

## Second Person Perspective, Virtues and the Gifts in Aquinas's Ethics

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**Abstract:** *The second-personal perspective is an emerging development in philosophical and theological ethics. Significant here is the recent work of Andrew Pinsent. He proposes a reading of Aquinas's treatment of the virtues, gifts, beatitudes and fruits of the Spirit in the light of the second person perspective and the interpersonal experience of Joint Attention. Pinsent draws on recent work in philosophy, neuroscience and experimental psychology to underpin his approach. This article attempts three things: to rehearse the main lines of Pinsent's proposal; to investigate further two aspects of Pinsent's study, namely, personal resonance and connaturality as evident in Aquinas's ethical framework; finally, to offer an initial assessment and an implication of the proposal.*

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**Key Words:** Aquinas; second-personal; virtues; gifts; fruits; connaturality; resonance.

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C urrent work in ethics has thrown more light on the Second Personal aspect of the moral life. Ethical positions differ in their point of departure and focus in relation to knowing what is truly or objectively good. The "first person" builds on the perspective of the acting subject; the "third personal" is characterized by a more detached, impersonal stance and grounded in properties such as autonomy and rationality; the "second person" approach centres on interpersonal relationships.<sup>1</sup> Within Christian Ethics, innovative, studies have been done recently by Andrew Pinsent, building the work of Eleonore Stump.<sup>2</sup> He offers a reading of Aquinas's treatment of the virtues, gifts, beatitudes and fruits of the Spirit in the light of the Second Person perspective and the interpersonal experience of Joint Attention. Pinsent draws on recent work in philosophy, neuroscience and experimental psychology to underpin his approach.

In this article, I would like to attempt three things: to rehearse the main lines of Pinsent's proposal;<sup>3</sup> to investigate further two aspects of Pinsent's study, namely, personal

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<sup>1</sup> For the second-personal perspective and its fundamental role in the various forms of recognition of persons and the moral claims they entail, see Stephen Darwall, *The Second-Personal Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective in Aquinas's ethics: Virtues and gifts* (New York: Routledge, 2012); "Aquinas and the Second Person in the Formation of the Virtues" in T. Brian Mooney & Mark Nowacki (eds), *Aquinas, Education and the East* (Springer: Heidelberg/News York/London, 2013) 47-71; *Joint Attention and the Second-Personal Foundation of Aquinas's Virtue Ethics* (Proquest, Umi Dissertation Publishing, 2011); "The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit" in Brian Davies (ed), *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) 1-21. Also Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010).

<sup>3</sup> The focus is on the first of Pinsent's works listed in n.2.

resonance and connaturality as significant in Aquinas's ethical framework; finally, to offer an initial assessment and an implication of the proposal.

## PINSENT'S SECOND-PERSONAL PROPOSAL

In essence, Pinsent argues that Aquinas's ethics, properly understood, differs qualitatively from Aristotle's virtue approach. For Aquinas, virtue in the full sense is only found in the infused virtues (theological and moral). Aristotelian dispositions are only virtues in the restricted sense. Pinsent anchors his case on Aquinas's definition of virtue. Even with his vast knowledge of Aristotle's ethics, Aquinas introduces the category of virtue by using Augustine's definition of virtue from Peter Lombard's *Sentences*. "Virtue is a good quality of mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us."<sup>4</sup>

Aquinas explains that God working virtue "in us without us" does not mean that God works virtue in us without our consent. What is essential to the notion of virtue is that it is infused by God. Aquinas clarifies this further. He says that virtues that order a person to good (to human flourishing) as defined by divine law (i.e., beatitude), cannot be caused in us by habituation.<sup>5</sup> On that basis, for Aquinas, "without the infused virtues, there are no virtues."<sup>6</sup> Virtues, in the fullest sense, direct to happiness with God.

Given this, Pinsent argues that past recourse to the metaphors of "habituation" in tandem with (supernatural) "elevation" to differentiate between virtues in Aristotle and Aquinas is not adequate. There is needed a new overarching metaphor that can unify yet differentiate Aquinas's treatment of the specific yet interrelated features of the moral life. To achieve this, Pinsent draws on studies exploring the importance of metaphor to understand and articulate embodied, lived, and, in this instance, shared experience. He also taps research into social cognition to illuminate and integrate features in Aquinas that have no parallels in Aristotle.

After explaining seven ways in which Aquinas's virtues are radically non-Aristotelian, Pinsent's proposes that, for Aquinas, moral perfection grounded in God "working virtue in us without us" gives an essential role to the gifts, beatitudes and fruits of the Spirit. Its structure is captured in the acronym VGBF (virtues-gifts-beatitudes-fruits). The gifts, as second personal dispositions, are perfections disposing a person to be attuned to, and to follow, the divine impulse or instinct of the Holy Spirit. These dispositions surpass all the Aristotelian or divinely infused moral virtues. Where the theological virtues are the ultimate foundation, the gifts are the penultimate basis of the whole VGBF structure of Aquinas's theory of virtue. Given that the gifts are not secondary but essential, Pinsent argues that a proper understanding of Aquinas's ethics starts with the gifts.

