Aquinas, we find the great synthesis of Aristotle's moral philosophy and Christian philosophical concept of happiness in such a way that they both become inseparable. However, Aquinas also develops a full-blown natural law theory and a type of happiness, which is coloured by his concept of the Supreme Being, the "First Cause" or "First Act", God. It must also be noted that Aquinas does not rely on his faith or revelation to prove that natural (imperfect) happiness fulfils only temporary human goods and is attainable in this life, while the supernatural (perfect) kind of happiness is the *true* kind of human happiness, but is unattainable in this life, only in the next life, through what he termed 'the contemplation of the "*beatific vision"* (*Divine Essence*) (*ST* I-IIae, Q. 4, Art. 8, *co.*). By divinity Aquinas means "the being of all things, not as their pith, but as their maker and exemplar cause" (*ST* Ia, Q.3, Art.8, *ad.* 1). So, when Aquinas concluded, as Stephen Wang notes, that human beings cannot be perfectly happy in this life, his conclusion was philosophical (2007: 324).

However, one would, to some extent, expect a different approach to happiness from Aquinas in comparison to Aristotle because his (Aquinas') notions about certain concepts are

different from those of Aristotle's, viz. the concept of God and His existence, morality and what the human ultimate end (good) may consist of. The highest good for man, according to Aristotle, does not consist in any form of political life, nor even in the performance of the moral virtues as such, but in the theoretical inquiry and "contemplation of truth" (Wang 2007: 328). Aristotle holds this view because it is only contemplation, according to him, that brings about the continuous and complete happiness of the human person. Contemplation brings together into one action the activity of the highest part of human nature, which is the intellect. However, Aquinas shows in his ethics that it is in contemplation of the First and Final Cause, "God" that a person participates in the supernatural happiness, *the beatific vision*. So, for Aquinas, there is no real or "true" (perfect) happiness in this life, because that would mean "the end and not the fulfilment of the human life", which is the object of happiness (*Ibid*). Whatever one experiences here in this life, as 'happiness', is only an "imperfect happiness", not only because it is temporary in nature, but because God is not the "object" and the "end" of such happiness. For Aquinas, God, who is "perfect in being and cause", can only offer happiness that is perfect and eternal (Johnson 1989: 114). Happiness, for Aquinas, unlike Aristotle, is more than just the activity of the soul in accordance with virtue (*N.E.*1102^{a} 5-1102^{a}25), but according to Aquinas, God Himself is the "essence of happiness" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp.*). However, the process through which Aquinas arrives at this thought, as I will demonstrate later in this thesis, will be as vitally important to me as the conclusion he arrives at through this process.

Furthermore, Aquinas, while standing on Aristotle's shoulders, so to say, conveniently links happiness with the spiritual part of the human being he called "soul". The assumption here is that Aquinas might have done this because Aristotle defines *eudaimonia* as an activity of the soul in accordance with rationality and virtue, with human excellence (*NE.*1102^{a}5-1102^{a}25)[3] and in another place as "the human ultimate end" (*NE.* 1095^{a}19). However, Aristotle himself admits that there are many types of excellence. Aristotle explained that "*human* excellence [virtue] is the disposition that makes one a good man and causes him to perform his function *well"* (*NE* 1106^{a} 21-23). Is happiness a virtuous activity that consists in an active and comprehensive practical life or the exercise of man's highest and best faculties, which Aristotle termed 'contemplation'? If happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with rationality and human excellence (virtue), it means that only rational

[3] Cf. *N.E.*1177^{a}18-18600

and spiritual beings can be happy in the Aristotelian sense of this word, since it is only human beings who are capable of contemplation. Does this mean that happiness is part of human nature, or is it acquired? In other words, do we, actually, need a virtuous life in order to be happy, as Aristotle claimed, or do we attain happiness through a kind of supernatural assistance as Aquinas claimed? How would Aquinas develop the Aristotelian concept of happiness in such a way that it would accommodate his supernatural concept of happiness?

However, Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* has been heavily criticised by numerous philosophers, including Anthony Kenny (1978) and Hintikka in their respective writings, but this concept has also been defended by numerous philosophers, both classic and contemporary, including, Aquinas himself, who develops and transforms this Aristotelian concept in his moral philosophy. Therefore, this thesis will examine the concept of *eudaimonia* as Aristotle understands it, in order to be able to ascertain *to what extent* this concept is developed in Aquinas' moral philosophy. However, there are things both Aquinas and Aristotle have in common: believing that happiness is central to morality because the practising of virtues leads one to a fulfilled life. The question here is, do Aristotle and Aquinas have the same understanding of what a fulfilled life entails? Aristotle believes that our life is considered a fulfilled life, if we live according to dictates of our reason in pursuit of happiness through a virtuous life in the state. In other words, since the human being is a rational and social being, he must function according to his nature (Cf. *Pol*.1253^{a}2), which is to pursue a "goal" or an "end" to which all his actions are directed.

Aquinas, on the other hand, begins his inquiry into happiness, and finally concludes that Happiness[4] is the ultimate end for human beings, which is not far from Aristotle's definitions of happiness (Cf. *N.E.* 1095^{a}19). However, for Aquinas, the human ultimate end and happiness assume a new dimension since human ultimate happiness does not consist in external things, which are called goods. Aquinas, then, concluded that human happiness must consist firstly in the contemplation of the truth because truth is sought for its own sake, and God is Truth itself. Secondarily, he argued that happiness also consists in the operation

[4] Note the difference in the use of the capital letter "H" since this, for Aquinas, refers to the human Ultimate Happiness (End), who is God as well as the Eternal Happiness, which God offers to the human beings in Heaven.

of the practical intellect ordering human actions and passions towards an Ultimate Happiness (End). For Aquinas, human beings seek this Happiness (God) by nature without even being aware of it through what he calls "Natural Law". Aquinas claims that this Natural Law is "God's imprint" on the human mind that directs him to a "Perfect Happiness", God. This is possible because, according to him, God created us for a purpose: to seek "perfect happiness". This means then, for Aquinas, that God will be contradicting Himself by directing the human being to seek something else other than the Perfect ('true") happiness or to seek happiness elsewhere other than for God's sake. It is true that not everyone agrees with this proposition from Aquinas, but I will later show how this argument is resolved. Aquinas follows Aristotle in affirming that happiness is the reward of virtuous activities, but also adds that happiness can consist only in a "vision of the divine essence" (Beatific Vision). He also claims that the bases within which we can carry out such activities are "our cognitive and appetitive dispositions and capacities" as well as the external forces that aid us, which include the natural and divine laws as well as what he termed the "grace of God" (Robert Pasnau 2004: 20).

However, Aquinas, as a Christian theologian believes that there are some truths which exceed the human reason, and can only be made known through divine revelation, yet he strongly believes in the natural reasoning of Aristotle (*ST,* Ia, Q.1, *resp.*). This kind of truth is what he calls, the "divine truth" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q.1, Art. 1, *ad*. 1). This kind of truth can only be known through God's revelation as found in the Sacred Scriptures. Aquinas also believes that truth can never contradict itself, because God is Truth (Jn 14:6) and God can never contradict Himself. For this reason, Aquinas believes that the truth that Aristotle presents in his ethical concept of *eudaimonia* through his natural reasoning (philosophy) can never contradict the truth he (Aquinas) discovers through God's revelation about happiness. Aquinas, both as a theologian and a philosopher, strongly believes that it is necessary that philosophy (natural reason) be assisted by faith (theology) in order to achieve "man's[5] ultimate end", which Aristotle terms *eudaimonia* and Aquinas calls Beatific Vision (*ST*. Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art.2 *resp*.). Put differently, for Aquinas, the supernatural orders should not eliminate the natural orders. Grace is built on nature: "grace does not destroy nature, but

[5]While it is understood that the word "man" is not inclusive language, it will be employed here often since for Aristotle and Aquinas *man* clearly referred to both males and females of the human species: it is used here in a generic sense.

brings it to fulfilment" (*ST* Ia, Q.1, Art.8, *ad* 2). Based on this, he considers it not only necessary to rely on Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy, but to *develop* it so as to enrich the Christian moral philosophical understanding of happiness. This means that Aquinas, in his moral philosophy, actually set out to bridge the gap between the natural orders and the supernatural orders.

Therefore, from the Catholic perspective, this thesis will be structured in eight chapters to demonstrate that Aquinas does not just "baptise" or "Christianise" Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his ethics of happiness. Chapter one, which is the introduction will, among other things, highlight the scope and the limit of this study.

In Chapter two, I will be examining the arguments that form the basis of this thesis, namely, that though Aquinas uses Aristotle's ethical views, especially, his concept of *eudaimonia*, yet he is able to transcend it beyond what he adopts from Aristotle in his moral philosophy. In other words, this chapter will be devoted to exploring the opposing view of this thesis, which claims that Aquinas "merely Christianised" Aristotle's ethical concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness) in his moral philosophy. Herein, thirteen renowned scholars will argue it out as to whether Aquinas does develop (transform) Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* or whether he "merely Christianises" it in his moral philosophy.

Chapter three will be devoted to exploring the basic principles behind Aristotle's moral philosophical constructs. Herein, I will present an overview of Aristotle's understanding of the human being, as a rational, social and moral animal. This chapter will also examine Aristotle's notion of "God" as the first unmoved mover -an idea, some writers will argue later that helped Aquinas in forming and articulating his own concept of "God". Whether this thesis agrees with this view or not, will be seen later.

Chapter four will, specifically, focus on the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia,* a concept around which Aquinas' moral philosophical notion of happiness will revolve in this thesis. By examining Aristotle's concept of happiness, I will be able to identify the

development made therein by Aquinas in his moral philosophy later in the subsequent chapters. In other words, this chapter is meant to show, succinctly, how Aristotle understands *eudaimonia* in his three main ethical works of *Nicomachean Ethics, Magna Moralia* and the *Eudemian Ethics,* so as to be able to contrast this with Aquinas' concept of happiness in the later chapters of this thesis. What will also be critically examined are the basic concepts and phraseologies that underpin and underline Aristotle's treatment and definition of happiness. The phrases will be critically and extensively examined herein and will include, happiness as: "an activity of the soul", "human highest good", "reward of virtuous activity" and "human ultimate end". Finally, in this chapter, I will examine Aristotle's concept of the magnanimous statesman as an epitome of a happy person through his virtuous activity.

Chapter five is somewhat similar to chapter four because it will investigate, at length, Aquinas' moral philosophical starting point, which he will employ in his quest to develop Aristotle's concept of happiness. In other words, this chapter will serve as Aquinas' basic departure from Aristotle's concept of happiness towards the development of his own concept of happiness in his moral philosophy. At this point, Aquinas would have articulated clearly his own concept of happiness by developing some of the concepts he adopted from Aristotle in his moral philosophy. Aquinas, at this point, would have introduced some new concepts not found in Aristotle. Things also that will be examined in this chapter also include, how Aquinas presents, in his moral philosophy, the notion of the human person as a rational and spiritual (moral) being, a being in relationship with a Supreme Being, he called "God". Aquinas' concept of God and His relationship with His creatures, which includes the human person as "*Imago Dei*", will be examined as well. This chapter will also examine Aquinas' claim that the human person seeks happiness as his end through a natural imprint in him, which he termed "natural law" by the Supreme Being (First Cause/First Act). What a claim!

Chapter six is a clear indication and demonstration that Aquinas has gone beyond what he adopted from Aristotle in his concept of virtue. In other words, herein, we will examine Aquinas' basic framework of virtue as something natural and supernatural; a claim with is beyond Aristotle. We will also look at Aquinas' categorisation of virtues, which should include what he calls "acquired" and "divinely *infused*" (theological) virtues. Aquinas claims that the acquired virtues are the natural virtues, which Aristotle presents in his ethical

works, while the supernatural or divinely infused virtues are those virtues that are "poured in" into us by the First Act or First Cause, God.

Chapter seven will focus on Aquinas' own concept of happiness. In this chapter, I will demonstrate that Aquinas does not rely on his faith or revelation to prove that human wants and desires are unsearchable, which means that human perfect ("true") happiness is not possible, or rather, cannot be attained in this life. Aquinas made a broad distinction between what he terms natural and supernatural happiness. He claims that the natural (imperfect) happiness can be attained in this life through our virtuous activity as Aristotle claimed, but supernatural happiness is "man's true happiness", which cannot be attained in this life, but in the afterlife. I will examine Aquinas' idea that the human person is a being in pursuit of happiness by nature and that the human ultimate happiness is the contemplation of the divine essence, which can only be attained in the next life.

Chapter eight is the conclusion of this thesis. This chapter will aim at weighing the two sides of the arguments and highlighting the point that Aquinas does not merely "Christianise" or "baptise" Aristotle's concept of happiness, but goes beyond it. In other words, I will show, herein, that Aquinas does not only succeed in developing, philosophically, Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, but he also transcends it. Let me start, first, by examining some of the arguments raised in support and against the view, or rather, the standpoint of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

SUMMARISING THE DEBATE

Having successfully introduced this thesis, which supports the view that that though, Aquinas uses Aristotle's ethical views, especially, his concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy, yet he is able to develop and transform Aristotle, let me now start by examining carefully the two opposing views. In other words, this chapter will weigh the two sides of this argument, so as to ascertain, whether there are any merits in the claim that Aquinas only "Christianises" Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy. Aquinas' ethical and philosophical reliance on Aristotle's ethical works has constantly provoked lively debate. However, it is one thing to argue that Aquinas does not "merely Christianise" Aristotle's ethical concepts, especially that of happiness, rather than developing and going beyond what Aristotle presents in his ethical works; and quite another to demonstrate *the extent* to which Aquinas adopts or relies on Aristotle's ethical views. In this chapter, the views of the two sides will be taken into consideration, to ascertain whether the aim of thesis will be upheld, that is, the view that Aquinas does expand, philosophically, Aristotle's ethical concepts of happiness.

First of all, not all commentators or scholars agree that Aquinas has, actually, a moral philosophy of his own. Gerard Hughes for example, does not even consider it reasonable to argue this in the first place. Hughes maintains in his criticism of Denis Bradley's work[6], that Aquinas had no moral philosophy of his own, because, everything that is attributed to Aquinas as his moral philosophy (ethics) is Aristotle's (2003: 313-314). He argues further

[6] Denis M. Bradley. 1997. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science*.. Pp. xv, 610, Washington, Catholic University of America Press.

that all of Aquinas' deliberations[7] on Aristotle's works should be seen as merely "interpretation of Aristotle" or "Aquinas's own readings of Aristotle" (Hughes 2003: 314). In other words, there is *nothing new* added to what he adopts from Aristotle as he claims. It means that Aquinas only 're-invents the wheel', so to speak, in his moral philosophy. If this argument is anything to go by, it means that this thesis has no basis even to argue that Aquinas goes beyond or develops Aristotle's ethical views in his moral philosophy since he does *not* have one in the first place. This is a strong claim that cannot be taken lightly because Hughes even goes to the extent of dismissing Aquinas' notion of "perfect happiness" and "imperfect happiness" and "Natural Law", and attributes them to Aristotle. Hughes goes on to argue that the generally agreed notion among this group of scholars and commentators that Aquinas is the architect of these concepts is "erroneous" since there is nothing found in Aquinas that is not "Aristotelian" (Ibid). However, Hughes admits that "Aquinas certainly does have a completely different view of the supernatural, of the final end of all human moral striving and activity, whereas Aristotle, equally clearly, does not" (2003: 514). For him, only at this point, does Aquinas differ from Aristotle, yet, for him, this is not enough evidence to accord a separate moral philosophy (ethics) to Aquinas. Hughes is not even entirely convinced that Aquinas' view of the "supernatural" realities, has its root in Aristotle because for him, it is "much less clear, at least in my view, whether this difference is equally central to the ways in which Aquinas read Aristotle, or supplemented Aristotle's views [...]" (2003: 314). He, however, admits that there is a thin line between what Aquinas presents as his moral philosophy and what he adopts from Aristotle. Hughes' argument is complex as it seems contradictory, yet his point is clear. He also points out that it is very difficult to ascertain "[...] the extent [to which] Aquinas's reading of Aristotle on these issues does not directly depend on his views about beatitude [...] (2003: 315).

This argument from Hughes supports the view that since Aquinas has no moral philosophy of his own, he has no option other than to Christianise it, by "heavily relying" and adopting Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*. Hughes claims that Aquinas uses or relies on Aristotle's ethical concept of happiness as the human ultimate end because he knows that "the immediate or proximate ends of action must be judged as to whether or not [their ends]

[7] Aquinas's 'theological ethics, Science and Theology; Aquinas Reading Aristotle; Aristotle: Practical Wisdom; Aristotle: Deliberation and Choice; Practical Reason: The Primary Source of Natural Law; Will: the Secondary? Source of Natural Law; Imperfect and Perfect Happiness; A Paradoxical Ethic; A Thomistic Philosophical Ethics?" (Hughes 2003: 314).

are in harmony with the ultimate end, union with God'" (2003:315). For him, Aquinas only "offered us a philosophical ethics" of Aristotle, but with a theological aim or conclusion that the end of the human life "is a supernatural end" (Ibid). However, he admits that it can be shown successfully that "to detach philosophical ethics" of Aristotle from Aquinas' work is impossible, "even if it is true that Aquinas's perspective from beginning to end in the *Summa* is a theological one" (Hughes 2003:315). It becomes even more difficult to judge Hughes on the grounds of his argument owing to the fact that he has already argued that there is nothing found in Aquinas that is not Aristotelian. In other words, how can he argue that there is nothing new in Aquinas that has not been in Aristotle, and then, turn around again and state that "Bradley's reading of Aristotle is important, not only because it is correct, but because it provides us with a clear rationale for his [Bradley's] contention that Aquinas introduces his doctrine of *synderesis* precisely to strengthen the somewhat uncertain cognitivism in Aristotle's account" (2003: 316). This means that he (Hughes) agrees that Aquinas "introduced his doctrine of *synderesis"* into Aristotle's ethical views, just to strengthen it. Even though he accuses Aquinas of wrong "motivation" for basing his notion of the human nature on his "faith in the revelation of the Decalogue", yet, I still consider this "introduction" as argued by Hughes as a kind of 'development', rather than a simple Christianisation of Aristotle's ethics (Hughes 2003: 316).

However a good number of scholars would agree that Aquinas does go beyond Aristotle's ethical view in his moral philosophy; but only a few scholars like Gerard Hughes would also argue that Aquinas has no ethics (moral philosophy) of his own. In other words, most scholars would consider Aquinas as "a highly perceptive interpreter", who relies so heavily on Aristotle's ethical views, in the process of building up his own ethics, rather, than one who has no ethics of his own at all. However, the challenge here is whether to consider Aquinas as some scholars see him, "a highly perceptive interpreter" or as one, who, philosophically (theologically) expounds on Aristotle's ethical views, rather, than the simple Christianisation of them. T.H Irwin suggests two ways of approaching Aquinas' "interpretation" of Aristotle's ethical views in this context. Firstly, either that he adheres "very closely to the text" and falls into an "error that results from reliance on principles", which Aristotle has made, or secondly, he would "try to do justice to the text of Aristotle in front of him, and would not try to impose an interpretation that would fit more easily into the moral psychology of Aristotle" (2013: 24). Irwin insists that in the second case then, Aquinas' choice would be "mistaken", but would not be "unreasonable" (2013: 24). The

result of this would be his accusation to Aquinas of "sticking very closely to Aristotelian text [...]", hence, one would argue, his "mistake" of Christianising the text (2013:4). T.H. Irwin explains that Aquinas' aim in his interpretation of Aristotle's ethical works was "to ascribe to Aristotle the most reasonable position that is consistent with the text" (2013: 14). Following this, Irwin insists on the reason why he thinks Aquinas should be accused of Christianisation of Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* as "reading the text closely and sometimes trying to work out Aristotle's intention, from the context and from other works" (2013:13)[8]. Irwin, however, avoids explicit accusation of Aquinas' Christianisation of Aristotle's ethical concepts and prefers to accuse him of being "a bad historian" because, for him, "Aquinas did some things that a good historian should do [... though] historians soon identified serious faults in his approach to Aristotle, and these faults may convince us that he was a bad historian" (Irwin 2003:13).

Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams express their agreement with a good number of scholars, who accuse Aquinas of "elaborating and adopting *precisely* what he viewed as the basic philosophical content of the [*Nicomachean Ethics*...]" in his moral philosophy (2013: 5). This "precise adoption" of Aristotle's ethical views in his (Aquinas') moral philosophy, is in line with T.H. Irwin's accusation that Aquinas' "sticking too close" to Aristotle's ethical views is to be considered as the Christianisation of Aristotle's ethical view. However, John Jones follows a different line of argument by accusing Aquinas of "offering an odd and apparently bizarre interpretation" of Aristotle's ethical views (2002: 530). Jones maintains that Aquinas interprets Aristotle's ethical views in order to incorporate them into his own Christian doctrines. This is a strong claim and accusation against Aquinas. This claim is not from the sentiment echoed by Bertrand Russell; who claims that "the originality of Aquinas is shown in his adaptation of Aristotle to Christian dogma, with a minimum of alteration" (1961: 452). However, Jones maintains that Aquinas in his "bizarre interpretation" of Aristotle's ethical views, offers explanations that Aristotle himself never intends or imagines. It would seem that Jones is more concerned that Aquinas "distorts" the original ethical views of Aristotle than whether he actually does, Christianise them in the process. He also considers the Christianisation of Aristotle's ethical views by Aquinas as part of the distortion of Aristotle's ethical views. However, Jones insists that it is difficult, if not impossible to decipher what originally belongs to Aristotle and what is added to it through

[8] Cf. *ST* Ia, Q.79, Art. 7, *ad*. 1; I-IIae, Q.50, Art.1, *co*.

the "bizarre interpretation" of Aquinas. To buttress his point, John Jones quotes the passage below from Aristotle:

> [...] for the complete good is thought to be self-sufficient. Now by self-sufficient we do not mean that which is sufficient for a man by himself... Let us examine this question, however, on another occasion; the self-sufficient we now define as that which when isolated makes life desirable and lacking in nothing; and such we think happiness to be; and further we think it most desirable of all things, without being counted as one good thing among others—if it were so counted it would clearly be made more desirable by the addition of even the least of goods; for that which is added becomes an excess of goods, and of goods the greater is always more desirable. Happiness, then, is something complete and self-sufficient, and is the end of action (*NE* $1097^{b}7$-$1097^{b}22$)[9].

John Jones goes on to explain that Aquinas like his teacher, Albert the Great, offered a "bizarre interpretation" of what Aristotle means in the T passage. According to him, Aquinas thinks that Aristotle means that "even as self-sufficient, natural human happiness can be made better with the addition of even the least goods (*mimima bona*)" (2002:530). He quotes Aquinas' argument in *Sentendo Libri Ethicorum* (*SLE* 1.7)[10] to illustrate his point that Aquinas misinterpreted Aristotle. He then cites Denis Bradley, who is not of the same view, "that Aquinas misinterpreted Aristotle", when it comes to Aquinas' understanding and principle that, "as a finite good, happiness can be improved upon" (2002:532). He explains that for Aquinas, what a person needs for happiness is specified by what is necessary for the person. Therefore, he (Aquinas) interprets Aristotle as saying that "what is necessary refers to the necessity from an end in contrast to formal or material necessity or necessity that arises from efficient causes" (2002:532).[11] For Jones, if Aquinas had stayed "too close" to Aristotle's original ethical texts and views as he claims, he would not have accused Aristotle of stating that "happiness only needs the virtues (presumably both the moral and the intellectual virtues)[...] without which happiness cannot exist" (2002:535). He goes on to

[9] I will refer to this passage as "T" as John Jones does in his argument

[10] "Something is said to be sufficient by itself and not reckoned with anything else in as far as it contains everything that a person needs out of necessity. And in this way the happiness of which we now speak is in itself sufficient because, namely, it contains in itself everything that is necessary for a human, but not however everything that can come to a human. Thus, it can be made better by the addition of something else. However, the desire of a person does not remain disquiet, since desire regulated by reason, which is required to be happy, does not have disquiet about things that are not necessary although they may be obtained ... Thus, this is what he says belongs to happiness above all else: that it is choice worthy even if it is not reckoned with other things. But nevertheless, if it is so reckoned even with something else, even the least of goods, it is clear that it will be more choice worthy. The reason is that a surplus or increase of goodness arises though the addition. However to the degree that something is a greater good, to that degree is it more choice worthy" (*Sentendo libri ethicorum* (SLE) 1.7 (Leonine ed. XLII.1.35)).

[11] Cf. *ST*. Ia, Q.19, Art.3.*res*; *ST* Ia, Q.41, Art.2, *ad* 5

argue that human experience has shown that whatever is necessary for the "existence or perfection of any end we pursue" bearing in mind that the reward of virtuous life is happiness. In a similar way, whatever is considered necessary for happiness is always "needed for happiness — whether for its existence or 'well-being' (*bene esse),* and this makes happiness 'a self-sufficient good'" (2002: 536). Therefore, he claims that for Aristotle, both the virtues and exterior goods are needed for happiness. In other words, for Jones, such a claim could only come from Aquinas with the assumption that "happiness is not limited simply to contemplation or the virtues or to those goods that are essential to happiness since all of those goods are chosen for the sake of happiness" (2002: 536). So, for him, "if Aquinas understood the self-sufficiency of happiness in this manner", there is no reason, why Aquinas would misinterpret Aristotle, unless he has intended another aim, which might include, one may argue, the Christianisation of Aristotle's ethical views (*Ibid*). With this in mind, Jones, drives home his message that Aquinas' "bizarre interpretation" of Aristotle's concept of happiness is only meant to Christianise Aristotle' ethical views and concepts.

On the other hand, Nicholas White argues that Aquinas makes "some developments with plenty of significance" in his moral philosophy, despite the fact that he does combine Aristotle's idea with his Christian doctrine (2006: 57). In other words, White argues that when comparing the ethical thoughts of these two, "Aquinas developed other philosophical issues [...] besides the ones found in Aristotle's ethics" (2006: 57-58). He, nevertheless, maintains that Aquinas' effort to develop Aristotle's concept of happiness involves, in particular, locating the notion of the *beatific vision* that he identifies as the supreme happiness. White, however, queries Aquinas' lack of identification of "the basis of this happiness", which he claims Aquinas only maintains on the basis "that we love God *propter se*, because of himself or what he is" (Ibid). However, White never explains what he means by "the basis" of Aquinas' assertion that the *beatific vision* is the human supreme or ultimate happiness. Besides, as it will be shown later in chapter seven, the philosophical supposition behind Aquinas' claim that the *beatific vision* or rather, the contemplation of the *Divine Essence* is the human supreme and ultimate happiness. However, Stephen Wang provides an answer to Nicholas White's question about the "basis" for such a claim from Aquinas. Wang argues that Aquinas has explained his basis for this when he argues that human wants and "desires" in this life are unsearchable and unsatisfactory; which then means that these desires and wants can go on *ad infinitum* in this life, and can only be satisfied in the

next life in the *beatific vision* (2007:326)[12]. He argues further that since Aquinas does appeal to the human experience that the enjoyment we get from the temporary goods is never a "perfect enjoyment" because we must always be looking for something better and beyond what we are or have at the moment, it means that "the desire to find rest and perfection necessarily brings with it a movement beyond any fleeting rest we might find in the goods of this world" and this means that the "temporal goods are not only *insufficient*, they are also *unstable*" (*Ibid*). Moreover, Wang maintains that Aquinas not only has his basis for claiming that *beatific vision* is the only human ultimate and supreme happiness, but he (Wang) also helps Aquinas in explaining well that "the human intellect is very curious, which wonders incessantly about causes" (2007: 330). This also means that intellect cannot be satisfied only by "knowing that God exists as the First Cause, since we want to know *what* he is and read the very essence of the first cause" (Ibid). Therefore, he concludes that, for Aquinas, the "human final and perfect happiness [*beatitudo*] must therefore consist in nothing less than the vision of the Divine Essence" because "if we find the ultimate good we are seeking and fulfil our desire, then we will be happy" (2007: 323).[13]

White, goes on to argue that "Aquinas' view of the highest or most perfect happiness", which is expressed as: perfect human happiness (*beatitudo*) consisting in the vision of the divine essence, is "Aquinas' Christian adaptation of Aristotle's view that the best human happiness is philosophical contemplation" (2006:99). This assertion by Nicholas White is a strong argument that touches the core of the debate in this thesis, and hence, it must be rebuffed since he does not offer any philosophical basis for such an assumption. First of all, two clarifications must be made in regard to this assertion Firstly, it must be noted that from the outset of this thesis, it has always been made clear that the aim of this thesis is to show, without denying the fact that Aquinas uses or relies on Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia,* that Aquinas goes beyond what he adopts from Aristotle's ethical concepts in his moral philosophy. Secondly, White's claim that Aquinas only "adapted" Aristotle's "view that the best human happiness is philosophical contemplation" should not imply that Aquinas only Christianised Aristotle's view since Aquinas' happiness is more supernatural

[12] Cf. *ST* I-IIæ, Q.2, Art.8, *co*

[13] Cf. I-IIae, Q.3, Art. 8, *co.*

(theological/ontological) than natural (philosophical) even though he uses Aristotle's principles of causality in its explanation. However, it has been shown that Aquinas does "adapt" or modify Aristotle's concept of happiness, but I argue that he also, ethically and philosophically, expands and transforms it. However, many scholars including Stephen Wang are of the view that Aquinas does succeed in developing a kind of happiness that goes beyond Aristotle's notion of *eudaimonia,* which is a kind of "philosophical" happiness. Stephen Wang and Gerard Hughes are of the view that Aquinas develops a kind of happiness that is different from Aristotle's. For them, Aquinas develops an "ontological", "supernatural" and "theological" happiness, as opposed to Aristotle's "philosophical", "moral" and "political", "proximate" and "immediate" happiness (2003:315). However, Robert Pasnau insists that "Aquinas is Aristotelian in the way his theology is Christian, and much of what follows is unintelligible apart from its background in Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology" (2004: 3). Based on Stephen Wang's and Gerard Hughes' arguments, one can then argue that this kind of claim by Robert Pasnau has no logical basis, even though he claims to have read and analysed *all* works of Aquinas (2004: 3). However, realising the weakness of his argument, Pasnau tries, quickly, to retract his statement by saying, "But it is a mistake to suppose one can reach a deep understanding of Aquinas solely by a close reading of *ST* [*Summa Theologiae],* Aquinas's vast literary output (more than eight times the length of Aristotle's surviving work) is a miracle" (2004:3). Besides, what Pasnau does not consider before making his first assertion is that Aquinas is not only influenced by Aristotle in his writings, but also by other philosophers and theologians, like Plato, Augustine and Albert the Great. In other words, it is not only Aristotle's "background of metaphysics and psychology" that influences Aquinas in his formulation and articulation of his ethical concept of happiness. Gerard Hughes, also completely, disagrees with Pasnau's claim because, for him, "Aquinas's theological perspective enabled him to sort out the otherwise troublesome debate about Aristotle's views on *eudaimonia*" (2003: 318). This means that Aquinas' theological background, no doubt, has immense influence on his development of Aristotle's ethical views, especially, his concept of happiness. Hughes then cautions anyone with such views as Pasnau against what he calls the "detachment, of Aquinas's ethics, from the revealed assumptions within which he operates" (Ibid).

