

Person and Ethics in Thomas Aquinas*

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Sommario: 1. Love as the most fundamental act of the will. 2. The structure of dilectio: love of friendship and love of concupiscence. 3. Persons as the ends of all actions. 4. Persons and teleology.



It is, perhaps, unusual to consider the person as an ethical concept for Thomas Aquinas. The term usually appears, in his works, within the context of Trinitarian or Christological discussions and is not at all common in the properly moral or ethical discussions¹. Moreover, what does chiefly appear in his ethics are notions such as beatitude, virtue and vice, law, the voluntary and the involuntary, etc. Yet it seems that if we take Thomas' own understanding of the person as a rational individual who possesses dominion over his own actions, this concept indeed stands at the very heart of Aquinas' ethics.

This claim does not arise simply from the observation that moral actions are free, rational actions and thus necessarily presuppose a rational agent—a person—who carries them out. Nor is it simply a question of Thomas' teleological ethics in which the perfection of these personal agents serves as a measure for the goodness or badness of actions. Rather, the basis for this view lies primarily in an analysis of the structure of moral action itself. As is well known, Thomas refers to a moral action as

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¹ For a survey of the historical precedents as well as a general description of Thomas' doctrine of the person and its role in his theological discussions, see "Person" in *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*, ed. J. Ritter and K. Gründer (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, Basel-Darmstadt 1989), vol. 7, pp. 269-338, esp. 281-93; also, A. LOBATO, *La persona en el pensamiento de Santo Tomás de Aquino*, in *Atti del congresso internazionale: Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo settimo centenario* (Edizioni Domenicane, Rome-Naples 1974 ff.), vol. 7, pp. 274-93. Aquinas does at times use the terms *persona* and *personalis* in the context of his ethics, especially in the discussions of distributive justice (e.g., *Summa theologiae* [ST] II-II, q. 63, aa. 1-2) and of original sin (e.g., ST I-II, q. 81, a. 2, c.; q. 83, a. 2, ad 2).

an *actus humanus*, an action that proceeds from a deliberate will. The structure of moral action, then, depends upon the structure of the will's acts, the most basic of which is love (*amor*). A close examination of the structure of love and particularly the properly rational love which Thomas calls *dilectio* reveals the moral priority of the person: the first and most basic object of the will is always a person. This priority of the person is reflected in all subsequent acts of willing and thus permeates the moral life as a whole.

In order to see how this is so, we shall briefly sketch out Thomas' understanding of *amor* as the first of the passions and the origin of every affective motion (Sect. I). Then we shall turn to rational, willed love, *dilectio*, to see its essential structure as a combination of the love of friendship and the love of concupiscence, in which the love of friendship has priority (Sect. II). With these analyses, we will be able to see how the person is the primary object of all moral action, and, in addition, how even the distinction between good and evil acts is made by reference to persons (Sect. III). Finally we shall briefly attempt to show how the centrality of the person is in harmony with the teleological structure of Aquinas' ethics (Sect. IV).

1. Love as the most fundamental act of the will

We must begin our investigation with Aquinas' understanding of love in general before taking up the specifically rational love. For Thomas *amor* is present wherever appetite is to be found. This means that love is found in all beings, since all beings have some kind of striving, tendency, or inclination. There are, of course, different kinds of tendencies and inclinations in different beings; thus the love found in these beings will be different and the notion of love itself will be an analogical one. Nevertheless, in every being there is a basic inclination to that which is good for it, and *amor* denotes the most basic relationship of that being to the good which is perfective of it².

Thomas refers to this most basic relationship as a proportion (*proportio*) or con-naturality (*connaturalitas*) between the striving being and the object, the good toward which it strives³. The simplest example of what he has in mind can be taken from the lowest level of appetite, the natural appetite found in beings without cognition. A heavy object has a natural tendency to fall to the middle of the earth; no external mover is required for it to move in that direction. So too, that heavy object has a tendency to remain at the middle once there; it would require an external mover for it to leave that place. Hence it is clear that there is a special affinity in the object for that

² As a representative text, ST I, q. 60, a. 1, c.: «Est autem hoc commune omni naturae, ut habeat aliquam inclinationem, quae est appetitus naturalis vel amor. Quae tamen inclinatio diversimode invenitur in diversis naturis, in unaquaque secundum modum eius. Unde in natura intellectuali invenitur inclinatio naturalis secundum voluntatem; in natura autem sensitiva, secundum appetitum sensitivum: in natura vero carente cognitione, secundum solum ordinem naturae in aliquid». Also I-II, q. 26, a. 1, c.: «... amor est aliquid ad appetitum pertinens: cum utriusque obiectum sit bonum. Unde secundum differentiam appetitus, est differentia amoris». Cf. ST I, q. 20, a. 1, c.: *In librum Beati Dionysii De divinis nominibus expositio (De div. nom.)*, ch. 4, lect. 9, n. 401.

³ ST I-II, q. 25, a. 2, c.; q. 26, aa. 1-2; q. 27, a. 1, c.; *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 9, n. 401.

place. This is what Thomas calls the *proportio* or *connaturalitas*: the suitability of that place for that object, or seen the other way around, the suitability of the object for that place⁴.

It is important to see here that this *proportio* is identical neither with the tendency to move to that place nor with the rest in that place. Rather it underlies both of these. The object tends to that place and rests there *because* of this underlying *proportio*. Exactly this proportion, says Thomas, is *amor*. Nothing tends towards any object without being proportionate to that object, and precisely because the object is suitable for that being it is good for it. Thus the object of love is necessarily always a good (even if only apparent)⁵.

In beings endowed with cognition the need for this proportion or connaturality is also present. Nevertheless, the way in which it arises is radically different. In the case of natural inclinations the *proportio* is given with the natural form of the thing; simply being the sort of thing it is, a being has tendencies toward its specific objects. Where cognition is found, in contrast, the *proportio* comes about through the apprehension of the object. Through this apprehension the object works a modification in the appetite, and by this modification the appetite takes on the condition of being suitable to that object⁶. Thus there is an appetitive change in the cat upon its apprehension of a mouse; it becomes, through this change, affectively proportionate to this mouse. Parallel to the case of the heavy object, the cat now desires the mouse if it does not have it and so moves toward it, or, if it has it (i.e., has caught it) takes pleasure in it. Here then the same basic structure is found. There is the underlying proportion to the good object, and arising from this love are both desire (*desiderium*) and delight (*gaudium* or *delectatio*), depending upon whether the loved object is possessed or not.

In the case of sense cognition and sense appetite, Thomas calls the affective motions *passiones*. These are the object of the “Treatise on the Passions” in the *Prima secundae* (ST I-II, qq. 22-48). The passions have as their objects sensible goods or evils, and, while they are motions of the sense appetites, they include necessarily a bodily change as well⁷. The passions are “lived” experiences which include consciousness or awareness, as is clear in the case of desire and pleasure. This does not imply that here there is present the degree of reflection proper to rational beings, but only that the passions share in the intentionality of knowledge as found on the sense level. Thomas refers to the love that arises through cognition precisely insofar as it is psychologically experienced as complaisance (*complacentia*). One is pleased by the object, one experiences the object as good. At times Thomas refers to love simply as the *coaptatio* of the appetite to the object, stressing the ontological fact of

⁴ For this example see ST I-II, q. 26, aa. 1-2. There Thomas remarks that the heavy body’s heaviness (*gravitas*) can be called its “*amor naturalis*”.

⁵ Thomas expresses the need for this proportion as follows: «Manifestum est autem quod omne quod tendit ad finem aliquem, primo quidem habet aptitudinem seu proportionem ad finem, nihil enim tendit in finem non proportionatum; ...». ST I-II, q. 25, a. 2, c. That the object is always a good: ST I, q. 20, a. 1, c.; I-II, q. 27, a. 1, c.

⁶ For this distinction among the levels of appetite, see (among others): *De veritate* (DV), q. 22, a. 3, c.; *Summa contra gentiles* (SCG), Bk. II, chs. 47-48; ST I, q. 80, a. 1, c; *De malo* q. 6, a. un., c.