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<sup>4</sup> *ST* 1.2.55.4 as in Pinsent. For my referencing of the *Summa*, I have consulted the Latin/English (Blackfriars) version of the English Dominican Province (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1963-1975) and the *Summa Theologica of St. Thomas Aquinas* 2<sup>nd</sup> rev. ed. 1920, translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province in the on-line version [www.newadvent.org/summa/](http://www.newadvent.org/summa/). Translated passages from the *Summa* (henceforth *ST*) are those of the Blackfriars edition. Summaries or paraphrases are this author's.

<sup>5</sup> *ST* 1.2.63.2.

<sup>6</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 13.

As noted earlier, Pinsent (and Stump) suggest that recent studies of second personal experiences and second personal relationship can illuminate Aquinas's approach to the moral life. These draw on advances in neuroscience (differences in left [analysis] and right brain [affective and metaphoric] activities) and, importantly, on research into social cognition with its relational and embodied context.

For Stump, the necessary conditions for a minimal second-personal experience can be expressed thus:

One person, Paula, has a second-person experience of another person, Jerome, only if:

- (1) Paula is aware of Jerome as a person (call the relation Paula has to Jerome in this condition "personal interaction"),
  - (2) Paula's personal interaction with Jerome is of a direct and immediate sort,
- and
- (3) Jerome is conscious.<sup>7</sup>

An experience is second-personal, then, when one person in the experience truly recognizes the other as a "you", namely, as a person. This is in contrast to recognising the other person as simply a "him," "her," "it," or even as some form of "me." Stump's necessary conditions reflect studies of those suffering from autism spectrum disorder, who appear to lack the ability (to a greater or lesser degree) to have this kind of interpersonal interaction. Those with autism have difficulty using the second- personal pronoun "you" and tend to regard it as something used of a third person.

Further, among those who are able to share a second-personal relationship there is a phenomenon called *triadic joint attention*. In this process, both individuals in a second-personal relationship can simultaneously have his or her attention fixed on some third object, event or state of affairs. Hence, from within the second-personal relationship, there can be a reciprocity whereby each person's attitudes and responses to the third "object" can be shared in a manner that is direct and intuitive. It is a "sharing of minds." Pinsent argues that this form of interactive relationship can offer an insight into the interaction and "sharing of minds" between God and the person in the setting of a graced relationship.

Research has shown that children with autism spectrum disorder are often unable to be "moved" by the other person, such that, from a basic form of affective response, the child can identify with the "other" and so engage in "joint attention" of another object or event. Pinsent (and Stump) suggests that such a condition can be seen analogically in terms of a person's "spiritual autism"—the inability to be "moved" affectively by the divine other, and, hence, share a graced relationship with God and its associated "meeting of minds."

On this basis, Pinsent probes texts in Aquinas where the infused non-Aristotelian virtues (theological and moral) and gifts heal and remove a person's spiritual autism. One is, thus, enabled to enter and pursue a relationship with God which is radically different in character and consequences from Aristotelian accounts of virtue.

Within the matrix of second-person relatedness, the virtues and the gifts can be seen as two sets of interrelated and complementary dispositions. Pinsent argues that first-personal dispositions (such as the virtue of wisdom) are possessed by an individual

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<sup>7</sup> Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* 75–6.

without entailing any shared stance or inter-personal relationship. They are habitual dispositions by which a person exercises their power of self-direction through being moved easily by their own reason.<sup>8</sup> In the virtue of wisdom, for instance, this takes the form of an individually-based evaluative judgment. Alternatively, second-personal dispositions involve the shared experience of embodied relationship, namely a mutual presence of another and an acknowledged shared stance. The person, it could be said, so identifies with the other that they take on something of the other's psychological disposition, namely, their ways of perceiving and their dispositions to be moved and respond affectively, and so come, as in the gift of wisdom, to a "shared evaluation".

Seen in relation to Aquinas's moral theory, then, Pinsent points out that

Since, by means of the gifts, one's cognition and appetites are moved [by God] in a second-personal way, a gift could be characterized as a second-personal disposition, classifying a virtue, by contrast, as a first-personal disposition.<sup>9</sup>

For Aquinas, with the virtue of wisdom, for instance, a judgment is made in relation to the benchmark of *first-personal flourishing*, albeit within the context of the gift of grace. It encapsulates growing in the divine likeness through self-direction in freedom (*per se potestativus*).<sup>10</sup> Alternatively, since the gifts are a disposition to being "moved", they entail an interaction with another personal agent so that there is a sharing of, or a participation in, the stance towards some object, an expression of *inter-personal flourishing*.