Furthermore, even T.H. Irwin, who, himself claims that Aquinas' moral philosophy is, to a great extent, an "elaboration of Aristotelian themes", nevertheless, admits that "there is the influence of other philosophical traditions like stoicism and Neo-Platonism on his [Aquinas'] discussion of issues" (2013:11). In other words, T.H. Irwin also disagrees with Pasnau, who claims that Aquinas' ethical concepts are "unintelligible" without his background in Aristotle's "metaphysics and psychology". Irwin insists that Aquinas could also have been influenced by "his interaction with his contemporaries as a university teacher", an assertion he makes based on the fact that Aquinas "participated in several contemporary debates which provided the background and sometimes even the framework for his discussion of particular issues" (ibid). Even Jörn Müller, in this case, disagrees with Pasnau as he argues that Aquinas' emphasis on the "imperfect nature of worldly happiness" both in his *Sentendo Libri Ethicorum* (*SLE)* and his theological works can be understood as "a reaction to Averroistic readings, inspired by Albert's commentaries, of Aristotle's doctrine of happiness in the arts faculty" (*Ibid*). In the same vein, Fergus Kerr agrees with T.H. Irwin that Aquinas had other philosophical and theological influences during the formulation of his concept of happiness, even though "some of the clergy in the Arts faculty in Paris were perceived as being seduced by Aristotle's *Ethics"* (2002:13). However, Kerr is a bit concerned about the influence of "some of these clergy", who even "believe, wholeheartedly, that the study of wisdom to which the philosopher [Aristotle] is dedicated, supported by a life of total asceticism, resulting in quasi-mathematical knowledge of the First Cause, would deliver all the happiness, the beatitude, available to human beings"(*Ibid*). In other words, Fergus Kerr is arguing that Aquinas is not only influenced by his reliance on Aristotle in his treatment of happiness, but he is also influenced by his contemporaries, and this equips him to be able to transcend what he adopts from Aristotle. The difficulty with this argument is that one does not know, *to what extent*, then, Aquinas relies on or incorporates Aristotle's original works in the development or the treatment of his concept of happiness. Worse still, one does not even know, to what extent, Aquinas is influenced by the "distorted Aristotelian philosophy" or concept of happiness, that made Jones accuse him and his teacher, Albert the Great, of "offering a bizarre interpretation" of Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (2002:530).

In addition to this, Jörn Müller claims that right from the start, Aquinas only constructs a kind of "metaphysical framework" for the Aristotelian concept of happiness. In other words, Aquinas only Christianises Aristotle's concept of happiness by putting it in a Christianised "framework". Müller maintains that Aquinas only succeeds in "identifying" and

"unifying" Aristotle's two-fold account of happiness, which leads to his formulation of the natural and supernatural kinds of happiness (2003:55). In other words, Aquinas, through keeping very "closely" to the text, is able to identify the two Aristotelian concepts on which he builds his ethics of happiness, namely: "ultimate finality and self-sufficiency" (Ibid). This means that the main thrust of Müller's argument is that Aquinas succeeds in his moral philosophy, not only because he reads or sticks "very closely" to the Aristotelian text, but because "these points are already pervasively present throughout" Aristotle's ethical writings (*Ibid*). As result, for Müller, there is nothing substantially new in what Aquinas presents as his ethics of happiness, which is not found in Aristotle. Müller echoes a similar sentiment to Gerard Hughes, who claims that there is nothing in Aquinas that is not found in Aristotle (2003: 314). Müller, then, concludes that what actually seems, to some people, as Aquinas' radical development of his own ethical concept of happiness, is actually what he (Aquinas) adopts from Aristotle; especially those concepts concerning the "formal" criteria and the nature of perfect happiness, human finality, self-sufficiency and stability (2013:62). He maintains that all concepts used in Aquinas' ethics of happiness should be attributed to Aristotle because these concepts are necessary in order for the natural human "desire for ultimate perfection to be completely fulfilled" (Ibid). Müller insists that "[...] the difference between perfect and imperfect happiness which, according to Aquinas, follows from the Aristotelian criteria of happiness but is not clearly stated by Aristotle himself" is sufficient evidence that Aquinas does not add anything new to Aristotle's ethical views (2003: 10). Therefore, for Müller, Aquinas in his ethics of happiness, only succeeds in making "explicit', what is "implicit" in Aristotle's ethics of happiness by framing (structuring) it (Ibid).

On the other hand, not all scholars accuse Aquinas of offering a "bizarre interpretation", or of "distorting" Aristotle's ethical views, or of only making "explicit" what is "implicit" in Aristotle, or even worse, of Christianising Aristotle's concept of happiness. Joseph Owens offers a very persuasive argument in support of this thesis, in his article in *the Cambridge Companion to Aquinas.* He argues that Aquinas was very conscious of the philosophical "distortions" of his contemporaries and teachers and in order to avoid these "distortions", he resorts to the use of his Christian theological doctrine "in a fully integrated system encompassing all natural and supernatural reality" with his conviction that "Aristotle's philosophy afforded the best available philosophical component of such a system" (1993: 38). In other words, Owens disagrees with John Jones, Jörn Müller, and Gerard Hughes, who accuse Aquinas of the distortion of Aristotle's ethical views and texts.

Owens also disagrees with what he calls "the somewhat prevalent impression that links Aristotle and Aquinas as though they both represented the same general type of philosophical thinking" (*Ibid*). In other words, even though, it cannot be denied that Aquinas "used Aristotle's formal logic", the fact that "both of them reason in terms of actuality and potentiality; of material, formal, efficient, and final causes" is not enough reason to argue that Aquinas is not able to develop his own 'moral philosophy', which includes his concept of happiness (*Ibid*). To strengthen his argument, Joseph Owens, sharply outlines the similarities between Aquinas and Aristotle, as thus:

> Both regard intellectual contemplation as the supreme goal of human striving. Both look upon free choice as the origin of moral action. Both clearly distinguish the material from the immaterial, sensation from intellection, the temporal from the eternal, the body from the soul. Both ground all naturally attainable human knowledge on external sensible things, instead of on sensations, ideas, or language. Both look upon cognition as a way of being in which percipient and thing perceived, knower and thing known, are one and the same in the actuality of the cognition (1993:38).

However, Owens admits that this, indeed, is a "closer similarity between the two great thinkers", but for him, this is just a "coincidence" that has the tendency to easily mislead people at its "*prima facie"*. He further claims that "these *prima facie* indications of the basic coincidences are impressive enough to occasion a widespread acceptance of the label 'Aristotelico-Thomistic' for the type of philosophy promoted by Pope Leo XIII's" encyclical letter, *Aeterni Patris*[14] (1993:39). Moreover, Joseph Owens in his exciting view argues that "outright identification of Aristotelian philosophy with Thomism was not at all unanimous in Neoscholastic circles" (*Ibid*). He also admits that there are "serious difficulties in finding one-to-one correspondence" between the important philosophical doctrines in Aquinas and their counterparts in Aristotle. To buttress his point, he claims that for Aristotle, "being and essence are identical in each particular instance", but for Aquinas there is an explicit claim that in all creatures, "there is a real distinction between a thing and its being" (1993: 39). He insists that this distinction between essence and existence "could be regarded in Neothomistic circles as the fundamental truth of Christian philosophy, which pervades the whole of Thomistic metaphysics" (*Ibid*). For Owens, this difference is, actually, at the heart of Aquinas' teaching about the difference between God and the creatures. For Aquinas, God's existence and essence are identical. This is the basis for the demonstration of the difference between "nature and faculties in creatures". This is also very crucial in Aquinas' proof of the "indestructibility of the human soul", in contrast to the perishable character of the soul in

[14] *Aeterni Patris* was the document of the Catholic Church that gave ecclesiastical backing to modern Thomism

other animals and in plants as found Aristotle's ethics. Owens concludes with a strong point that all this "was everywhere crucial for Thomism. Yet it was very unAristotelian" (1993:39-40). If a number of Aquinas' ethical doctrines are "unAristotelian" as he claims, then there is no basis for anyone to argue that Aquinas only Christianises Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy. As if this is not enough, Joseph Owens goes on to argue that even Aquinas' "five ways" of demonstrating God's existence are regarded in "Neoscholasticism as vital for Thomistic philosophical thought. Yet even the basic framework for these arguments is lacking in Aristotle, despite superficial structural resemblances" (1993:39-40). This means that there is a radical difference between the philosophical thinking and approach of Aquinas and that of Aristotle, despite Aquinas' use of similar "Aristotelian vocabularies". And therefore, the philosophical concepts, wording or phrasing used by these two thinkers, Aquinas and Aristotle, "may to a large extent be the same, but the meanings attached to the same expressions can be very different for each of them" (*Ibid*). Experience has also shown that many philosophers do use the same terms in their writings, yet they understand them in radically different ways. In other words, Joseph Owens does not make the same mistake as Robert Pasnau above, who fails to accept the fact that Aquinas' different background and the influence from that of Aristotle could also make a difference in his way of philosophising and reasoning. Put differently, experience has also shown that the cultural, historical and linguistic circumstances in which various philosophers are brought up, have a great role to play in their way of formulating and understanding philosophical concepts. Aquinas is not exempted from these cultural and historical influences. However, it is obvious that Joseph Owens has dislodged the basis of the argument, which claims that Aquinas only Christianises Aristotle in his moral philosophy, especially, in his concept of happiness. Similarly, Nicholas White's thought is in line with this argument that Aquinas' historical, religious and social circumstances would have aided him immensely in the articulation and formulation of his concept of happiness. Nicholas White argues that "under those circumstances the relevant debates would be about what sort of pleasure might be most stably maintained" within the circle or the environment in which one grows up or operates in. In this case, for Aquinas, as a priest and as a theology and philosophy teacher at the university, he is expected to have a different view of happiness in comparison to Aristotle (2006: 146). So, White argues that Aquinas' conception of "perfect" or "supernatural human happiness as the *beatific vision* of the Divine Essence" could have

been widely accepted within the Roman Catholic university circle (philosophical/theological communities) at that time (*Ibid*). As a result, William Prior, in agreement with this line of thought, affirms that it is only within such an academic environment that Aquinas would be able to develop "the concept of virtue and the human good and [...] his notion of natural law [...]"(2001: 339).

Moreover, Gerard Hughes's argument as he critiques Denis Bradley in his book[15], is consistent with the line of thought that has been maintained in this thesis, namely, that even though Aquinas relied on Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia,* yet he was able to develop his own ethics without merely Christianising Aristotle's ethical view. Having said this, Gerard Hughes notes that though at every stage in his work, "Aquinas depends heavily on the Aristotelian *Nicomachean Ethics*, his Christian theological belief that the final end of human beings is the vision of God is radically different from anything which could be assumed under Aristotelian *eudaimonia* [...] (2003:319). Hughes maintains that Aquinas' moral philosophy "everywhere [possible] transcended" Aristotle's ethics. With this, Hughes introduces another term, which is consistent with the stand of this thesis, "transcendence". Transcendence, literally, means "going beyond the usual limits", as well as a "development" of a sort. With this in mind, Hughes insists that Aquinas' moral philosophy, especially, his concept of happiness "transcends" Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*. He asserts that "[...] Aquinas's theology gave him a view of the final aim of human beings which goes beyond anything which Aristotle could have held [...]" (2003: 317). Therefore, Gerard Hughes concludes that Aquinas' ethics, in its "practical conclusion", teaches about how one ought to live one's life, and "this goes beyond anything that Aristotle or any other philosopher could justify [...]" (2003:18).

That notwithstanding, Susanne DeCrane offers a different perspective on the debate at hand, though, it is a balanced one. She argues that from her experience, most scholars agree that "Aquinas devoted roughly one-third of his greatest systematic work on theology, the *Summa Theologiae"* and his famous commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics*, the *Sententia Libri Ethicorum,* to virtue ethics like Aristotle *(*2004:59). This implies that it is only "one-third" of Aquinas' ethical concepts that could be said to be Aristotelian, while two-thirds are not. This means that the whole debate as to whether Aquinas Christianises

[15] Denis Bradley. 1997. *Aquinas on the Twofold Human Good: Reason and Human Happiness in Aquinas's Moral Science*. Washington, Catholic University of America Press. Pp. xv, 610.

Aristotle or not, is based only on "one-third" of Aquinas' ethical views (moral philosophy). Susanne DeCrane agrees that it is a challenge to determine, exactly, *to what extent* Aquinas relies on Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* when developing the concept of happiness in his moral philosophy. She maintains that Aquinas' treatment of a number of issues (subjects) in his moral philosophy are not given the attention they deserve because many writers (scholars) devote their works to investigating how much influence Aristotle has on Aquinas as opposed to examining how much Aquinas achieves, while relying on Aristotle's ethics. In her effort to support her claim, she alludes to Aristotle's concept of "good", which Aquinas adapts and "interprets" beyond the Aristotelian meaning ascribed to it. According to her, Aquinas expands the meaning of this "deceptively simple but multivalent term" to mean ''the common good'', an "interpretation of meaning that has become associated with the term over time" (2004:59). However, Aquinas' considerations of the "common good", she claims, are scattered throughout his writings. She insists that, for Aquinas, "the common good is a formal moral norm, a basic aspect of the good, not an optional dimension of it" (*Ibid*). In other words, Susanne DeCrane sees Aquinas as saying that God is the reality to be experienced and enjoyed uniquely by each person; and at the same time, He is the good enjoyed by many. Hence, for Susanne DeCrane, ''When St. Thomas asserted that God is a common good, he meant a good which is numerically one, yet which can be the end of many'' (*Ibid*). Put differently, for her, God is the universal common good to which all human beings are oriented as their final end and ultimate fulfilment in life. For Aristotle, the good is a virtuous activity to which all human action (function) aims. Good has a moral connotation for Aristotle, but for Aquinas, human good is ontological because the human being shares in the goodness of the First Act (God). Therefore, Aquinas' concept of the human good includes both the natural and supernatural dimension, and this makes his ethics substantially different from that of Aristotle's, which means that Aquinas does not merely Christianise Aristotle's concept of happiness, but transcends it (DeCrane: 2004:60).

In conclusion, the complexity of the issues covered in this chapter, and the nuanced approach of the contributors make it difficult to generalise as to which group has won the debate. However, certain interesting points have emerged from this debate. Firstly, it is clear that Aquinas closely relies on the philosophical presuppositions of Aristotle in conjunction with his Christian theological belief to develop an essentially teleological view of the concept of happiness. Secondly, it also emerges here that Aquinas has many options opened to him

on how to re-read, understand or interpret Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, yet he chooses, consciously with his reasons, to interpret Aristotle's ethical views in ways that make some commentators and scholars consider his ethics as being "too close to Aristotle's text", and hence, it is misconstrued as the Christianisation of Aristotle's ethical views. Thirdly, there is no doubt that the two groups of contributors made convincing contributions in their debates: Jörn Müller claims that Aquinas makes explicit what he finds implicit in Aristotle's ethical views. T.H. Irwin agrees with Robert Pasnau that what Aquinas presents as his moral philosophy would be "unintelligible" without Aristotle's "metaphysics and psychology". Nicolas White and John Jones accuse Aquinas of the adaptation and distortion of Aristotle's ethical views, hence, the accusation of the "bizarre interpretation" of Aristotle. Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams also accuse Aquinas of "elaborating and adopting *precisely*" Aristotle's ethical concepts and views just to Christianise them. Gerard Hughes accuses Aquinas of "sticking too close" to the text, and, thereby interpreting Aristotle's ethical view with the ulterior motive of Christianising it.

On the other hand, Joseph Owens draws attention to the similarities and dissimilarities between Aquinas and Aristotle, and only then does he conclude that a number of ethical concepts as found in Aquinas are "unAristotelian". Stephen Wang carries out a comparative study of Aquinas' and Aristotle's concepts of happiness, and concludes that Aquinas' happiness is "ontological" and "theological", while that of Aristotle is "philosophical", "moral" and "political", "proximate" and "immediate", and therefore, Aquinas could not have Christianised Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* . Gerard Hughes also claims that Aquinas' moral philosophy "transcends" that of Aristotle because of a more complex philosophical and theological influence on Aquinas from his contemporaries, which is different from what Aristotle has. Therefore, taking into consideration, the wider context of this chapter, all the arguments made for and against the stand of this thesis, I can convincingly, conclude that, though Aquinas does use Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy, yet, he is able to develop a concept of happiness that transcends what Aristotle presents in his ethical works.

CHAPTER THREE

ARISTOTLE'S FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY: UNDERSTANDING THE HUMAN BEING

Aristotle's ethics has to do with the practical, yet moral issues, facing human beings ("statesmen") in the society in which they live (*polis*). As a result of this, Aristotle places much emphasis on character (behaviour) and its proper development rather than on rules and regulations. He feels that since ethics is practical, it requires the use of a dialectical approach to solving problems, rather than a scientifically demonstrative approach[16]. Aristotle supports this view because he is convinced that we cannot deduce moral truths from universal necessary premises. Therefore, Aristotle begins his *Nicomachean Ethics* with the question: "What is the good for man?" After his long dialectical survey of views on this subject, he comes up with his claim: *eudaimonia*. The question is: what is *eudaimonia*? This question will be fully answered in the subsequent chapters.

However, it will be appropriate at this juncture, to re-state that the scope of this thesis is limited to investigating *the extent* to which Aquinas relies on Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in developing his own concept of happiness in his moral philosophy. It will be necessary always to be reminded that the overall aim of this thesis is to demonstrate that Aquinas does not simply "Christianise" or "baptise" Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy (ethics), but extensively develops it. However, to start with such an investigation would require firstly, looking at a detailed examination of Aristotle's general

[16] An approach which he would have learnt, or rather, adopted from Socrates and Plato.

understanding of the human being so as to ascertain in the next chapter, the relationship between the human being and his/her "ultimate good", *eudaimonia* (happiness)[17]. Put differently, there is no doubt that Aristotle's notion of the human being would have shaped his philosophical and ethical (moral) consciousness in relation to the human "highest good" ("goal"), which he (Aristotle) claims to be *eudaimonia*. Aristotle does not define the human being in terms of his/her biological or ontological composition, but in terms of his/her "function" (*ergon*)[18]. For Aristotle, since "all things have a function or activity", it follows that man must have his own function, because his criteria for considering things "good" or "well" "resides in the function" (*NE* $1097^{b}23$-$1098^{a}16$). The question is, what did Aristotle mean by "human function" and what has this to do with his concept of *eudaimonia*?

3.1. Aristotle's Twofold Functions of the Human Being

Aristotle states that the best way to understand a human being is to perceive him/her in terms of his/her "functions" (*NE* $1097^{b}23$-28). By "human function", Aristotle means the human natural characteristics or features which distinctively orient human beings toward their final good (end). In other words, according to Gerard Hughes the "*ergon* of a human being must involve not merely the good exercise of those capacities which we humans have; he [Aristotle] says that it must consist in the exercise of those capacities which are specifically human, the ones which we *don't* share with animals" (2001: 37). Human function must consist in those "human activities" that are especially human *qua* human, which are not shared with other non-human animals. However, for Aristotle, since everything good is said to be good because of its function, it then means that finding human function would mean, finding human good. Aristotle himself agrees that the concepts of "good" and happiness as the human ultimate end can only be understood "if we could first ascertain the function of man" (*NE* $1097^{b}25$). Therefore, in an effort to understand human good as well as "human activity" better, it will be appropriate to first offer an account of Aristotle's twofold functions of the human being, which include: (i) to be "rational animals" and (ii) to be "sociable animals" (*NE* $1098^{a}3$).

[17] Though *eudaimonia* can be loosely translated as "happiness", we are yet to unpack and understand what it means and encompasses in this thesis.

[18] Function ordinarily means "deed", "job" or "work". Here, Aristotle used it to mean how something is supposed to work.

3.1.1 The Characteristic Activity of Human Beings: Rationality

As I have mentioned above, in his quest to find the human ultimate goal (end) in life, Aristotle argues that "human good must be found in *action*, which must be in accordance with the human function" (*NE* 1098^{b}9-1098^{b}29). Aristotle believes that the human good is not to be found in every part of human life, but only in a certain kind of human life: action. This kind of life, according to Aristotle, is "an activity or action of the soul"[19], which must be in "accordance with the rational principle" (*NE* 1097^{b}23-1098^{a}16). Thus, Aristotle argues that "in general, for all things that have a function or activity, the good and the 'well' is thought to reside in the function [...]" (*NE* 1097^{b}22–33). The question is, "if all things" have their functions or activities as Aristotle claims, what is the function of human beings, and what makes the human function differently from the functions of other non-human animals? In answer to this question, Aristotle argues that "the function of man is an activity of soul in accordance with, or not without, rational principle" (*NE* 1097^{b}22–1098^{a} 16-25). This means, as Gerard Hughes observes that "they [humans] too will have function (*ergon*) and an inbuilt goal (*telos*)", since humans are complex organisms (2001: 36). However, we are not sure whether this complexity of the human being is the same thing as Aristotle's "rational principle".

Having said this, it will also make sense to argue that human beings will be said to live a happy ("fulfilled") life, if they function "well" (properly). In other words, to function properly is to exercise the capacities that are to be found in the human soul, which is to act according to his/her rationality. This human "functioning well" according to the dictates of rationality is what some writers like Gerard Hughes term "the Function Argument" of Aristotle. This means that human beings have "function" just like all other beings because human beings, by nature, are rational, and therefore cannot be "functionless" (*NE* 1097^{b}23). In other words, it simply means that the function ("task") of a human being is to be found, as Aristotle claims, in the action of the "rational part of the soul" (*NE* 1097^{b}5-24). For Aristotle, soul, in this context, is to be considered as the system of active abilities of the mind to engage in the vital functions of the intellect (*NE* 1102^{b}11-16). Aristotle explains that the activity or actions of the soul must always imply a rational principle (*N.E.*1097^{b}22–1098^{a} 16-25).

[19] Aristotle's concept of soul is different from the Christian theological concept of soul

Furthermore, having established that the function of the human being is found in the rational activity of the soul, it will be pertinent to argue that human beings are animals, whose function it is to engage in a rational activity. Aristotle does not agree that non-human animals have the capacity to reason or to think, rather, they can only act out of their instinctive nature (*NE* 1129^{b} 19-26; *MM* 1189^{a} 33). As Gerard Hughes put it, "the behaviour of non-human animals is instinctive rather than thoughtful, and so is quite different from the actions performed by humans, even if we might use the same words in speaking of both" (2001:38). This means that there are certain behaviours, which human beings share in common with non-human animals, yet these behaviours cannot be regarded or put on the same spectrum as proper human activities. The few that come to mind are: eating, sleeping or procreation. As much as one naturally wants to procreate, one does not jump into procreation just because one has the natural urge or desire to do so. There are certain requirements or responsibilities that are attached to human procreation that make it proper human activity. These attachments to human behaviours are regulated by laws, and laws are products of human rationality. This means that proper human actions carry moral weight or rather, have moral undertones. This is what makes human beings moral beings. This makes sense because even though some non-human animals do follow certain strict "natural rules" in terms of their behaviour, for example, having life-partners, looking after the young, yet these instinctive behaviours are not considered to be human "activities" in the right usage of the word, according to Aristotle.

Moreover, to answer what Aristotle means by human activity, he gives a complicated explanation of the concept of the human "action" or "activity" to which J. L Ackrill devotes several pages merely trying to comprehend it (Cf. Ackrill 1980: 93-101). However, J. L Ackrill finally comes to the conclusion that Aristotle's concept of human action, as he employs it in his *Nicomachean Ethics,* contained some "incoherencies" and "inconsistencies" (1980: 100). He argues that Aristotle's concept of "action" is inconsistent because if he argues that when one chooses to do something, one always chooses it with a view to some end, that is for the sake of something, say X; J. L Ackrill asks, why Aristotle would again "insist that the man, who performs a virtuous act is not displaying any action of virtue unless he has chosen it 'for itself'" (Rorty 1980: 93). Ackrill observes that if action is done for the sake of other things as Aristotle claims, why would "action (*praxis*) differ from (production

(*poiesis*) because it [production] is its [action's] own end" (1980: 93). As a result of this inconsistency, J. L. Ackrill asks, "How can action be good in itself, if it is valued as a means to *eudaimonia*?" (1980: 93). In other words, how can an action be something done to bring about an outcome, and yet at the same time be distinguished from a production since action is done for its (production's) own sake? There is something not adding up here, because one either does something or acts as a means to an end, which is independent of the end (production) or one does things because they are the end in themselves. However, Aristotle insists that this is correct because for him, "certain difference is found among ends; some are activities, others are products apart from the activities that produce them" (*NE* $1094^{a}1$-$1094^{a}17$). For Aristotle, the ends and motives of our actions must not be confused with each other because "the end aimed at is not knowledge but action" *(NE* $1095^{a}12$-$1095^{a}13$). Aristotle believes that what makes human action *qua* human is that human action is a product of choice (*NE* $1094^{a}1$-$1094^{a}17$). Human action is deliberately chosen for the sake of itself and with an end in mind. Based on this, Aristotle concludes that what distinguishes human action (activity) from the behaviour of non-human animals is the ability to *choose* his/her actions. For him, the human agent acts "knowingly", and "chooses" to act for the sake of an end itself. Aristotle then asks, "Will not the knowledge of it [action], then, have a great influence on life?" (*NE* $1094^{a}1$-$1094^{a}17$)[20]. The answer is in the affirmative because nobody must be "forced" to act *(NE* $1110^{a}20$-$1110^{a}33$).

Besides, it must be noted here that "Aristotle's Function Argument depends on the characteristics, which all human beings share" as opposed to the exceptions (Hughes 2001: 29). Moreover, not only are these activities proper actions of humans, but they also lead them to a happy (fulfilled) life. That is why Aristotle requires that we exercise our rational capacities "well" because for Aristotle, "the good and the 'well' are thought to reside in the function" (*NE* $1097^{b}23$). Therefore, proper human (actions) activities are those rational activities that are performed "well", and they should be rightly categorised as human activities *qua* human. This is exactly what distinguishes human activities from the behaviours of the non-human animals'. This also serves as a yardstick for measuring good and bad human behaviour : good behaviour is morally right because it is performed "well", but bad behaviour is not. This means that stealing, for example, cannot be considered proper human

[20] Cf. Ackrill 1980: 96-97

activity *qua* human, even though the robber acts "thoughtfully" or logically to achieve his/her aim (end). For Aristotle, an action that is performed well is the one "performed in accordance with the appropriate excellence [virtue]" (*NE* 1098^{a}16).

However, having seen that the proper human function is the rational activity of the soul in accordance with the right excellence (virtue), it then becomes obvious that there is a connection between "living well" and "living happily" in society. This means that for one to live a happy life in a society, one needs to live in accordance with one's reason in order to be able to relate and interact with others in a proper 'human' social manner. The good for the human person, is an active use or exercise of "the powers of the mind and will" (Cf. *MM* 1191^{b}17-18). However, unlike Aristotle, as will be seen in subsequent chapters, Aquinas in his effort to develop this notion, places emphasis and value both on human intellect/rationality (because it is the part of the human person that resembles God's Personhood most perfectly) and on divine grace, which is evidenced in his understanding of "God" (*ST* Ia, Q. 29, Art.4, *resp.*). For Aquinas human beings are rational "persons" made in the *Image* of God, and not just rational and social animals as Aristotle thought. However, for Aristotle, rationality then becomes the basis on which the human moral edifice is built. This means that human moral action is judged as moral because of the human rational capacity. At this stage, it is clear that Aristotle was laying his ethical and logical foundation on which to build his concept of *eudaimonia*. He focuses upon the activities done well ("functioning well"), which he would in turn make part of his definition of happiness. Aristotle, and later Aquinas, would see happiness as "an intrinsic end of human action" as opposed to Kant, who considers happiness as "an extrinsic end of action" (Hayden 1992: 73-74).