⁷ ST I-II, q. 22, a. 1, c.; cf. DV q. 26, aa. 1-2.

the change and the resulting proportion. At other times he terms it *complacentia* emphasizing thereby the *psychological* experience of being taken, so to speak, by the object⁸.

Amor, then, is a being's most basic affective determination. It is that formal determination by which the being has the tendencies and strivings it has. Usually, in the order of our knowing, we first recognize the tendencies and strivings, and then we reason to the existence of the underlying determination in the appetitive power as what is first in the order of being. Love, we could say, is known as the necessary condition for both striving and rest. In this sense, love is the first of all the passions and is the cause of all other passions.

This last point is particularly important for our purposes and must be emphasized. As we have seen love necessarily gives rise to desire or joy depending upon the presence or absence of the object. These three, love, desire, joy, and are the three passions of the concupiscible appetite which are directed to the good *simpliciter*. With respect to the good as difficult, (*bonum arduum*), two passions arise in the irascible appetite, hope and despair. Both of these, however, presuppose desire, for we hope for and despair of goods only if we desire them. This means that hope and despair, like desire, also presuppose love. Moreover, all the passions that have as their objects evils (e.g., hate, fear, anger, sadness) presuppose love. The most basic of these passions is hate, for only if an evil is hated does one fear it or is one sad when it is present. But hate itself, says Thomas, depends upon love. Since an evil is the privation of a good, hatred of the evil presupposes a love for the good of which one is deprived. Thus all the negative passions directed to evils, both of the concupiscible and of the irascible appetites, follow from love. It is, then, clear that *amor* is the first and most basic affective state in all beings and the most fundamental of the passions in beings endowed with cognition⁹.

Amor, however, is first not only among the passions, the motions of the sense appetites, but also among the motions of the will, the rational appetite. Thomas clearly distinguishes these two levels of appetite¹⁰. As we have seen, the passions, in the strict sense of the term, are the motions of the sense appetites: they arise from sense cognition (internal or external), are directed to a sensible good or evil, and include as an essential element a bodily change. The will, on the other hand, follows from intellectual cognition and thus has for its object anything which can be grasped as good (*sub ratione boni*). Because its object is the *bonum in communi*, the will is open to all goods, whether sensible or non-sensible. Also, as a spiritual power without a bodily organ, its acts do not essentially involve bodily alteration, although they may take their rise from a sensible passion or be the cause of such a passion¹¹.

⁸ For a study of Thomas' use of these terms and their meanings see H. D. SIMONIN, *Autour de la solution thomiste du problème de l'amour*, «Archives d'Histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age», 6 (1931), pp. 174-274, esp. pp. 179-94. In his discussion of love in *Summa theologiae*, I-II, Thomas employs a wide variety of terms to express the acquired condition in the appetite which formally is love: *aptitudo*, *coaptatio*, *complacentia*, *consonantia*, *con-naturalitas*, *convenientia*, *immutatio*, *inclinatio*, *proportio*.

⁹ For the order among the passions and the priority of *amor*, see ST I-II, q. 25, aa. 1-4; DV q. 26, a. 5, c.; see also n. 2 above.

¹⁰ For example, ST I, q. 80, a. 2; DV q. 22, a. 4.

¹¹ For this distinction between the motions of the will and those of the sense appetite (i.e., pas-

Moreover, the motions of the will can be *free* motions; it is proper to the will to have dominion over its acts, including its acts of love¹².

Despite these crucial differences, the motions of the will parallel the passions, and so on the rational level, as on the sense level, one can love, hope, hate, fear, be sad, and so forth. Accordingly, for the will too, the act of love is the first of all acts and gives rise to all others¹³. Here again, there must be the underlying *proportio* by which the person is affectively adapted to the object and so tends toward it. The *proportio* here, as on the sense level, is a *complacentia*, a complaisance in the object. Without this complaisance, a person would not experience any further motions of the will, such as, for example, the commanding of the exterior act by which the desired good is obtained. This complaisance, which is *amor* on the rational level, is called *dilectio*.

We must note here a most important text from the treatise on the passions, which appears at the end of the treatment of *amor*. There Thomas asks whether love is the cause of all that the lover does¹⁴. His reply is brief yet incisive:

«I reply that every agent acts for an end, as was said above [q. 1, a. 2]. The end however is the good which is loved and desired by each thing. Hence it is clear that every agent, whatever it may be, carries out every action from some love»¹⁵.

Here it is clear, once again, that all appetitive activity arises from love. When we consider this as applied to the will, it means that the source of all voluntary action, the action proper to the will as such, also arises from love. If we add to this the consideration that all moral action is voluntary action (*actus humanus*), then we must say that for Thomas all moral activity has its source in love. Hence, to understand the structure of moral action, we must analyze the structure of the love underlying it. This we can do by studying the structure of *dilectio*.

sions in the strict sense) see ST I, q. 20, ad 1; ST I-II, q. 22, a. 3. Thomas discusses the will's relation to the passions in terms of his distinction between antecedent and consequent passions. Antecedent passions are those which precede and give rise to an act of the will without themselves having been willed. Consequent passions are those caused by the will. For this distinction see ST I-II, q. 24, aa. 1-3; DV q. 26, aa. 6-7. Cf. ST I-II, q. 17, a. 7.

¹² *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 9, n. 402.

¹³ «Et propter hoc, omnes alii motus appetitivi praesupponunt amorem, quasi primam radicem. Nullus enim desiderat aliquid, nisi bonum amatum: neque aliquis gaudet, nisi de bono amato... Unde in quocumque est voluntas vel appetitus, oportet esse amores: remoto enim primo, remouentur alia». ST I, q. 20, a. 1, c. Thomas refers to the motions of the will parallel to the passions at ST II-II, q. 18, a. 1, c.: «... similes motus qui sunt in appetitu inferiori cum passione, in superiori sunt sine passione...» These motions are called *passiones* only in an extended sense of the term (*extenso nomine*, I-II, q. 26, a. 2, c.; cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 27, q. 2, a. 1, c.).

¹⁴ ST I-II, q. 28, a. 6: «Utrum amor sit causa omnium quae amans agit».

¹⁵ *Ibid.*: «Respondeo dicendum quod omne agens agit propter finem aliquem, ut supra [q. 1, a. 2] dictum est. Finis autem est bonum desideratum et amatum unicuique. Unde manifestum est quod omne agens, quodcumque sit, agit quamcumque actionem ex aliquo amore». Also ad 2: «Unde omnis actio quae procedit ex quacumque passione, procedit etiam ex amore, sicut ex prima causa».

2. The structure of *dilectio*: love of friendship and love of concupiscence

As we have seen, *dilectio*, as the rational *amor* which is found in the will, is distinct from the passion of love. Like the will's acts in general, moreover, it has both natural and elective forms. The natural *dilectio* is the will's natural inclination to beatitude. Rational beings, like all beings, have a natural tendency or inclination to that which will fulfill them, and this tendency is located in the will, the will being that appetite by which a rational being as a whole tends to its fulfillment¹⁶. The choices which arise on the basis of the will's natural inclination can also be *dilectio*, and Thomas calls this *dilectio electiva*. Whether or not a person takes complaisance in an object can result from a free choice; one chooses to take the object as one's good to be pursued, or one chooses to pursue the good of one person and not another¹⁷.

Dilectio of both kinds always has a basic structure, one which usually appears when Thomas discusses the love of rational beings. This structure is expressed in terms of his distinction between love of friendship (*amor amicitiae*) and love of concupiscence (*amor concupiscentiae*). The clearest description of this distinction is found in the treatise on the passions.

«I answer that as the philosopher says in *Rhetoric* Bk. II, "to love is to will the good for someone". In this way, then, the motion of love tends toward two things: namely, toward some good which one wills for someone, either for one's self or for another; and toward that for which one wills this good. Thus one loves the good that is willed for the other with love of concupiscence, and that for which the good is willed with a love of friendship»¹⁸.