More important, however, is the gift of wisdom, since it is qualitatively different from the virtue of wisdom. It is a disposition, again built on friendship with God that seeks to be associated with God in an intimate way by a kind of "union of the soul." From the action of the Holy Spirit, the person is disposed to be "amenable" or "readily moveable" by divine inspiration."<sup>11</sup> Here, wisdom's judgment comes from a "meeting of minds" and whose goal is *second or interpersonal flourishing*. There is a "connaturality" for such judgments from love through union with God. Hence, the gift of wisdom emerges within a setting of an interpersonal relationship and in a mode of knowing that is immediate and intuitive—a sharing in the divine instinct. It is this disposition to a shared sympathy *with* God (*idem velle idem nolle* of Augustine), that specifically characterizes the gifts and differentiates Aquinas's theological ethics. Pinsent sums it up:

In the VGBF network, Aquinas argues that the gifts are foundational to the infused moral and intellectual virtues, beatitudes, and fruits, the unifying principle of which is love which Aquinas describes as "friendship" with God.<sup>12</sup>

This metaphoric framework of the second-personal, consequently, is the setting for understanding the virtues, beatitudes and fruits. The theological and infused virtues are related, naturally, to the union and shared stance towards the situations requiring joint attention. For the autistic (whether psychologically or spiritually), the issue is not in what they know but the manner in which they are moved (or not) by what or who they know.

<sup>8</sup> See fn.10 below.

<sup>9</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 62. Emphasis in original.

<sup>10</sup> *ST* 1.2. Prologue, where the moral life is seen by Aquinas in relation to the divine exemplar as self-direction of the free and intelligent divine image (*intellectuale et arbitrio liberum et per se potestativum*).

<sup>11</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 32 citing *ST* 1.2. 68.1.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.* 50.

The virtue of love means that “one loves with the beloved what the beloved loves.”<sup>13</sup> The difference lies in the form of movement. With the virtue, one moves oneself as the image of the divine exemplar (as *per se potestativus*). With the gifts, one is moved by a second person, namely, God, within a second personal relationship. It is joint activity through sharing in the *attitudes* and action of the divine exemplar (*per alio potestativus?*). With the gift of wisdom, for instance, in relation to a common object, event or state of affairs, a shared stance with God comes an intuitive judgment or “a sure estimation that something ought to be adhered to and its opposite withdrawn from” that simulates the will. Citing Stump’s phrase, it is a shared “conative attitude prompted by the mind’s understanding.”<sup>14</sup> One is moved by the Spirit to taste with the divine taste.

Concerning the beatitudes, Pinsent suggests that, for Aquinas, they parallel the role of Aristotle’s habituation of virtue. Using a narrative approach, Pinsent argues that the transformation of a person’s character revolves around a shift in motivation. In first-personal virtue, one loves God for one’s own good. By contrast, second-person motivation is concerned with loving *with* God what God loves and *in the manner* in which God loves. Pinsent sees the beatitudes in terms of contrasting states and the gradual change between them. For instance, from a condition of lowliness (poor in spirit) one is called and recognised as a child of God. The beatitudes’ progression “begins with some implied conflict or some undesirable states and ends with resolution.” To that extent, the beatitudes “single and collectively share the basic characteristics of narrative”, one directed to a completion in the future and, hence, suitably denoted as “promissory narratives.”<sup>15</sup>

Finally, the fruits, like the gifts, emerge from an interpersonal relationship and joint attention activity. They pertain “to a triadic person-person-world relationship, in which there is a harmony of desire and union of affection with the other person in relation to some object.” The fruits could be defined as “states or operations that involve a certain harmony with God with whom one relates in a second-personal manner” and which “have a certain finality or delight for the person engaging in them” as achieving one’s goal (“last end”).<sup>16</sup>

Pinsent suggests that the principle of resonance in contemporary physics throws light on this final stage or state of completion found in the fruits. It involves “a qualitative change, a disproportionate decrease in effort and increase in intensity, when coupled systems are almost in harmony with each other.”<sup>17</sup> Pinsent suggests a suitable metaphor for the fruits, implied in Aquinas’s account, is found in activities involving resonance, for instance, of musicians or dancers where they are perfectly attuned to each other. This brings a sense of “pleasurable exhilaration of ‘flying along’, as if their playing or dancing has suddenly become effortless, and the sound or movement they generate practically takes on a life of its own.”<sup>18</sup> Joint attention and joint operation with God through the VGBF

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 71.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. 40. See Eleonore Stump, “The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas’s Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions” *Faith and Philosophy* 28:1 (2011): 29-43, at 41.

<sup>15</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 87.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 95.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 96.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. 97.

model finds its completion in an experience metaphorically understood as *interpersonal resonance*.

To sum up: in Pinsent's account, the *second-personal* metaphor is complemented by that of *interpersonal resonance* in the fruits. Also, as seen earlier, Pinsent explained briefly the role of connaturality as "sympathy" for the divine with the gift of wisdom. These two aspects warrant further investigation since they both have a role in the broader context of Aquinas's ethics. Here I will focus on *intrapersonal* resonance in relation to connaturality in Aquinas.

## INTRAPERSONAL RESONANCE AND CONNATURALITY

Any discussion of intrapersonal resonance in Aquinas involves the organic unity of the person. Some introductory comments on this are appropriate here.