3.1.2. Human Beings: Sociable by Nature

The second proper human function according to Aristotle, is his idea that human beings are "sociable by nature", hence, he categorises them as "social animals" (*NE* 1097^{b} 14). For Aristotle, human beings are actually social "animals" just as all other gregarious animals in the wild are because of their "sense-pleasure" (*NE*1118^{a}17-1118^{b}7). However, Aristotle also acknowledges that human beings are "the best of the animals" not only because they are rational beings, but because they are meant to live socially and morally in their society (*NE* 1141^{a}34-1141^{b}7). In other words, human beings are not just social animals like

other gregarious non-human animals, such as monkeys or chimpanzees, but are also rational animals because of their complex social life and structure. This rationality gives rise to the rules and regulations guiding them in the society, in which they live. Aristotle would argue that the human being is a social animal because his/her activity or behaviour should conform to the norms, rules and expectations of the society, in which he/she lives. These rules and regulations are also the products of their rationality (*NE* 1129^{b} 19-26). Human beings are social animals because they live rationally in society with others. The Human being is a complex animal. Indeed, nobody lives in isolation from other people. However, Aristotle concludes that it is only the human animal that is able to live a complex life in a complex society (*NE* 1126^{b}12-1127^{a}6). Human society is complex because, according to Aristotle, there are different kinds of people in society. Some are easy to relate to and others difficult, yet there are "those concerned with pleasure, viz. religious guilds and social clubs, one is displayed in jests, the other in the general social intercourse of life" (*NE* 1128^{b}4-1128^{b}9; *NE* 1160^{a}9-1160^{a}31). Sociability is man's natural instinct. The human being has no option in this case, but to live in society with constant interaction with other human beings. For Aristotle, a human being is a social animal not only by nature, but also by necessity. It is said that "no man is an island", and therefore, we can only fulfil our desires if we are living together with others in society (state, for Aristotle). The first among these needs and desires is *eudaimonia* (happiness). As a result, the human being engages in many activities in search of happiness, which is the human ultimate and highest goal (*NE* 1177^{a}18-1860).

It is obvious at this point that Aristotle, in his claim, means that relationship is vital to being human in society because we are dependent animals. It is like a second nature for the human being to depend on something stronger or better than him/herself, hence, the creation and sustainability of the concept of a supreme or strong being called "God". Our morality is exercised in relation to one another in society. This action of human social life, when lived rationally in society, is what Aristotle regards as "living well" (*NE* 1097^{a}23-1098^{a}16). The idea of the human being as a social and relational being is also central in Aquinas' moral philosophy, though he develops and transforms it to include the human participation in the *Relationality* and *Personhood* of the Triune God (*ST,* Ia, QQ.28-30, Art. 3, *ad*.1)[21].

[21] Aquinas claimed that his "God" is a community of Persons: God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Relationship is part of this God's nature. This God cannot be God if the Three Persons in One God are devoid of relationship.

Furthermore, Aristotle sees the interaction between human beings as something intrinsic to 'humans', which should define them. That is why he argues that for one to be a virtuous person in society does not mean living "a solitary life", but for one to live "for parents, children, wife, and in general for one's friends and fellow citizens, since man is sociable by nature" (*NE* 1097^{b} 14). For Aristotle, for any human being to be regarded as a virtuous citizen he/she should possess the good habits required for this kind of good life in society. Society exists so as to enable people to achieve their ultimate end as human beings, which according to Aristotle, is *eudaimonia* (*NE* 1095^{a}14-1095^{a}30). The doctrine of happiness is central to Aristotle's ethics, and this would, in turn, be central to Aquinas' moral philosophy, though Aquinas would transform this idea by stressing that the ultimate human good is the Beatific vision (Happiness) in the next life (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.7, *resp.*). However, since happiness is central to Aristotle's ethics (as well as Aquinas'), it will be proper before investigating further what happiness is and where it can be found, to examine one of the most fundamental ethical principles of Aristotle: the doctrine of mean-state[22]

3.2. Human beings as Moral beings: Observing Mean-State

It has been seen above that the human being is identified by Aristotle, with his/her function, as a rational and social animal. It makes sense then that for one to safeguard the interaction and relationship among humans in society, one would need a set of guiding rules and principles, which would aid one in *acting well*: morality. Aristotle maintains that even though all humans share rationality by nature, yet not all humans know how and when to use this rationality in order to produce the desired effects of proper human action (activity). He also reasons that people do not act in a moral way either because they are ignorant of what comprises rational moral actions or because they do not know how to apply this rationality well. Therefore, in this section, we will look at Aristotle's doctrine of mean-state, as a moral tool to aid one in determining the best kind of rational choice when confronted with any moral dilemma in society. In other words, man is a moral being because he/she is a rational and social being. This supports Aristotle's claim, as has been seen above, that the proper function of the human being consists in being a rational and social (political) animal in pursuit of happiness (*NE* 1098^{a} 3; *NE* 10997^{b} 10). For Aristotle, one needs rationality so as to be able to determine the "mid-point" of any virtuous (moral) activity in order to act well in

[22] Aquinas also adopted this principle in his moral philosophy.

any situation. Aristotle bases this claim on the fact that *eudaimonia (*happiness) is a reward of virtuous activity[23]. Aristotle, basically, sees virtue as that which "makes its possessor good" and possessed as a mean-state between two extremes of "excess and deficiency" (*NE* 1119^{a}1-1119^{a} 20; *MM* 1186^{a} 30-35; *EE* 1220^{b} 30-35). From this, it looks as if Aristotle is saying that human virtues are like technical skills, where every technician knows exactly how to avoid excess and deficiency in order to find the condition that will be an intermediate between the two extremes (of "excess and deficiency"). It is clear that Aristotle does not consider that in our moral life, at times, there are *grey areas*, which are not as "clear cut" as he thought. For Aristotle, virtue is just a condition intermediate between two other states, where one involves excess, and the other deficiency (*NE* 1106^{a}26-1106^{b} 28). The question here, in regard to Aristotle's view on this, is how does one know what will make one a good (virtuous) person, when confronted by a moral dilemma? Aristotle would argue that it is the deliberation, which will reach its peak in choosing the middle point of any moral action. Hence, he defined virtue as "a property of happiness [...] a mean of the... excess or defect" (*MM* 1186^{a} 30-35)[24].

Putting these together, one may ask that if virtue is "a sort of mediety" (*EE* 1220^{b} 30-35), that is, the "middle position" between the two extremes of excess and defect (*NE* 1119^{a}1-1119^{a} 20), how does one determine this middle position? In answering this question, Aristotle however, admits that to determine the mid-point of every situation is not as easy as it sounds. As he puts it, "for in everything it is no easy task to find the middle" (*NE* 1109^{a} 20-1109^{a} 29), but whenever we succeed in finding that middle ground, "then, we stand [...] in a good position to make the right judgment" (*EE* 1222^{b}10). For example, according to Aristotle, one who fears everything that one sees becomes a coward, while one who fears nothing at all in the face of all dangers, becomes "rash" (*NE* 1104^{a}10-1104^{a}27). The question is, what determines when one flees from danger and when one confronts the danger head-on? It is obvious here that Aristotle does not, precisely, tell how to find the "middle point" or the mean of every moral situation that might come our way. As Kraut Richard rightly stated: "the right amount is not some quantity between zero and the highest possible level, but rather the amount, whatever it happens to be, that is proportionate to the seriousness of the situation" ("Aristotle's Ethics", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy).* Kraut goes on to explain that there are two distinct theses that can each be called a doctrine of the "mean-

[23] I shall look at this in detail in the next chapter

[24] Cf. *M.M.*1191^{b} 22-27

state". The first one is the thesis that every virtue is a state that lies between two vices, one of excess and the other of deficiency. The second one is the idea that whenever a virtuous person chooses to perform a virtuous act, the person is said to be aiming at an act that is in one way or another intermediate between alternatives that the person rejects. The second thesis is the more criticised one because virtuous acts cannot be quantitatively or mathematically calculated or analysed.[25] As I have just mentioned above, this is one of the main criticisms against virtue ethics in general (not only Aristotle's), because it does not produce codified principles to guide one's action in a situation of moral dilemma as Aristotle claims in his doctrine of mean state. However, Aquinas will also battle with this in his moral philosophy, but he solves his own problem by introducing the virtues of *infused* prudence and *infused* temperance as God's special way of helping one, who possesses them in making the right decisions when confronted with such moral dilemmas. Therefore, to ascertain the mean-state of any moral situation, will mean taking into cognisance, the peculiarity and specificity of every situation at hand.

Furthermore, Aristotle insists that the doctrine of the mean-state simply signifies "moderation, i.e. not to act too much or too little in any given moral situation" (*NE* $1106^{b}8$-$1106^{b}28$). This means that whatever one is doing that constitutes a virtuous act with *eudaimonia* (happiness) in mind, must be done "[...] at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right aim, and in the right way [...]" (*NE* $1106^{b}18$-19). Virtue really lies in the middle, so to speak. Therefore, the mean-state is the appropriate and adequate response in any particular situation. This involves a lot of difficult decisions. As I have said above, it is to determine the right thing to do in any given situation. This makes virtue, actually, "praiseworthy" (*NE* $1103^{a}4$-$1103^{a}13$). In fact, for one to be on either extreme is actually not hard, but to maintain the balance and find the middle position between both extremes is considered a daunting task. Hence it is called a *virtue*. This is true because virtue is not Science or Mathematics, where one can accurately calculate and pin-point the mid-point of any given situation on a board (*MM* 1182^{a} 15). In other words, there are many *grey areas* involved in our everyday moral situations and decisions. However, it is true that Aristotle acknowledges the difficulty involved in arriving at the mean-state of any moral decision, but he seems to trivialise it as he argues that "[...] to fix upon the mean point [...] is hard and this is the point for which we are praised; for which reason the good is rare"

[25] Available online at 2001 "Aristotle's Ethics" in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aristotle-ethics/. Accessed on 26th July, 2014.

(*MM.* 1187[a] 1-4). However, Aristotle comes very close, in his *Eudemian Ethics,* to suggesting that the ability to determine this mean-state, apart from rationality, could also be aided either through blind luck or through "divine inspiration" "[...] owing to which the fortunate man's success is thought to be due to the aid of the God [...]" (*EE* 1248 [b]3-8). Whether there is a point in this argument or not, Aristotle has introduced another concept here, "God" ("divine inspiration"). It must be noted that there is a metaphysical difference between Aristotle's concept of God and that of Aquinas. Aquinas believes that the introduction of the supernatural (*infused)* virtues will help one in making the right decision in every moral situation, while Aristotle believes that one has to use one's natural ability to reason it out. In other words, for Aquinas, since God intends human beings to enjoy a life of happiness that surpasses their nature, it means that this life cannot be attained merely by the cultivation of the natural capacity of their virtuous life. Aquinas believes that this supernatural human life is a gift from God, not a human accomplishment of some sort achieved through reasoning out the mean-state of every moral situation. Therefore, Aquinas seems not to have confidence in one's natural capability to choose correctly in every moral dilemma, hence, his claim about God's *infused* virtues. This is a clear indication that Aristotle and Aquinas have different notions of "God" as well as the role their respective God plays in their ethical views.

3.3. Aristotle's Notion of God: The Unmoved Mover

Robert Pasnau argues that Aquinas does not only "Christianise" or "baptise" Aristotle's ethics, but he also relies "heavily" on his ethical view of happiness. Pasnau argues that Aristotle even provides Aquinas with the "philosophical cornerstone" of his ethics of happiness, which may include the "broader concept of God" (2004: 206). However, Pasnau also admits this "God" of Aquinas is not a "control freak", but a God who "*delegates* causal authority" to His creatures by giving them the capacity (free will) to pursue their appropriate end, yet this idea in itself is Aristotle's. However, this will necessitate examining Aristotle's concept of "God", so as to be able to make the distinction between his concept of "God" and that of Aquinas. Aristotle devotes his argument about the existence of a "God", "who" or "that" is in control of the universe in his *Metaphysics*, Books XI- XII Chapters 6-11. He

begins by first examining the notion of "movement in the universe" as a single causal system. For Aristotle, *motion* is seen as a change in any of the several different categories he enumerates. Aristotle criticises "Leucippus and Plato; for they say there is always movement", and yet, they never tell us the "cause" of this movement (*Metaphysics*, Book XII Chapter 6). He then goes on to argue that it is not actually plausible to have a "movement, if there is no actually existing cause" (*Metaphysics*, Book XII Chapter 6). In other words, according to Aristotle, "nothing is moved at random, but there must always be something present to move it" (*Metaphysics*, Book XII Chapter 6).

Consequently, this gives rise to Aristotle's fundamental principle, in which he argues that everything that is in motion is moved by something else, and he offers a number of arguments to this effect. He argues that there cannot be an endless series of the "moved movers". For example, when X1 is in motion, there must be some X2 that moves this X1, and if X2 is itself in motion, then there must be some X3 moving X2, and so it continues . However, Aristotle emphasises that this chain of movements cannot go on *ad infinitum* (forever), but must come to a stop at a certain point in time in some way , say XZ, which will be the "first cause" of these motions. He also claims that this initial "cause" (motion initiator or XZ) in itself must not be moved. However, by "cause" here, Aristotle meant the object or substance that set the other being (s) or substance (s) in motion. This initial object or substance (the motion initiator/XZ) is what Aristotle called the "the first cause", "the final cause" or "the prime mover" or "the first mover" (*Metaphysics*, Book XII Chapter 6). Aquinas will later assimilate some of these notions here, but with some differences. However, as Francesca Murphy points out in her book, *God is not a Story: Realism Revisited,* "Aristotle's First Mover did not create the world ex nihilo; and thus, the argument, translated without alteration by Thomas from the Greek philosopher, takes us to a Mover that is 'really in the realm of physics' or 'cosmography'"(2007:207).

That notwithstanding, Aristotle in his effort to give a convincing argument about this "prime mover" argues that this ZX ("first cause" or "prime mover") must be some kind of "eternal and imperishable substance" (*Metaphysics*, Book XII Chapter 6). He insists that this "eternal substance" must be "a principle, whose very essence is actuality. Further, then, these substances must be without matter" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 6). As we are struggling to comprehend fully what he says in chapter 6, he puts forward another

argument in chapter 7 that this "eternal actual substance" must be a single "prime mover", which, "will be the source of all process and change, but must not be itself subject to process of change or be affected by change. Aristotle has succeeded in confusing his readers here when he argues that this "substance" has the ability to do what is considered the human highest form of life, which he claims is to "think" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7). Again, I run into another problem here because this statement implies that this "substance" or "prime mover" must be a kind of "living being" in order to "think", yet Aristotle claims that it is also "eternal". What does Aristotle mean by "eternal" here? Aristotle would be contradicting himself and what his whole "principle of rationality" stands for, if he states that a non-human substance could reason or "think". Aristotle does mean here that this "eternal substance" ("prime mover" or "final cause") has the human "best" quality of "thinking". Aristotle does not make it clear exactly what he means by a "thinking substance"; rather he left this argument hanging. However, by the "final cause" here Aristotle means "(a) some being for whose good an action is done, and (b) something at which the action aims..." (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7). Aristotle has not defined the term he uses here, which is "eternal", yet he introduces another word, "good". In other words, according to Aristotle, what is the good for "some being"[26]? Though this question will be answered properly in the next chapter of this thesis, yet at this point, from what has been said so far, I can confidently postulate, in accordance with Aristotle's reasoning, that the human "ultimate good" is *eudaimonia* (happiness).

However, Aristotle finally answers the question, in regard to what he means by the "eternal substance". He claims that it is "the possession rather than the receptivity [of] the divine element", which contains the "act of contemplation" and what is "most pleasant and best" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7). Furthermore, Aristotle argues that "God is always in that good state in which we sometimes are [...]. We say therefore that God is a living being, eternal, most good, so that life and duration continuous and eternal belong to God; for this is God" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7). Aristotle insists that since "life also belongs to [this] God; for the actuality of thought is life, and God is that actuality", it then follows that this "God's self-dependent actuality is life most good and eternal" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7). Aquinas would agree with Aristotle on this line of thought. However, Aristotle does not make it clear as to what kind of "living being", "eternal" being and "most good"

[26] For "some being" Aristotle meant human beings

being God is. This sounds contradictory and raises a number of questions as to whether something can be 'alive' and at the same time 'eternal'. Put differently, can an accidental substance produce an eternal substance? It is a known fact, according to Aristotle's principle causality, that it is only an "actual substance" that has the ability to produce an eternal element. Aristotle's argument has led one to believe, though unconvincingly, that the "first principle" or "primary being" is not movable either in itself or accidentally, but produces the primary eternal and single movement. The question is: what is the "first principle" of being? For Aristotle, since that which is moved must be moved by something else other than itself, "and the first mover must be in itself unmovable, and eternal, movement must be produced by something eternal and a single movement by a single thing [...] each of these movements also must be caused by a substance both unmovable in itself and eternal" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 8). This sounds like a circular argument here. Strangely enough, Aristotle proves in chapter 8 that there is only one "single" prime , but he then turns around to assert that there are in fact "forty-seven" or rather, "fifty-five" of these "Gods" (substances). From this, it is not clear what Aristotle's God (s) is/are: the planets or spheres (cosmos), substance or being, movement or principle, one or forty-seven of them, or fifty-five of them? It seems the cosmos is a living being (substance) for Aristotle. However, Aristotle argues that "since that which moves is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal, substance, and actuality" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7). He concludes that this "first mover, then, exists of necessity; and in so far as it exists by necessity, its mode of being is good, and it is in this sense a first principle" (*Metaphysics,* Book XII Chapter 7).

Having provided his concept of God, Aristotle asks a very vital question as to whether *eudaimonia* (happiness) is to be acquired by learning or by habituation or some other sort of training, or comes in virtue of some "divine providence" or again by chance. However, in answer to this question, he argues that "if there is *any* gift of the gods to men, it is reasonable that happiness should be god-given, and surely the most god-given of all human things in as much as it is the best" (*NE* $1099^{b}9$-$1099^{b}17$). In other words, for one to be happy would require one doing things that will please the gods since it is their gift. This means that the will of the gods must be the "ultimate cause" of action in human life and in the cosmos. However, this would also make the human being a puppet in the hand of gods However, in a curious move, Aristotle does not take up an examination of the nature of the gods or whether

or not they can be the source of human action. Aristotle quickly argues that this "God is not a ruler in the sense of issuing commands, but is the end as a means to which *prudence* gives commands [...] since clearly God is in need of nothing" (*EE* 1249 ^{b}14-17). From this statement, according to Aristotle, it would seem reasonable to assume that this God is the 'absolute good' and the 'supreme end' of all human actions.

However, from what have been done so far in this section, Aristotle has made it clear that his conception of God differs remarkably from the concept of God with which most people are familiar. Aristotle's God is not a being, so to speak, but a source of all things, that in which the nature of all things is to be found, the prime mover and the final source of all that exists. And as the source of all being, it must stand beyond all beings in a higher realm of existence. God, for Aristotle, is the truth and source of all things; it is the comprehensive account of all natures in the universe. Aristotle's notion or concept of God will, to some extent, influence Aquinas's concept of God. However, unlike Aristotle's concept of God, which is a living creature and at the same time a divine and eternal substance, Aquinas' God is a Supernatural Being. The activity of Aristotle's God is only to think (pure knowledge) possibly about itself, and remains completely detached from the universe. This God is not interested in the world, but Aquinas' God, as he claims, is not detached from the universe He created; rather, He is involved in it. As a result, this God enters into relationship with human beings. In other words, according to Aquinas's claim, since his God is interested in His creatures, especially human beings, He guides them in finding the human ultimate goal in life: happiness. However, having examined in this chapter, Aristotle's basic principles of moral philosophy, which includes his understanding of human beings as rational and social beings, and being capable of choosing the mean-state of their moral actions, one can compellingly conclude that Aristotle places much emphasis on human rationality. Moreover, Aristotle's concept of God is not convincing, yet it makes some logical sense that there must be a First Unmoved Mover, which is the source of everything in motion in the universe. Aquinas, as well, would adopt and develop Aristotle's concept of God in his moral philosophy, but before looking at that, let me first examine Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness).

CHAPTER FOUR

ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF *EUDAIMONIA* (HAPPINESS)

Although there are many hypotheses on the nature of happiness, Aristotle is clear in stating what happiness is and where it can be found.[27] Aristotle, himself admits that there is general agreement among "most men" ("vulgar types of men and people of superior refinement") that happiness is "identified with living well and faring well, but with regard to what happiness is they differ" (*NE* 1095^{a}14-1095^{a}30). This means that there is no general consensus as to what happiness is and where it can be found. However, in Books I and X of his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle offers a detailed examination of *eudaimonia*[28] (happiness). Therefore, this chapter will examine precisely Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* as a reward for the virtuous activity of man's rational soul, which can only be attained in accordance with the act of practical wisdom. I will also examine Aristotle's claim that happiness is epitomised in the life of the magnanimous statesman.

4.1. Happiness: An Activity of the Rational Soul[29]

Aristotle's consideration of happiness as "an activity of soul in accordance with complete excellence [virtue]" (*NE* 1102^{a}5) has put me in a difficult position since I have to first establish what 'soul' is so as to understand how happiness is "an activity of the rational soul". Aristotle believes that the human good[30] is not to be found in every part of the human body or life, but only in a certain kind of human part that contains the soul (*NE* 1098^{b}9-1098^{b}29). By human good, Aristotle means that activity, which assists man to aim and strive towards achieving his full potential in life. I have shown above what Aristotle means by human activity and rational principle, but what he means by "soul" in this case still needs to

[27] I shall not go into this general notion of happiness, since it will detract from the aim of this thesis, which is to examine Aristotle's concept of happiness as used by Aquinas in his moral philosophy.

[28] Aristotle's treatment of *eudaimonia* is not limited or restricted to *Nicomachean Ethics.* He offered an extensive account of *eudaimonia* as well in Book I & II of *Eudemian Ethics* and in Books I & II of the Magna *Moralia*.

[29] See diagrams 4.1. and 4.2.

[30] Aristotle used the term "good" in two different ways: one as an adjective and the other as a noun. When he used "good" as an adjective, according to him, it is synonymous with "well". As we have pointed out in chapter one Aristotle's criteria for considering things "good" or "well" "resides in the function" the thing performs (Cf. *NE* 1097^{b}23-1098^{a}16). On the other hand, when he used "good" as a noun, he generally meant *eudaimonia* (happiness) (Cf. *NE* 1094^{a}1-1094^{a}17).

be discovered. However, Aristotle gives us a hint about what the soul is, when he says "that one element in the soul is irrational and one has a rational principle" (*NE* 1102^{a}26). This suggests that according to Aristotle, there are two "elements" in this thing called soul, rational and irrational.

Aristotle, like Plato, his teacher, believes that ethics must be rooted in a view of the human soul. Plato as Aristotle's teacher identifies soul with "self" and thinks of a soul as "an immaterial being which pre-existed its association with this particular body, and would survive bodily death" (Hughes 2001: 33). Hughes goes further to explain that Platonic ethics requires that one should care for one's soul, and that the body should be treated in such a way as not to impede the proper activity of the soul. Elsewhere, Plato even identifies soul with "reason", though he later modifies this view since for him "desire and emotion" can be at odds with the reason, "since the conflict took place in the soul" (*NE* 1145^{b}8-1145^{b}21). Plato makes three divisions where soul can be found: in appetite, spirit, and reason, though, he insists that reason is the highest human goal or aim. That would mean that as he sees things, Aristotle's definition of the human good or happiness as "[...] activity of the soul in accordance with excellence [...]" is highly Platonic (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1098^{a}17–18)[31]. Aristotle, also in examining Plato's account of virtue in Magna *Moralia,* finds it "pleasing" to him because "he [Plato] divided the soul into the rational and the irrational parts and in this he was right in assigning appropriate virtues to each" (*MM* 1182^{a} 25).

However, unlike Plato, Aristotle's conception of what the soul is comes from his interest and knowledge of Biology, rather than his religious views about "the incarnation and reincarnation of a disembodied true self" (Hughes 2001:8). In other words, Aristotle's concept of "soul" is not religious nor theological, but biological. Soul for Aristotle does not have any religious connotation as does Aquinas'. For Aristotle, soul is considered as "the system of active abilities of the mind to engage in the vital functions of the intellect" (*NE* 1102^{b}11-16). However, it must also be noted that this difference between Plato's religious notion of soul and Aristotle's biological concept of soul will have great implications for Aristotle's ethical views (moral philosophy). The starting point for Aristotle, concerning his concept of "soul" is that there is a difference between living organisms and non-living ones. Aristotle reasons that the difference between living organisms and non-living things is

[31] Cf. *MM* 1182^{a} 15-20

possible only because of the soul (*psychē*). Unlike Plato, Aristotle believes that plants and animals all have soul. As Gerard Hughes observes that "The feature which characterizes all organisms is just what our word for them suggests - they are internally *organized*; they have an inbuilt natural aim" (2001: 34). Even though Aristotle does not mean that a kitten or a lamb, for example, is conscious of its "aim" (*telos*), yet it is natural or in-built in it (the lamb/kitten) that it has an "aim". An aim is the goal toward which every creature/being is naturally oriented (*Ibid*).

However, in Plato's, view, the soul is a separate thing in itself, which lives inside the body, but Aristotle considers soul as the way the body of an organism is purposely structured. A soul then will be "a living body, with all its capabilities" (Hughes 2001: 34-35). There are different kinds of soul, which can be defined in terms of their capabilities. All the organisms grow, eat and reproduce: animals can sense, and move around and have emotion; humans can do all these, and in addition to all these, "humans can think, plan and choose"[32]. It must be noted that to say that plants, animals and humans have different types of souls simply means that their respective bodies are organised as to have different capabilities. For Aristotle, the well-being of any organism consists in the incorporated exercise of these capabilities he calls *telos*, and his whole ethics is based on this capability of the human soul (rationality). Aristotle claims that we cannot decide what should account for fulfilment (happiness), but it is our nature that determines what *eudaimonia* must be like.

However, in his *De Anima* ($1097^{b}33$-$1098^{a}5$; $414^{b}32$-$415^{a}13$), Aristotle classifies different kinds of organisms and their souls. He claims in *De Anima* that the soul is the form of the living body and the body is the matter (*DA* $412^{a}16$-21)[33]. In other words, for Aristotle, the soul is the essence of the living organism because without the soul, there is no life in the organism; it ceases to be a substance: it becomes a 'dead' object. By essences Aristotle means "what a thing is" according to its nature (*MM* 1182^{b} 1-30). For Aristotle, an essence of a thing explains or "defines the nature" of *this thing* and not *that thing*. Similarly, the soul defines the nature of the human being as a living organism and as a rational being with the peculiar characteristic of pursuing his/her ultimate good (happiness) above all other goals. This, then, makes the human being an organism (being) searching for his/her ultimate good: happiness.

[32] See diagram 4.1.

[33] See diagram 4.2.

Aristotle went on to argue that a soul is the "form" of an organism not only because it gives life, but because it directs the goal and activity of that organism (*DA* 412^{b}10-12). As T.H Irwin observes, "we normally think of state of consciousness; Aristotle's theory seems to be a theory of something quite different from what concerns us in psychology or philosophy of mind. Aristotle's theory includes important claims about thoughts, feelings, perceptions and so on" (1980: 41). He goes on to argue that for Aristotle, the doctrine of the soul as a form of the living organism explains his conclusion that happiness is the realization of the soul (*NE* 1102^{a}5). It will come as little surprise to know that the basis for Aristotle's argument about *eudaimonia* (happiness) as the human ultimate good or end rests on his doctrine of the soul. However, T.H Irwin criticises Aristotle for over- generalisation of his view, when Aristotle claims that all human beings "must" or "should" desire happiness. For Irwin, "If Aristotle's general theory of the soul is understood, some common objections to his claim about the universal desire for final good will justifiably leave him unmoved" (1980: 47).

Moreover, for Aristotle, the fact remains that the human being has a complex and rational soul, and therefore, is supposed to pursue his/her overall good (happiness), which is to be guided by some "systematic reflective conception" (*NE* 1094^{b}27-1095^{a}11; *NE* 1168^{b}29-1169^{a}11). What Aristotle does not consider here is that not *all* human beings have the ability to perceive or conceive this human good or desire (*eudaimonia*) as something paramount to pursue in their lives. Moreover, concerning this claim, Irwin further argues that, "Aristotle's claim about the final good seems to equivocate between psychological description and ethical advice..." (1980:47). Irwin maintains that Aristotle's thought that everyone has the conception of the final good, which he on one hand, advises people to acquire, and on the other hand, claims that everyone has , is inconsistent because these are two different claims (1980:47). Put differently, at one point Aristotle treats the final good (happiness) as an end or goal that everyone *does* pursue and on the other hand, he treats it as an end everyone *should* pursue. One may argue that if any of these claims by Aristotle are anything to go by, it will then justify Aristotle's whole claim that happiness is the human final good, which is an outcome of the examination of the rational soul. This makes sense as Irwin argues that since "the human essence and form include the pursuit of happiness; it will be reasonable to say that it is an essential human property" (1980:48-49). This is true because, according to Aristotle, happiness also involves the "systematic satisfaction" of someone's rational aim. It can be argued as well that Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology

do support his ethical starting point that the human being is a distinctive organism because of his/her rational soul, which orients him/her toward the pursuit of happiness (*Ibid*).

Furthermore, we can now examine Aristotle's claim that there are two elements in the soul, one "rational" and the other, an "irrational principle" (*NE* $1102^{a}26$-$1102^{a}32$). What does Aristotle mean by the "elements" in the soul? Aristotle does not specify what he means by the term "element", but he does imply that this can be considered as the rational part or component of the soul. It has already been seen above what rationality is, and why the human being is considered to be a rational being. For Aristotle, human rationality should include the ability of the human soul to make him/her a reasonable person, who is capable of perception (*DA* $414^{b}1$-9). In other words, with the help of the soul, the human being can "universally apprehend" the concept of things as opposed to non-human animals that can only have the "perception and memory of particulars" (*NE* $1147^{b}3$-5). By "perception" here I mean, the human ability to mentally access the features of any given object. And by "universal apprehension" here, Aristotle means the ability for the human mind to grasp or perceive the general, but peculiar, characteristics of objects of the same kind (*NE* 1147^{b} 6-1147^{b} 17). By "particulars", we mean the individuating feature of any given object. However, for Aristotle, it is only this rational part of the soul that enables the human mind/soul to process the complex knowledge that is supposed to lead him/her to his/her final goal/good: happiness.