According to Thomas, when someone loves with *dilectio*, he always loves a person and in loving that person wills the good(s) for him. To love a person and to will the good for him are not two acts, but rather a single act with two objects. Nevertheless we can distinguish the two aspects or components of this act, and in so doing we arrive at the distinction between *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae*. The love directed to the beloved person is called love of friendship; the love directed to the good willed for that person is called love of concupiscence. These never occur separately, as if a person had to choose between the one sort of love and the other. To say that I love a person but am wholly indifferent as to whether that person has what is good for him is obviously incorrect. So too, to love something that is not a person

¹⁶This distinguishes the will from the inclinations found in individual powers toward the objects of those powers (ST I, q. 80, a. 1, ad 3). It also distinguishes the will from the sense appetites which do not desire what is good for the person as a whole, but only what is good in terms of sensible pleasure and pain (ST I-II, q. 4, a. 2, ad 2). That which a person desires by the rational appetite is always desired as being good for the person as a whole, even when it is clear that in some or many respects that thing will harm the person.

¹⁷Thomas' most extensive discussion of love in terms of *dilectio naturalis* and *dilectio electiva* is to be found in ST I, q. 60, concerning the love of the angels. It is clear from those texts that this distinction applies to the love of all rational creatures.

¹⁸«Respondeo dicendum quod, sicut Philosophus dicit in II *Rhetoric*. [1380b 35], *amare est velle alicui bonum*. Sic ergo motus amoris in duo tendit: scilicet in bonum quod quis vult alicui, vel sibi vel alii; et in illud cui vult bonum. Ad illud ergo bonum quod quis vult alteri, habetur amor concupiscentiae: ad illud autem cui aliquis vult bonum, habetur amor amicitiae». ST I-II, q. 26, a. 4, c.

without reference to persons is also disordered. Thomas speaks of the love we have for wine or horses and remarks that we do not love them as that for which we will the good, but rather as goods for us, i.e., for persons¹⁹. Hence, when a person loves what is not a person with a love of concupiscence, he must have a corresponding love of friendship, either for himself or for another person; if I love wine I love it for someone. So too, if a person loves himself or another person, he must also love that which is good (at least apparently) for the person. In every act of love there is a two-fold *complacentia*: the lover takes complaisance in the loved person as that person for whom he or she wills goods, and complaisance in the good as that which is good for the loved person. We may choose the person for whom we will the good and we may choose what good we will for the beloved person, but the structure itself is simply a given in every love.

In this text, as in many others concerning love, Thomas describes the structure of *amor amicitiae/amor concupiscentiae* using neuter pronouns (here, “*illud*”) to refer to that for which the goods are willed, i.e., that which is the object of the love of friendship. In my opinion, he does so in order to highlight the fact that we are dealing with a formal structure pertaining to the very nature of this love: a love which has as its object *both* that for which goods are willed and those goods which are willed for that thing. We should not take this to mean, however, that any kind of being at all could fit into this structure and so be the object of *amor amicitiae*. Rather, it is clear that for Thomas only *rational beings* can be loved in this way. Indeed, in other texts we find Thomas using the masculine pronoun to refer to the object of this love²⁰. In his general teaching, Thomas holds that the objects of *amor amicitiae* are only beings capable of friendship, an activity he considers proper to rational beings. Thus he consistently maintains that all beings inferior to human beings, whether animals, plants or non-living beings, can be loved on the level of *dilectio* only with the *amor concupiscentiae* component and only in order to some rational being(s)²¹.

It is precisely here in the specification of the object of *amor amicitiae* that we find the link to the notion of person. As is well known, Thomas takes over Boethius’s definition of person as an individual substance of a rational nature (*rationalis naturae individua substantia*). The simple equivalence of those beings designated as persons and the objects of *amor amicitiae*—both are rational beings—allows us to say that the love of friendship is always the love of a person.

In his own arguments for this definition of person, however, Thomas makes a number of points which are of interest for the present discussion. In the first place, he says, it is proper that individual substances as such have a proper name, *hypostasis*, since they are individual through themselves (*per seipsam*), unlike accidents which are individual through the individuality of their underlying subject. But among sub-

¹⁹ ST II-II, q. 23, a. 1, c. We might consider here even those things that we think of as loved for their own sake, such as works of art. If we were to suggest that, in order that the art work last longer and be less exposed to destruction, we should enclose it in a capsule and send it into space never to be seen again, it would become clear that even here the object is loved for the sake of persons.

²⁰ E.g., ST I, q. 20, a. 1, ad 3: «Ad tertium dicendum quod actus amoris semper tendit in duo: scilicet in bonum quod quis vult alicui; et in eum cui vult bonum. Hoc enim est proprie amare aliquem, velle ei bonum». Cf. *Quodlibet* I, q. 4, a. 3, c.

²¹ ST II-II, q. 25, a. 3; cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 28, a. 2; *De caritate*, q. un., a. 7, c.

stances, rational substances have a higher degree of individuality than any others, because of their *freedom*, the dominion they have over their actions. Self-determination produces a heightened singularity that is not to be found in individuals such as inorganic elements whose activity is determined by their specific nature, or even in animals whose activity follows instincts common to the species as such. On account of this special individuality or singularity, the rational individual receives the special name of *persona*²². The person, Thomas holds, is the most perfect thing in nature (*perfectissimum in tota natura*) as well as that which has the greatest worth or dignity among creatures (*dignissimum in creaturis*); for this reason it is proper to apply the name “person” even to God²³.

These characteristics of the person are mirrored in a certain way in Thomas’ doctrine of love and *dilectio*. In the first place, appetitive activity in general is contrasted with intellectual in that it is directed to beings as they exist in nature and not as they exist in the mind; being as existing in nature, however, is individual, since real being is always singular. Thus the will, despite being directed to goods under a universal formality, is always directed to goods which are singular beings²⁴. Consequently love always has individual beings for its object, and in the case of *amor amicitiae*, an object whose very name connotes individuality. *Amor amicitiae* is directed to the person precisely as possessing the radical individuality proper to free beings. In the second place, the person is characterized by freedom or *dominium* over its actions. For Thomas it is precisely the absence of this trait in brute animals which renders them incapable of being objects of *amor amicitiae*. To love something in this mode is to will the good for that thing, but the brute animals, lacking *dominium* over their acts and thus over their goods, cannot be said to “have” a good²⁵. Finally, the elevated dignity and perfection of the person is reflected in the fact that only it is loved with *amor amicitiae*, while all other beings are loved with an *amor concupiscentiae* and only for the sake of rational beings or persons. Persons are the ends of the universe, God as the ultimate end to which the whole of creation is ordered, and created persons as the beings for which the whole of the created universe is willed; all that is not a person is ordered to persons²⁶. This special status of the person is mirrored in the special love it demands.

Also corresponding to Thomas’ definition of person is his more precise demarcation between the objects of love of friendship and love of concupiscence in terms of the metaphysical distinction between substance and accidents. The object of love in general is the good (*bonum*), which converts with being (*ens*). Corresponding then

²² ST I, q. 29, a. 1, c.; cf. *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 2, c. For an explanation of Thomas’ definition as well as a defense of it against some contemporary objections, see H. SEIDL, *The Concept of Person in St. Thomas Aquinas*, «The Thomist», 51 (1987), pp. 435-60.

²³ ST I, q. 29, a. 3, c.; *De potentia*, q. 9, a. 3, c.

²⁴ ST I, q. 80, a. 2, ad 2.

²⁵ ST II-II, q. 25, a. 3, c.: «Primo ergo modo [amore amicitiae] nulla creatura irrationalis potest ex caritate amari... Primo quidem, quia amicitia ad eum habetur cui volumus bonum. Non autem proprie possum bonum velle creaturae irrationali: quia non est eius proprie habere bonum, sed solum creaturae rationalis, que est domina utendi bono quod habet per liberum arbitrium». This argument also explains why animals do not partake in relations of justice (which are also reserved to persons): ST II-II, q. 64, a. 1, ad 2.