### *Intrapersonal Resonance*

The different aspects of the body/spirit relationship are captured particularly in Aquinas's *Treatise on the Passions*. In essence, while the passions, strictly speaking, typically entail some sort of bodily change, the soul (mind and will), through its union with the body, is capable of being affected by bodily experiences.<sup>19</sup>

This means that the intellectual and sensitive appetites communicate and mutually affect each other and their operations. This occurs through a process of resonance or reverberation. On one hand, the body can influence the spiritual level. Aquinas speaks of how bodily changes can affect the soul (the intellectual appetite). A hot bath and sleep can be remedies for pain and sorrow. The organic unity of the human being is such that "every good disposition of the body has a certain 'resonance' (*redundat quoddammodo*) with the heart, that is, with the source and the end of bodily motion."<sup>20</sup>

Alternatively, the influence can move from spirit to body. For instance, a yearning for wisdom in the intellectual appetite can overflow (*fit redundantia*) into the sensitive appetite so that it, too, tends to the spiritual good.<sup>21</sup> Again, the moral status of a passion (with its bodily change) is evaluated in terms of being fitting, resonating with, "in or out of tune with" (*conveniens, consonans/dissonans*) with right reason.<sup>22</sup> Elsewhere, Aquinas points out that, through *redundantia*, the more perfect the virtue, the more it will influence the movements of the sensitive appetite, namely, reverberate in the realm of the

<sup>19</sup> ST 1.2.22.1. There is much discussion on emotions, passions and affections and their relationship. Since the concern here is personal and bodily resonance in Aquinas, I use his term "passion" for consistency.

<sup>20</sup> ST 1.2.38.5 ad 3. Also ST 1.2.45.3 where "the warming of the heart repels fear and causes hope." Scientific explanations aside, physiological changes can arouse passions.

<sup>21</sup> ST 1.2. 30.1 ad 1.

<sup>22</sup> ST 1.2.24.1. Also, on the will see ST 1.2.2 and *de Malo* 6. Aquinas's language is interesting. Fittingness is natural, habitual or about the passions. His definition of natural fittingness captures the key elements for each: that something is "naturally in tune with, or disposed to, what is fitting for it" (*naturalem consonantiam vel aptitudinem ad id quod sibi convenit*), see ST 1.2.29.1. An object moving the will is a good apprehended as "fitting" (*conveniens* or *consonans*) in a specific situation. Overall, to evaluate what is morally good, Aquinas seems to draw on the grammar of consonance and dissonance as in musical harmony.

passions.<sup>23</sup> Through the will's intense orientation to goodness or through a deliberate decision to cultivate a certain passion there is an accompanying and supportive involvement of the passions.<sup>24</sup> We find Aquinas commenting that our body/spirit makeup determines that our good activity is in conjunction with passion "even as it is produced by the help (*ministerio*) of the body."<sup>25</sup> There is a positive mutual causality. When the passion is in tune with the will's choice, psychological and physical reverberations facilitate the act.<sup>26</sup> Or as Cates says, when an object is attractive on the intellectual and sensory levels at the same time, it could be said that "a motion of the will can be *accompanied* by a notable bodily resonance."<sup>27</sup>

Chenu notes that Aquinas's conviction about the organic unity of the person flowed from the principle of consubstantiality of body and soul central to Aquinas's approach to the passions. For Aquinas, then, while the passions are integrally related to mind, will and freedom, they have their own proper perfection. For this reason, to describe the collaborative relationship between the intellect, will, passions and imagination, Aquinas uses the governing metaphor of political rather than despotic rule or, in modern terms, a "deliberative assembly."<sup>28</sup> For Aquinas, the phenomenon of bodily resonance is a central indicator that the human sensibilities are virtuous not by simple docile subordination or by simple habituation "but by an intimate penetration. It is thanks to this penetration- or better interpenetration- that the spirit finds home in our sensibilities or passions" and that:

the human dignity of the passions is such that they enjoy in the active outflowing of the spirit (*derivatio*) their natural energy and even their freedom of direction. In this way they are subjects of virtues and possess authentic moral value, for better or for worse.<sup>29</sup>

Reid sums it up by noting: "What is remarkable, given the limitations of time and opportunity, is St. Thomas' continuing interest in the role of bodily resonance in man's emotional life and the extent and diversity of his comments on the subject."<sup>30</sup>

For our purposes, it suffices to say that the phenomenon of intrapersonal resonance does have a role, even if undeveloped, in Aquinas. Further, our discussion reminds us that "resonance" is an analogical term. On Pinsent's reading, its interpersonal expression in a relationship with God emerges from a state of finality, of completion as realized in the fruits. Our considerations have shown that, for Aquinas, resonance also denotes the equilibrium characteristic of the natural (and "fitting"-*consonans*) functioning of the body/spirit totality.

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<sup>23</sup> *ST* 1.2.59, 5.

<sup>24</sup> *ST* 1.2. 24.3 ad 1.

<sup>25</sup> *ST* 1.2.24.3 ad.3.

<sup>26</sup> *Quaestiones Disputatae* 26.7.

<sup>27</sup> Diana Fitz Cates, *Aquinas on The Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009) 223.