On the other hand, Aristotle argues that there is also another element of the soul, which is 'irrational". He insists that the irrational element is "vegetative in its nature [...] that which causes nutrition and growth" (*NE* $1102^{a}33$-$1102^{b}12$). This vegetative element of the soul, according to Aristotle, is "the kind of power of the soul that one must assign to all nurslings and to embryos and this same power to full-grown creatures" (*NE* $1102^{a}33$-$1102^{b}12$). This kind of power of the soul is found in babies and non-human ("full-grown creatures"). The reason for this is quite obvious as I have implied above, that infants and non-human animals lack universal apprehension and have only perception and memory of the particulars (*NE* 1147^{b} 6-1147^{b} 17). Put differently, these non-human creatures and the human infants do not possess the will power or the ability to perceive and access the complex reality available to the human mind, which is for Aristotle, the basis of all morality. However, this is one of the undoings of Aristotle, when compared to Aquinas; he places much emphasis on rationality (mind) as opposed to all human natural compositions, viz. psychological, social,

spiritual, physical and moral life. For Aristotle, the world is divided into two: rational and irrational. The question here is, what of those human beings, who are not able, individually, to reason because of one factor or another, viz. the babies, the aged or the mentally handicapped (ill)? Aristotle would like to throw the baby out with the bath water, so to speak, because they cannot make use of their rational faculties. For Aristotle, this will then mean that people like this are unable to engage in any virtuous activity, which means that they are not able to pursue the human ultimate good (happiness). I need at this juncture, to examine Aristotle's concept of the human excellence (virtue).

4.2. Happiness: A Reward of Human Excellent Activity (Virtue)[34]

In my quest to examine the key terms used by Aristotle in defining his concept of happiness, I have succeeded so far in detailing what Aristotle means by 'the activity of the rational soul'; I can now investigate what he means by "human excellence [virtue]". It is only in considering and understanding the nature of excellence that I may be closer to solving this puzzle of knowing what the nature of happiness is and of what it consists (*NE* $1102^{a}5$-$1102^{a}25$). However, the Greek word "*aretê"* is always vaguely translated as "excellence" or "virtue". As Gerard Hughes points out, "[...] for someone to possess *aretê* is for that person to be good at something [...] " (2001: 23). In other words, when the word *aretê* is used as 'virtue' or 'excellence', it does not carry any moral weight; it is not used in a moral sense. For example, we can say that a church organist has the 'virtue' or 'excellence' of playing classical music. In other words, this particular organist has the skill or is very good at playing classical music well. Apparently, Aristotle makes two distinctions of *aretê* in his *Nicomachean Ethics*: "[...] some excellences [that] are intellectual and others moral [...] (*NE* $1103^{a}4$-$1103^{a}13$). This would mean that there are two kinds of 'virtue' (excellence): those that have to do with "one's skill of thinking" and those that have to do with morals. Those grouped under intellectual virtues are "philosophic wisdom and understanding and practical wisdom"; while those grouped under moral excellence are "liberality and temperance" (*NE* $1103^{a}4$-$1103^{a}13$). Aristotle explains that the main distinctive features between the intellectual and moral excellences are that intellectual excellence "owes both its birth and its growth to teaching, experience and time, while moral excellence comes about as a result of habit [...]" (*NE* $1103^{a}14$-$1103^{a}25$).

[34] It must be noted that Aristotle uses 'virtue' and 'excellence' interchangeably to mean *aretê.*

Moreover, it must also be noted that an investigation into the nature or meaning of virtue in Greek classical society did not start with Aristotle. There had been a number of thinkers before him, who had attempted to answer this question for example, 'what is virtue or what is the nature of virtue?' Even Aristotle himself admits that before him, there had been many attempts made to discover what *virtue* is all about. Hence, he affirms, "we ought to be aware also of what others have said before us on this subject [virtue]" (*MM* 1182[a] 10). In his *Magna Moralia,* Aristotle considers Pythagoras[35] as one of the earliest philosophers to have attempted investigating the nature of virtue. However, for Aristotle, Pythagoras is "unsuccessful" in his quest because he reduces virtues to numbers, thereby subjecting "virtues to a treatment which was not proper to them, for justice is not a square number" (*MM* 1182[a] 10).

Socrates[36] was another earlier thinker before Aristotle, who examined the nature of virtue. Apparently, Socrates is "unsuccessful" too because he made "virtues sciences", which according to Aristotle, is inappropriate because "all the virtues...are not to be found [only] in the rational part of the soul" (*MM* 1182[a] 15-20). In other words, by making virtue science, "he [Socrates] is doing away with the irrational part of the soul, and is thereby doing away also with both with passion and moral character" (*MM* 1182[a] 20-24). Thus, Aristotle criticises Socrates for thinking that "to know virtue was the same thing as being virtuous" (*N.E*. I1I6[b] 15. 3-10). Aristotle also examines Plato's[37] account of virtue "and in this he was right" because "he divided the soul into the rational and the irrational part and in this he is right in assigning appropriate virtues to each" (*MM* 1182[a] 25). Nevertheless, Aristotle admits that it was only at this stage that Plato was "right" because after this, "he went astray" by "mixing up virtue with the treatment of the good" (*MM* 1182[a] 25-27). The question then is, what does "good" mean for Aristotle that made it inappropriate to be treated together with virtue? It will later be shown that Aristotle defines good as "that at which all things aim", which is happiness (*NE* 1094[a]2), but virtue is the disposition of the soul (*NE* 1144[b] 1-20).

[35] 569-475 BC

[36] 469BC-399 BC

[37] 427 BC- 347 BC

However, virtue for Aristotle is a character trait or a disposition which is well entrenched in its possessor, unlike habit which is ordinarily quite unstable (*NE* 1144^{b} 1-1144^{b}29). In other words, in trying to understand the nature of virtue, Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* argues that virtue ("excellence") must be one of the three kinds of things found in the soul: passions, faculties, states" (*NE* 1105^{b}19-20). By passion Aristotle means "appetite, anger, fear, confidence, envy, joy, love, pity [...] and in general the feelings" (*NE* 1105^{b}21). He goes on to argue that virtue cannot be "feelings" since we are not praised or blamed for feelings, but we are praised for having virtue, and "blamed for the lack of it" (*NE* 1105^{b}29-1106^{a}2). For instance, we are not praised or blamed for feeling good or bad about helping the poor man at the church gate, but we are praised or blamed for helping or not helping that poor man. Besides, we are said to be "moved" by passion or said "to be disposed in a particular way" to virtue (*N.E.*1106^{a}3-1106^{a}6). Therefore, passion is eliminated from the list where excellence (virtue) might be found, and we are left with two options: faculties and state.

By faculty, Aristotle means those things that make it possible for us to feel, for instance, anger, pain or pity (*NE* 1105^{b} 19-21). For Aristotle, virtue cannot be found in the faculties because "we have the faculties by nature [...] we are not made good or bad by nature" (*NE* 1106^{a}7-1106^{a}10). In other words, Aristotle implies that we are always responsible for all our moral actions, which can be good or bad, virtuous or vicious. We cannot blame "nature" for our moral misconducts, because we are rational beings. Hence, Aristotle eliminates the faculties as the source of virtue. Hence, Aristotle asserts that since neither faculty nor passion constitutes the virtues, "all that remains is that they should be *states"* (*NE* 1106^{a}11-1106^{a}12).

Aristotle is a bit vague about what a "state" actually means for him, but he does manage to explain that "[...] states are the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions [...] and well if we feel it moderately [...]" (*EN* 1105^{b} 25-28). Aristotle's definition of state has led some Aristotelian scholars to believe that Aristotle must have taken a "state" to mean a kind of disposition or habit. This means that a virtuous state then would mean a disposition to act "moderately well" and a vicious state, to act "extremely badly" (*NE*1106^{a}3-6). This would explain why Aristotle affirms that virtues are "the mean

states which we say are intermediate between excess and defect [...] in accordance with right reason" (*NE* 1138^{b}24).

However, he maintains in his *Eudemian Ethics* that "virtue is that sort of *habit* from which men have a tendency to do the best actions [...]" (*EE* 1222^{a}5-15). Therefore, what can be deduced from all this is that virtue, for Aristotle, is a good act, a "disposition" or a mean state of "living well" between excess and deficiency, and this means, for Aristotle, living happily (*MM* 1184^{b} 15). In other words, Aristotle considers virtue to consist in a certain kind of disposition: good disposition (habit). Thus, for him, the "human excellence [virtue] will be [defined as] the disposition that makes one a good man and causes him to perform his function *well*" (*NE* 1106^{a} 21-23). The question here is, if virtue is a disposition of some sort, what does Aristotle mean by the term "disposition"? Disposition, according to Aristotle, is that "which leads to the attainment of the best and most expedient in matters of action" (*MM* 1199^{a}8). This is possible because of what Aristotle called, "practical wisdom", which he claimed is a special kind of virtue. The question is, what did Aristotle mean by this "practical wisdom" and how does it help one to attain happiness?

4.2.1. Practical Wisdom (*Phronesis*): An Excellence of Deliberation

As it will be seen later, the human good, for Aristotle, consists in living well, which is the same thing as living happily. However, for Aristotle, the one who has the excellence (virtue) of practical wisdom, is "the man who is capable of deliberation" that leads him to happiness (*NE* 1140^{a}24-1140^{b}19). By excellence, Aristotle means, "a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean", which is of course, relative to each individual, since we are all different (*NE* 1106^{b}36). By "deliberation" here, Aristotle means the ability to make a right choice that directs one to one's ultimate end: happiness. By "choice", Aristotle also means a conscious opinion in favour of something (*EE* 1226^{b} 9). But what determines the choice that one makes is the "reason working with practical wisdom, which is an acquired talent for living well, for directing activity towards the most fruitful ends" (Oser 2007: 7). However, Aristotle insists that "the function of man is achieved only in accordance with practical wisdom as well as with moral excellence [...]" (*NE* 1144^{a}7-1144^{a}11). As I have shown above the proper human function is to live a social and moral life guided by reason in society. This means that the work of the practical reason is to direct human beings to their

final end: happiness. This leads Aristotle to stress the point that practical reasoning will always presuppose that one has some end/goal that one is trying to achieve. This means that the task of a person, who deliberates well, will be able to determine how that goal will be accomplished. As indicated earlier, the practical wisdom has to do with moral deliberation, and this deliberation has to do with the choice of the human ultimate good: *eudaimonia* (happiness).

Moreover, practical wisdom helps us in weighing the available options open to us in any given situation. This means that it is through practical wisdom that we actually determine what is "too much" or "too little", which Aristotle termed, the mean - state. Aristotle affirms that, "[...] the man who is capable of deliberating has practical wisdom" (*NE* $1140^{a}24$-$1140^{b}19$). In other words, practical wisdom has to do with "the cause of choice that is desired and reasoning directed to some end" (*EE* 1139^{a} 32 – 34). However, for Aristotle, both choice and desire seem to be intimately related to each other. For one to choose wisely and desire goods that would lead to happiness, one needs to have a certain kind of virtue, which Aristotle, again, calls practical wisdom (*phronesis*)[38] (*NE* 1140^{b} 20-1140^{b} 30). Choosing the right action and making the right decision at the right time and at the right place is the work of practical wisdom. As Alasdair MacIntyre wisely observes *phronesis* has come to mean "generally a virtue that helps one to exercise the right judgement in particular cases" (1981: 144-145). Aristotle would agree that practical wisdom is a necessary aspect of our everyday life, since happiness requires choosing and distinguishing between things that are good from things that are bad (Alasdair MacIntyre 1981: 144). Practical wisdom, as Aristotle explains, has two sides because choosing well must involve both the ability "to discern one's own immediate good, and the larger good for "mankind of which one finds oneself a part" (*EE* 1140^{b} 9-11). Aristotle then concludes that it will be impossible for one "to be good in the strict sense without practical wisdom, nor practically wise without moral excellence [...]" (*NE* $1144^{b}30$-$1145^{a}6$). In this case then, human excellence, or rather, practical wisdom will be the disposition that leads us to attain our ultimate good: happiness.

4.3. Happiness: The Human Ultimate Good

The examination of the good life begins with the way one acquires and acts in relation to happiness (*EE* 1214 $^{a}17$). Aristotle begins his inquiry into his ethics by seeking to find out

[38] Aquinas would later call it *prudence* in his moral philosophy

exactly what is *good* for the human being (*NE* 1094[a]1-1094[a]17). Aristotle gives a formal definition of the *good* as "that at which all things aim" (*NE* 1094[a]2). He reasons that this could make a solid foundation for his definition of "human fulfilment", which is often interpreted as *eudaimonia* (happiness). By *good* here, Aristotle does not intend a list of 'good things' that we encounter daily like good food, good house or good car, but "that at which all things aim" (*NE* 1094[a]1-5). Aristotle implies several times that the human ultimate good is happiness. If correct then, happiness becomes the goal and end of the human ultimate aim. Hence, Aristotle establishes a connection between human goods and happiness. As Anthony Kenny observes, Aristotle made a link between *eudaimonia* and the two elements that contribute to it: "end" and "good" (Kenny 1969: 43). In other words, to be *eudaimon* (happy) means to experience the completeness of the human's ultimate (highest) good, which will mean achieving his/her full potential. The human good then becomes the excellent activity on the part of the soul that has reason as I have noted above (*NE* 1098[a]16-20).

However, since Aristotle claims that there are many good human activities, is every human good the same, or is there any good that is more desirable than others? For Aristotle, the answer to this question is as affirmative, as it is obvious. However, there is a little problem here because if there is any human good that is desired above other goods, then the next question would be: is there any good that is desired for itself and not for the sake of any other thing else? For example, if we desire money for food, and food for survival, and survival for something else and so on, where does this end? Aristotle, at this point reasons that this desirability of good cannot go on to "infinity"; it must stop at a point and that point will be the "chief" human good or the "highest" human good (*NE* 1094[a] 22). One thing is very clear to Aristotle, that this "highest" good must have a feature that no other good would have, and that would make this good the "chief" or "highest" human good. Thus, for Aristotle, this chief good must be desirable (chosen) for what it is by itself; it must not be desirable for the sake of any other good, and all other good must be desirable for its own sake (*NE* 1094[a]18-1094[b]11). At the end of his long inquiry, Aristotle comes up with "happiness" (*eudaimonia*) as that which is desired for its sake and not for the sake of any other thing ; "something complete and self-sufficient, and is the end of action [...] happiness is the chief good [...]" (*NE* 1097[b]23-1098[a]16).

Furthermore, Aristotle in trying to prove that happiness surpasses every other human good, stresses that since the practical good things like "honour", "pleasure", "reason" and all virtues are chosen for the higher *good* (which is happiness) other than themselves, it means that happiness is something superior to all these good things because "we choose these [other good things] also for the sake of happiness, judging that through them we shall be happy" (*NE* 1097^{a} 36 – 1097^{b} 6). This then makes happiness the end of all human desires and aspirations (*NE* 1097^{b}7-1097^{b}22). As a result of this, Aristotle insisted that only human beings can be happy because of the unique and rational nature of the human being (*NE* 1217^{a}25). It is only human beings, who have the ability to choose their end (good) and, through rationality, work toward this end and good in a way that other animals are incapable of doing (*NE* 1217^{a} 26). Hence, Aristotle argues that it is only the human being, who is capable of happiness because, it consists not only in an active and comprehensive practical life, but also in the exercise of man's highest and best faculties, which Aristotle terms, "contemplation". By contemplation, he means an activity of the mind to focus on an object in order to apprehend its features. For Aristotle, "other animals have no share in happiness" because they do not in any "way share in contemplation" (*NE* 1178^{b}32-1863). Bearing this in mind, Aristotle argues that both "activity of God" and human activity can be contemplated because this makes happiness a complete contemplative activity (*NE* 1178^{b}23-1863). Aristotle presents an example of the person, who has successfully followed Aristotle's road-map of virtuous activities and arrived, through contemplation, to the human ultimate good (happiness): the magnanimous statesman.

4.4. The Magnanimous Statesman: An Embodiment of Happiness

Having seen, what *eudaimonia* (happiness) means for Aristotle and of what it consists, I can now look at how his concept of happiness is practically lived out in society and in the life of the magnanimous statesman. When Aristotle talks about the magnanimous statesman, he is not referring to any specific individual, but to anyone, who is living a *happy* life, because he is "worthy of perfect excellence" (*NE* 1123^{b}28-1124^{a}20). For Aristotle, the only person, who is "good in the strict sense" of the word is the "magnanimous statesman" because in him all virtues are united. If all virtues are united in him, and since happiness is the reward of virtuous activity, then, it implies that the magnanimous statesman is the only one who has achieved happiness. In other words, this magnanimous statesman, in his reward

for his united virtues, epitomises, or rather, exemplifies Aristotle's kind of happiness. Aristotle would hold this kind of person in very high esteem for his virtuous character, which has led him to the discovery of the human ultimate good (happiness). Aristotle argues that the magnanimous statesman would be the one, who seeks the greatest good "outside of us" in whatever he does (*NE* 1123^{b}16-21). This person must be a humble person, though Aristotle also believes that honour is among the good things that are "outside of us" (*MM* 1184^{b}1-5). This sounds contradictory because one may ask, why should Aristotle declare somewhere that the good things "in the soul are best" (*MM* 1184^{b}1-5), and yet present the magnanimous statesman as the epitome of the virtuous person in society for acquiring the "good outside us"? However, in his explanation of this confusion, Aristotle, insists that a person is considered to be magnanimous only if the person "is worthy of great things...because anyone who esteems his own worth unduly is foolish, and nobody who acts virtuously is foolish or stupid" (*NE* 1123^{b}2-3). Aristotle goes on to argue that the person, who is "of great things" would be the person, whose greatness of soul is a "mean between vanity and littleness of soul, and it has to do with honour and dishonour" (*MM* 1192^{a}20-30). In other words, the magnanimous statesman must avoid the two extremes of excess and deficiency as we have seen above, viz. to be proud on the one hand, and cowardly (timid) on the other for the sake of honour (*NE* 1123^{b}9-10). By, honour, Aristotle meant "such a thing as the divine, the more excellent (for instance, soul, intellect), the more ancient, the first principle, and so on" (*MM* 1183^{b}20-25). We are not sure whether this explanation has cleared this confusion, or has made the confusion worse, but we can only say that the magnanimous statesman is an honourable man: a man of the highest form of excellence. Such a man is a man "of practical wisdom", which he seeks at all times (*NE* 1095^{b}13-1096^{a}5).

The magnanimous statesman seeks "the good [which] will bestow honour with knowledge and good judgement (*MM* 1192^{a}20-30)". For Aristotle, honour can never be bestowed on the mediocre or evil man; so it follows that the magnanimous statesman must be a good (happy) person. For Aristotle, it is obvious that such a person as the magnanimous man is characterised by greatness in every excellence or virtue (*NE* 1123^{b}30). As we have seen above, it is extremely difficult to determine the mean-state of every situation or circumstance, so it is extremely difficult to be truly a magnanimous man as Aristotle claims (*NE* 1124^{a}4). However, while it is true that the magnanimous man is concerned mainly with honour, yet he must always be moderately disposed towards honour, wealth, power and every kind of good and bad fortune (*NE* 1124a12-15). For Aristotle, that a person is born into a

wealthy family does not necessarily make one an honourable person (magnanimous man), rather, "in truth only the good man ought to be honoured [...]" (*NE* 1124^{a}26). In other words, being born in a wealthy family does not make one a happy person, but excellence (virtuous activity) does (*NE* 1124^{a}29). So, consequently, what seemed like contradiction to us at the beginning is not, actually, a contradiction after all because Aristotle has made it clear that a magnanimous man must have both virtue and honours, which are "good inside us" and "good outside us" respectively (*MM* 1184^{b}1-5)[39].

Moreover, in trying to paint a vivid picture of this magnanimous statesman, Aristotle lists a number of qualities expected of him. He explains that the magnanimous statesman is a man who takes great risks, when it is necessary for the good of himself, others and his society (*N.E.* 1124^{b} 6-9). Whenever such a person has received help from people, though he is reluctant to receive it, he repays such a service with interest (*NE* 1124^{b}12). The magnanimous man would not like to depend on anybody, except on his friends. Even this kind of dependence must be to the extent that it does not stain his reputation in society (*N.E.* 1124^{a} 30-1125^{a}1). That is why Aristotle maintains that in his dealings with other people, the magnanimous man "is haughty towards those who are influential and successful, but moderate towards those who have intermediate positions in society" (*N.E.* 1124^{b}17-23). The magnanimous man does not concern himself with trifling or worthless things; and in all his dealings he is open to speak and act in a straightforward manner (*N.E.* 1124^{b} 25-29). This person does not bear grudges, because it belittles his personality and paints his image black. He does not waste his time talking about himself or others, because he does not care whether he is complimented or not, and does not want anyone to be criticised (*NE* 1125^{a}4-7). In all indications, this magnanimous statesman is an embodiment of all virtues, but is this possible? What Aristotle does not consider is that for one 'to know' what virtue is, or how to be virtuous, does not automatically translate into being virtuous. That the magnanimous statesman has acquired all the necessary knowledge about virtues and how to apply them does not necessarily mean that he can achieve happiness. In other words, it is difficult, if not impossible to see one, who can embody all these qualities expected of this magnanimous statesman as enumerated by Aristotle. Therefore, Aristotle is right by saying, "Must no one at all, then, be called happy while he lives; must we, as Solon says, see the end? [...] is it also the case that a man is happy when he is *dead?* Or is not this quite absurd, especially for us

[39] This argument is based on the premise that Aristotle wrote Magna *Moralia*, or if not written by him, himself, at least, that it still contains his ethical doctrine.

who say that happiness is an activity?" (*NE* $1100^{a}10$ - $1100^{a}31$). However, this only suggests that for one to acquire happiness is quite a difficult goal to attain; hence, it is an on-going activity.

In conclusion, one thing is very clear in this chapter, that for one to acquire happiness is not easy, and also to pin down what Aristotle means by happiness is not easy either. However, it is apparent that happiness is the end and aim of all human activities, desires, and aspirations. Human nature plays a vital role in the Aristotelian concept of *eudaimonia* since it is based on humans having an end or ultimate goal, happiness. This happiness is not rooted in pleasure, but in the human function guided by reason in society, whether one is a doctor, a teacher or a driver and so on. It is within one's function that one will receive happiness; and in order to perform this function well, one needs to act in accordance with excellence (virtue), which Aristotle termed, the practical wisdom. Aristotle implies that human function does not come naturally to a human, but it is developed in and by society through the aid of his/her rational soul. This soul, not only makes man a living organism, but it also helps man in the active abilities of his mind to engage in the vital functions of the intellect (*NE* $1102^{b}11$-16). Aristotle believes that the human ultimate good is happiness, and thereby affirms happiness as a goal or end of the human ultimate aim. In other words, for Aristotle, there is a connection between the human goods (that for which we aim) and happiness. If we can achieve our goal or end, we must be happy. At last, it may look as if Aristotle has succeeded in presenting us with a theory/concept of *eudaimonia* that is not naturally plausible or attainable, except through contemplation. With that in mind, happiness then becomes an actualisation and the exercise of the basic activities that define the moral human life in society. Therefore, for Aristotle, every human being with a rational soul *should*, seek and acquire the life of excellence (virtuous life), which has happiness as its reward. Based on this, Aquinas in his moral philosophy (as will be seen in the subsequent chapters) will try to extend Aristotle's concept of happiness so as to be able to accommodate his ethics. But before that, I shall first examine Aquinas' moral philosophical starting point in relation to his notion of the human person as well as his (Aquinas') claims concerning the supernatural being, he calls "God".

Diagram 4.1. Aristotle's Hierarchy of the Living Organisms in Relation to Their 'Souls'

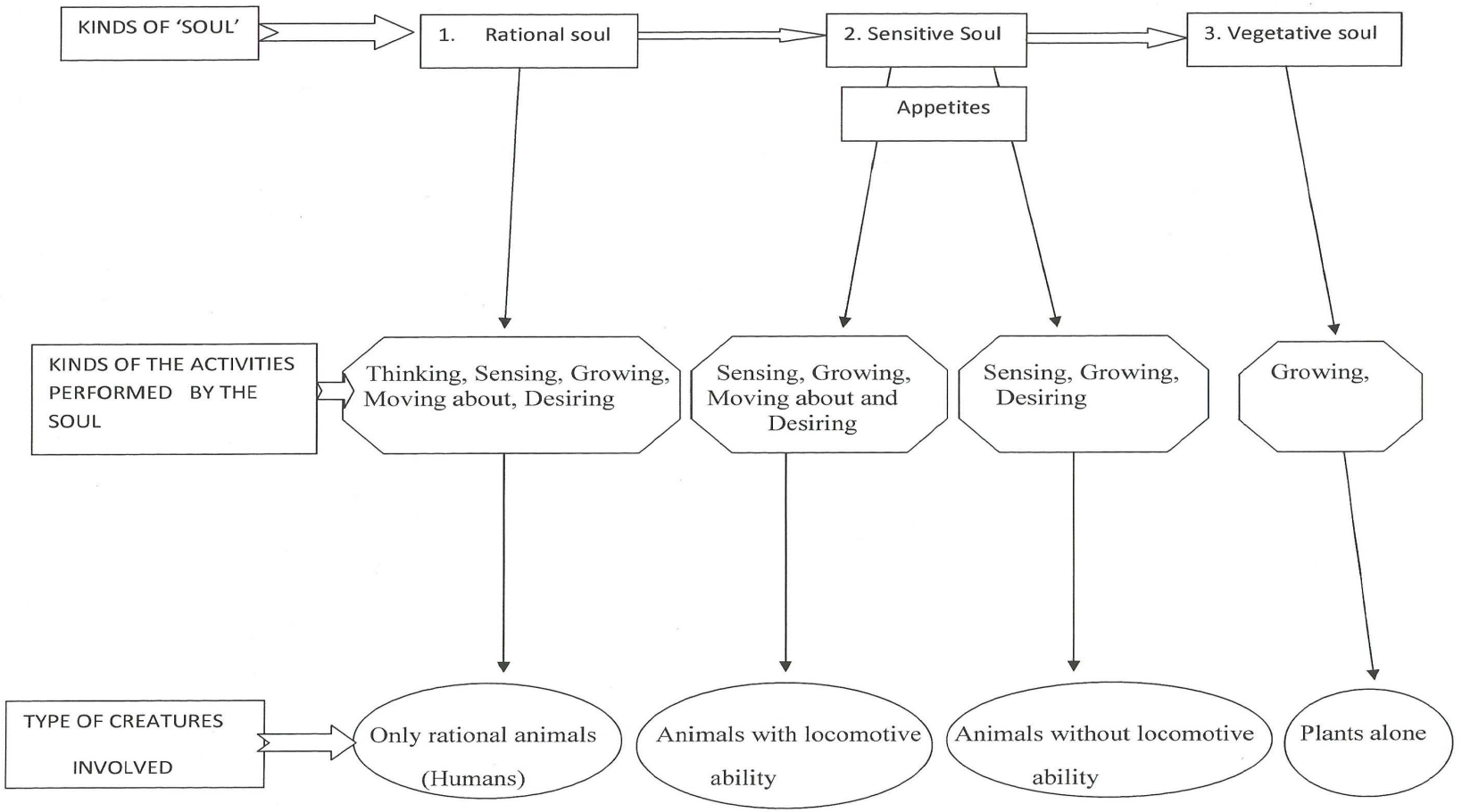
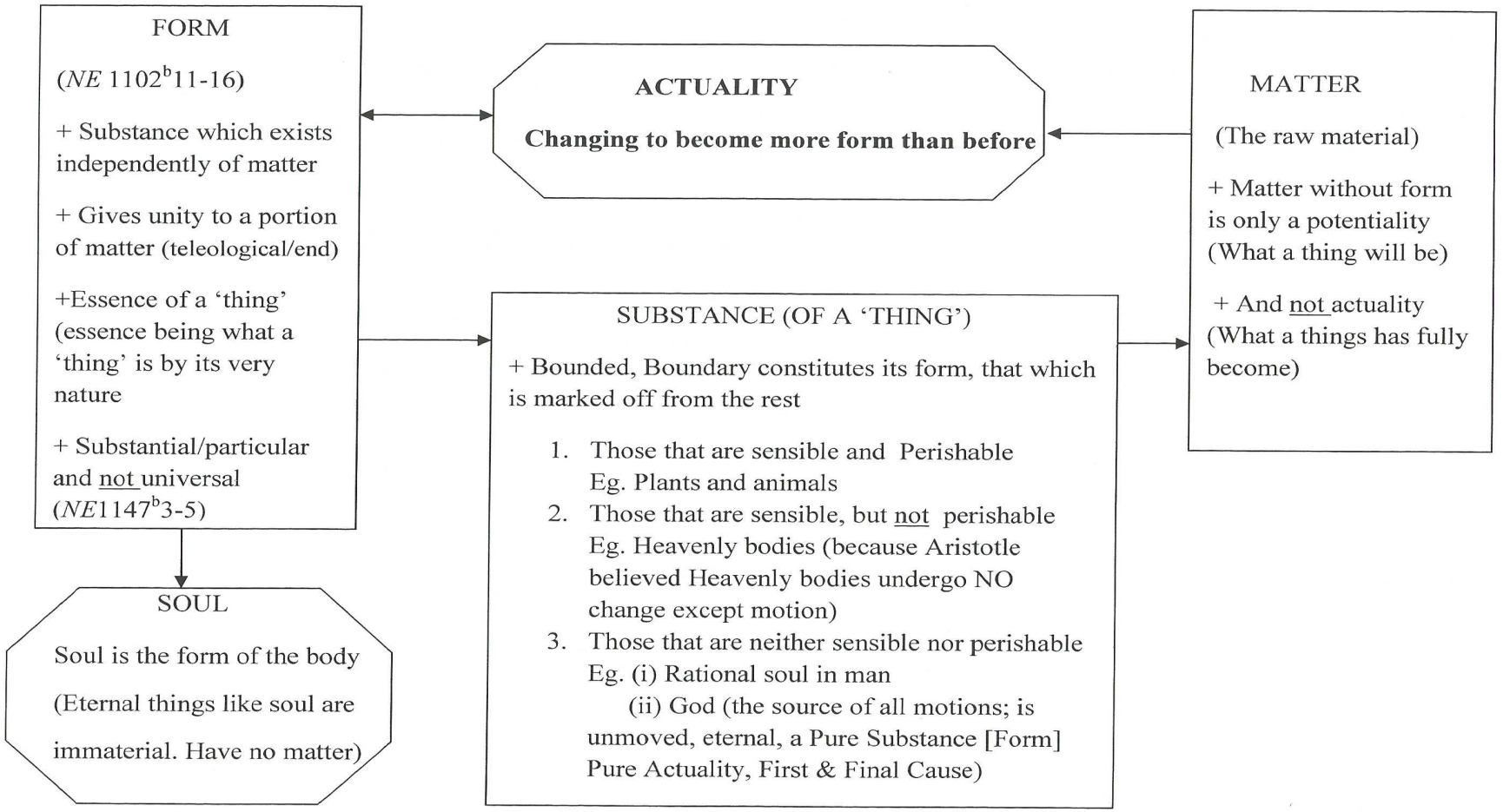


Diagram 4.2. Aristotle's metaphysical relationship between form and matter in relation to soul



CHAPTER FIVE

AQUINAS' BASIC MORAL PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK*:* HUMAN PARTICIPATION IN THE "DIVINE" NATURE

Having seen in chapter three Aristotle's basic moral philosophical principles, his emphasis on the human nature, as a rational being with function (*ergon*) in society; and having also looked in chapter four at Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness) as man's ultimate good, I can now proceed to examine, extensively, in this chapter, Aquinas' fundamental framework of moral philosophy so as to be able to establish to *what extent* he develops Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*. To be included in this chapter will also be Aquinas' understanding of the human "nature" as one, who participates in the supernatural activity of a Supreme Being he calls "God". After this, Aquinas' concept of God will be examined, and thereafter shown, in the subsequent chapters, that this "God" is, for Aquinas, the ultimate good/end (happiness) of the human person. However, Aquinas' moral philosophy (ethics) has two basic principles embedded in it and they are: firstly, the ultimate goal of human existence, which he claims like Aristotle, to be happiness, and secondly, how this goal can or cannot be attained or achieved. Aquinas devotes his *Summa Contra Gentiles* III chapters 25-40 to examining the first part of these principles, while his Second Part of the *Summa Theologiae* is set aside to deal with the second part of these principles. In *Summa Theologiae* IaIIae.1-5,[40] Aquinas took time to develop an argument that shows the nature and existence of one single ultimate end/goal for all human actions as well as the actions that the being has "control" over. From this starting point, Aquinas tries to develop an argument that human beings necessarily, (though not always aware of it), seek everything for the sake of the ultimate end/goal, happiness (beatific vision). For Aquinas, this is true since every action

[40] This is at times called the Treatise of happiness

(will) that proceeds from the human being (rational being) must be in accordance with the nature of its "object"; while the object of the will is an end and a good, where "an end is perceived as good by the willer's intellect" (*ST* Ia-IIae. Q.1. Art.1, *co*).