²⁶ SCG III, chs. 22, 112; *De caritate*, q. un., a. 7, ad 5.

to the metaphysical distinction between those beings which exist in themselves (substances) and those which exist only in another being (accidents) is a distinction between those goods which are subsisting goods and loved as such and those goods which inhere in the subsisting goods and hence are loved as good for their subject. Here we have a more formal distinction between the objects of *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae*. *Amor amicitiae* is directed to subsistent goods, and, as seen above, these are rational substances or persons. *Amor concupiscentiae* is directed chiefly to goods that inhere in persons such as health, knowledge, virtue, etc. None of these is a subsisting being or is loved as that for which other goods are willed. Rather each is a perfection of a subsisting being, metaphysically speaking a second perfection, which in some way perfects the substance, which alone has only its first perfection. These perfecting accidents are loved *for* the perfected person²⁷.

Having distinguished between substantial and accidental goods, we can specify more exactly the object of *amor concupiscentiae*. Whatever is loved in this mode is loved as a good for a person. The chief objects, then, are precisely those accidents of the person which constitute the person's perfections. This includes not only the above mentioned accidents, but also all acts of the person, including the act of love itself. The sum of all these perfections is *beatitudo* or happiness (*felicitas*), and thus the chief object of the love of concupiscence is nothing other than a person's beatitude²⁸. All objects of the love of concupiscence, consequently, are either components of persons' happiness or means thereto²⁹.

The category of means includes all things, whether natural or artificial, that are not persons, for as we have seen, all the irrational beings of the universe are ordered to the good of the rational beings. Obviously many of these things are substances; hence it is not immediately clear how Thomas can claim that the love of concupiscence has for its object ontological accidents. Thomas replies to this possible objec-

²⁷ «Sicut autem ens dupliciter dicitur, scilicet de eo quod per se subsistit et de eo quod alteri inest, ita et bonum: uno modo, dicitur de re subsistente quae habet bonitatem, sicut homo dicitur bonus; alio modo, de eo quod inest alicui faciens ipsum bonum, sicut virtus dicitur bonum hominis, quia ea homo est bonus; similiter enim albedo dicitur ens, non quia ipsa sit subsistens in suo esse, sed quia ea aliquid est album. Tendit ergo amor dupliciter in aliquid: uno modo, ut in bonum substantiale, quod quidem fit dum sic amamus aliquid ut ei velimus bonum, sicut amamus hominem volentes bonum eius; alio modo, amor tendit in aliquid, tamquam in bonum accidentale, sicut amamus virtutem, non quidem ea ratione quod volumus eam esse bonam, sed ratione ut per eam boni simus. Primum autem amoris modum, quidam nominant amorem amicitiae; secundum autem, amorem concupiscentiae». *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 10, n. 428; cf. lect. 9, n. 404; ST I, q. 60, a. 3, c.; *In III Sent.*, d. 28, a. 1, c.

²⁸ Important here is Aquinas' distinction between the good which perfects the person (*finis cuius*), and the activity by which the good is actually possessed (*finis quo*): ST I-II, q. 1, a. 8, c.; q. 2, a. 7, c.; q. 3, a. 1, c. The *finis quo*, an activity and thus an accident of the person, is loved with love of concupiscence. The *finis cuius*, which for Aquinas is God, can be loved with a love of concupiscence when loved in order to the created person's perfection. Nevertheless, to be such a perfection, God must also be loved by the person with a love of friendship. For Aquinas, the virtue of hope is directed to God as that which will perfect the person, while the virtue of charity is directed to God as good in himself and so loved for his own sake (ST II-II, q. 17, a. 8, c.). For the doctrine that a created being's perfection consists, ontologically, in an accident, see ST I, q. 5, a. 1, ad 1.

²⁹ For texts where Thomas speaks of the objects of *amor concupiscentiae* in terms of perfections of the person and beatitude, see n. 40 below.

tion by noting that, when the irrational substances are loved, they are always loved for some accidental quality. The good that one loves in the wine is not the wine's substance but the accidental quality causing its taste. What is loved in all such things are precisely those qualities which serve the good of rational beings. To love the substance itself would be to take it as that which was loved simply for the good it has in itself; this is proper, however, only to persons. We should note here that it is even possible to love rational substances, persons, with a love of concupiscence. This occurs in what Aristotle terms friendships of utility or pleasure, in which the other person is loved, not for himself or herself, but as a means to the perfection of the lover (or of some other person). Here as well, it is not the substance itself, the person, that is loved, but rather some quality of the person which serves the good of some other person³⁰.

In the love of friendship, on the other hand, it is the person himself, the supposit, that is the object of the love. This metaphysical precision is crucial. It means that in this mode of love, it is not some characteristic or quality of the person but rather what the person is *per se*, i.e., that which constitutes the person as person, that is loved. In this love the lover takes complaisance in the very subsistence of the person loved—the simple fact that the person is—and all the qualities and characteristics of the person are loved precisely as the qualities of *this person* and because they are the perfections of this person. When a person is loved with a love of concupiscence for the sake of some particular quality he possesses, it is the quality that is loved *per se*, while the person himself is loved *per accidens*, merely as that which bears the loved quality. In *amor amicitiae*, in contrast, it is the good which is the existing supposit itself that is directly willed.

We should note that for Thomas the love of friendship for other persons always originates on the basis of some quality of that person, some similitude with the lover. This may be as profound as the shared parentage of siblings or so casual as a shared journey³¹. Nevertheless, the object of the love is not this particular aspect of the person, but rather the person himself. In the case of the traveler, if my interest in him extends no further than the traveling itself such that I have no concern for him outside of this shared relationship, then I do not have a love of friendship for him. In a love of friendship, my wish for his good (*benevolentia*) would extend to his good simply, i.e., to his good as a person, even though the goods I actively seek for him (*beneficentia*) may be only those related to the traveling.

This ordination to the good of the person as such is seen in Thomas' statement that *dilectio*, by its very nature, intends to be unending. If a person proposes to love someone only for a determinate period of time, he maintains, that is not true *dilectio*³². This fact arises from the very object of the *dilectio*. The qualities of a person

³⁰ «Contingit autem, quandoque, quod etiam aliqua bona subsistentia amamus hoc secundo modo amoris, quia non amamus ipsa secundum se, sed secundum aliquod eorum accidens, sicut amamus vinum, volentes potiri dulcedine eius; et similiter, cum homo propter delectationem vel utilitatem amatur, non ipse secundum se amatur, sed per accidens». *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 10, n. 429; cf. lect. 9, n. 405.

³¹ ST I-II, q. 27, a. 3; II-II, q. 23, a. 5, c.; *In VIII Ethicorum*, lect. 12, (Leonine, vol. 47.2, p. 485, ll. 20-28). On this point see H. D. SIMONIN, *op. cit.*, pp. 257-62.

³² «Ad tertium dicendum, quod vera dilectio de sua ratione habet quod nunquam amittatur; qui enim vere diligit hominem, hoc in animo suo proponit, ut nunquam dilectionem dimittat.

may change or perish with the passage of time, but the person himself remains identically the same. Precisely because the *amor amicitiae* component is directed to the person, it intends to persist as long as its object, the person, exists.

It is now clear that *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae* are distinguished in that the former is directed to the person himself, while the latter aims at the perfections of the person and all the means thereto. But within this distinction the love of friendship has priority over the love of concupiscence. The object of *amor amicitiae* is that good which subsists, and this is what is good *simpliciter* and *per se*. The object of *amor concupiscentiae*, in contrast, is an inherent good; as such its goodness is relative to its subject, and consequently it is good only relatively to the person (*secundum quid*). Correspondingly, Thomas holds that the love of friendship is love *simpliciter*, since its object is loved simply and *per se*, while the love of concupiscence, whose object is loved for the sake of something else, is love only *secundum quid*. The love of friendship is the basis for the love of concupiscence and not vice versa. When I will the good for someone with a love of concupiscence, I do so precisely *because* I love that person with a love of friendship. The love of concupiscence, then, is relative to the love of friendship; as Thomas states, it is “included” in the love of friendship³³. Thus the loves that make up *dilectio* have an analogical character. Love in the fullest sense of the term is the love of friendship, the love for persons as such. This love constitutes a rational being’s most fundamental affective orientation.