<sup>28</sup> Germain Grisez, *The Way of the Lord Jesus* Vol 1 (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1983) 415.

<sup>29</sup> Chenu, "Body and Body Politic" 197. Miner corrects Chenu noting that "passions cannot be the subjects of virtues, because they are the particular acts of the sensitive appetite's powers." The virtues are perfections of a power (which is, therefore, their subject). See Robert Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of Summa Theologiae 1a2ae 22-48* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009) 288-9.

<sup>30</sup> J. Reid, O.P., Intro., Notes, Trans., of *Summa Theologiae* (1a. 2ae. qq.40-48) Vol. 21 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1965) Appendix VI 172.

This brings us to another aspect of resonance: its association with connaturality.

### *Connaturality and Resonance*

We recall Pinsent's discussion of connaturality or "sympathy" with the divine as characteristic of the gift of wisdom. This is connaturality's most complete expression, namely, in second-personal union, one that is qualitatively different yet grounded in the dynamisms of human experience.

It is helpful to recall that, in Aquinas, there are three other first-personal dimensions of connaturality—the ontological, the habitual (virtuous) and, bridging the two, the epistemological. Andrew Tallon points out that, for Aquinas, it is connaturality that makes our "faculties" operate with spontaneity, responsive to what is akin to them, befitting them. Take our eyes, for instance. They don't need to *know the* light and colour are good for them. They naturally act and experience fulfillment (*complacentia*).<sup>31</sup> This is *ontological* connaturality.

In humans, the cognitive, affective, volitional operations of rational consciousness *respond* to their proper objects (*being* as true and good) because of their "cor-respondence with their proper objects." This is because, in Aristotelian/Thomistic teleology and ontology, "every agent acts on account of an end and to be an end carries the meaning to be good".<sup>32</sup> This is the *epistemological* connaturality- an experienced befittingness, belongingness, affinity, attunement.<sup>33</sup> For humans, it is directed to the *habitual* connaturality (of virtue), where true judgments of conscience have their source in a "sort of connaturality between man and the true good."<sup>34</sup>

Our focus here is on what is salient to the first-personal dimension and *intrapersonal* resonance. Connaturality in Aquinas is variously described as experiential or appreciative knowing and characterized by congeniality or attunement.<sup>35</sup> Where can we find the first point of intersection between *epistemological* and *habitual* (virtuous) connaturality? For Aquinas, it is in an awareness of primary moral principles. This foundational awareness is not one of *ratio* (discursive, reasoned knowing) but of *intellectus*, which is both non-discursive insight "from within" and an initial form of loving knowledge with the immediacy that accompanies contemplation.<sup>36</sup> It is an intuitive appreciation of the truth precisely as a good that is fitting and congenial to authentically human existence. It is both an epistemological and moral expression of ontological connaturality.

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<sup>31</sup> Andrew Tallon, *Head and Heart: Affection, Cognition and Volition as Triune Consciousness* (NY: Fordham University Press, 1997) 235.

<sup>32</sup> *ST* 1.2.94.2.

<sup>33</sup> Tallon, *Head and Heart* 235.

<sup>34</sup> *ST*. 2.2.45.2.

<sup>35</sup> Aquinas calls connatural knowledge "judgment by inclination" (*per modum inclinationis*, *ST*. I.1.6 ad 3); "affective cognition" (*cognitio affectiva*, *ST*.1.64. 1; 2.2.162) and "experiential cognition" (*cognitio experimentalis*, *ST*. 2.2.97.2).

<sup>36</sup> *De Veritate*, q. 16, a. 1, resp.; q.1, a.2.c; *ST* 2.2.180.4. Also Dennis J. Billy, C.Ss.R., "Christ's Redemptive Journey and the Moral Dimension of Prayer" *Studia Moralia* 37 (1999): 127-152 at 146 and *ST* 1.2.94.2 ad 2 where Aquinas speaks of insight or understanding as *synderesis* or "*lex intellectus*."

Jacques Maritain is of the same mind. Anything in nature has within it its own "natural law", the "normality of its function", in how it should act "to achieve fullness of being in its growth and in its behaviour." This knowledge of natural law (basic moral sense):

is obscure, unsystematic, vital knowledge by connaturality or congeniality, in which the intellect, in order to bear judgment, consults and listens to the inner melody that the vibrating strings of abiding tendencies make present in the subject.<sup>37</sup>

The three modes of first-personal connaturality, then, converge in primordial moral awareness, in the sense of certain perceived realities as good, as "in tune with" the deepest self, if only in a groping and non-thematic way. This is resonance at the level of one's being, captured best, perhaps, by the term "affective connaturality." Snell suggests that, since *connaturality* is in the realm of affection, we could borrow from Heidegger and use the equivalent *Befindlichkeit* or *Stimmung* which denotes mood or attunement to Being itself and, in the context of faith, is understood as attunement toward the Divine.<sup>38</sup> This theme points to the next stage of the discussion.

### *Connaturality: Further Mode of Resonance?*

We return to the second-personal expression of connaturality discussed briefly by Pinsent concerning the "sympathy" of the gift of wisdom for things divine. One judges in tune with God is if it was "second-nature" to do so. There is a refinement that can be made to Pinsent's treatment.