Aristotle argues in his *Nicomachean Ethics* that the human ultimate end/goal/good is happiness, where happiness is, for him, the reward of the human virtuous activity of the rational part of the soul. However, Aquinas, without disagreeing with Aristotle, goes a step further to argue that happiness is man's ultimate end/goal, while he insists that this ultimate end/goal consists in the divine contemplation: the "beatific vision". However, one may still argue here that, all these additional views from Aquinas gave him a wider context in his ethics, which Aristotle does not have. In other words, the complexity and wider context of Aquinas' ethical backgrounds, would substantially help him to develop a more diverse and systematic concept of happiness than Aristotle. Yet, this does not take away the fact that Aristotle equips Aquinas with the basic philosophical and ethical perspective of understanding human beings, who through their virtuous activities, are in pursuit of happiness (*N.E.* $1097^{a}36$-$1097^{b}6$). Aristotle also provided Aquinas with the basic understanding of human virtue, which is teleologically explained. For Aquinas, these qualities have given human beings the edge to be able to direct their actions and aspirations towards their ultimate good/end, which is "happiness". Moreover, it also must be noted that even though Aristotle did provide Aquinas with some of the ethical basic tools he needed in his moral philosophy, yet the fact also remains that Aquinas does broaden those concepts he adopted from Aristotle beyond what Aristotle envisaged, and that is what this chapter is all about. In other words, this chapter will show the departing or the starting point of Aquinas' journey in developing Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*, which would be gradually, but fully developed in next two chapters. However, let me start by examining Aquinas' concept of the human being.

5.1. **Aquinas' Concept of Human Nature**

Robert Pasnau claims that Aquinas agreed with Aristotle that to ask the question, "What is the human being?" is very obscure since a human being is a complex being with many "relevant component parts" and "underlying subjects" (2004:25). In other words, as Robert Pasnau notes if one asks the question, "*What is a human being?"* without specifying what kind of answer one anticipates, one may be expecting a psychological, social, ethical or metaphysical answer about the human being because each of these has its own definition of

human being (2004: 24-25). The reason why Pasnau agrees with Aristotle and Aquinas that the question is fundamentally obscure is because "the obscurity lies in large part in uncertainty over what sort of answer might be wanted" (2004:25). However, Aquinas, in trying to avoid this obscurity, makes it clear that his question about what a human being is will be answered metaphysically: human person (nature) in relation to his "soul". By soul here Aquinas means the form of the substance (body). Aquinas argues that the human being should be considered as a being, who is naturally "composed of a spiritual and corporeal substance" (QQ50–74). Aquinas explains in his *Summa Theologiae* that we can understand what human beings are, only by considering, first, their "nature" (*natura*) (QQ75–89. By human nature, Aquinas means the essential features of human beings, the things that make a human being a human being. Unlike Aquinas, Aristotle thought, as can be seen above, that what makes human *qua* human is something different from soul and body (*NE* 1129^{b} 19-26; *MM* 1189^{a} 33). For Aristotle, what distinguishes human beings from non-human animals[41] is their function (*ergon*), which consists in the rational activity of the soul. In other words, for Aristotle, with the help of the soul (rationality), a human being can "universally comprehend" the concept of things as opposed to the non-human animals that only have the "perception and memory of particulars" (*NE* 1147^{b}3-5). By "universal apprehension" here, Aristotle means the ability of the human mind to grasp or perceive the general characteristics of objects of the same kind (*NE* 1147^{b} 6-1147^{b} 17). So, for Aristotle, the rationality is in the soul and this helps in shaping human behaviours (characteristics). However, though Aquinas did not disagree with Aristotle's definition of human beings in terms of their "function", he preferred to define human beings in terms of their metaphysical composition of "soul" and "body". Aquinas insists that, "the fulness [sic] of human being requires a compound of soul and body, having all the powers and instruments of knowledge and movement: wherefore if any man be lacking in any of these, he is lacking in something due to the fullness of his being" (*ST*. Ia, Q.18, Art.1, *co.*). In other words, for Aquinas, in order to understand the human "nature", one needs to understand first, the human components parts (soul and body). What does Aquinas mean by "nature" here?

Furthermore, Robert Pasnau points out that the term "nature" has been interpreted to mean many things, which include: to "signify the inner principle of any generation or birth, [...] any inner principle of movement or action [...] the ultimate end of the process of generation, which Aquinas identifies as the essence of the species" (2004: 7). This then

[41] Aristotle considered human beings as "rational animals" as well (Cf. *NE* 1098^{a}3).

means that the nature of anything is the "inner principle" or "inner movement" or the "essence" of that subject (being). In this case, the human nature will be the inner principle or movement or the essence of the human being. In other words, human nature is considered to be "the essence or defining character of human beings" (Pasnau 2004: 8). This begs the question, what is the essence or the inner principle of the human being? For Aquinas, the essence of the human being is "the soul", which is the "trace" or "mark" of the Creator on him/her, a will be seen later (*ST*. Ia, Q.93.Art.6, *ad.* 3). This is not far from what Aristotle understood the soul to be in his *De Anima* as can be seen above, where he argues that the soul is the essence of the living organism (Cf. $1097^{b}33$-$1098^{a}5$; $414^{b}32$-$415^{a}13$)[42]. Without the soul, there is no life in an organism (*MM* 1182^{b} 1-30). For Aristotle, an essence of a thing explains or "defines the nature" of that object. Similarly, for Aquinas, the soul defines the nature of the human being as a living organism and as a rational being, whose ultimate end is happiness. The question here is what is the relationship between the human body and soul in relation to the attainment of his/her ultimate goal of life, happiness? In other words, what precisely does Aquinas mean by "soul" and "body", and how do they aid the human being in the attainment of his/her goal/end, which is happiness?

5.1.1. The Human Being: A Composite of Body and Soul[43]

In dealing with the "soul", Aquinas first criticises "the Philosophers of old", which included Demorcritus and Empedocles[44], who according to him, were not "able to rise above their imaginations, supposing that the principle of these actions [knowledge and movement] was something corporeal[...]" (*ST*. Ia, Q. 75, Art.1, *co.*). For this group, "only bodies were real things and that what is not a body is nothing" (*ST*. Ia, Q. 75, Art.1, *co.*). Aquinas argues that the bodies cannot be souls nor the principles of movement since that would make all parts of the body different souls. He argues further that it might be true that the body is *a* principle of life, just as the heart is a principle of life in an animal, yet the soul remains the *first* principle of life in the human being. Aquinas invokes Aristotle's principle of the *Unmoved Mover,* to support his argument. For Aquinas, everything that moves is moved by some mover, and the mover is moved by another mover, but this movement must not go

[42] Cf. *NE* $1097^{b}33$-$1098^{a}5$; $414^{b}32$-$415^{a}13$

[43] *ST* QQ 75-80

[44] As he found them in Aristotle *De Anima* 1,2 ($404^{a}1$)

on to infinity. And since to move is to pass from potency to act, it means that the mover must always be ready to actualise the object that is being moved (*ST*. Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co. & resp.*). Therefore, the body cannot be the mover here because it cannot produce the act for the soul, since it cannot give what it does not have. So, the mover here, which also causes an invariable movement to the body, is the soul (*ST*. Ia, Q. 75, Art.1, *co.*).

Furthermore, after explaining that the soul is not the body, Aquinas directs his argument against those, who "maintained man to be a soul making use of a body" (*ST*. Ia, Q. 75, Art.4, *co.*) and that man is, viz. a pure "intellectual soul" (*ST*. Ia, Q. 76, Art.1, *co*). Those on top of his list here would be represented by Plato and the Platonists like Augustine. As Anton Pegis notes "Platonism has the tendency to say that man is a *soul* using a body rather than a *composite* of soul and body" (1965: xvii). Pegis goes on to argue that the implication of this tendency is that the whole nature of man will be found then in the soul, and that the body will be a kind of "[...] residence for man, a residence which is sometimes a workshop, sometimes a prison, sometimes a grave" (1965: xvii). For Aquinas, the implication for this tendency, when stretched out a bit would have a far-reaching effect on the understanding of human nature since, for him, those, who support this tendency intend to separate soul from body, mind from senses, form from matter (*ST*. Ia, Q. 75, Art.5, *co.*). Even Plato himself tries to protect this idea of "purity of intelligible essence, the universality and immateriality of intellectual knowledge, as well as the rational dignity of soul from the stain of matter" (1984: xvii). In other words, for Plato and his disciples, the true world is the world of pure indelible essence and knowledge, and a true man is the man of pure rational soul alone. Aquinas argues that from experience, such a man never existed, and will never exist because if he did/does exist, he would not be a human being, but an angel or "God", who is a pure intellect without matter (*ST*. Ia, Q. 76, Art.7, *co.*). Therefore, for Aquinas, what exists is a man composed of matter and form, a being united in soul and body. For Plato and his supporters, man is completely intelligible as a rational animal, but not as soul and body because essence and being must not be put together with matter. This made these Platonists conclude that man has two beings: the soul and the body. Aquinas disagrees with this view of the human being, but rather, affirms the view that the human being is one being and one nature, yet composed of soul and body (*ST*. Ia, Q. 76, Art.1, *co.*). This means that man is a unified being in soul and body with the "internal organization and order serving *as a whole* one specific and final purpose" (Pegis 1965: xx-xxi).

Moreover, in affirming his stance against the Platonic argument that man is of two beings, Aquinas argues that the human soul is a spiritual substance, which does not need a body to exist because it can and does exist through itself (*ST*. Ia, Q.75, Art.6, *co.*). This means that the spiritual substance does not exist by itself because the whole composite receives actual existence through one cause or principle (*ST.* Ia, Q. 75, Art.5, *co.*). That is why, for Aquinas, to say that man is a composite being is ambiguous because when it is said that man is a composite being, it must not be seen as if man has two beings; rather, it should be seen that though man is composed of body and soul, the body then exists *in* and *through* the existence of the soul (*ST*. Ia, Q.75, Art.2, *co*.). For Aquinas, that is why it is right for somebody to say, existentially considered, that it is the body that is in the soul, not the soul that is in the body. So, man can be said to be spirit and matter together; he is not an imprisoned angel; he is by nature an incarnate spirit (Pegis 1948: xxii). For Aquinas, the human soul is a subsistent that is "incorporeal" (without material body), and thus does not cease to exist as a result of the death of the body (*ST*. Ia, Q.75, Art.2, *co*.). This means that the soul as a 'subsistent form' (spirit) can exist without any matter after the death of the body. The soul then becomes the form of a substance (body). By substance, Aquinas means something that is both subsistent and complete in a nature. By nature here, it is means an intrinsic principle of movement and change in an organism (a subject). It is in the human soul that the formal principle element of a human nature is found (Ralph McInerny 2014)[45].

Furthermore, for Aquinas, the human soul is subsistent because, without the material body, the soul has the ability to carry on the intellectual activity, which makes him an incarnate spirit (*ST.* Ia, Q. 75, Art.2, *co.*). To say that man is an incarnate spirit makes him an observable reality, and this does not pose any problem with the unity of his being and of his nature as Platonists feared. As Pegis argued, there are two things we cannot say about the soul in this regard: firstly, "that an intellectual substance is joined to a body as a consequence of being an intellectual substance because the good of such a substance is a spiritual good, the knowledge of truth. Secondly, we cannot say that the soul is joined to a body for the good of the body itself, since matter serves form rather than making it its servant or enslaving it"

[45] Available online at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas

(Pegis 1965: xxiii)[46]. This means that a spiritual substance like the human soul, which is also intellectual in its nature and purpose, must require to be part of a body (matter) in order to perform its intellectual function well (*ST.* Ia, Q. 76, Art.1, *resp. & co.*). Aquinas argues further that the form, rather than the matter, is the inner principle that makes a thing be what it is: "the essence of any given thing is completed through its form" (*ST.* Ia, Q.29, Art.1, *ad* 4). What about matter? Aquinas holds that the material cause (the human body), for example, has much less claim to be included as part of human nature because human beings share matter (body/flesh) with other non-human animals. In other words, that which makes us human *qua* human is not the matter, but the form and that should lay claim to the *humanness* of the human being. For Aquinas, "the saying that man and animals have a like beginning in generation is true of the body; for all animals alike are made of earth. But it is not true of the soul" (*ST.* Q. 75, Art. 8, *obj.*1) .

Moreover, following Aristotle, Aquinas argues that all living things are composites of matter and substantial form. By "substantial form", Aquinas means a principle that organises matter into a discrete substance equipped with certain powers (potentialities).[47] In other words, a thing's substantial form comprises the nature of a thing, and this is metaphysical aspect since the substance of a thing makes that thing the kind of a thing it is and it also gives that thing "the species-defining powers it has" (*ST* Ia, Q. 76, Art.1; *ST* Ia, Q. 5, Art.5, *co.*; *ST* Ia-IIae, Q. 85, Art.4, *co.*). The soul is the substantial form of the human being since it organises the human body (matter). This is so because for Aquinas, all substances seek always their own perfection (*ST* Ia Q.6, Art.1, *resp. & co.*). In other words, all substances seek as their final end a fully realised state of existence or actuality; and this final end (cause), Aquinas, argues is "God", as will be seen later. This means that a substance cannot achieve its final end (cause) in isolation from the formal and efficient causes. Aquinas adopts Aristotle's final cause as "the cause of causality" because they both agreed that it fixes and determines each of the other causes. As has been seen in chapter one, Aristotle perceived the principle of the First Cause (First Unmoved Mover) as a substance he called *God.* Aquinas would agree with this, but the only underlying (causal) difference between both principles is that both Aquinas and Aristotle have different concepts of "*God"*. In other words, they both

[46] Cf. *ST.* Ia, Q. 76, Art.1, *co & resp*.

[47] See diagram 4.1. and 4.2.

agree on the principal of causality, but they differ on how it is translated or applied to the reality at hand (soul and body).

In view of this, following Aristotle's analysis of the principle of causality, Aquinas set out to explain that the human being should be considered in terms of formal and material causes. This led him to demonstrate that the soul is not a body, but rather the form of a body. In considering the formal causes, Aquinas argues that "the form does not perfect its matter except through the end" (*ST.* Ia Q.75, Art.5, *resp. & co.*). Aquinas describes the form (soul) as what actualises matter (body), but here he stresses that form perfects (or completes) matter. He argues that although formal causes are most often projected ahead of material causes, yet no definition of human beings would be complete without reference to the bodies of which we are composed. The nature of a species consists in what its definition signifies. But in the case of natural things, like the human being, the definition signifies not the form alone, but the form and the matter: "spiritual and corporeal substance" (*ST.* Ia, Q.75, Art.4, *co.*). As Pasnau observes, "[...] we can pick out the form of any composite object by identifying that which perfects the object [...]" (2004: 25-26). We cannot settle questions about the form of an object unless we know what that object's perfect (complete) state consists of. This is true because it is only in seeing a finished product, for example, a car, that we can see the form of a car. It is in asking the question, what is the nature or form (purpose/ end) of human life that, one can see and understand what the essential features of a human being are. In other words, Aquinas insists that it is the final cause that specifies and gives shape to the formal cause in much the same way that the formal cause specifies and gives shape to the material cause: "The end is related to things ordered to the end just as form is related to matter" (*ST.* 1a-IIae, Q.4, Art.4, *co.*). For Aquinas, the matter does not receive its form except through the end (final cause, happiness: "God"), and the form does not perfect its matter except through this end. Put differently, it is the human final cause or end or purpose of life (happiness) that gives meaning to life. We can't know what the most significant human nature (capacity) is, unless we know what the ultimate end of human life is. In this way, we can see that Aquinas' views about the end or purpose of human life, or rather the meaning of human life has become also, as it were, his motivation for developing Aristotle's *eudaimonia*. Aquinas claims that man's ultimate end is, unarguably, the *beatific vision* (happiness with "God"). This end helps us to identify the form or the place of the soul in relation to its final end, happiness with 'God'. As Robert Pasnau rightly notes in his book, *Thomas Aquinas on Human Nature*, "His [Aquinas's] view that final causality gives shape to human nature

provides both a rationale and a sample of why theology for him is continuous with philosophy for us" (2004:21- 22). Therefore, there is a link between the material cause (body) and the formal cause (soul) in relation to the human ultimate end, happiness. This link is possible because the human being, a composite of soul and body, is a "*knower"*.

5.1.2. The Human Soul-Body Makes Man A "*Knower"*

After discussing the human being as a composite of soul and body, Aquinas followed Aristotle closely to definite soul as "the first actuality of a physical body potentially having life" (*De Anima* 2,1, 412^{a}28). I have shown above that Aristotle identifies three types of soul in human beings: intellectual, sensitive, and vegetative. Aquinas argues that the three "capacities" or "powers" of the soul, which correspond exactly to the three types of soul given by Aristotle: the rational power, the sensitive power, and the vegetative power, are all present in the human soul (*ST.* Ia, Q.75, Arts.3 & 4, *co.*). Beyond the capacities for reasoning, sensing, and growing, Aristotle affirms that the soul is the origin of the principle of desire as well as that of the body's movement from place to place. Therefore, in addition to the intellectual, sensitive, and vegetative powers, Aristotle attributes to the soul a "locomotive" and an "appetitive" power (Miner 2009: 13).[48] However, Aquinas, in agreement with Aristotle, defines soul as "the first principle of life of those things which live: for we call living things 'animate' [i.e. having a soul] and those things which have no life, 'inanimate'" (*ST.* Ia, Q. 75, Art.1, *ad*) and elsewhere as "the principle of intellectual operation [...] a principle both incorporeal and subsistent" (*ST* Ia, Q.75, Art 2, *co.*). By the first principle of life, Aquinas means that which any living being (animate) cannot do without, that is the form. It is *the* first in the hierarchy of the principles of the human person. The heart is a principle of life in animals, but "nothing corporeal can be the first principle of life" for the human person (*ST*.1a, Q. 75, Art.1, *ad*). Robert Pasnau explains that "the human soul does not only distinguish the human person from other animals, but it distinguishes human beings as distinctive animals" (2004: 208). This means that for Aquinas, the human being is not just a rational and social animal, but a substance endowed with the Spirit of God. This would also mean that the function of the human being is not only to be engaged in rational virtuous activities in society as Aristotle argued in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, but also to engage in a spiritual activity that fulfils his/her ultimate end, contemplation of God.

[48] Cf. *NE* 1102^{b}29-1103^{a}3

Consequently, Aquinas concludes that the human being as a composite of soul and body must be understood as the complement of the spiritual and intellectual nature of the soul. He reaches this conclusion because for him, if the knowledge of the truth is the aim of a spiritual substance, and if the soul which is such a substance, is an incarnate spirit, then it means that it is an incarnate in order to do the work of spirit or rather, spiritual work. So, the soul must do the spiritual work as in incarnate spirit. This means that the soul has taken a spiritual and metaphysical dimension for Aquinas. And to say that the human being must do spiritual work as an incarnate spirit, which is an aspect of his intelligence, therefore, makes man a "*knower*" , a composite being. For Platonists, the *knower* is a pure reason, but for Aquinas, the knower is "a knower", the composite of body and soul (*ST.* Ia, Q.12, Art.4, *obj*. 4 & *co.*). Knowing involves a process, and the soul and body must be involved in this process. For Aquinas, for man to be a knower means that he must be partly material in order to be adequately a *knower*. Plato's greatest fear has surfaced again, because for Plato material (matter) must be viewed with suspicion: human sense can corrupt human knowledge. For Aquinas, man is a *knower*[49] (body and soul, matter and form), which makes it possible for him to be able to comprehend (know) the world around him, not as an abstract, but as a sensible reality. Aquinas affirmed that it is only the human soul that has the capacity *to know* or to rationalise because man possesses the intellectual soul as opposed to other non-human animals. Aquinas also argued that this is possible because man is a composite being (unity) of soul and body, and this gives him access to the double worlds of senses and spirits (material and intellectual/spiritual) (*ST.* Ia, Q.12, Art.4, *obj*. *co.*). In other words, the unification of the body and soul helps man in his process of acquiring knowledge; the world is made knowable to him through his senses. As Aquinas puts it:

> Now our soul possesses two cognitive powers; one is the act of a corporeal organ, which naturally knows things existing in individual matter; hence sense knows only the singular. But there is another kind of cognitive power in the soul, called the intellect; and this is not the act of any corporeal organ. Wherefore the intellect naturally knows natures which exist only in individual matter [...] hence it follows that through the intellect we can understand these objects as universal; and this is beyond the power of the sense (*ST*. Ia, Q.12, Art. 4, *co.*).

This is true because we know things as beings, not as essence. Man knows concrete sensible being first, and not the abstract. This makes it possible for the human being *to be* a being of action. For Aquinas, the name *being* takes its origin from the *act to be*; a name

[49] Aquinas did not deny the fact that man is a thinker, but he emphasised the ability of man "to know" the sensible world as opposed to the abstract thinking of the world.

which makes man a being of *action* as opposed to a being of a essence. Aquinas considers the human act as a defining characteristic of the human nature (*ST* Ia, Q.76, Art. 1, *resp* & *co.*).

5.2. Human Act and Will: As the Constitutive Elements of Human Moral Actions

Apparently, in his effort to define human activity, Aquinas adopts Aristotle's "function argument" similar to what has been seen in chapter one above, though a different variation of it. We have to remember that for Aristotle, man's function is what makes him good or bad; his worth depends on whether he performs his function well or not (*NE* $1102^{b}11$-16). However, the problem here is that Aristotle does not tell us exactly what such function is and of what it consists. As Norman Kretzmann & Stump Eleonore observe, it is incorrect to make the hasty transition, as Aristotle does, "from particular individual functions to *the* human function" (1993:202). However, what is obvious from what Aristotle and Aquinas present is that the *human act* is one that only the human agent performs. However, human beings have endless lists of such human actions, but Aquinas' response is similar to that of Aristotle that what characterises "the human agent is rational activity" (Kretzmann & Stump 1993: 202). Kretzmann & Stump also explain further, that rationality helps man to have "dominion over his acts thanks to reason and will- and the virtue of *that* activity makes the human agent good" (*Ibid*). Aquinas, like Aristotle, argues that the acts performed by human beings (agents) are said to be moral acts for a number of reasons, but first among these reasons is, for their rational nature. However, to be able to understand these reasons, we need to look at the distinction made by Aquinas between what he calls the "human acts" (*actus humani*) and the "acts of a human being" (*actus hominis*) (*ST* Ia-IIæ. Q.1, Art.1, *resp.*). For Aquinas, proper "human acts" have moral dimensions attached to them. These actions are properly called "human actions" because they are proper to "man as man" (*Ibid*). What does Aquinas mean by this? Aquinas explains that since "man is a rational animal [...] he is master of his actions [...] through his reason and [free]-will" (*ST* Ia-IIæ. Q.1, Art.1, *resp.*). By free-will, Aquinas means "the faculty and will of reason" (*Ibid*). In other words, 'the human act' is not every action performed by the human being, for example, sleeping, eating, procreation, which other animals could perform better than human beings, but only those actions that "proceed from a deliberate will" with a reasoned choice of an end in mind (*ST* Ia-IIæ. Q1.

Art.1, *resp.*). Only those activities that are "willingly and knowingly" performed would qualify as human acts. Put differently, in order for actions to count as human acts, it must be presumed that those actions are the "products of an agent", who, through his/her reasoned consideration, has made a conscious- free decision about what is good or bad (Kretzmann & Stump 1993: 204).

Similarly, Aquinas argues that the human act is the action performed by the human agent with a certain end in mind, because for him, "every agent acts for an end" (*Contra Gentiles* BK 3, § 6). In other words, every agent, both human and otherwise, acts for an end, human beings through their intellect, and animals through their natural instincts. In other words, the human being as an agent acts by nature to an end, which is happiness with "God". Hence, it can be said that "human acts [*actus humani*] are the actions that are governed by a reasoned consideration of what is good, because reason is the first principle for all human acts [...]" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.58, Art.2, *resp.*). On the other hand, 'the acts of a human being' are "any other actions found in man [...] but not properly 'human' actions, since they are not proper to man as man" (*ST* Ia-IIæ. Q1. Art.1, *resp.*). The acts of a human being are "any and all activities or operations that can truly be attributed to human beings, *but not insofar as they are human*, not *qua* human" (Kretzmann and Stump 1993: 196, *my italics*). Sleeping or walking, for example, is an action of a human being, because one does not need rationality to sleep or to walk well; these activities (actions) are common to all animals both human and non-human. At this point, it is clear that what distinguishes 'human acts' from the 'acts of a human' is that all 'human acts' are supposed to lead us to our final end, happiness, while the 'acts of the human being' are any unconscious actions attributed to human beings. This leads Aquinas to explain that "the object of the will is the end and the good" for the human actions (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.1, Art.1, *resp.*). Thus, since human acts *qua* human have their source in reason and *will*, this means that these are faculties possessed only by human beings and this makes human actions moral actions directed toward the "First Act" (Final Cause), Aquinas terms, "God".

5.3. Aquinas' Concept of "God": A Pure and First Act

Aquinas begins his investigation into the nature of a being he calls "God" by first criticising the "ancients", who thought that the nature or essence of the "first principles" of things are corporeal elements (*ST.* Ia, Q. 3, Art.1, *co*.). It is not clear here what Aquinas means by first principles. However, Pasnau explains that by the basic principle of causality, Aquinas implies "God" (Pasnau 2004: 34). Aquinas is determined to systematically demonstrate that the existence of "God" is knowable since it is "self-evident". For Aquinas, to say that God exists is "self-evident" because it is the same thing as to say that the predicate is included in the essence of the subject (*ST,* Ia, Q. 2, Art.1, *co*.). By "self-evident" Aquinas means the ability of the human mind to access the nature or essence of God. Aquinas argues that God's 'self-evidence' can be considered in two ways: "on one hand, self-evident in itself, though not to us, on the other hand, though self-evident in itself and to us" (*ST,* Ia, Q. 2, Art.1, *co*.). This sounds contradictory because God cannot be knowable to us, and at the same time unknowable to us, either that God is knowable or not. However, Aquinas maintains that there is no contradiction in his argument because the essence of God is unknowable to us since the essence of God is identical to His existence. For Aquinas, if the essence of the predicate and the subject is known by all, then, it means that the proposition will be self-evident to all. Aquinas insists that since the proposition "God exists" is self-evident to us because the predicate is the same as the subject, then to know God's essence will be possible because God is His own existence. But since the essence of God is not known to us in full, we need something that is known to us that will demonstrate this divine essence by its effects. Aquinas makes a big leap in his argument here, by arguing that since God is man's happiness by nature, then, to know that God exists in a general way, though not in a clear way, is imprinted in us by nature. Aquinas insists that since "man naturally desires happiness, [therefore] what is naturally desired by man must be naturally known to him" (*ST,* Ia, Q. 2, Art.1, *ad.*1). Therefore, Aquinas argues that man may know that God exists, even though it is not the full knowledge of God's nature or His essence. For Aquinas that God exists is self-evident because it is true, and the existence of the truth is always self-evident, but the existence of the First Truth is not self-evident (*Ibid*).