Before concluding this description of *dilectio*, we should introduce a few precisions to avoid confusions which arise from connotations attaching to the terms “love of friendship” and “love of concupiscence”. In the first place, for Thomas, *amor amicitiae* and *amicitia* are related but not identical. The love of friendship, as the love of the person himself, is found wherever a person is loved for his own sake, while *amicitia* or friendship requires reciprocal and mutually recognized loves of friendship on the part of two persons for one another³⁴. Thus love of self is an instance of *amor amicitiae*, since a person wills goods for his own sake³⁵. Secondly, the love of concu-

Sed quandoque illud propositum mutatur, et sic dilectio quae vera fuit, amittitur. Si autem hoc aliquis habuisset in proposito, ut a diligendo quandoque desisteret, vera dilectio non fuisset». *De caritate*, q. un., a. 12, ad 3.

³³ ST I-II q. 26, a. 4, c.: «Haec autem divisio est secundum prius et posterius. Nam id quod amatur amore amicitiae, simpliciter et per se amatur: quod autem amatur amore concupiscentiae, non simpliciter et secundum se amatur, sed amatur alteri. Sicut enim ens simpliciter est quod habet esse, ens autem secundum quid quod est in alio; ita bonum, quod convertitur cum ente, simpliciter quidem est quod ipsum habet bonitatem; quod autem est bonum alterius, est bonum secundum quid. Et per consequens amor quo amatur aliquid ut ei sit bonum, est amor simpliciter: amor autem quo amatur aliquid ut sit bonum alterius, est amor secundum quid». Cf. *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 9, n. 405: «Omne autem quod est per accidens reducitur ad id quod est per se. Sic igitur hoc ipsum quod aliquid amamus, ut eo alicui bene sit, includitur in amore illius quod amamus, ut ei bene sit».

³⁴ For this distinction see ST II-II, q. 23, a. 1, c. At times Thomas uses the term *amor benevolentiae* as an equivalent for *amor amicitiae*; both are distinguished from simple *benevolentia* in that they imply an affective union with the loved person, while *benevolentia* is simply a wanting of the good for the other (See ST II-II, q. 27, a. 2, c.; *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 9, n. 404; cf. *In III Sent.*, d. 29, a. 3, c.).

³⁵ For the love of self described as an *amor amicitiae*, see ST I, q. 60, aa. 3-5. Thomas states that we can use the term *amor amicitiae* to refer to love for self because self-love is the

piscence is not, as the name might suggest, limited to sensual goods and pleasures. As we have seen, its object includes all goods loved as goods for a person, whether that good be physical pleasure, virtue, exterior goods such as money or houses, or even beatitude itself. In addition, the love of concupiscence is not necessarily “self-seeking”. If I love another person for his or her own sake (*amor amicitiae*) and so will goods for that person, my love for those goods is a love of concupiscence³⁶. It happens, finally, that the love of friendship and the love of concupiscence are frequently distinguished simply as two ways to love another person; i.e., to love the other and to seek his good for his own sake is love of friendship, while to love the other as good for me (as useful or pleasant) is love of concupiscence. This distinction is not exactly identical with that of Thomas; nevertheless, it is clear from what we have seen, that it fits perfectly within Thomas’. Since Thomas distinguishes between love for persons for their own sake and love directed to objects as means to the perfection of persons, clearly in loving a person as useful or as pleasant, one loves that person with *amor concupiscentiae*. Thomas’ distinction is all-embracing; it applies to all striving toward goods, whether those goods be persons or other objects, whether the end of the striving is self or another person. That is to say, it applies to *dilectio* as such, the rational inclination or striving of persons.

3. Persons as the ends of all actions

At this point the primacy of the person in Aquinas’ “moral universe” is evident. The first affective motion is love (*amor*), which takes the form of a complaisance in the apprehended good. The priority of love holds not only for the passions, but also for the rational appetite or will. Thus love is the most basic motion of the will and the principle of all moral action. Rational love, however, is *dilectio* with its structure of *amor amicitiae/amor concupiscentiae*, within which *amor amicitiae* is prior to and gives rise to *amor concupiscentiae*. Thus the absolutely first appetitive motion in rational beings is *amor amicitiae*, the love of persons. It is this love that gives rise to all moral action, whether good or evil, since in all action the agent aims at the perfection of some person, either himself or another. It is no surprise then to find Thomas explicitly stating this position: «The principal ends of human acts are God, self, and others, since we do whatever we do for the sake of one of these»³⁷.

basis for all love of others: «Et quamvis nomen amicitiae imponatur proprie secundum quod amor ad alios se diffundit, tamen etiam amor quem quis habet ad seipsum amicitia et caritas potest dici, inquantum amor quem quis habet ad alterum, procedit a similitudine amoris quem quis habet ad seipsum». *In III Sent.*, d. 28, a. 6, c.; cf. ST II-II, q. 25, a. 4, c.: «... amor quo quis diligit seipsum, est forma et radix amicitiae...».

³⁶ «Concupiscimus enim aliquid et nobis et aliis». ST I, q. 20, a. 2, c.; also I-II, q. 26, a. 4, c. (see n. 18 above); II-II, q. 25, a. 2, c.

³⁷ This quotation appears within the discussion of how the gravity of a sin depends upon the person whom it offends (ST I-II, q. 73, a. 9, c.): «Respondeo dicendum quod persona in quam peccatur, est quodammodo obiectum peccati. Dictum est autem super quod prima gravitas peccati attenditur ex parte obiecti. Ex quo quidem tanto attenditur maior gravitas in peccato, quanto obiectum eius est principalior finis. Fines autem principales humanorum actuum sunt Deus, ipse homo, et proximus: quidquid enim facimus, propter aliquod horum facimus; quamvis etiam horum trium unum sub altero ordinetur».

The structure of *dilectio* as love of friendship and love of concupiscence reflects, then, the structure of the moral universe. The primary and chief elements of that universe are *persons*, both created and uncreated. These are the proper objects of love of friendship, the most basic love³⁸. The secondary objects are the perfections of the persons. In the third place come all other existing creatures, living and non-living, all of which are means to the perfections of persons. Both the perfections and the means to them are objects of the love of concupiscence. Thus the *amor amicitiae/amor concupiscentiae* structure and the implied priority of the person are to be found in each and every moral action. In every choice, whether good or not, the agent is somehow seeking a perfection for some person. At times this structure may be hidden by the complexities of the chains of means directed to the perfections of the persons. Yet one can trace the chain and will always arrive at the persons to whom all else is directed. For example, a craftsman may conscientiously prepare glass for the mirror of a telescope which will serve astronomical science, an activity which may appear far removed from persons. Nevertheless, the perfection ultimately sought here is knowledge, and the knowledge itself is sought as a perfection of the persons possessing it. So too, in the plotting of a bank robbery or a simple failure to fulfill a contract, it is possible to see which persons are to be benefited and what the goods or benefits are. Nor is this structure lost in the case of actions directed to common goods. In such cases the person benefited is actually several persons (depending upon the community in question) and the common good is precisely some good shared by them, whether as a perfection of the persons themselves (e.g. astronomical science) or as a means to such perfection (e.g., the telescope).

To speak of persons as the ultimate ends of actions may sound somewhat odd, since Thomas usually employs the term *finis ultimus* to refer to beatitude, the perfect state of the rational being. Thus we find Thomas saying that the first point to clarify in moral science is precisely the final end, and he accomplishes this in his discussion of beatitude³⁹. The term “ultimate end” seems to be more appropriately and certainly more frequently applied to beatitude. Nevertheless, it is necessary to recognize that “ultimate end” has two distinct senses corresponding to the distinction between love of friendship and the love of concupiscence. Beatitude is referred to as the ultimate end, *in the order of the love of concupiscence*. It is possible to will acts and objects as means to happiness, but happiness itself, constituting the perfection of the person, is not directed to anything further as a means, and thus is rightly said to be ultimate. Nevertheless, happiness is willed, not as a separate good, but always as the perfection of a person. Corresponding to the love of concupiscence for beatitude is a love of friendship for the person who is perfected by the beatitude. This person can also be said to be ultimate in the sense that there is no regress to something more fundamental. The person is loved for his or her own sake. Although this love of friendship is actually the most basic, Thomas usually presupposes it in his discussions of happiness and only seldom mentions it explicitly⁴⁰.