Pinsent's focus seems to be on a form of *epistemological* connaturality, namely, wisdom's non-discursive and intuitive knowing compared the discursive and analytical. But, as Kelly notes, beyond the "native aptitude" of our embodied existence in this world to pursue what is true and the good, there is needed, through grace, an overall aptitude or connaturality for participating in the divine realm. Hence, the seven gifts of the Spirit adapt the cognitive and affective aspects of personal consciousness to the divine milieu such that faith is a new way of "seeing."<sup>39</sup> But connaturality could also be described, as noted above, in the first-personal realm, less in terms of knowing/seeing and more as "embodied awareness" or "attunement" to Being or, here, to *being*. Our concern, here, is its second-personal form in shared attention through the gifts that goes beyond the first-personal mode of virtue. As Pinsent notes correctly, for Aquinas, the animating and enabling force of friendship with God is love. Any shared knowing and loving is an expression of love and its union.

<sup>37</sup> Jacques Maritain, "Natural Law in Aquinas" in Charles E. Curran & Richard A. McCormick, SJ, (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology*, No. 7 (Mahwah NJ: Paulist, 1991) 114-123, at 115 and 119. This quote indicates a certain ambiguity in Maritain noted by Tallon. Affective connaturality seems to be at the service of discursive reason and its judgment rather than being recognized as a mode of "judgment without concepts" that is valid in its own right. See Tallon, *Head and Heart* 222, 226, 229.

<sup>38</sup> R.J. Snell, "Connaturality in Aquinas: The Ground of Wisdom" *Quodlibet* 5/4 (2003): 1-8, at 3. Available online at <http://www.Quodlibet.net> and accessed 15, 10, 2003. Ibid. 3. Snell argues that connaturality or attunement to Being is the transcendental condition of the dynamism of the structure of the operations of intentional consciousness, to use Bernard Lonergan's terminology.

<sup>39</sup> For a succinct and accessible account of this see Anthony J Kelly, "Faith as Sight? Toward a Phenomenology of Revelation" *Australian eJournal of Theology* 19.3 (2012): 180-194 especially at Section 3, *The Eye of Love and the Gifts of the Spirit*.

It is precisely this love that produces a transformation of one's identity—ontologically, existentially and, consequently, in the realm of consciousness. It brings about a “gratuitous connaturalizing of one's human nature to the divine nature by sheer, gratis, divine agency.”<sup>40</sup> The love of God permeates and alters how we see and experience everything and everyone, making “one a different person, a being capable of *being affected* differently and so capable of *responding* differently.”<sup>41</sup> Bringing Lonergan's perspective to Aquinas's classical text on the gift of wisdom (used also by Pinsent), Tallon suggests that the actions of discursive knowing and the will's elective ability are unified in a higher level of functioning (sublated) through the love that transforms our very identity such that:

as we are, so we connaturally love, with a love that flows spontaneously from the Core of our being without need of discursive reasoning or deliberative will. Connaturality operates on the basis of who and what we are and have become rather than solely because of what we think.<sup>42</sup>

This prompts Barry Miller to see connaturality slightly differently, namely as “an *experienced* ‘befittingness’ not a mere *known* befittingness; *and it is from the former not the latter that love arises.*”<sup>43</sup> Miller's final phrase guides our discussion and clarifies the “affective” aspect of connaturality.

First, the phrase suggests another perspective for the basis of the second-personal relationship. The capacity to be moved and identify with another can also be articulated in terms of the person's affective capacity for what is *experienced* as truly *fitting* at the level of one's being. I can know something as not fitting when in fact it truly is. But, as Miller reminds us, “love is not subject to the limitations of self-knowledge.”<sup>44</sup> It is the experience of what is most fitting, of what (the object, the value) is most in harmony with who one is according as one is constituted and *disposed*. This is the foundation of love, namely, not from what we know but from what we *are*, namely, open to be moved to respond and so enter a second-personal relationship with God.

Second, from this emerges shared form of *experienced* “befittingness” towards an object or state of affairs. It is a joint resonance at the level of *being* between the person and God, namely, as shared stance towards the world and life. It must be noted that, for Aquinas, we can, properly speaking, attribute to God affections such as love, joy and mercy which imply no imperfection since they are qualities of a moral subject and come from a single act of will, namely, God's love within the Trinity and for all things.<sup>45</sup> However, connaturality of one's human nature with God's nature remains that of creature to creator. What is one act of will in God follows the pattern, in human graced participation, of “being affected *differently* and responding *differently*” to what is truly good in a way that is beyond “the human measure”, namely, with the attitude and disposition of God.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Tallon, *Head and Heart* 238.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 214.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 212-3. See *ST* 2.2.45.2.

<sup>43</sup> Barry Miller, *The Range of Intellect* (London: Routledge, 1963) 147. Cited in Tallon, *Head and Heart* 213. Emphasis in final phrase added.

<sup>44</sup> Miller, *The Range of Intellect* 213.