However, Aquinas is very certain that while the knowledge of the essence of a God is unknowable to philosophy, it can be known to us by "Revelation"[50]. The question here is, can the existence of God be philosophically demonstrated? If God's essence is His existence, as

[50] Since this is not a theology thesis, it will not be necessary to venture into this realm

Aquinas claims, and His essence remains in principle, philosophically, unknowable to us, how then could it be demonstrated? For Aquinas, it can be demonstrated that there is *a* God, Who is only *One*. However, Aquinas admits that to know God's essence remains in principle, philosophically, unknowable to us because the existence of God cannot be demonstrated from what he terms "prior absolutely" (*a priori*)[51]. For Aquinas, there are two ways through which we can demonstrate the existence of God: firstly, through the cause (*propterquid*), whereby we argue from what is "prior absolutely" to what is *posteriori*. In other words, a demonstration from what is evident to our world of senses to what is not evident to our world of senses (experience). Secondly, to demonstrate God's existence can also be through the *effect* and this is called demonstration *quia.* According to Aquinas, this kind of demonstration "is to argue from what is prior relatively only to us" and to what is not made clear to us prior to our knowledge (experience) of it (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.2, *co.*). Aquinas argues further that if we know the *effect* of something, it will definitely lead us to its *cause* because if the *effect* is knowable to us, we can proceed to the knowledge of the *cause* that we do not know. In other words, if we know the *effect* of a thing, we stand a better chance of knowing the *cause*. So, the existence of God, though is not clear to us, can be demonstrated through the effects of the Cause. This is true since every effect depends upon its cause; if the effects exist, then, the cause must pre-exist. Aquinas believes that the existence of God can be known by natural reason. Aquinas argues that "when the existence of a cause is demonstrated from the effect, then the effect takes the place of the definition of the cause in proof of the existence" (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.2, *ad*. 2-3). Aquinas goes on to give us his five famous philosophical arguments (Five Ways) to prove the existence of God:

Firstly, Aquinas invokes an argument very similar to that of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover. However, Aquinas argues that anything that is in motion has been put in motion by another, but since this chain of motion cannot go on to infinity, therefore, there must be a First Mover, who initiated the whole movement, and this he calls God (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*). For Aquinas, since nothing can move unless it is in a process of potency to act, this movement, then, can only be started by something that is in a state of actuality. And the only thing that can start this process, Aquinas argues, is the First Act, called God (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*).

[51] A *priori* knowledge is the kind of knowledge that requires evidence from sensory experience to ascertain its truth, while a *posteriori* knowledge is a kind of knowledge that does not depend on sensory experience or experienced-based knowledge to ascertain it truth.

The second argument is about the causality, and it is similar to that of Aristotle's[52]. Aquinas claims that from our human experience, there is nothing that exists that is not caused by something. This chain of efficient cause cannot go to infinity as well, therefore, there must be "an intermediate cause, and the intermediate cause is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether this intermediate cause be several or one only" (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*). Aquinas goes on to argue that to take away the cause is to take away the effect, which means that if there is no first efficient cause, there won't be any intermediate or ultimate cause. Therefore, since this cannot go on forever, it is "necessary to admit a first efficient cause to which everyone gives the name of God" (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*).

The third argument is about the possibility and necessity. Here again, Aquinas appeals to the human experience. He claims that since there are things from our experience that are possible "to be and not to be" because they are "generated", it means that these things can also cease to exist at one point (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*). In other words, things at a certain point in time that did not exist have the possibility of not existing again at a certain time. In other words, anything that has a beginning must have an ending. He argues that it is only something that exists that has the ability to bring something that does not exist into existence. He posits that there must be a kind of being (efficient cause) that its existence is necessary so as to cause the existence and necessity of other beings; and this being is what people call God (*Ibid*).

The fourth way is about the gradation as it is found in things. Aquinas argues that among beings, "there are some more and some less good, true, noble and the like" and this "more" or "less" are "predicated to different things according to their different way, which is a movement towards the maximum" (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*). In other words, every being strives toward perfection or maximum; therefore, there must be "something which is truest, something best, something noblest, and consequently, something which is the most being..." (*Ibid*). Put differently, if all things are striving for the maximum or the best, there must be

[52] Cf. Aristotle's *Physics* 195^{a} 6-8; *Metaphysics* 1013^{b} 6–9

something which is the cause of all goodness and perfection in other beings, and this we call God (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*).

The fifth argument is about the designer. Aquinas argues that we see in nature that there are things which do not have intelligence, but they act for an end (because they act in the same way all the time for the best result). For Aquinas, if these bodies do not have intelligence and still can act for an end, it then means that there must be some being with knowledge and intelligence, who directs them toward their end/goal, whether or not they are aware of it. Aquinas therefore, concludes that "some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are ordered to their end; and this being we call God" (*ST,* Ia, Q.2, Art.3, *co.*).

Furthermore, Aquinas goes on to make a semantic distinction between "God" used as a proper noun, and "God" (god) used as a common noun (a metaphor). For Aquinas, when it is used as a proper noun, "it is a concrete name signifying a nature existing in some *suppositum*" (*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 9, *co.*). Therefore, when the name *God* is used (at times with a capital letter) as a proper noun, it signifies the *divine nature*. While when the name God (s) is used as a common noun, it is used in a metaphorical sense, which means that these gods, according to Aquinas, "share, not in the whole, but in divinity by likeness" of the true God (*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 9, *co.*). He argues that if gods are called by this name it does not mean that they possess "divine nature", but may possess some properties of God such as existence. In view of this, he explains that "the divine nature is only communicable according to the participation of some likeness" (*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 9, *ad.*1). Therefore, one needs to be careful in order to identify when Aquinas uses the name of God in an appellative way, which signifies the likeness of "the divine nature in the possessor" , or as a proper noun, which applies to the "true God and not God of opinion" (*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 10, *s.c.*). Aquinas goes further with his clarification that the name God is actually used in an analogical way since "God Himself in reality is neither universal nor particular" (*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 9, *ad.*2). He argues that the name *God* cannot be applied "univocally" nor "equivocally" because if it is applied in a univocal term, it would mean absolutely the same thing as "gods", and if it is applied in equivocal term, it would mean an absolutely different thing from the name, "god". Therefore, Aquinas has to settle for the middle point, namely the analogical term, which

means for him, "a word taken in one signification, [which] must be placed in the definition of the same word taken in other sense..." (*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 10, *co.*). He finally concludes that the most proper name that applies to this God is "HE WHO IS"[53] for three reasons:

> Firstly, because of its signification for it does not signify form, but simply existence itself. Hence since the existence of God is His essence itself, which can be said of no other (Q[3], A[4]),.. Secondly, on account of its universality, for all other names are either less universal, or, if convertible with it, add something above it at least in idea [...] Now our intellect cannot know the essence of God itself in this life, as it is in itself, but whatever mode it applies in determining what it understands about God, it falls short of the mode of what God is in Himself.[...] Thirdly, from its consignification, for it signifies present existence; and this above all, properly applies to God, whose existence knows not past or future, as Augustine says (De Trin. v).(*ST* Ia, Q.13, Art 11, *co.*).

In conclusion, Aquinas argues that "the First Act is the universal principle of all acts, because it is infinite, virtually 'precontaining all things'" (*ST,* Ia, Q.75, Art.5, *ad*. 1). For Aquinas, it makes sense to argue that all acts must have proceeded from the 'First Infinite Act', and in which they also participate, though not as part of Him, but by diffusion of His processions. He goes on to argue that since change belongs to matter because of its potency, and the form causes matter to be, and so is the agent, by changing the matter to the act of a form, therefore, there must be an Act that will not be affected by the change because it is not matter nor potency. In other words, since a human being is composed of matter and form, he/she is moving from potentiality to act, and this movement is that of acting to the 'Ultimate Act' or 'First Act': happiness, God (*ST,* Ia, Q.75, Art.5, *ad*. 3). For Aquinas, everything that participates in something, must participate in something (object or being) higher than itself, because participation is a sign of limitation on the part of the participator, therefore, "God alone, Who is His own being, is pure act and infinite" (*ST,* Ia, Q.75, Art.5, *ad*. 4). This participation of the human being with this "higher being" is what Aquinas meant by *Imago Dei.*

5.4. The Human Person as an *Imago Dei*

Aquinas claims that the best way to understand "God's nature" is only through understanding God via creation. Aquinas argues that all of creation provides a kind of image or mirror of this First Principle (First Act) he called, God, though some parts of creation provide clearer or better image of this God than the others. There is no doubt, that for Aquinas, the human being is the only part of creation that could mirror God more than all

[53] A name he borrowed from his Christian Bible (Exodus chapter 3 verse 6).

other creatures. For Aristotle, every creature has a soul; for Aquinas, every creature is an *Imago Dei*. Aquinas borrows this term, *imago dei*, from the Biblical concept, which sees the human being as a being created in the "*image* and *likeness* of God" (Cf. Gen. 1:26-27). Aquinas has a couple of ways through which he explains what the "*Image of God*" means for him. Aquinas, analogically explains that an 'image' of something is a copy of that thing, just as a statue of a person is said to be an image of a person, whereas a 'likeness' is a mark or "trace" of something (*ST*. Ia, Q.93. Art 6, *ad* 3). Hence, Aquinas states that an "image, properly speaking, means whatever proceeds forth in likeness to another" (*ST*, Ia, Q. 35, Art.1 *resp.*1). In other words, the human person as an *Image* of God would mean a creature who "proceeded forth" in the likeness of God. By "proceeded forth from God" Aquinas means that the rational (intellectual) creatures (like the human being) resemble God in 'knowing' and 'understanding' of what is right and wrong, while other creatures do not 'understand concepts' like the human persons, "though there are certain observable traces of the Intellect" that exist in them (*ST* Ia, Q.93.Art.6, *co*.).

Furthermore, in the question as to where this *Image* of God can be found in the human being, Aquinas argues that it must reside in the human person's ability to reason and love since he/she is the only "intellectual creature, which has a capacity for the highest good", which is happiness as Aristotle claims. However, he/she is also a spiritual being, whose ultimate end is the beatific vision (*ST,* Ia, Q. 93, Art.2, *ad.* 3). This is not completely different from Aristotle's view, as has been seen above, that the human highest good is happiness achieved through rational virtuous activities. However, Aquinas makes a clear, but philosophical distinction between his understanding of the human highest Good, and that of Aristotle. Aquinas explains that "the image of a thing may be found in something in two ways" (*ST* Ia, Q. 35, Art.2 *resp.* 3). Firstly, it may be found in something of the same specific nature, for example, as when an image of a king is said to be found in his son. Secondly, it can also be found in something of a different nature, for example, when an image of king is said to be engraved on a coin (*ST* Ia, Q. 35, Art.2 *resp.* 3.) The question here is, which one of these two ways applies to the *Imago Dei* (the human being)? Aquinas claims that in the first instance, only Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the *Perfect* Image of God the Father; while in the second, the rest of the humanity will be said to be the *imperfect Image of God* (*ST,* Ia, Q. 35, Art.2 *resp.*3). He argues further that in order to give room for the imperfection of the *Imago Dei* in the human person, the image is said to be "to the image", which suggests "a

certain movement or tendency to perfection. But it cannot be said that the Son of God is 'to the image,' because he is the *Perfect Image of the Father*" (*ST,* Ia, Q. 35, Art.2 *resp.*3, *my italics*). As a result, Aquinas affirms that "the image in the human person could essentially consist in the intellectual nature [...]", which, in turn, directs the human person to his/her final end (the First Principle/First Act), the beatific vision of God (*ST*. 2a, Q. 93, Art.3, *ad*.1). Moreover, Aquinas also argues that this "intellective nature" of the human being is a law naturally imprinted in the human mind by this 'higher being' through a process he terms "natural Law".

5.5. Natural Law: Basis for Aquinas' Moral Philosophy[54]

The theory of the natural law is at the heart of Aquinas' ethics (moral philosophy). To understand what Aquinas means by the natural law, it is first necessary to understand the concepts he uses in regard to this. By law, Aquinas means "an ordinance of reason for the common good, made by him who has care of the community, and promulgated" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.90, Art. 4, *resp.*). Laws are the product of the human reason meant for the "common good" of any particular society by those entrusted with the power to do so (Kretzmann & Stump 1993: 209). In other words, "the natural law is promulgated by the very fact that God instilled it into man's mind so as to be known by him naturally" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.90, Art. 4, *ad 1*). For Aquinas the natural law is for the whole community of the universe, in which every creature participates, because God has impressed every creature with the inclination, which is proper to that particular creature and its ends (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.94, Art.1, *resp.*). Clifford Kossel also explains in his article, "Natural Law and Human Law" edited by Stephen Pope, that every creature participates in the *natural law*, but the human being participates more because of his/her rationality which puts him/her under divine providence and, therefore has more excellent participation in this natural law than other creatures (2002: 172). In other words, to live a virtuous life would mean that one has to adhere to these natural principles imprinted on one's heart.

Moreover, Aquinas argues that God has endowed human beings with the intelligence to act in a certain way that will help them achieve their ultimate end/goal of life, happiness. This is another reason why Aquinas needs to develop Aristotle's virtue ethics metaphysically,

[54] Cf. *ST,* Ia-IIæ, QQ. 90-108

as will be seen in the next chapter, in order to make room for God as the source of human morality. This means that natural law, for Aquinas, is a kind of inscription in rational creatures of eternal law, which is the divine plan for bringing such creatures to enjoy the happiness, which they naturally desire, but it is granted to them only by what Aquinas terms "divine grace" (cf. *ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 91, Art. 2, *co.*). It is true that every society has its civil law, which is imposed or made by the government or an institution for the common good of the people within that particular society. In addition to this civil law, there are divine laws, which are found in the scriptures as revealed by God to guide and direct human beings in things beyond the limit of their reason. On the other hand, there are also other laws which, according to Aquinas, are inherent in the human mind by nature and these laws direct human beings to their final end, happiness, or the beatific vision (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.94, Art.1 *resp.*). However, on the basis of the natural law, we judge things to be good or bad, "not because they go against the law of the state or the word of the Bible, but because we see through the light of reason that such actions are immoral" (Pasnau & Shields 2004: 220-221). For Aquinas, the natural law is "the law which is written in men's hearts" (*ST*, Ia-IIæ, Q. 94, Art.6, *ad*.2). Following Aquinas' argument here, this natural law would have been available to Aristotle, though not as clear as it was to Aquinas, in his philosophical and ethical writings, which made Aquinas adopt and employ them in his ethics too (*ST*, Ia-IIæ, Q. 94, Art.6, *ad*.2). However, if this kind of law that is imprinted in every human mind exists, as Aquinas claims, then everyone by nature should seek the human ultimate good, happiness. On the other hand, does this also mean that all human beings, by nature, have no option or choice of choosing their actions or ultimate good/final end? However, Aquinas argues that human beings have the choice of choosing virtuous activity since happiness is the reward of virtuous activity proper to human beings.

Finally, in this chapter, I have shown how Aquinas lays the foundation on which to base his ethical transformation, or rather, development of Aristotle's concept of happiness. Aquinas does not define the human being in terms of his rationality or function (*ergon*) as Aristotle does, but in terms of his metaphysical composition of body and soul. It is true that Aristotle talks about happiness being the activity of the soul, yet his approach and concept of soul is slightly different from that of Aquinas because Aquinas' concept of soul is more spiritual and moral than that of Aristotle, which is basically rational. In other words, Aquinas' treatment of the human being is more balanced than that of Aristotle, who places much emphasis on the human mind (rationality), at times at the expense of the human soul and

body. Aquinas considers the human being as a knower, a being composed of body (matter) and soul (form), without either of them stifling or dominating the other one. Aquinas, also in agreement with Aristotle, defines the human being as a being of actions and will. However, Aquinas' notion of God is slightly different from that of Aristotle in the sense that Aquinas, without disagreeing with Aristotle's notion of the First Unmoved Mover, also held that God is One, who is the Final Cause and the First Act, and whose existence is knowable, though not completely, through sense experience. However, Aristotle claims that *God* is a substance, or rather, a cosmic movement, who is at one time, one *God* and another, many Gods. Furthermore, Aquinas also insists that the human being is an *Imago Dei* (*Image*) of this Final Cause he called God because since this God is a Pure Intelligent Act, the human being as an intelligent being (rational being) participates in the Supreme Intelligence called God. For Aquinas, the ability of the human being to participate in the supreme rational activity of this First Principle/Act (Intelligibility of God) is possible through the natural law imprinted in the human mind. This natural law is God's imprint of his guiding principles into the human heart, hence, making the human being a moral being capable of discerning and choosing his final end, happiness. Therefore, considering the fact that Aquinas has a different understanding of the human person and his/her end in comparison with that of Aristotle, one would expect Aquinas' treatment of virtue and happiness in the subsequent chapters to differ from that of Aristotle.

CHAPTER SIX

AQUINAS' CONCEPT OF VIRTUE: A DEPARTURE FROM ARISTOTLE'S

VIRTUE ETHICS

Having seen in chapter five, the first part of Aquinas' ethical departure from Aristotle, in his effort toward developing Aristotle's concept of happiness, I will now look at the second part of his starting-point from Aristotle so as to enable me, in the next chapter, to analyse and establish *to what extent* he develops and transforms Aristotle' concept of *eudaimonia*. Having also established that Aristotle's working definition of happiness has been "an activity of soul in accordance with complete excellence [virtue]" (*NE* 1102^{a}5), I can now go on to examine Aquinas' own concept of virtue. In other words, I cannot satisfactorily demonstrate the extent to which Aquinas develops and transforms Aristotle's concept of happiness without first looking at Aquinas' understanding of virtue since it is included in Aristotle's definition of happiness. Put differently, Aquinas could not have succeeded in his quest to develop Aristotle's *eudaimonia* without an in-depth knowledge of Aristotle's concept of virtue that makes him (Aristotle) include it in his definition of happiness. This means that since happiness is a virtuous activity of some sort, no one can understand happiness without full knowledge of what virtue (excellence) is both for Aristotle and Aquinas. It goes without saying that there is a strong link between *eudaimonia* (happiness) and virtue. As William Prior notes "*Eudaimonism* is particularly well suited for answering certain questions about the nature and value of virtue. If the concept of virtue is disconnected from *eudaimonism*, virtue ethics cannot answer these questions and runs the risk of turning into a mere variant of rival theories" (2001: 325). So, in this chapter, I will deal with Aquinas' overall view of virtues. Herein, I will examine Aquinas' treatment and categorisation of virtues, which for the most part, of course, will be based on his reading of Aristotle's virtue ethics. This means that this chapter will focus on how Aquinas develops some of the ethical concepts he adopts from Aristotle's virtue ethics, and how he manages to take them beyond what Aristotle envisions. To start with, let me first look at Aquinas' categorisation of virtue.

6.1. Aquinas' Categorisation of Virtue: Natural and Supernatural Virtues

Aquinas adopts Aristotle's definition of virtue as "an operative habit" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.55, Art. 2, *resp.*), but he does not stop there. He also develops this definition by injecting into it, Augustine's theological definition of virtue as that "which God works in us, without us" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.55, Art. 4, *obj*.1). This Augustinian definition opens a different door for Aquinas' treatment of virtue, which is not found in Aristotle's virtue ethics. However, Aquinas claims that there are two ways through which one might acquire the practical wisdom (virtue) that will enable one to judge correctly about how to act in the way that leads toward the human ultimate end, happiness. After much deliberation, Aquinas comes up with two broad groups of virtues: natural and supernatural. By natural virtues Aquinas means those virtues, according to Aristotle, which are acquired through "teaching", "experience" and "time" (*NE* $1103^{a}14$-$1103^{a}25$).[55] It must also be noted here that Aristotle has two kinds of virtues, intellectual and moral virtues, but Aquinas combines these two kinds of virtue into one group of virtues he calls, natural virtues. On the other hand, by supernatural virtues, Aquinas means those virtues that are "*infused*" (literally means "poured in") through "divine operation alone" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.63, Art. 2 *resp*.). Aquinas also claims that those *infused* virtues are even better than those *acquired* through human efforts (like Aristotle's moral and intellectual virtues) not because they are intellectually superior, but because they are directly connected with man's supernatural (ultimate) good, happiness. Aquinas also argues that even Aristotle's cardinal virtues have their *infused* counterparts like *infused* practical wisdom, *infused* temperateness, courage and justice (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art. 3 *resp.*).

6.1.1. Aquinas' Categorisation of Virtue: Natural virtues

Aquinas' categorisation of virtues is quite complicated, because his treatment of virtues overlaps with his theology. However, Aquinas has under natural virtues, three broad categories of virtues, grouped according to their *object, ultimate end*, and *efficient cause* (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, QQ. 61-63). According to Aquinas, the *object* of a virtue is an aim to which the virtue directs us. The *ultimate end* of a virtue is the purpose of that virtue, while the *efficient cause*

[55] Cf. *ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 2 *resp.*

of a virtue is the agent or the person (or even "God") that is behind a virtue (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, QQ.61-63). The virtues that Aquinas categorises according to their objects are: cardinal and theological virtues. The theological virtues direct us "to God immediately" as opposed to those virtues (natural virtues) that do not direct us to God "immediately". Aquinas groups moral and intellectual virtues under those virtues that do *not* direct us to God immediately. According to Aquinas, these virtues are "acquired through ordinary human efforts and they are also something comprehensible to human reason" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 2, *resp.*), while the theological virtues are supernatural virtues (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 2, *ad*. 1). As William Mattison states, "the objects of the moral and intellectual virtues are manifold, but they are all activities that are accessible to unaided human reason" (74, 2010: 215-216).

Furthermore, Aquinas also categorises the virtues according to their ultimate end. Under this category, Aquinas argues that natural virtues lead human beings to their temporary end (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 1, *resp., ad.1*). Here Aquinas claims that the cardinal virtues, for example, direct us to our natural (temporary) happiness in this life, as opposed to the theological virtues, like any other *infused* virtues, that would lead us to our eternal ultimate end, happiness, beatific vision of God (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 2, *resp*. *ad*. 1). Aquinas also explains that the cardinal virtues can be subdivided into "political, perfecting, perfect, and exemplar virtues"[56] (Mattison III 2010: 219). For Aquinas, as Mattison notes, the political virtues are concerned with natural activities at the level of "human affairs", which include the natural ("civic") happiness in society, while the exemplar virtues "pre-exist in God" (Mattison III 2010: 219) . On the other hand, Aquinas argues that "perfecting virtues are those virtues that tend toward divine similitude, and perfect virtues are possessed by those who have attained divine similitude" (Mattison III 2010: 220). Let me now look at Aquinas' understanding of the intellectual and moral virtues because, even at this level, he also develops and transforms Aristotle's virtue ethics.

6.1.1.1. Intellectual and Practical (Moral) Virtues

[56] I shall not go in detail into these divisions because this will be going outside the scope of this thesis.

Aristotle makes a clear distinction between intellectual (speculative) and practical (moral) virtues. In his explanation, Aristotle claims that intellectual virtue "owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral excellence [practical virtue] comes about as a result of habit [...]" (*N.E.* 1103^{a}14-1103^{a}25). It has been said above that for Aquinas, virtue is "a habit by which we work well" and this means that habit can be directed to a good act in two ways: firstly, through habit, one acquires an excellence to perform a good act, and secondly, habit confers not only the excellence to act, but also the right use of that excellence (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.56, Art. 3, *resp.*). Aquinas also adopts the Aristotelian distinction between intellectual and moral virtues , but he does add to it his own "three virtues of the speculative intellect, viz. wisdom [*sapientia*], science [*scientia*] and understanding [intuitive insight/*intellectus*]" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.57, Art. 2, *obj.*1). However, Aquinas separates the intellectual virtues from moral virtues. For Aquinas, intellectual virtue does not confer or require "an uprightness of the will" because even the person without good moral character can still possess the intellectual virtues (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.58, Art. 5, *resp.*1). For Aquinas, the name "virtue" as given to the intellectual virtues, only applies to them in an analogical or relative sense of the word. In other words, the intellectual virtues do not qualify to be called virtues "*simply*" (*simpliciter)* because all virtues, by definition, are supposed to have something to do with the "good habit of the will", but this is not found in the intellectual virtues (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.56, Art. 3, *resp.*). Therefore, Aquinas, argues that these kinds of virtues "do not make the work good except in regard to a certain aptness, nor do they simply make their possessor good" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.56, Art. 3, *res.,* my italics). Aquinas names five separate habits as intellectual (speculative) virtues[57]: science (the habit of drawing inferences about necessary conclusions of lower rank), wisdom, intuitive insight/understanding, art (the virtue of correct judgment) and prudence (the virtue of practical wisdom) (Reichberg 2002: 136-137).

Furthermore, Gregory Reichberg explains that "[...] Thomas notes that although intellectual virtue bestows a *capacity* to perform cognitive tasks well, it does not dictate the actual occurrence of the said acts" (2002: 141). This is true because, for example, a highly-qualified science lecturer may refuse to impart proper knowledge of his area of science to his students as a result of laziness. This is also the reason why Aristotle rejects Socrates' account of virtue as I have shown above[58]: that 'knowledge' of virtue or science does not automatically translate into being virtuous. The laziness of the lecturer to impart knowledge

[57] We will not be looking into these virtues in details because of the limitation in our thesis

is not as a result of his lack of ability or knowledge of the virtue, but because of his lack of "free choice of the will" as I have also shown above. Hence, Aquinas explains further that "the speculative virtues and art confer only the aptness to act" and not "the right use of the aptness" *ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.56, Art. 3, *resp.*). This means that virtue must remain an "operative habit", an activity of the fault of the will and it is "only habits rooted in the will that merit such an appellation" (Reichberg 2002: 141).

Aquinas argues that moral virtues, unlike intellectual virtues, need to be united or connected. Unfortunately, in the sciences and arts, "each of them is defined by a sphere of operation that entails little or no connection with the others" (Reichberg 2002: 141). The moral virtues, on the other hand, are always united and connected together by prudence and charity, which aim towards the human specific last end that combines the entire aspect of the human life, happiness (Reichberg 2002: 141). Hence, the intellectual virtues are not defined in relation to the unity of the ultimate end. Aquinas, in trying to make the distinction between the moral and intellectual virtues clearer, ends up asking the same question as Aristotle, i.e. whether the intellectual virtues and moral virtues are interdependent. In answering this question, Aquinas affirms that "moral virtue can be without some of the intellectual virtues, viz. wisdom, science, and art; but not without understanding and prudence" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.58, Art. 4, *resp.*). He goes on to argue that moral virtue cannot be without prudence, because it is the virtue of prudence that helps us to choose and choose well. To make a good choice ("choose well"), one requires two things: firstly, that the intention be directed to the ultimate end, which is happiness, and that the work of moral virtue, "which inclines the appetitive faculty to the good that is in accord with reason, which is a due end" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.58, Art. 4, *resp.*); and secondly, "that man take[s] rightly those things which have reference to the end: and this he cannot do unless his reason counsel, judge and command aright, which is the function of prudence and the virtues annexed to it" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.58, Art. 4, *resp.*). Accordingly, Aquinas affirms that "those virtues which are called 'principal' or 'cardinal' are rightly placed among the moral virtues" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art.2, *resp.*) because they direct us to our ultimate end, happiness.

[58] Cf. *N.E.* 1106[b] 4-6

6.1.1.2. Developing Cardinal[59] Virtues: Beyond Aristotle's Moral Virtues

Aquinas' treatment of the moral virtues, which he terms "cardinal virtues" or "principle virtues" is slightly differently from Aristotle's treatment of the moral virtues of justice, courage, prudence and temperance in (Cf. *NE.* $1107^{a}28$-$1107^{b}8$; *N.E.*$1104^{a}28$-$1104^{b}3$). This is, of course, a development away from Aristotle's virtue ethics. It is clear that Aristotle does not use the term "cardinal virtue" [60] or "principle virtue" in his ethics, so the term is Aquinas' in this context. Not only does Aquinas use the name "cardinal virtue", which is different from Aristotle's moral virtues, but he also makes it clear that these virtues are connected and in their various ways lead us to our final/ultimate end, beatific vision. For Aquinas, these virtues are called "cardinal" or "principle" virtues because they are the anchors or hinges on which all other virtues hang or revolve (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art. 3, *resp.).* As a result of this, when they are considered according to the importance of their matter, *prudence* then becomes the "virtue which commands"; *justice* then becomes the virtue which deals with "due actions between equals"; *temperance*, on the other hand, becomes the virtue which suppresses "desires for the pleasures of touch"; and *fortitude* then becomes the virtue which strengthens one against dangers of death (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art. 3, *resp.).* It is not difficult to see why Aquinas insists that these virtues should be called 'principle' or 'cardinal' virtues. It is because according to R. E. Houser (IIa IIae, qq.123-140), "each cardinal virtue governs *all* the good acts of its respective power" (2002: 307). By powers here, he means the four appetites on which Aquinas places these four cardinal virtues: intellect, emotions, desires and the will. Accordingly, all four powers must engage properly for an act to be good, and this makes each of these appetites a seat for these cardinal virtues, i.e. intellect for *prudence*, the free will for *justice*, the emotions for *courage* and desire for *temperance* (Houser 2002: 307).