³⁸ We should note here again the doctrine that persons are the ends of the universe (see n. 26 above).

³⁹ ST I-II, qq. 1-5.

⁴⁰ The clearest discussion of the inclination toward beatitude in terms of *amor amicitiae* and *amor concupiscentiae* is to be found in the discussion of the love of the angels, ST I, q. 60,

The foregoing points out the priority of the person in all moral action, whether good or evil. The person, however, is also decisive for the determination of morally good and morally evil actions. Good and evil actions, for Thomas, are formally distinct precisely in their accord or disaccord with the order of reason. What accords with reason's perception of what is to be done is good and what does not is evil⁴¹. But how should we, *materially*, describe the order of reason? Here we must turn to persons. That is to say, good actions consist precisely in *seeking goods of persons in the proper order*. This order consists first in an order among those for whom the moral agent seeks the good; this is the proper order in his love of friendship. This order is most clearly described by Thomas in his discussions of the order of charity, wherein he spells out which persons should be loved more than others, as well as what kind of beneficence is due to different persons⁴². Second, the order of reason consists in seeking the proper goods for persons and seeking them in accord with their relative contribution to the person's good. This would be the order of reason in the love of concupiscence⁴³.

This relation to the person as determinative of the goodness of action can be seen in a number of central elements of Thomas' moral teaching. In his doctrine on law, for example, he states that all the precepts of the decalogue pertain to the natural law. All ten commandments, moreover can be reduced to two which are themselves first (*prima*) and common (*communia*) principles of the natural law: the love for God and the love for neighbor⁴⁴. That is to say, the precepts of the decalogue can be reduced to the precepts of love⁴⁵. Hence these fundamental precepts of the natural law primarily command a love of friendship; their goal is rightly to order one's love for other persons and consequently to order one's actions with respect to them.

aa. 1-4. Especially illuminating for the double sense of "ultimate" is ST I-II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 2: «Ad secundum dicendum, quantum ad propositum pertinet, quod *beatitudo maxime amatur tanquam bonum concupitum*: amicus autem amatur tanquam id cui concupiscitur bonum; et sic etiam homo amat seipsum. Unde non est eadem ratio amoris utrobique. Utrum autem amore amicitiae aliquid homo supra se amet, erit locus considerandi cum de caritate agatur». ST I-II, q. 2, a. 7, ad 2 (emphasis added). According to the objection, beatitudo as *finis cuius* must be a good of the soul, because a) beatitudo is the ultimate end, b) what is most ultimate is the person himself for whom the good is willed, and c) what is best in the person is the soul. For other explicit references to *beatitudo* as object of *amor concupiscentiae*, see III *Sent.*, d. 28, a. 1; d. 29, a. 4, c.; ST I, q. 60, a. 4, ad 3; II-II, q. 25, a. 2, c.

⁴¹ ST I-II, q. 18, a. 5; q. 71, a. 2.

⁴² ST II-II, q. 26; In III *Sent.*, d. 29; *De caritate*, q. un., a. 9.

⁴³ For example, ST II-II, q. 152, a. 2, c.: «... in humanis actibus illud est vitiosum quod est praeter rationem rectam. Habet autem hoc ratio recta, ut his quae sunt ad finem utatur aliquis secundum eam mensuram qua congruit fini. Est autem triplex hominis bonum, ut dicitur in I *Ethic.*: unum quidem quod consistit in exterioribus rebus, puta divitiis; aliud autem quod consistit in bonis corporis; tertium autem quod consistit in bonis animae, inter quae et bona contemplativae vitae sunt potiora bonis vitae activae, ut Philosophus probat, in X *Ethic.*, et Dominus dicit, Lc. 10,42: *Maria optimam partem eligit*. Quorum bonorum exteriora quidem ordinantur ad ea quae sunt corporis; ea vero quae sunt corporis, ad ea quae sunt animae; et ulterius ea quae sunt vitae activae, ad ea quae sunt vitae contemplativae. Pertinet igitur ad rectitudinem rationis ut aliquis utatur exterioribus bonis secundum eam mensuram qua competit corpori: et similiter de aliis».

⁴⁴ ST I-II, q. 100, a. 3, ad 1.

⁴⁵ ST I-II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 1.

In the realm of virtue, the chief virtues are precisely those dealing with persons as such, as opposed to the passions, the body or exterior goods. Thus, among the theological virtues the chief is charity, which rightly orders one's love on the level of grace: first, one's love of friendship for God, self and others, and, second, one's love of concupiscence for all other things as ordered to these persons⁴⁶. The primary act of *caritas* is *dilectio*, of which the chief element is the love of friendship for all those persons who are capable of communicating in *beatitudo*⁴⁷. Among the moral virtues, the chief is justice. It is the greatest precisely because it achieves the good of more persons than any of the other moral virtues⁴⁸. The primary object of justice is precisely other persons; all other objects enter into the field of justice insofar as they are owned or used by persons⁴⁹. Thus we could describe justice as the virtue by which the relations among persons are rectified⁵⁰. Here it is interesting to note that for Thomas, all acts of injustice, insofar as they detract from the good of others, are also considered to be opposed to *beneficentia*, that act of charity by which one seeks the good for the loved person⁵¹.

Even when we turn to the understanding of self-love we encounter a decisive reference to persons, in this case to other persons. Thomas almost never opposes self-love to the love for others, even to the love for God, as if one displaced the other. Rather, he distinguishes between proper and improper self-love. Improper self-love is a love in which one seeks for self primarily the goods of the lower part of one's nature, especially sensible goods. Because such goods cannot be shared without being diminished, such a love gives rise to competition with others; precisely self-love of this sort is opposed to the love of other persons. Proper self-love, on the other hand, seeks higher, spiritual goods for the self, and chief among these goods is the love of friendship for other persons, i.e., a love for the others for the sake of the others⁵². A person who truly loves himself, says Thomas, directs himself to God⁵³. So too, it pertains to true self-love to love others, even if the degree of intensity is not so great as that of one's self-love⁵⁴. A person is better, we can say, precisely for loving others for

⁴⁶ For the priority of *caritas* among the theological virtues: ST I-II, q. 66, a. 6; as the love of friendship for God and others, II-II, q. 23, a. 1; for charity insofar as it includes a love of concupiscence, II-II, q. 25, aa. 2-3.

⁴⁷ ST II-II, q. 27.

⁴⁸ ST I-II, q. 66, a. 4, c.; II-II, q. 58, a. 12, c.

⁴⁹ ST II-II, q. 58, aa. 2, 8-10, especially a. 10, c.: «Sed materia iustitiae est exterior operatio secundum quod ipsa, vel res cuius est usus, debitam proportionem habet ad aliam personam. Et ideo medium iustitiae consistit in quadam proportionis aequalitate rei exterioris ad personam exteriorem».

⁵⁰ E.g., ST II-II, q. 180, a. 2, ad 2.

⁵¹ ST II-II, q. 31, a. 1; q. 43, Intro.

⁵² For this distinction between proper and improper self-love, see *In Ethicorum*, Bk. IX, lect. 8-9; ST II-II, q. 25, aa. 4, 7; I-II, q. 29, a. 4, c. & ad 3.

⁵³ «... in hoc enim homo vere se diligit, quod se ordinat in Deum». ST I-II, q. 100, a. 5, ad 1.