<sup>45</sup> *ST* 1.82.5 ad 1.

<sup>46</sup> *ST* 1.2.70.4.

Third, Miller's comment reminds us that the intentionality of connaturality is towards what is good and, in particular, in an embodied experience of the particular good as "fitting" and, hence, to be done. For Tallon, connaturality's proper correlative is less knowledge and more *action* (at least, oriented to action). The intentionality of the second-personal relationship, whether in the mode of the virtues (first-personal) or the gifts (second-personal) is about discerning, responding to, and acting for what is *truly good* in God's eyes through a shared resonance at the level of *being*.

These considerations on connaturality as a form of resonance seem to offer a broader context and more depth to Stump's phrase used by Pinsent concerning the gift of wisdom, namely, a "conative attitude prompted by the mind's understanding."<sup>47</sup> This brings us to the final part of our discussion.

## ASSESSMENT AND AN IMPLICATION

Overall, Pinsent's is a coherent, innovative and persuasive interpretation of Aquinas's moral theory. Whether it helps promote what he describes towards the end of the book, namely, a kind of "Copernican revolution" in understanding the virtues, only time will tell.

Clearly, the study highlights a Thomistic metaphysics that "recognizes the absolute primacy of persons."<sup>48</sup> Pinsent's proposed model puts a needed emphasis on the relational and integrally receptive ("passive") dimension of human personhood and its moral nature. This, and other re-appraisals of the relational dimensions of personhood, converges with Benedict XVI's call in *Caritas in Veritate* in the light of globalization and the interaction of people in the world. The Pope suggests a "new trajectory of thinking" that requires "*a deeper critical evaluation of the category of relation*".<sup>49</sup>

Pinsent has good reasons for proposing a metaphor that captures the qualitative difference in Aquinas's ethics while providing a synthetic "picture of virtue" closely linked to everyday human experience.<sup>50</sup> By drawing on contemporary psychological and empirical research, he can offer a more detailed analysis of the experience of consciousness and its interpersonal dynamics. This approach also helps transcend some of the limits to the body/spirit relationship in Aquinas. Again, Pinsent's proposal gives timely emphasis to the role of affectivity and emotional responsiveness in interpersonal relationships, in personal existence and in moral virtue, judgment and choice. In all this, Pinsent applies his considerable philosophical abilities in presenting an argument that Aquinas's ethics is essentially (and uniquely) theological. It would be difficult to fault his clarity and skills in argument and textual analysis, though I note one exception.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> See n.13 above.

<sup>48</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 104. This is a dimension already well explored by, for instance, W. Norris Clarke.

<sup>49</sup> John Paul II, *Caritas in Veritate: Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth* (Strathfield NSW: St Pauls, 2009) n.53. Emphasis in original translation.

<sup>50</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 29.

<sup>51</sup> There is puzzling fn.90 on p.120 of *The Second-person perspective* concerning a translation from Latin. Pinsent says "Aquinas describes shame as a 'wicked fear', and hence an example of an evil passion (*ST* 1a2ae, q. 24, a.4)" – a view also held by Robert Miner in his study of Aquinas's *Treatise on the Passions* 93. In fact, Aquinas's view is the reverse. The body of the article expands what Aquinas says in the *sed contra*: "verecundia est passio laudabilis." Shame (*verecundia* or *timor turpis*) is the example of a good passion since it is in

As Pinsent acknowledges, a new unifying model of virtue must be tested in regard to contentious issues, for instance, the relationship between infused and acquired virtue. Pinsent's interpersonal model seems to enable a more adequate resolution of difficulties in this area. For instance, his reading of Aquinas underscores the special role of the non-Aristotelian virtue of humility as acknowledged dependence on God. In the context of being "moved" by another and openness to another's stance, Aquinas's treatment of pride's self-sufficiency takes on a new light as does gratitude and magnanimity. Again, Pinsent's probing of Aquinas is most valuable concerning infused virtues and gifts as dispositions that can be present in children and the intellectually impaired.<sup>52</sup> In seeking the guidance of another in a non-coercive setting of being "moved" and of joint attention, they are helped towards exercising rationality in personal action and acquiring habits guided by prudence. Hence, Pinsent suggests "the role assigned to God in Aquinas's account of the virtues is plausibly played, to some extent, by other second-person agents in everyday situations, such as parents interacting with their children."<sup>53</sup>

This project, nevertheless, has limitations, mainly theological. First, we have noted above Pinsent's analysis of the VSBF network in Aquinas where love, the unifying principle, is described as "friendship" with God. It might have helped to note the extensive study by Paul Wadell. While his primary focus is on the virtues, Wadell argues that the overarching metaphor that unifies Aquinas moral theory is friendship.<sup>54</sup> His work is representative of those who, by argument or implication, see friendship rather than habituation as the "controlling" metaphor that Aquinas adapts from Aristotle. How Pinsent's proposed metaphor (embracing second-personal perspective/interpersonal relationship/joint attention) is related to, or goes beyond, these and earlier studies is not clarified.