Furthermore, it is true that Aquinas' approach to these four cardinal virtues, especially prudence, is profoundly and systematically different from that of Aristotle, yet he uses the

[59] The word, "cardinal" is derived from a Latin word, *cardo*, which means "hinge" just as in a door. The hinge on a door allows the door to turn.

[60] It was Ambrose of Milan, who first articulated the term "cardinal virtue" from the Latin term *cardo*, which was a cosmological term referring to "the earth's poles, points on the ecliptic, days when the seasons change, the four principal winds" (Houser 2002: 305).

four Aristotelian principles of causality (formal, efficient, material and final causes) to define his cardinal virtues (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.55, Art. 4, *resp.*). However, Aristotle does not give the issue concerning the connection or unity among these four cardinal virtues as much (if any) attention as Aquinas does. Aristotle, only claims that each specific moral virtue is connected with prudence (*phronesis*), which means for him, "it is not possible to be good in the practical way without prudence; nor prudent without ethical virtue" (*N.E.*1144^{b}30-2). The formal principle of these four virtues, for Aquinas, is "good as defined by reason" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art. 3, *resp.*). Aquinas goes on to argue that this good can exist in two ways: either in the very act of reason, in which case, we have prudence as the principle virtue, or according to the way the reason puts its order into operation, in which case, we will have one principle virtue called justice (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art. 3, *resp.*). For Aquinas, those virtues that serve as "the basis of human life are called 'cardinal'", because through them, we enter the door of our human moral life (*Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, "On the Cardinal virtues", Art.1, *resp.*). Therefore, for Aquinas, cardinal virtues are described as more fundamental virtues than all other virtues not only because they are more fundamental to our moral life, but because other virtues are founded and based on them as well (*Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, "On the Cardinal virtues", Art.1, *resp.12*). Let me now look at the cardinal virtue of prudence as a connecting virtue of all other virtues.

6.1.1.3. Prudence as the Co-ordinating Virtue: A Development Beyond Aristotle's *Phronesis*

For Aquinas, "prudence is a special virtue, distinct from all other virtues" because it holds other virtues together and it is also concerned with the "things done" as opposed to "things made" like book, house (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q. 47, Art.5, *resp*.). It is concerned with the "things that have their being in the doer himself" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q. 47, Art.5 *resp*.). This reinforces Aquinas' definition of virtue which he adopts from Aristotle as that "which makes its possessor good, and his work good likewise" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q. 47, Art.4 *resp.).* Good in this sense is either material or formal, which means that good is seen either as a quality of something (goodness of a person) or as a thing-in-itself as being good. In other words, virtues by nature "direct man to good materially, that is to say, to the thing which is good [...]" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q. 47, Art.4 *resp*.). Apparently, it is the duty of the virtue of *prudence* to moderate and co-ordinate all other virtues (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q. 47, Art.4, *ad*, 3). However, it is surprising to

note that Aquinas follows Aristotle in considering *prudence* as part of the intellectual virtue on one hand, but on the other hand, as a moral virtue. As Aquinas puts it, "prudence has the nature of virtue not only as the other intellectual virtues have it, but also as the moral virtues have it, among which virtues it is enumerated" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q. 47, Art.2, *resp*.).

However, it might sound contradictory to hear Aquinas argue that there is "no moral virtue possible without prudence", while on the other hand, he says "without the moral virtues there is no prudence" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q.47, Art.13, *ad*. 2). How is this possible? This is possible, as Pieper Josef notes, because it is only the prudent person who can be brave, just, temperate, while the person who is not already just, brave and temperate cannot be prudent (1954: 32). Pieper further explains that the "only one who previously and simultaneously *loves* and *wants* the good can be prudent, but only one who is previously prudent can be prudent" (1954: 34). However, the purpose of the virtue of prudence is to seek the ultimate goal of the human being, happiness. Josef Pieper agrees with this view since for him, "the reflection and the conclusions of prudence are directed solely toward the actual realization of justice, fortitude and temperance" (1954: 33). Apparently, when Aquinas develops his understanding of the virtue of prudence in the way beyond Aristotle's, he brings in a new dimension to his discussion about prudence: charity. Josef Pieper explains that "man attains right reason in prudence, which is right reason in the realm of action. But man attains God in charity" (1954:36). At this stage, Aquinas introduces the idea that prudence does not only deal with Aristotle's *phronesis* (the ability to choose the mean), which stops at the realm of natural reasoning, but it has also to do with charity *infused* by God, which is in the realm of the supernatural because "God is the principal object of charity" (*ST,* IIa-IIæ, Q.23, Art.5, *ad*. 1). It is clear at this point that Aquinas has, to some extent, spiritualised the virtues of prudence in a way that Aristotle knows nothing about in his ethical writing. I will now examine the supernatural virtues.

6.2. Aquinas' Categorisation of Supernatural Virtues: A Step

Beyond Aristotle

Aquinas believes that virtues obtained during repeated human activities should be called *acquired* virtues. This idea of *acquired* virtues is not very far from Aristotle's notion of virtues, which he (Aristotle) argues can be acquired through habituation and repeated practices (*N.E.*1103^{a}21-3, *E.E.* 1214^{a}22). Aquinas claims that there are other kinds of virtues besides what he adopts from Aristotle, and this he calls supernatural virtues because they are *infused* in us through divine involvement. Aquinas also claims that this is possible because ttheological virtues have their object as "God Himself", and therefore, the supernatural virtues are *infused* in us and they direct us to the "supernatural happiness" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 1, *resp.*). By supernatural happiness Aquinas means the *beatific vision* (happiness with God). In other words, the end of the supernatural virtues is to direct human beings to their supernatural ends, happiness. As I will show later in the next chapter, the human ultimate end is happiness, which can be either "perfect" happiness (beatific vision) or "imperfect" happiness (which is a *eudaimonian* or Aristotelian) kind of happiness. All supernatural virtues are "*infused*" into human beings. This begs a question, as to what happens then to Aristotle's notion of virtue as an activity, which presumes some kind of human effort? Aquinas has an answer for this as well through what he calls "infused moral virtues" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.66, Art. 3, *co*.).

6.2.1. *Infused Moral* Virtues

Accordingly, it is seen above that, for Aquinas, the *acquired* virtues are those virtues which direct human beings to their natural end, happiness in this life. They are caused by human acts because they are the products of human reason (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 2 *resp*.). On the other hand, I have mentioned that the *infused* virtues are those virtues, which direct human beings to their ultimate good "as defined by the Divine Law, and [...] are produced in us by the Divine operation alone" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.63, Art. 2, *resp.*). In other words, the *infused* virtues direct human beings to their supernatural happiness. For Aquinas, moral virtues are naturally acquired for the good of our human happiness on earth out of our rationality. However, the *acquired moral* virtues would be the kind of moral virtues that Aristotle deals with in his virtue ethics, which are based on the activity, rationality and the good of the individual in the *polis*. However, going beyond these Aristotelian 'acquired moral' virtues, Aquinas develops what he terms *infused moral* virtues. These virtues, as

Bonnie Kent observes with Aquinas in mind, make "persons belonging to the household of God, with love of God as the highest good, faith in God's word, and hope for the happiness of the afterlife" (2002: 122).

Moreover, one may be wondering if Aquinas is treating these virtues philosophically or theologically. However, as Bonnie Kent explains, Aquinas transforms Aristotle's concept of virtue as a habit or the doctrine of *mean*, so that it can now apply not only "to naturally acquired virtues, but also to infused moral virtues"[61] (2002: 122). Thus, Aquinas insists that it is only virtues infused by God, along with charity, that deserve to be called *virtues* without qualification (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.65, Art. 2, *resp.*). The *acquired moral* virtues also differ from *infused moral* virtues because of their respective ends and measures. As I have said many times, the *acquired moral* virtues direct human beings toward a natural (general) kind of happiness (*felicitas*- Aristotelian kind of happiness), which can be achieved in this life, while the *infused moral* virtues direct humans toward the eternal happiness that consists in the *beatific vision* of God. This kind of happiness, as we will see later, can only be achieved through divine intervention. However, another difference Aquinas made between the *infused* virtues and the *acquired* virtues is that God is the efficient cause of all the *infused* virtues, and that is why the phrase in Augustine's definition of virtue, "which God works in us without us", is very important for Aquinas in his definition of virtue (*ST.* Ia-IIæ, Q.55, Art. 4, *resp.*). However, what is obvious here is that for Aquinas, only *infused* virtues are necessary for human supernatural happiness, while the naturally acquired virtues are necessary for our moral life in society. This does not mean that Aquinas denied the importance of the naturally *acquired* virtues in the attainment of the supernatural happiness, but those virtues must be used in connection with the theological virtue of charity.

6.2.2. Theological Virtues: A Transformation Beyond Aristotle's Virtue Ethics

[61] Cf. *ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.64, Art. 1,ad 3, Art, 4

It has been shown that all *infused* virtues are necessary for human supernatural (eternal) happiness. Such happiness, as has been said several times, is beyond what human beings can achieve on their own, hence, they need divine assistance to achieve this. One of the ways in which God can assist human beings to achieve this supernatural happiness is by *infusing* in them, the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 1 *resp*.). According to Aquinas, these virtues are called the theological virtues for three reasons: (i) "because their object is God, in as much as they direct us aright to God"; they direct human beings to their Supernatural Happiness (ii) "because they are infused in us by God alone" and (iii) "because these virtues are not made known to us, save by Divine revelation, contained in Holy Writ" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 1, *resp*.). These theological virtues of faith, hope and charity are also part of the *infused* virtues, which he groups under supernatural virtues. They have God as their sole *object* and *end* because they enable us to share in the divine nature and direct us to the human end, supernatural happiness, attainable only in the next life. We cannot acquire these virtues through our own efforts or resources; we can only have them through "God's grace". By God's grace, Aquinas means the extraordinary divine assistance to the human being to aid him/her to transcend his/her human ordinary nature. That is why Aquinas asserts that theological virtues are so-called "[...] because they are infused in us by God alone [...]" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art.1, *resp.*).

These virtues "differ in species from the moral and intellectual virtues" (Kretzmann & Stump 1993: 239). Faith, for example, is directed by the *will* because no one believes in something unless that person is '*willing',* in the first place, to believe in that thing. For Aquinas, our *wills* are always for an end, and our end, in this case, is our ultimate happiness: God Himself (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 1, Art.1). Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that some virtues lie in the "mid-point" (intermediate),and theological virtues, at times, seem also to lie in the mid-point, since "faith is a mid-point between two heresies"; hope lies in the mid-point "between presumption and despair" *(Disputed Questions on Virtue.* 'On the Virtue in General,' Article 13, *ad.* 10). However, for Aquinas, "the theological virtues are above man; they should properly be called not human but superhuman or divine virtues" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.61, Art.2, *resp.2).* Similarly, Aquinas explains that these virtues are called "divine" because "they match the nature a man shares with God" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art.1, *resp.*1). The nature we share with God is possible because the human being is *Imago Dei*.

In conclusion, it is obvious that Aquinas' concept of virtue is different from that of Aristotle not only because of the categorisation of virtues, but his approach and treatment are relatively different as well. Moreover, in terms of what Aquinas calls the "cardinal virtues", he is more systematic than Aristotle's moral virtues of justice, courage, temperance and prudence (*N.E.*1107^{a}28-1107^{b}8; *N.E.*1104^{a}28-1104^{b}3). However, Aquinas keeps the general framework of Aristotle's virtue ethics (intellectual and moral virtues), but he does extend them to include the supernatural *(infused*) and theological virtues. This means that Aristotle's virtues, which Aquinas now considers as natural virtues, are only meant to direct the human beings to their natural end (temporary happiness), while the supernatural virtues are supposed to direct us to our supernatural happiness. Considering this, Aquinas is then poised to develop, in the next chapter, a substantially different concept of happiness that will accommodate both the natural happiness of Aristotle and his supernatural happiness.

CHAPTER SEVEN

AQUINAS' NOTION OF HAPPINESS: A CONCEPT BEYOND ARISTOTLE'S *EUDAIMONIA*

Having demonstrated in chapters five and six that Aquinas' complex, systematic topics are broader than those of Aristotle, especially with regard to human nature, his view on the human final end, his concept of God and virtues, I will now show how his treatment of happiness, is different from that of Aristotle. However, it must also be noted, as I have mentioned several times , that Aquinas follows Aristotle closely in thinking that the human act is good or bad depending on whether it contributes to or prevents or rather hinders one from attaining one's proper human ultimate goal (end) to which all human actions aim: happiness. I have also mentioned that this human end, for Aristotle and Aquinas, is happiness (*eudaimonia*), which is also understood in terms of self-sufficiency, completion, perfection and well-being. This means that attaining or achieving this happiness will require the application of the human intellectual and moral virtues that will enable us to understand the nature of happiness as well as what it consists of so as to seek it in a reliable and consistent way.

Therefore, the aim of this chapter will be to show that Aquinas, though a theologian, succeeds, to a great extent, in presenting coherent philosophical arguments in support of his quest to develop Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia,* without relying much on his Christian faith or revelation. This is, of course, a daunting task, not only for Aquinas, but also for me in this thesis. In other words, Aquinas' questions and arguments about happiness are all philosophically founded despite the theological undertone of some of his concepts. As Stephen Wang points out Aquinas' "analyses of intellect and will, of human action, and of the desire for happiness, do not depend on faith in God [...] So when Aquinas concludes that human beings cannot be perfectly happy in this life the impasse he reaches is *philosophical*" (2007: 324). Hence, Wang notes that Aquinas's treatment of human action leads him to draw two conclusions about the goal of human life. Firstly, human beings by their very nature, as "creatures of intellect and will", desire a "perfect" or "true happiness, which cannot be found in this life, but only in union with God" (*Ibid*). Secondly, this union with God surpasses the very nature of every creature including the human beings themselves; therefore, they would need God's assistance to attain this kind of happiness (Wang 2007: 322). In line with this, Aquinas

argues that we have a natural desire for true (perfect) happiness, which cannot be naturally fulfilled or attained. However, for Aquinas, it will be inhuman for anybody not to seek "perfect" or "true" happiness. Aquinas neither depends on the biblical Revelation to prove that human beings by nature seek happiness, and to be precise, "perfect" happiness, nor does he rely on his Christian faith to demonstrate that human beings cannot attain this "true" or "perfect" happiness in this life. So, in this chapter, I will look at Aquinas' concept of happiness, which has, undeniably, Aristotle's concept of happiness as its starting point. I will also show that Aquinas, to a great extent, succeeds in demonstrating, philosophically, that the natural or (political/moral) happiness of Aristotle is actually not the human *ultimate final end*, but what he terms "perfect", "true" or "supernatural" happiness in God. It will be good to first look at Aquinas' basic understanding of happiness, which stems from Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia*.

7.1. Aquinas' Setting of Happiness: Aristotelian Doctrine of *Summum Bonum*

Aquinas makes three vital distinctions in his treatment of happiness. The first is between what he considers to be the general meaning of the human final end and the particular object we are seeking as our last end. For him, "we all seek our last end" as such, because we all want to be contented as well as to find a permanent fulfilment in happiness (*ST* I-IIae, Q.5, Art. 4, *co*.).[62] However, the problem with this kind of assertion as Stephen Wang points out is that, we do not all agree on how to be happy, and on where we will find that fulfilment (2007: 323). The second distinction made by Aquinas when treating his happiness is, between "possessing an end imperfectly, only in intention", and "possessing an end perfectly, not only in intention but also in reality" (*ST* I-IIae, Q.11, Art. 4, *co.*). For Aquinas, it is a known fact that the human "will" can enjoy happiness, but the truth is that this kind of happiness is imperfect because the enjoyment it offers does not last to the end; it is not permanent. The third distinction that Aquinas makes, which I will also consider in this chapter, is between *beatitudo imperfecta* (natural) happiness and *beatitudo perfecta* (supernatural) happiness.

Aquinas' understanding of happiness is considerably different from that of Aristotle, even though they both use similar terms, but at times, Aristotle seems to define happiness in

[62] Cf. Wang 2007: 323-324

terms of the human highest (supreme) good (*summum bonum*) that comes as a reward for virtuous activity (Cf.*NE* 1097^{b}23-1098^{a}16). This highest good he defined as "an end of action which is desired for its own sake, while everything else is desired for the sake of it" (*NE* 1094^{a}19). As Anthony Kenny argues, one may understand what Aristotle means here in three ways: firstly as "a logical truth", secondly as "an empirical observation", or thirdly "as moral imperative" (1969:43). As Kenny further argues, Aristotle's concept of 'supreme good/end' for the human being could mean a logical truth, something, which is aimed at in every human choice because there is a single end. This is true since for Kenny every man does have "as a matter of contingent fact" a single aim in every one of his many choices. Kenny argues that alternatively, Aristotle could also have meant that every man "*should* under pain of being unreasonable or immoral, aim at a single end in each of his choices" (1969:43).

However, Aristotle does not make his doctrine of *summum bonum* clear, whether this end is what *all human being have* or *should have* (*ought to have*) because these two are completely different issues, if considered morally or philosophically. The argument here is, to ask if there is an end for which all human actions (choices) aim, is not the same thing as to ask whether there is *a supreme end* (good) for which all other 'ends' must aim? To say that every road leads *somewhere,* does not mean it follows logically that there is a particular place called 'somewhere'. Kenny argues that Aristotle seems to have contradicted himself by accepting the conclusion that "there is one and only one end of all chains of practical reasoning", which is *one* supreme end (1969: 43); while on the other hand, he admits that there are "ends other than happiness, which we pursue for their own sake" (*NE* 1097^{b} 1-5). Among these "ends other than happiness", Aristotle mentions pleasure and honour. The fact of the matter is that Aristotle should have posited two "ends" as the human ultimate end for which "everything else is desired for the sake of it" (*NE* 1094^{a}19). In other words, either happiness is the end for the sake of which "everything else" is desired, or it is not, and in that case, 'something else' will be the human ultimate end. Experience has shown that this kind of happiness from Aristotle (as virtuous activity) cannot be the human ultimate end since when we are happy owing to wealth and honour, we still want to be 'happy' and want it forever, which we can never achieve. That is why Aristotle says, "[...] call no one happy, while he lives [...]" (*NE* 1100^{a}10-1100^{a}31). In other words, Aristotle realises at last that the kind of happiness he advocates does not fit into the picture he paints of what the human ultimate end

consists. However, Aquinas also seems to have been entrapped by this contradiction, but he manages, somehow, to argue and wriggle himself out of it, as we will see later.

However, Aquinas' treatment of happiness does not completely stem from Aristotle; rather, it assumes a different dimension. Aquinas looks at happiness as a desire for the perfect human ultimate good and the possibility of attaining this perfect human ultimate good can only be possible in the Pure Act or Final Cause, he calls God in the next life. As Stephen Wang remarks, Aquinas considers this happiness that eludes Aristotle as the supernatural happiness (*beatitudo)*, which is seen as "the satisfaction we hope to find when we reach our final goal and attain the perfection we have longed for" (2007: 322). That is why Aquinas argues that "happiness [*beatitudo*] is the perfect good, which satisfies the appetite , or else it would not be the last end, if something yet remained to be desired" (*ST* I-IIæ, Q.2, Art.8, *co*). Aquinas argues further that since the object of the human will (which is the appetite) is universal good, and since the object of the intellect is also the universal truth, it will be difficult to get anything that "can quiet man's will except the universal good" (*ST* I-IIæ, Q.2, Art.8, *co.*). This universal good, according to Aquinas, cannot be found in any created goods, "but in God [Pure Act or First Act] alone, because every creature has goodness by participation. Therefore, God alone can sanctify the will of man" (*ST* I-IIæ, Q.2, Art.8, *co.*). This is true because for Aquinas, happiness is supposed to be perfect, the last end and self-sufficiency, which obviously, all creatures lack; so, no created goods can offer us true and perfect happiness (*ST* I-IIæ, Q.5, Art.3, *co.*). Aquinas' notion of human "end" has slightly changed from that of Aristotle because Aristotle claims that happiness is the human ultimate end in this life, an idea which Aquinas also accepts, but he also advocates a kind of happiness that is perfect and supernatural. The attainment of this kind of end (happiness) is beyond man's natural ability, and what Aristotle presents in his ethics.

7.2. That Human Ultimate End is Happiness

Aquinas' moral philosophy (ethics), to some extent, has its foundation in Aristotle's teleological view of creation: the view that everything which exists in nature acts, purposefully, for an end or a goal (*NE* $1094^{a}1$-$1094^{a}17$). This means that the understanding of

anything, including the human being, should depend on whether the purpose or end of the thing involved is understood or not. In other words, what is the final cause or the ultimate end of the human being? For Aquinas, life in itself is goal-oriented or goal-directed, which means that human life has a purpose (Cf. *N.E*. 1094^{a}1-1094^{a}17). For Aquinas, proper human acts are those actions, which direct or lead us to the realisation of our final goal/end, which is, happiness (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp.*). Aquinas strongly believes that what defines the human agent is his/her action, which must always be directed toward a higher and final end, the Final Cause or the First Act (God). For Aquinas, wherever we find any movement, that movement must be directed towards some good, which is a response to a natural law implanted in that being. Therefore, an action of an agent is good "in so far as it tends to the perfection or full actuality of the nature... the notion of end is fundamental and necessary as the notion of being itself" (D'arcy 1944: 228). Hence, for Aquinas, everything acts for its good, whether consciously or unconsciously, and the good, is "the perfection of the agent". However, Aristotle, unlike Aquinas, as Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump argues, claims that "all actions aim at *some* end or other, [...though] there is *some* end or good for the sake of which all actions are performed" (1993: 198). Aristotle is not precise as to what this "end" of all human actions is, and consists of, but Aquinas is precise about it. That is why Kretzmann and Stump argue with Aquinas in mind that there is "[...] an overarching, comprehensive, ultimate end of all that human beings do", and it is what Aquinas calls the *beatific vision* (1993:198).

Moreover, the human ultimate end for Aquinas is the same thing as the human "final cause", which is the *beatific vision* (perfect happiness) . In other words, in every series of causes, the first cause is said to be more a cause than the second cause, and the second is said not to be a cause except through the first as seen above. This means that the first cause in this series is the final cause, which is, for Aquinas, God. However, Aquinas, unlike Aristotle, makes a distinction between twofold ends of human activities. Aquinas explains that the first kind of end is "the *thing-in-itself* which we desire to attain" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp*. my *italics*). For example, the end for a rich man is money, while the second end is "the attainment or possession, the use or enjoyment of the thing desired" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp.*). We can say that the end for the rich man here is the possession or enjoyment of the money he has. Following this example, Aquinas, analogically concludes that in the first

instance, the end, which is the *thing-in-itself*, "which is man's last end, is the uncreated good, namely, God because out of His infinite goodness, He alone can perfectly satisfy the human will" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp.)*. In the second, Aquinas claims that man's last end is something created, because the possession or enjoyment of this ultimate good exists in man, and "this is nothing else but the attainment or enjoyment of the last end" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp.*). However, he states that if we consider human happiness in its "cause or object", it is something uncreated, something supernatural, which is the First Act Himself, but if we consider it as something that goes to the very "essence of happiness, then it is something created", which means our desire for an unending happiness (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1 *resp.*).

7.3. Aquinas' Concept of Happiness: A Step Beyond Aristotle

Both Aquinas and Aristotle agree that the human end is happiness, though they differ in their understanding of what this happiness is, and in what it consists., Aquinas adopts Aristotle's notion of happiness as the virtuous activity of the soul (*N.E.*1102^{a}5-1102^{a}25), which, Aristotle claims, must always be sought for its own sake and not for the sake of any other thing (*M.M.*1184^{a} 10-20). However, for Aristotle, happiness will always consist of contemplation, which reaches its peak in the reward of virtuous activity in society here in this life, while for Aquinas, happiness assumes a supernatural dimension. Aquinas claims that happiness consists of an act of the intellect or an act of the will. In other words, happiness consists essentially in the contemplation of the divine essence. Therefore, happiness for Aquinas as Wang notes is "the perfect and sufficient good, which excludes every ill and fulfils every desire" (2007: 324). [63]Aquinas also claims that the final end for human beings consists essentially in, what he called the *beatific vision*, although he also acknowledges a sort of divine (God's) assistance as the object of this *beatitudo*. *Beatitudo* is the perfect (supernatural) happiness in relation to God. Complete happiness, for Aquinas, is found in the contemplation of God in the next life, which is the only *thing* (end) we can seek or desire for the sake of itself because this kind of "[...] happiness surpasses every created nature" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 5, Arts.7, *resp.*). Aquinas, unlike Aristotle, believes that the desire to seek the ultimate goal (true happiness), is engraved in every human being's mind by God (through the natural law), and this directs human beings to God as their ultimate end.

[63] Cf. *ST* I-IIae, Q.5, Art. 3, *co.*

Furthermore, Aquinas argues that if "happiness is the highest good [...] the ultimate end toward which the human will naturally tends" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad.* 2-3), it means then that every "human will ought to tend towards nothing other than God", who is "the highest good" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.3). Through this, Aquinas implies "that happiness is identical to God" as the ultimate human good and end (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.2). However, Aquinas quickly explains that to understand what happiness fully means, it must be understood in terms of the "human end" as I have shown above (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.1, Art.1, *resp*.). Of course, this explanation by Aquinas is also greatly influenced by Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* from the *Nicomachean Ethics* (*NE*1217[a] 22).[64] However, Aquinas insists that every "end" we seek is only a means to some further end; and for him, there must be some 'ends' that we choose for their own sake, and not for the sake of any further ends. This kind of "end" we choose for the sake of itself, is what Aquinas calls the "ultimate end" and for Aristotle, "ultimate good", and by implication, happiness. It is true that Aquinas follows Aristotle in affirming that the ultimate human end is happiness, but he also goes beyond Aristotle by affirming that "happiness is nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art. 8, *resp.*). However, to make a distinction between his concept of happiness and that of Aristotle, Aquinas claims that there are two kinds of happiness: natural and supernatural.

7.3.1. Natural (Imperfect) Happiness: Aristotle's *Eudaimonia*

As I have mentioned above, Aquinas agrees with Aristotle that human happiness (*eudaimonia*) is that "which we desire for its sake" and that "[...] to which all things aim" (*NE* 1094[a]2). Aquinas also concurs with Aristotle that human happiness consists in the proper exercise of human reason. However, Aquinas also believes that happiness can be either natural or supernatural. Happiness is said to be natural (*beatitudo imperfecta*)[65], when it leads

[64] Happiness is that chosen for the sake of itself (*N.E.* 1097[b] 7-9).

[65] Aquinas uses a Latin term "*beatitudo*" in his *Summa Theologiae (ST*, Ia-IIæ, QQ. 2-5) which can be translated as "beatitude", "blessedness" or "happiness". However, to translate this term to mean "blessedness" seems a bit unsatisfactory, because the English word "blessedness" does not capture the intended meaning of this Latin word, *beatitudo* as used by Aquinas. To use "beatitudes" would have been a better rendering of this translation, but in order to avoid mixing up the beatitudes given by Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5: 3-12 and Lk 6: 20-26) and the beatitude that is the human ultimate end (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 69); I have decided to use , happiness here. So, the fact that Aquinas uses *beatitudo* in his *Summa Theologiae* can be justified because his aim is to prove that there is really only *One* thing that *beatitudo* could be for all human beings, and this is "man's ultimate end, happiness: [God]" (*ST* Ia- IIæ, Q.1, Art. 8, *sed*).

human beings to the fulfilment of their ends/goals in this life alone. We are "temporarily satisfied" when we have attained this kind of happiness. Aquinas defines 'imperfect' or 'incomplete' happiness (*beatitudo imperfecta)* as "[...] simply happiness to the extent that we can find it in this life. It is that which is had in this life [...]" (*ST* I-IIae, Q.2, Art. 1, *ad*. 3). Aquinas makes it clear that human true or perfect happiness cannot consist in anything natural (created goods) like "wealth", "honour", "fame", "glory", "power", "pleasure" or even " virtuous activity" (as Aristotle's claims) all because for Aquinas, they will not lead to man's last (ultimate) end (*ST* I-IIae, Q.2, Arts.1-8, *ad*. 3). Aquinas argues further that human happiness cannot be found in all these goods because since "happiness is a perfect good, which quiets the human appetite altogether...it will not be the last end if something yet remains to be desired" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 2, Arts.8, *co*). In other words, these goods cannot satisfy the human uncountable wants and longings for the *last* fulfilment in life. Aquinas argues that since human desire or want, in this life can never end or be satisfied, it makes sense to argue that the happiness offered by these goods and the happiness we attain here on earth is only for our natural (temporary) fulfilment (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 5, Arts.3, *co.*). This means that true or complete or supernatural happiness is a lasting and permanent kind of happiness, though for Aquinas, it seems not to be attainable in this life since our desires in this life can never end. Stephen Wang agrees with Aquinas that "the desire for a good always reflects a desire to become what we are not, because in every good we seek, we are always seeking *our own good*, that is, *the being that we do not yet have"* (2007: 325). He goes on to argue, with Aquinas in mind, that it is an essential part of our nature as creatures in time to be "incomplete and looking beyond". In other words, to be human, according to Wang, in his interpretation of Aquinas, "is to lack the fullness of being which we could attain, which is to lack ourselves. Human beings, as far as the life we know is concerned, are an essential insufficiency" (2007: 324-325)[66].