⁵⁴ For the priority of self-love, see ST I, q. 60, a. 4, ad 2; I-II, q. 27, a. 3, c.; II-II, q. 26, aa. 4, 13. On the centrality of the love of friendship in Aquinas' ethics, see S. PINCKAERS, *Der Sinn für die Freundschaftslove als Uratsache der thomistischen Ethik*, in *Sein und Ethos: Untersuchungen zur Grundlegung der Ethik*, edited by P. Engelhardt (Matthias-Grünwald, Mainz 1963), pp. 228-35; as well as *Eudämonismus und sittliche Verbindlichkeit in der Ethik des heiligen Thomas. Stellungnahme zum Beitrag Hans Reiners*, in the same volume, pp. 267-305.

their own sake. Thus we find Thomas claiming that spiritual sins are graver than carnal sins because in the latter case one sins against one's own body while in spiritual sins one sins against God and against neighbor⁵⁵. Self-love itself is measured by the love for persons.

4. Persons and teleology

As is well known, Thomas' ethics are a teleological ethics. Nature itself, as created, determines an end or perfection for the human person, and the moral life consists in freely choosing those actions which will achieve that end. One can, in fact, describe the order of reason as precisely the order of human acts to the achievement of this end⁵⁶. This all-determinative teleology is clearly reflected in the fact that the first topic treated in the moral part of the *Summa theologiae* is that of the end, *beatitudo*. On that discussion all subsequent discussions depend⁵⁷. How, then, is this basic theme of teleology, the drive to perfection and fulfillment, related to this other principal theme, that of the centrality of the person?

In the first place, this teleology does not mean that each individual seeks his or her own perfection irrespective of others, seeing them only as means to that perfection. Even were this so, the person as such would remain at the center, insofar as all actions would still be directed to personal perfection. Nevertheless, as we have seen, for Thomas true self-love, the true seeking of one's own good, includes the love of friendship for others, and in the case of God, with a love greater than one's self-love. This means that one's drive to perfection is fulfilled in a love for other persons for their own sake. This does not, we should note, oppose Thomas' postulation of a natural inclination to one's own beatitude. This inclination is a love of concupiscence directed to that which is best for oneself, that which will perfect oneself. Such an inclination does not exclude the possibility that what is best for oneself is to love another person more than self with a love of friendship. Such is Thomas' view: to love God with a love of friendship greater than one's love of friendship for self is what is best for self. So too, it is part of one's perfection to love others for their own sake. Thus the natural inclination can in fact lead to loving persons other than self⁵⁸.

Here, in the love for others, another important relationship between teleology and the person arises. In order to grasp this relationship, we must describe a bit more fully the structure of the love of friendship as understood by Thomas.

In *amor amicitiae* the lover takes complaisance in the beloved as a good. He finds complaisance in that good, however, precisely as a good for which (whom) other goods are to be sought; the accompanying *amor concupiscentiae* is directed to these other goods. Thus it belongs to the essential structure of the love of friendship that one wills that the other person have what is good for him or her (*benevolentia*), and that, in addition, one acts to bring about that good for the other (*beneficentia*). It also belongs to the essential structure of *amor amicitiae* that the benevolence and

⁵⁵ ST I-II, q. 73, a. 5, c.

⁵⁶ See, e.g., n. 43 above.

⁵⁷ See ST I-II, q. 1, a. 1, Intro.; q. 6, a. 1, Intro.

⁵⁸ See nn. 40 and 53 above.

benevolence be for the sake of the other person himself. This intention is absent when I love another person with a love of concupiscence directed to my own good (or a third person's good). I may, in such cases, will some good for the other (I pay the mechanic), but that is only a means to my own good (a working car). Thus, says Thomas, in the love of friendship, I love the other as another self, insofar as I will for him goods just as I will goods for myself, i.e., not as means to an end beyond the person who will have those goods. Here the other person is himself the end⁵⁹.

There is, however, another sense in which the beloved is another self. It also belongs to this love that the lover considers as his own the goods and evils enjoyed or suffered by the other, and that, moreover, he considers even the will of the other as his own, such that he rejoices when the other rejoices (and in that in which the other rejoices) and is sorrowful when the other is sorrowful. In this way, says Thomas, the lover, can be said to be "in" the loved person and to be made the same as him⁶⁰. Following Pseudo-Dionysius, Thomas calls this being-in-the-other or going-out-to-the-other which occurs in the lover's affections "extasis"⁶¹. In contrast to the love of concupiscence, which brings the other, so to speak, into one's self, the love of friendship denotes an extension, on the affective level, of one's self to the other. It is this extension that gives rise to the benevolence and beneficence, the seeking of the other's good for the other's sake⁶².

⁵⁹ For the explication of *amor amicitiae*, see ST I, q. 60, aa. 3-4, ST I-II; q. 28, aa. 1-3; *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 9, nn. 404-5; lect. 10, nn. 428-30. On the notion of the loved one as another self, see K. HEDWIG, *Alter ipse. Über die Rezeption eines Aristotelischen Begriffes bei Thomas von Aquin*, «Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie», 72 (1990), pp. 253-74. For a general treatment of Thomas' theory of love and friendship as well as its sources, see J. McEVROY, *Amitié, attirance et amour chez S. Thomas d'Aquin*, «Revue philosophique du Louvain», 91 (1993), pp. 383-408.

⁶⁰ ST I-II, q. 28, a. 2, c.: «In amore vero amicitiae, amans est in amato, in quantum reputat bona vel mala amici sicut sua, et voluntatem amici sicut suam, ut quasi ipse in suo amico videatur bona vel mala pati, et affici. Et propter hoc, proprium est amicorum *eadem velle, et in eodem tristari et gaudere*, secundum Philosophum, in IX *Ethic.* et in II *Rhetic.* Ut sic, in quantum quae sunt amici aestimat sua, amans videatur esse in amato, quasi idem factus amato».

⁶¹ ST I-II, q. 28, a. 3, c.; *De div. nom.*, ch. 4, lect. 10, n. 430.

⁶² It would seem that here we might find in Thomas' understanding of interpersonal relationships what is expressed by the phrase "gift of self" as characterizing the "unselfish" love of one person for another. While it is occasionally possible to speak of a bodily giving of self, e.g., in the spousal love of marriage, this is not proper to the love of persons as such. It would seem, rather, that the "gift" should be understood as occurring primarily on the level of the affections, especially on the level of the will. As Thomas describes it, the lover places his affection in the other, "gives" it to the other we could say, precisely by willing the other's good. Thus in *benevolentia*, he wishes the good for the other, and in *beneficentia*, he acts to achieve that good for the other. Here we can speak of a gift of self, in that the actions of a person are more intimately his own, are more "self" than any external goods. When a person directs these acts to the good of someone outside himself (*extasis*), and does so freely (*dilectio*), and does so *for the sake of the other* and not for the sake of a return (*amor amicitiae*), we have the essential elements of a gift as such. In addition, Thomas' reference to the union of wills also points to a "giving" of oneself to the other. This union means, as I understand it, that the lover wills as his own good what the beloved wills, *because* the beloved wills it. Insofar as the will is what is most personal in a person, the lover's directing of his will to those goods to which the loved person directs his will constitutes a "gift of self".

Precisely here, however, the theme of teleology and perfection enters. To will the other's good presupposes that the other *has* a good, that there is for him a distinction between a better and worse state or between more perfect and less perfect conditions. Only with this distinction does it become intelligible to seek his good or to rejoice in his obtaining of the good. In order that I be able to know what is in fact good for him, the other must be ordered to a good *prior* to my seeking that good, and this order to one's perfection is precisely what is meant by a natural teleology. This order is given prior to choice, and in light of it one is enabled actually to choose what is good or what is better for a person. Thus beneficence presupposes order to an end or to perfection.

What occurs if this pre-given ordination to perfection is denied? First of all, the notion of good is changed, and instead of referring to the thing's perfection, it comes to mean simply that which is desired. Whatever a person desires is good for that person; the good becomes relative to each individual and it is no longer possible to draw a distinction between the true good—what is truly perfective of a person—and the apparent good—what a person simply desires. What would beneficence mean in this context? What would it mean to seek the other person's good? It would seem that the only possible meaning would be that I, as "friend," would seek to procure whatever the other person desired. Given that there is no measure of the good to be found in the person's perfection, I cannot judge that what the other wants is *in reality* good for him or not. Thus it seems that beneficence is radically changed. I can no longer seek a good for the other which the other himself does not take to be good, nor could I refuse him a desired good on the ground that it was not truly good for him. I cannot wish for him what is "truly" good (benevolence) because this term has lost its content. As soon as we consider the benevolence and beneficence proper to persons such as parents or teachers, we glimpse how radical this view would be, if (as is seldom the case) it were consistently followed.