Further, as Pinsent draws on insights from psychology and social cognition to illuminate virtue in Aquinas, this could also apply to other fields of theology. Convergent with friendship (already noted) is that of Trinitarian theology (or theologies). There is no effort to relate Pinsent's new metaphor either to past insights or present advances in understandings of the Trinity (and its role in the moral life). Clearly, Pinsent's model is compatible with, for instance, psychological, bestowal or social models of the Trinity. Unfortunately, this is not explored, despite the book's focus on sharing in the knowing and loving of the intra-trinitarian life and the role of the Holy Spirit.

Again, Pinsent's investigation could be enhanced by drawing on more recent work on the relationship between the infused and acquired virtues.<sup>55</sup> For all that, he does

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harmony with reason (*conveniens rationi*) whereas envy (*invidia*) exemplifies an evil passion since it is not in harmony with reason (*dissonum a ratione*). Perhaps "*turpis*" was read as an adjective rather than as an adjectival noun in the genitive case, hence, the equivalent of "*turpitudinis*"?

<sup>52</sup> Aquinas says, in contrast with Aristotelian acquired virtues, anyone can possess the gifts (and virtues) which are infused by God. See *ST* 2.2.47.14 ad 3. Pinsent makes it quite clear that, "autism does not preclude possession of the gifts and a second-person relationship with God." Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 131 fn.95. How precisely Pinsent's model applies in the atypical situation of autism is beyond this paper.

<sup>53</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective* 107.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Wadell, *Friendship and the Moral Life* (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989). Also Daniel Schwartz, *Aquinas on Friendship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) and Edward Collins Vacek, SJ, *Love, Human and Divine: The Heart of Christian Ethics* (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994).

<sup>55</sup> For instance, William Mattison, "Can Christians Possess the Acquired Virtues" *Theological Studies* 72:4 (2011): 558-585.

address the issue of supernatural/infused virtues vis-à-vis acquired virtues/natural happiness (and Limbo) that was part of Aquinas's world view. While appropriate, given Pinsent's aims, this debate has, nevertheless, been overtaken by Rahner's theology of the nature/grace relationship centred on the "supernatural existential" (and by recent developments in a theology of Limbo). Acknowledging such progress could have been valuable in relation to Pinsent's aims, particularly since Aquinas himself anticipates Rahner's position and Vatican II's teaching when he says:

each human being who achieves a mature self-determination, in so doing either turns to God and enters into divine grace with the remission of original sin, or culpably turns from God by not doing "what within him lies."<sup>56</sup>

Aquinas's position, remarkable for its time and not representing prevailing views, has a specific implication for today. As noted above, for Aquinas, the infused virtues and gifts are universal.<sup>57</sup> While the primary means for this is baptism, there also is the implicit desire for God as in baptism of desire. Its modern expression (*Lumen Gentium* 16) highlights the salvific value of striving to lead a good life through commitment to conscience.<sup>58</sup>

So, it is our (and Aquinas's) faith that any person, including the non-believer or atheist, who lives "according to their lights" seeking what is true and good in good faith, can possess the infused virtues and gifts. Entry into divine grace means the VGBF network and friendship with God are at work in their lives, albeit in a hidden and unacknowledged way. It will be distinguishable in a pattern of moral self-transcendence centred on love where one is "moved" by others and identifies with them in their needs. Such obedience to conscience brings a practical, non-conceptual, "non-conscious knowledge of God, which can co-exist with a theoretical ignorance of God."<sup>59</sup> Or, as Bernard Lonergan suggests, they "may love God in their hearts while not knowing him with their heads."<sup>60</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Clearly, Andrew Pinsent's is an important and thought-provoking contribution to understanding virtues and Aquinas from the second- person perspective. Nevertheless, as noted above, it needs to be strengthened in terms of theological perspectives (past and present), the body/spirit mutual relationship in Aquinas, and other insights into the dynamics of human consciousness. What is valuable is the clarity he has brought to the distinctiveness of Aquinas's (and Christian) ethics, to its inherently relational and interpersonal character and to an awareness that, for Aquinas and all of us, living a good life ends with, but, more importantly, begins with God.

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<sup>56</sup> *ST* 1.2.89.6, corp. where "not doing what within him lies" translates "non faciens quod in se est." Cited in John Thornhill, "A Wholesome Agnosticism and Christianity's Coming Dialogue with the World Religions" *Pacifica* 6 (1993): 265-277, at 267.

<sup>57</sup> Pinsent, *The Second-person perspective*, xiii and n.51 above.

<sup>58</sup> "Those also can attain to everlasting salvation who through no fault of their own do not know the gospel of Christ or His Church, yet sincerely seek God and, moved by grace, strive by their deeds to do His will as it is known to them through the dictates of conscience." *Lumen Gentium* 16 in Walter M. Abbot, SJ (Ed), *The Documents of Vatican II* (The America Press, 1965) 35.

<sup>59</sup> David Coffey, *Believer, Christian, Catholic* (Sydney, NSW: Catholic Institute, 1986) 10.

<sup>60</sup> Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1972) 278.

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