This argument that a human being by nature is incomplete and therefore cannot attain a perfect happiness in this life, would make sense for Aquinas since the human intellect has a natural desire 'to know' the cause of things. The truth is that human desire cannot be fully satisfied until we know the "first cause" of things, which is God. In other words, our intellect will never stop its inquiry (craving to know) until it reaches the end of any search for knowledge it embarks on. This then makes man by nature, for Aquinas, a being searching for

[66] Cf *ST* Ia-IIae, Q.5, Art.3, *co*

a perfect happiness, a being searching for God. This is possible because it is part of human nature as intellectual beings to question things, and as long as we are alive, we must keep on questioning things and seeking more and more fundamental answers and explanations until we can no longer question, either because we have found the ultimate answer (God) or because we are dead (non - existent). Therefore, Stephen Wang concludes, with Aquinas in mind, that "our desire for understanding (and so for happiness) can never be fully satisfied in this life. The intellect takes us beyond what we do not yet know, and there is no end to what we can discover. One proof of the endlessness of human desire is thus our incessant curiosity"(2007: 325). Natural happiness is said to be imperfect because when we possess, for example, one hundred rand (R100), we are said to be 'happy', but at the same time, we desire more money, for example, three hundred rand (R300), and we will seem happier as soon as we get it, but again, we want more, and this chain of wants and desires will go on to infinity. Therefore, it is logical to think that this kind of 'happiness' cannot be the human ultimate end because if it is, we will always keep on searching, longing or yearning for anything that will make us 'happier'. As Wang puts it, "*Whichever* goods we seek in time, the provisional happiness we might attain through them is *always* accompanied by a deepening appreciation of their insufficiency. However great the good we achieve, however secure the happiness we find, it is always threatened by the possibility that we will move on and desire something else" (2007: 326). Therefore, for Aquinas, this desire to move on in search of a happier or "deeper fulfilment" or a more satisfied good goes on *ad infinitum* (*ST* Ia-IIae, Q.2, Art.8, *ad.*3).

However, for Stephen Wang, our understanding and desires are "[...] quite literally *without limits*, *never ending*, infinite [...]" (2007: 326)[67]. Therefore, if human wants and desires are infinite, so will be the happiness which they offer us. Aquinas insists that this imperfection or limitedness of human natural happiness in this life is not because of the circumstances surrounding us, but because of our human nature. Human beings are beings, who "operate progressively in time", and who cannot unify or bring all their activities or quests into one integrated whole or movement called happiness (*Ibid*). Therefore, for Aquinas, it is "self-contradictory" and against human nature, to talk about human "temporal perfect" or "natural complete" happiness in this life (*ST* Ia-IIae, Q.11, Art.3, *co.*). Hence, for Aquinas, as Stephen Wang notes "[...] perfect human happiness is impossible in this life because it would mean the end and not the fulfilment of the human life that we know" (2007:

[67] Cf *ST* I-II, Q.2, Art.8, *ad*.3

328). Aquinas insists that his ontological argument about human natural (imperfect) happiness flows from a rationally argued account of human nature. As Stephen Wang puts it, "[...] by observing human life, by analysing the nature of intellect and will, Aquinas arrives at a philosophical impasse. We want to be perfectly happy, *and* we realise that we can never be perfectly happy in this life [...](2007: 328). Aquinas runs into an impasse here by using this ontological argument because he is arguing two things at a time. He cannot not argue that "it is impossible to have true and perfect Happiness in this life", and at the same time argue that "certain participation in perfect happiness" must *still be possible* in this life (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 5, Arts.3, *co.*). The question here is, what does Aquinas mean by "perfect" happiness? In answering this question, we might come to understand why Aquinas thought that there is no contradiction in his argument about the perfect happiness that cannot be attained in this life.

7.3.2. Supernatural (Perfect) Happiness: *Beatitudo Perfecta*

Having seen that Aquinas makes a distinction between natural (imperfect) happiness, which he claims to be a temporary kind of happiness and only attainable through and by human nature, since human beings are beings with intellect and unsearchable desires and wants, I can now look at what Aquinas means by the perfect or supernatural kind of happiness. Aquinas insists that it is impossible for the human being to attain the ultimate final end or 'perfect' happiness in this life because it will be against human nature. Aquinas defines this kind of happiness "as man's supreme perfection" (*ST* I-IIae, Q.3, Art. 2, *co*.); and elsewhere as "man's highest good" (*ST* I-IIae, Q.2, Art. 7, *ad.*3). He argues that what makes something perfect as far as that thing is concerned *is* actuality, because anything that is in a state of potency without act, is said to be imperfect in itself. So, the perfect happiness must consist in man's last act, since anything temporary is potency and is still in the process of reaching actuality, which Aquinas calls the Pure Act or First Act, God. In other words, the human perfect happiness must be found somewhere outside the potency, somewhere outside the human being and his/her natural happiness. Where then can this perfect happiness (actuality) by found? Aquinas does not waste time in arguing that this actuality (perfect happiness) can only be found in a supernatural being called God (the Pure Act or First Act). This resonates with Stephen Wang's definition of God, as he paraphrases Aquinas, "God is the universal good and the First Cause of all things Who *must* exist if our infinite desire for happiness and for understanding are [sic] not to be in vain" (2007: 330). Aquinas is making a

strong claim that perfect happiness (happiness as the supreme good) can only be found in the Supreme Being he calls God. The question here is, how is this possible and how can we verify this claim? For Aquinas, the answer to this question is not far-fetched; it is the contemplation of *the Divine Essence.*

7.3.2.1. Perfect Happiness: A Contemplation of the Divine Essence

Aristotle surprisingly argues that "complete happiness is a contemplative activity" and "happiness, therefore, must be some form of contemplation" (*NE* 1178^{b}23-1863). These terms are very similar to the ones Aquinas uses in his moral philosophy. The fact that Aristotle mentions "complete" and "contemplation" raises a question as whether Aquinas gets his idea about a kind of happiness that is 'complete' and 'contemplative' from Aristotle. Unfortunately, Aristotle does not offer any further insight in this regard. Besides, if he does, this thesis would not be arguing that Aquinas develops Aristotle' concept of happiness; but rather, it would be arguing that Aquinas Christianises Aristotle's concept of happiness. However, since Aristotle decides not to go further than what he presents in his ethics, that gives Aquinas a solid background to take this idea of contemplation of a "complete happiness" to a whole new level beyond what Aristotle envisages. So, Aquinas argues that human theoretical reasoning reaches its peak in what he terms "contemplation" because "the contemplation of Him [God] makes man perfectly happy" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.7, *resp.)*. However, for Aquinas, since man's true (perfect/ultimate) happiness does not consist in "any external goods, goods of body or the soul nor in the intellective faculty, nor in the practice of moral virtue, namely prudence"; then, the only option left is to conclude that this pure, true, perfect, ultimate happiness must consist in the contemplation of the Truth (*ST* I-IIae, Q. 4, Art. 8, *co.*). Stephen Wang summaries two conclusions made by Aquinas in this regard as thus:

> [...] (A) Human beings, *by their very nature* as creatures of intellect and will, desire a perfect happiness which cannot be found in this life. This perfect happiness can only be found in union with God, since there is no end to our seeking in this life, and God alone is the universal good which can entirely satisfy our will. (B) Union with God, the vision of God's essence, *surpasses the very nature* of every creature including the human being. All creaturely knowledge falls short of the vision of the divine essence, which infinitely surpasses all created substance. Consequently neither human beings, nor any creatures, can attain final happiness by their natural powers (2007:331)[68].

[68] Cf. *ST* I-IIae, Q.2, Art.8, *co*

Aquinas also warns, as Anthony Johnson notes, that this contemplation must not be based on "the understanding of the first principle: for this is most imperfect, as being universal and containing potential knowledge of things" (1989: 121). For Aquinas, such contemplation of the external or temporary goods will be the beginning and not the end of the human study of his goods, as opposed to the knowledge and study of the truth, which is God, Himself. Aquinas also argues that since perfect and final happiness can consist in nothing else other than the vision of the Divine Essence, this can only be possible "through union with God" (*ST* I-IIae, Q. 4, Art. 8, *co*). Aquinas explains that to know something is to know the essence of that thing, so to know God will be to know God's essence, which is not possible in this life. So, since human intellect can never rest until it knows the essence of its inquiry, therefore, the only way to know God's essence perfectly is to be "united with God" as our ultimate happiness. The satisfaction of achieving this task in itself is the end of all enquiries! In other words, once we are united to God, our intellect will have nothing else to know, hence, happiness becomes the human highest, ultimate, last and final end; something sought for the sake of itself because there is nothing else to seek or search for. Therefore, it then follows that human ultimate happiness consists in wisdom, based on the consideration of divine things (Johnson 1986: 122). Hence, one can agree with Aquinas that the perfect or complete happiness consists in the vision of God, and it is only through perfect happiness that we can "attain the true notion of happiness, while imperfect happiness does not attain thereto, but partakes of some particular likeness of happiness" (*ST* I-IIae, Q.3, Art.6, *co.*). In other words, as Pasnau & Shields point out, for Aquinas, human beings are at their "cognitive peak when they, having died in a state of grace, enjoy the beatific vision; the view that Aristotle never imagined" (2004: 210). It must also be noted that whenever Aquinas talks about happiness, he most often implies the perfect, supernatural or true happiness.

However, Aquinas, further claims that all human beings, whether we realise it or not, have the same "ultimate end", and this is what he called again, the *beatific vision.* We might, at times, think that we can have many ends, as Aristotle argues, but for Aquinas, every human being and even "other rational creatures" have *One* ultimate end: supernatural happiness in God (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.1, Art. 8, *resp.*). Aquinas, unlike Aristotle makes it clear that since human reason alone is insufficient to lead human beings to their "ultimate end", rather, they are led instead, through the supernatural "gift" he calls the "grace of God", and not through their own unaided virtuous efforts (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 63, Art.4 *resp*.1). By the grace of God, Aquinas

means the supernatural assistance offered to the human beings by God in order to aid them transcend their ordinary human natural capabilities. For Aquinas, the supernatural union and vision of God in the next life is the human true or perfect happiness, because "God alone" can fully satisfy the human longing for happiness. God is the only thing that can be sought for Himself alone and not for the sake of anything else. Hence, Aquinas argues that "God is happiness by His Essence: for He is happy not by acquisition or participation of something else, but by His Essence" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.1, *ad*.1). As Pasnau & Shields rightly note, "the best form of happiness, the best good for human beings, turns out to be not merely intellectual activity, but the activity of the theoretical intellect- namely, contemplation[...]of the highest and most august object in the entire universe, God" (2004: 211). The fact remains that we can only fully contemplate God in the next life. Once we have reached this state, in our search or desire for happiness, we will be contented because there is simply nothing left for us to desire or to know. Aquinas concludes that the human "final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.8, *resp.*). This is true because there is nothing more final, more desired and better than the beatific vision of God, which Aquinas affirms to be "identical with God" Himself (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.2).[69]

7. 3.2.2. Perfect Happiness: The *Beatific Vision*

Having seen above what Aquinas means by *imperfect* happiness (*felicitas),* which is a general kind of happiness, and what he means by *perfect* happiness (*beatitudo*), we can now look at what he means by perfect happiness as a *beatific vision*. Aquinas argues that *perfect* happiness is being in a state where "man's mind will be united to God by one, continual, everlasting operation" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Art.2, *ad*.4). This perfect happiness is possible only in the participation with the Supreme Good, God. For Aquinas, happiness is something perfect because we can only participate in God's happiness, since God Himself "is happiness through His own essence [...] and not by attaining or participating in something else" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.1). God is the only thing that is perfect and self-sufficient. Thus, the human participation in the divine happiness means that human beings need God's help or "gift" (grace) to attain it, and this "God's gift" is what Aquinas termed, the *infused*

[69] Cf. *ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.3

virtue as has been shown in chapter six above. At this stage, it is clear that Aquinas has moved beyond Aristotle in his understanding of the imperfect and temporary form of happiness to embrace his (Aquinas') perfect and eternal form of happiness, which God has made possible to us through His grace. As Kretzmann & Stump note "Christ alone reveals Perfect Happiness that none of the philosophers, not even his [Aquinas'] master Aristotle, was able to discover" (1993: 33).

Furthermore, this metaphysical, or rather, theological dimension of Aquinas' happiness has changed the way happiness is previously understood and defined. This would mean that when Aquinas, argues that happiness is what we desire for its sake, he has in mind not happiness on earth (*felicitas),* which is Aristotle's *eudaimonia,* but he has in mind, the *beatific vision*, supernatural and perfect happiness in God. Thus, it would make sense to talk about the *beatific vision* as the happiness in God since, for Aquinas, God is the only thing we can behold (contemplate) without searching for any other thing. In other words, perfect happiness is the only 'thing' we can seek or desire for the sake of 'itself' because this kind of "happiness surpasses every created nature" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 5, Arts.7, *resp.*). Aquinas maintains that the human's "final and perfect happiness can consist in nothing else than the vision of the Divine Essence" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.8, *resp.*). This is true because there is nothing more final, more desired and better than the *beatific vision* of God, which Aquinas claims to be "identical with God" Himself (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.2).[70] This means that God is the human being's perfect happiness. God is the only thing that can satisfy the human's unsearchable wants and desires. Aquinas saw happiness as something in relation to God, yet within human reach, something both human and divine, and something both natural and supernatural.

In conclusion, Aristotle in his concept of happiness (*eudaimonia*) presents what some scholars term "political" or "civic" happiness, which is, in a way, moral happiness; while Aquinas presents an ontological, metaphysical and supernatural kind of happiness. Both Aquinas and Aristotle agree that the human ultimate end is happiness. However, for Aristotle happiness can only be achieved in the *polis* as a reward for virtuous activities, while for

[70] Cf. *ST* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.1, *ad*.3

Aquinas, on the other hand, human being can never achieve "complete", "perfect" or final happiness in this life. Both Aristotle and Aquinas believe that there is a close relationship or interconnectedness between happiness and good life achieved through virtuous activity. However, Aquinas insists that "true" or "perfect" happiness consists only in the *beatitude* or the supernatural union with God (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 4, Arts.8, *co.)*. For Aquinas happiness assumes the being of God, who is the First and Final Act, while for Aristotle happiness remains human activity. For Aquinas, this supernatural (perfect) happiness lies far beyond what we human beings, through our natural human capacities, can attain. For this reason, we do not only need virtuous activities, but we also need God to transform our nature in order to be perfect, so that we might be suited to participate in this supernatural happiness. This is the only kind of happiness that satisfies and quenches the innumerable human hunger and thirst for wants and desires of this life.

In other words, for Aquinas, since the natural kind of happiness, of Aristotle, involves more of the human body (matter), which is something in potency (not actuality), it then follows that the supernatural kind of happiness will have to do with the human immaterial (spiritual) part, the soul. This means that since the human being is composed of soul and body, his/her true happiness must not be limited to the body alone, but must consist in something other than the body (the body is temporary, potency), that is the soul. And, since the human soul is incorruptible, true happiness must be something beyond the body (matter) and (to some extent) beyond the soul since the soul *only* mirrors or participates, through its intellectual activity, in the Ultimate, Final, Pure Actuality of God. Therefore, this kind of happiness offered by this Pure Actuality must transcend the kind of happiness offered by the corporeal "created goods" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts1, *co*.). Moreover, it must also be noted that the supernatural (perfect) happiness does not focus only upon the intellect, "neglecting the actualisation of the other powers of the soul", but ascends to this Pure Act, First Cause, in the process or action, which Aquinas calls contemplation. Therefore, for Aquinas, "[...] in perfect happiness the whole man is perfected, but in the lower part by an overflow from the higher" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q. 3, Arts.3, *ad*. 3).

Moreover, both Aquinas and Aristotle also agree that happiness must be "self-sufficient"; that it must be sought only for itself and not for the sake of any other thing else. This kind of happiness is said to be self-sufficient. As John Jones remarks , for Aquinas, since "God is the only, unqualifiedly perfect and self-sufficient good [... He] can never be made better by addition, since all other goods exist only so far as they participate in him" (Jones 2002: 532-533). Hence, perfect happiness (*beatitudo*), which has God as the object of its contemplation, "cannot be the sort of good to which Aristotle refers in T. Rather, T must refer to natural happiness, political/civic happiness [...] happiness in the present life" (ibid). In other words, as John Jones explains, for Aquinas, the natural happiness of Aristotle is 'self-sufficient' only to the extent that it fulfils our temporary goals or our ends in this life, but not for the final ultimate end of the human life (Jones 2002: 536). Therefore, it will suffice to conclude that Aristotle's natural or social or political happiness offers only limited goods of human life, since for Aquinas, Aristotle's happiness is only a means to *an* end, because *the* end can only consist in the *beatific vision* of the Pure Act/Ultimate Good: God.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis has shown that, like good friends, Aquinas and Aristotle agree on certain issues and, amicably, disagree on other issues. It has become clear from my observations that Aquinas relies "closely" on some of the philosophical presuppositions of Aristotle in combination with his theology, when it comes to the formulation and articulation of some aspect of his own notion of happiness. The first observation is that Aquinas uses similar (at times, the same) terms as Aristotle, though, in most cases, with different meanings and concepts. For example, terms like: "good", "ultimate end/goal", "contemplation", "God", "soul", "human being" and above all, "happiness", are all used by both Aquinas and

Aristotle, but with different meanings. However, they both agree that happiness is central to human life and morality, albeit that they disagree as to what happiness is and what it consists of. Happiness, for Aristotle, is the reward for the virtuous activity of the rational soul and the human highest good, but for Aquinas, happiness is the contemplation of God, which consists of the *beatific vision*. In other words, for Aristotle, happiness is, and consists of "human fulfilment" (enjoyment) in this life (*NE* $1094^{a}1$-$1094^{a}17$), while for Aquinas, happiness is, and consists of the participation in the supernatural life of God in the afterlife. If both disagree on what happiness is, and what it consists of, then, I challenge the ground on which some of the contributors, like Gerard Hughes and John Jones, support their view (argument) that Aquinas "merely Christianises" Aristotle's concept of happiness in his moral philosophy. However, that Aquinas' ethics is teleological in nature owes its origin to Aristotle because Aquinas also accepts the Aristotelian view that everything that exists always acts purposefully for an end (a goal). There is no doubt that Aquinas understands Aristotle's ethics thoroughly, to the extent, that he can incorporate some of Aristotle's ethical views in his moral philosophy, without excluding, in this case, his concept of happiness. Aquinas, fully aware of the complexity involved in using and adapting Aristotle's ethics in his moral philosophy, still procedes to develop and transform it according to "the needs and purposes of the thirteenth century". For anyone to argue otherwise, which is also against the position of this thesis, is "to risk the danger of ignoring and even losing those very doctrines which are the work of the personal genius of St Thomas himself" (Pegis 1948: xxviii-xxix).

However, this thesis has shown that Aquinas provides a systematic treatment of happiness as opposed to what he adapts from Aristotle's ethical view of *eudaimonia*. The great advantage of this thesis is that it draws its materials from a broad range of interpreters (scholars), who are conversant with the recent philosophical and ethical debates surrounding Aquinas' use and reliance on Aristotle's ethical views. As a result, this thesis has shown that it stands on better footing to refute any argument that tends to contradict its central position. In other words, this thesis has shown that it is in a better position to make an informed judgment regarding its central argument, namely, that Aquinas, though using Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* in his moral philosophy, is yet able to develop and "transcend" what he adopts from Aristotle. Of course, not everyone agrees with this assertion, hence, the basis for the debate in this thesis. Consequently, this thesis has constantly and consistently argued that Aquinas does not "merely Christianise" Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (happiness),

but rather, to a great extent, develops and transforms it beyond what Aristotle envisions in his three main ethical works introduced at the beginning of this thesis.

The contributors of the two opposing sides accept that Aquinas and Aristotle agree that human ultimate end is happiness. However, Aristotle in his concept of happiness (*eudaimonia*) presents what some scholars term "political" or "civic" (moral) happiness, while Aquinas presents an "ontological" (natural and supernatural) and "metaphysical" kind of happiness. For Aquinas, since a natural kind of happiness, which is Aristotle's kind of happiness stops at the level of the human body (matter), which is something in potency (not actuality), it then follows that the supernatural kind of happiness must transcend this kind of happiness to reach a different level of human operation, which is immaterial (spiritual), the soul. Aquinas reasons that since the human soul is incorruptible and immaterial, therefore, *true* and *perfect* happiness must be something operating beyond mere 'enjoyment' of the body. This means that this true and perfect happiness must be something able to satisfy the spiritual desires of the soul and participate in the activity of the human Ultimate End (Final Act), God.

Firstly, one might, however, question Aquinas' insistence that perfect happiness is only possible in the afterlife. There is no doubt that Aquinas uses the metaphysics of Aristotle (the principle of causality) in the composition of this argument in his favour. However, his conclusion has a far more reaching effect than that which is found in Aquinas' ethics; Aquinas brings in an ontological dimension of happiness, which is not found in Aristotle. The insistence by Aquinas then pays off, since the claim that 'true' and 'perfect' (supernatural) happiness cannot be found in anything created, other than in the vision or contemplation of the *Divine Essence*. Another example will suffice here: since the object of the human intellect is to reach the essence of *a thing*, therefore, the intellect will only attain the perfection as far as it knows the essence of what is before it. This means that, when a person knows an *effect* of something, his/her mind will tell him/her that there must be a *cause* for it; and there will be a kind of natural inclination and "desire to know the essence" of the *cause*. For Aquinas, the mind or the intellect will not rest until it reaches the essence of *a thing*, because "thought" is not yet the essence of the First Cause (God). It is only in the *beatific vision* that we can see and know, fully, the essence of God, and this will generate *true* and *perfect* happiness for us. Yes, the attainment of this essence of the First Cause (God) will generate perfect happiness because there is nothing left to be known or desired. Therefore, for the perfect happiness to

happen, it is necessary that the intellect or the mind must reach as far as the very essence of the First Cause, God (*ST* Ia-IIae, Q.3, Art.8, *co.*).

Secondly, Aristotle considers man as a rational animal, whose involvement in the virtuous activity (function) is rewarded by happiness; while for Aquinas, man is a being searching for his ultimate happiness (where this ultimate happiness is, God). Aquinas makes a distinction between 'enjoyment' and happiness and this distinction is beyond Aristotle. The reason for this abounds in Aquinas' explanation that enjoyment has to do with temporary goods and physical pleasures, which, according to him, are "short-lived", imperfect and unsatisfactory, irrespective of the amount and duration of it. In other words, Aquinas believes there is no amount of enjoyment that can satisfy unsearchable human desires and wants, or rather, cravings for a lasting, permanent and perfect kind of happiness. The claim from Aquinas is consistent with what he adapts from Aristotle's ethics. There will always be a persistent vacuum of unhappiness (quasi happiness) created in the human mind, whenever enjoyment or these temporary goods are accepted in place of the perfect happiness. In other words, from Aquinas, we learn that nothing can satisfy these never-ending desires for true and perfect happiness. As a result of this, the more enjoyment that one feels, the more one's soul longs for more enjoyment, but because this chain of desire cannot go on to infinity, one must at a certain point, stop and desire something more than mere enjoyment, which is perfect happiness.

Thirdly, it has also emerged that through the adoption of Aristotle's general definition of virtue as the human good of the "operative habit" (*ST* Ia-IIæ, Q.55, Art. 2, *resp.*), Aquinas is able to articulate and formulate a definition of happiness that is wide enough to accommodate, both the natural happiness of Aristotle and his (Aquinas') supernatural kind of happiness. In other words, White and Jones, who argue that Aquinas adopts Aristotle's ethical views in his moral philosophy, are now exonerated because Aquinas is uncompromising in his view that our true happiness can only be found in the knowledge or contemplation of the *Divine Essence*. 'Contemplation of the truth' is a phrase used by Aristotle in his ethics to indicate what happiness can consist of, while for Aquinas, the 'contemplation of the Truth (God)' carries similar meaning as that of Aristotle, though in Aquinas, it assumes a supernatural dimension.

Fourthly, Aristotle makes a distinction between what he calls "natural" (moral) virtues and "virtue in the full sense" (intellectual virtues), an idea which is not developed until Aquinas takes it up in his moral philosophy.[71] However, Aquinas' treatment of virtue differs, substantially, from that of Aristotle not only because of his categorisation, but because of his approach. Moreover, in terms of what Aquinas' termed the "cardinal virtues", he is more systematic than Aristotle in his moral virtues of justice, courage, temperance and prudence (*N.E.*1107^{a}28-1107^{b}8; *N.E.*1104^{a}28-1104^{b}3). Aquinas, unlike Aristotle groups the virtues into two main broad categories: natural and supernatural virtues. However, Aquinas keeps the general framework of Aristotle's virtue ethics (intellectual and moral virtues), though he extends them to include the *infused* (supernatural) and natural virtues. This means that Aristotle's kind of virtues, grouped now under Aquinas' natural kind of virtues, are only meant to direct the human beings to their natural (moral, social-political) happiness or an imperfect kind of happiness, while the supernatural virtues of Aquinas, are supposed to direct human beings to their supernatural happiness. These terms are Aquinas' invention, and he must be commended for that. That Aquinas goes beyond Aristotle, in this case, is obvious, especially, when he attests that theological virtues are called such because "their object is God", so they direct human beings to their Supernatural Happiness; and "are *infused* in us by God alone" (*ST,* Ia-IIæ, Q.62, Art. 1, *resp*.).

Fifthly, another conclusion can be reached here, though, Aquinas' moral philosophy (ethics) has its foundation in Aristotle's teleological view of creation, the view that everything which exists in nature acts purposefully for an end or a goal (*NE* 1094^{a}1-1094^{a}17), yet Aquinas takes this view to its supernatural conclusion. For Aquinas, since life in itself is goal-oriented or goal-directed, that would mean that to understand the nature of anything would depend on whether the natural goal or purpose of that thing is properly understood. Aquinas, then reasons that the human final cause or the ultimate end is the *beatific vision* (perfect happiness). This is an indication on how Aquinas understands or views a human being and his/her nature. As result, Aquinas considers a human being as an agent, whose action must always direct him/her to a higher and final end, the Final Cause, God. For Aquinas, wherever we find movement, that movement must be directed towards

[71] Cf. *NE* 1144^{b}10–12 ; *NE* 1144^{b}27–28

some good and that good must act according to the natural law imprinted into its being. Aquinas, concludes that an action of an agent is good in so far as "it tends to the perfection or full actuality" of the nature of that being. Hence, for Aquinas, everything acts for its natural good, whether consciously or unconsciously, and this good is the perfection of the agent. This is an idea, which evades Aristotle in his ethical concept of happiness.

Sixthly, Aquinas' definition of the human being in terms of his metaphysical composition of body and soul, as opposed to Aristotle's definition of the human being in terms of his/her function (*ergon*), aids Aquinas in his conclusion that man is a spiritual being. This is an expansion of Aristotle's thought about the human body and soul. Aristotle's concept of soul as a form a of living organism ("life force"), both for human and non-human beings, would have had negative implications on Aquinas' definition and understanding of the human being as a spiritual being. Aquinas considers the soul as the form and first principle of life possessed by a human person because of his participation in the "divine nature" through his/her rationality. So, for one to have argued that Aquinas adopts some of ethical concepts of Aristotle in his moral philosophy is correct, but one needs to admit also that Aquinas transcends or transforms Aristotle's understanding of the soul in his moral philosophy. This proves that Joseph Owens (1993) and Stephen Wang (2007) are correct in their claims that Aquinas, in some of his ethical thought, transcends and transforms Aristotle's ethical concepts even though they (Aquinas and Aristotle) both use similar or at times, the same vocabularies. This is consistent with the position of this thesis because Aquinas' treatment of the human being is more balanced than that of Aristotle, who places much emphasis on the human mind (rationality), as if rationality is the only thing that constitutes a human being. Aquinas sees the human being as a *knower*, a being composed of body (matter) and soul (form), without either of them stifling or dominating the other. Man is a spiritual being as well as a rational being: a claim, which is at the heart of Aquinas' moral philosophy. Consequently, Aquinas' view of God tends to be different from that of Aristotle, who believes God to be a substance, or rather, a cosmic movement, who is at one time, *one God* and another, many *Gods*. However, Aquinas agrees with Aristotle's notion of the *first unmoved mover*, but Aquinas also believes that God is <u>One</u> and is the Absolute Being, the Final Cause, First Act; whose existence is knowable, though, not completely. This difference between Aristotle's and Aquinas' concepts of the soul, the human being and God, has great

implications on how Aquinas understands human beings, their soul, their purpose and goal in life, their Maker and above all, their ultimate end, happiness.

Finally, Aquinas' use of Aristotle's ethical works suggests that existence in itself contains an order, "a reasonableness and intelligibility", which one does not need faith or revelation to explain. Aquinas has set out to bridge, philosophically, the gap between the natural and supernatural orders, rational and religious orders, philosophical and theological orders. Aquinas considers it paramount in his ethics of happiness not to rely on any religious concepts or sacred texts when demonstrating that human natural orders cannot provide us with true happiness. Whatever we acquire in the name of 'happiness', as experience has shown in this life, is only temporary, "transitory", ephemeral, and above all, unsatisfactory. For Aquinas, the perfect happiness will always elude us, and is, "in principle", not possible to "achieve in the life" that we know because any created thing (good) cannot provide a lasting happiness. In other words, for Aquinas, human beings seek a fulfilment, which can, in principle, never be found within this life, a claim which Aquinas makes with, carefully and systematically, argued points based on human every-day experience. This has also shown how in Aquinas' reasoning, the question of happiness leads one to the question of God and the possibility of His existence (Wang 2007: 323-324). Despite human effort to satisfy our unsearchable wants and desires, human life is necessarily insufficient in itself. It is part of human nature not to be satisfied and be happy in this life. It is part of human nature to be incomplete in this life, and hence, keep on searching and going beyond ourselves and beyond this life. Our desires will always go beyond anything in this life to an "ideal of perfection", which Aquinas associates with the First Cause, God. Therefore, Aquinas has succeed in going beyond Aristotle's natural, moral and political happiness in search of this ideal, true, perfect, ontological and supernatural happiness.

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