But there is an even more fundamental question: is it at all possible to have a love of friendship if we remove teleology and so change the meaning of "good"? If the good is what each person desires, it seems that the good can be said only with reference to the desiring individual, and only insofar as it satisfies the desire of that individual. Thus it seems that when the good is so understood, the only love possible for anything, including other persons, is a love of concupiscence ordered to one's own individual good. It is no longer possible to see the other as a good simply in himself. This, as we have seen, is required for *amor amicitiae*; I take the other as part of myself because I have taken the other as good in himself. Because I take the other as perfect, at least to some degree, and take that perfection as pertaining to me, I wish and strive for his further perfection. This is beneficence. But this presupposes that I can take the other as good or perfect independent of my desiring the person as good for me, and for this there must be a measure of goodness and perfection independent of the desire and striving I have for my individual good. Such a measure is to be found in the natural ordination to perfection; the person has, if only by the possession of a human nature, a certain degree of perfection, and on that basis I can love him for his own sake, for the good that is present in him. Thus the notion of the human person as naturally directed to an end plays a central role in Thomas' ethics, not only in the sense that each individual should act so as to achieve his or her own end, but also in that this teleology is a presupposition for the love of others for their own sake.

A final relationship between the theme of teleology and person is to be found in Thomas' understanding of contemplation. As is well known, Thomas follows Aristotle in positing that the end to which human persons are ordained by their natural teleology is an act of the speculative reason, the contemplation of that which is first in the universe, the divine being. At times the arguments for this view can seem to have little to do with a relationship of persons. This is especially so when Thomas simply employs the arguments of Aristotle: the end of a being lies in its highest activity; the highest activity is the activity of the highest faculty; in human beings the highest faculty is reason; the highest activity of reason is that directed to its highest objects; thus the end of human life lies in an act of thinking about the highest or divine being. The intellect has a natural inclination toward knowledge by which it drives to the first causes of all that is; until that cause(s) is reached there remains an unfulfilled desire and one falls short of human fulfillment⁶³. Even if one grants that the first being is a personal being, the sort of relationship to that being which arises in speculative knowing seems hardly to be a personal relationship; it is solely an intellectual and not an affective relationship.

While it is true that Thomas employs these arguments, it is necessary to recognize others, of a less or even non-Aristotelian nature, in which contemplation is seen in its relation to love. In the *Summa theologiae* the *finis cuius*, that object which perfects the human being, is distinguished from the *finis quo* that activity of the human being by which he possesses the *finis cuius*. This activity, says Thomas, is an activity of the speculative intellect, and consequently beatitude, taken as the *finis quo*, consists essentially in an act of contemplation. Here, then, the act of knowing is taken as a possession of or union with that perfecting object which is the *finis cuius*⁶⁴.

This point becomes even clearer in the discussion of whether the *finis quo* could be an act of the will, a discussion which hinges on Thomas' analysis of love as the will's most basic act. Love, as we saw earlier, gives rise to desire when the loved object is not possessed, and to joy when the object is possessed. None of these acts, however, actually brings about the possession of the object, as for example neither the love of money nor the desire for it makes one actually to possess it. One possesses the good only by an act other than that of the will. And if the object is not bodily but rather immaterial, its possession is achieved only through acts of the intellect, since an immaterial object achieves presence only through acts of knowing. So it is that love, an act of the will, is ultimately perfected by an act other than an act of the will, viz. an act of the intellect⁶⁵. Once again, as we saw earlier, it belongs to the essential nature of love to seek *union* with the loved object; it is precisely this union which is the object of both the desire and the joy, and this union perfects the love. Thus the love of that good which will perfect the human being—God—is perfected in that act by which he is present to the person. Seen in this light, the act of contemplation is not at all impersonal; rather it is the fulfillment of a personal relationship, the affective relationship between two persons.

⁶³ For Aristotle's discussion, *Nicomachean Ethics* X, chs. 7-8, as well as *Metaphysics* I, chs. 1-2. For Thomas' employment of these arguments, see e.g., SCG III, ch. 25.

⁶⁴ ST I-II, q. 3.

⁶⁵ ST I-II, q. 3, a. 4, c.

That contemplation denotes a personal relationship is made clear in the explicit treatment of the contemplative life, wherein we find a crucial additional precision in the analysis of contemplation's relation to one's affections. Here Thomas points to a two-fold possibility. One can love the act of contemplation for the sake of the knowledge itself which is thereby gained. This would be, in fact, a love of concupiscence for the knowledge, based on one's love of self; the knowledge is loved as a perfection of the knower. This seems to be the sort of relation to knowledge that one finds in Aristotle's discussions of contemplation⁶⁶. But one can also love the contemplation, the beholding of the object, on account of the love one has for the seen object. In that case, the act of contemplation is not loved simply as perfecting the knower, but rather as that by which the knower is united with the known. And this is primarily the case in the relationships between persons; those who love one another wish to see each other and indeed the love is perfected precisely in this sort of presence. It is this love, the love of the person seen in the act of contemplation that is primary in the contemplative life. Thus Thomas concludes: "And since everyone delights when he has obtained that which he loves, so the contemplative life ends in delight, which is in the affections"⁶⁷. Thus contemplation is not merely an intellectual act; rather, as the union with the loved person, it is the fulfillment of personal love.

The moral life, according to Aquinas, takes its rise from the will, the source of all moral actions. The will itself, however, has as its most basic motion, *amor amicitiae*, the love for persons, and this love determines the whole of the moral life. Thus it is no surprise that at its peak the moral life should be essentially a relation, or better, a union between persons.

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Abstract: *L'articolo indica la centralità della persona nell'etica di Tommaso d'Aquino, attraverso l'analisi della comprensione tommasiana dell'amore. L'amore è il movimento affettivo più basilare, sia al livello delle passioni (appetiti sensibili) che a quello della volontà. L'amore che si trova nella volontà, la dilectio, ha due componenti: un amore indirizzato verso una persona, chiamato amore di amicizia (amor amicitiae), e un amore indirizzato verso ciò che è buono per la persona, l'amore di concupiscenza (amor concupiscentiae). L'amore di amicizia è più basilare*

⁶⁶ We should point out that even Aristotle refers to the desirability of knowledge in terms of a joy taken not simply in the knowledge itself, but also in the known object: *Parts of Animals* I, 5, 644 b24-645 a3. This text is cited at ST II-II, q. 180, a. 7, ad 3.

⁶⁷ ST II-II, q. 180, a. 1, c.: «Mouet autem vis appetitiva ad aliquid inspiciendum, vel sensibiliter vel intelligibiliter, quandoque quidem propter amorem rei visae, quia ut dicitur Mt. 6,21, *ubi est thesaurus tuus, ibi est et cor tuum*: quandoque autem propter amorem ipsius cognitionis quam quis ex inspectione consequitur. Et propter hoc Gregorius constituit vitam contemplativam in *caritate Dei*: in quantum scilicet aliquis ex dilectione Dei inardescit ad eius pulchritudinem conspiciendam. Et quia unusquisque delectatur cum adeptus fuerit id quod amat, ideo vita contemplativa terminatur ad delectationem, quae est in affectu: ex qua etiam amor intenditur». Cf. *In I Metaph.*, lect. 1, nn. 2-4.

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dell'amore di concupiscenza, e ne è il presupposto; di conseguenza, l'affetto più basilare della volontà è l'amore per una persona. L'intera vita morale gira intorno alle persone e le loro perfezioni, e, infatti, i fini principali di tutte le scelte morali sono persone. In seguito, si parla della centralità della persona nelle dottrine di Tommaso sulle virtù e sulla legge. L'articolo conclude mettendo la nozione di persona in rapporto con un'altra nozione centrale, quella di teleologia.