Afterword

Where These Ideas Come From; How They Relate to Some Other Ideas; Where They Might Lead

Two kinds of philosophers are apt to find the preceding ideas disconcertingly unfamiliar, nonThomists and Thomists, or, as I prefer to call them, Realists. In this afterword, I am addressing Realists. In another work, Causal Realism, I have tried to explain the metaphysical and epistemological background of these ideas in a way that, in theory at least, nonRealists can understand. The present work is the ethical extension of those metaphysical and epistemological analyses.

1. Where These Ideas Come From

The preceding analysis of obligation came out of reflections on two of Jacques Maritain's neglected insights (did he have any other kind?). The first was his reconciliation of ethical teleology and deontology in Neuf lecons. He showed that the ethical value of an act consisted in its intrinsic perfection, but he also showed that the intrinsic perfection of an act did not exclude its being an end for an agent. Value concerns the order of specification or formal causality; finality concerns the order of exercise or an efficient cause's orientation to posit the act. Rather than being exclusive of one another, both orders are required in any action. As Aristotle said, the formal and final causes are one; whatever is a formal cause is also a final cause, and vice versa.

The dissolving of the teleology/deontology dilemma gave me hope for dissolving other dilemmas. And together with another of Maritain's contributions, his way of dissolving that dilemma turned out to also be the key to the is/ought, fact/value, "naturalistic fallacy" problem.

That other insight was his explanation of Aquinas's theory of truth by means of the distinction between things as things and things as objects of cognition. Aquinas had seen that truth required a real identity of things that had been made logically distinct by means of diverse cognitions. Maritain expressed this in terms of the real identity and logical distinction between things as objects of knowledge and things as extraobjective things. When there is truth there is strict identity between that which is an object of concept and what some extraobjective thing is, but the same extraobjective thing can be conceptually objectified in many logically distinct ways.

In reality, Maritain's theory was simply a necessary consequence of Aquinas's doctrine that truth is a transcendental property of being, and that fact is what made Maritain's theory of truth significant for ethics. The doctrine of the transcendentals states that true addsto being only a being of reason, the relation being-known. That is why there is strict identity between what is true and what exists: the distinction between what-is-known (Maritain's object) and what exists cannot be a real one since the relation being-known, as a being of reason, adds nothing real to that which exists.

The implication for ethics comes from the fact that the good is also a transcendental that adds nothing to being but a being of reason, the relation being-desired. Just as being becomes denominated "true" by a relation to intellect, being becomes denominated "good" by a relation to appetite. Where Maritain uses the word "object" to describe what is a term of a relation of cognition, we can use the term "value" to describe what is a term of a relation of appetition. That is, just as a thing becomes denominated an "object" by being known, it becomes denominated a "value" by being desired.

But in each case, that which is so denominated is the thing itself in its own

reality, since that is what terminates the relation of cognition or appetition.

By inference, then, there should be an identity between the term of a relation of desire and what exists just as there is identity between between a the term of a cognitional relation and what exists. And just as failure of identity between a cognitional object and what exists constitutes falsehood, a failure of identity between an object of desire and what exists should constitute evil.

In other words, there is a parallel between the transcendentals good and true precisely with respect to (1) the real identity of both with being due to (2) the fact that each adds to being only a relation of reason, the relations being-known and being-desired, respectively. But then there should also be a parallel between a defect with respect to the true and a defect with respect to the good. There should be a parallel between the opposite of truth, in the domain of cognition, and the opposite of goodness, in the domain of desires. And since lack of identity between what is believed and what exists is what makes a belief false, some lack of identity between what is desired and what exists must be what makes a desire evil. Just as beliefs are defective for not achieving identity between what is believed and what exists, a lack of identity between what is desired and what exists must make desires defective. If not, the parallel between the transcendentals true and good is lost; for the parallel is the identity between what terminates a relation of knowledge or desire and what exists. Therefore, if a nonidentity makes a knowledge act defective with respect to the true, it should make a desire defective with respect to the good.

Of course, transcendental goodness is not moral goodness. But moral goodness is a species (or analogate) of transcendental goodness, so what is true of transcendental goodness in general must be true of moral goodness in its own way.

For some it will (unfortunately) be important to point out that one does not have to use Maritain to conclude that there should be a parallel between defective desire and defective belief on Aquinas's principles. Aquinas has the doctrine of a logical distinction and real identity in truth, as well as the doctrine that both the <u>true</u> and the <u>good</u> are only logically distinct from <u>being</u>, because they only add beings of reason to it. Hence, there should be a parallel between the case where that which is believed is not genuinely true, for lack of identity with what exists, and the case where that which is desired is not genuinely good. In other words, there should be a parallel between a defective cognitional act and a defective appetitive act: both should be rendered defective by lack of identty between that of which the relations of reason being-known and being-desired are predicated and that which really exists.

How could this parallelism occur? How can there be identity or lack of identity between the term of a relation of desire and what exists as there is between that between the term of a cognitional relation and what exists? Maritain's insight into the teleology/deontology problem provides a clue to this question. The transcendental good concerns being as term of a desire, an act of an appetite. Therefore the parallel with the true and the false concerned an act of an appetite, in particular, the will, not the act of any faculty directed by the will. The reconciliation of deontology and teleology depends on the fact that the final cause and the formal cause are the same cause looked at from different points of view. Deontology is correct in thinking that the ethical value of an act must be found in its intrinsic perfection (formal causality), but for any agent, the intrinsic perfection of

its act is also that which fulfills the agent's orientation to the end because of which the agent acts (final causality).

In considering acts of the rational appetite, however, whose final and formal cause is in question, those of the will's act or those of another faculty directed by the will? Since the transcendental good concerns being as term of a relation of desire, the act in question is the appetite's act, and the finality in terms of which the success of failure of the act is measured must be the finality of the appetite itself. The finality of other faculties must be relevant only to the extent that those finalities relate to the will's finality. If not, the final cause and the formal cause giving moral value to the act would not be the same. The formal perfection of the appetite's act, i.e., the perfection that fulfills the appetite's finality, would be one thing. The formal perfection that constitutes the moral value of an act, i.e., the fulfillment of the other faculty's finality, would be something else. For the formal cause and the final cause to be the same, the act whose intrinsic perfection constitutes moral value must be an act satisfying the finality of the will itself.

Again, this is a conclusion one could have reached from Aquinas, without benefit of Maritain. But Maritain has done us the favor, not universal among Realists, of thinking about these questions philosophically, i.e., in the light of philosophical problems that need solving or pseudo problems whose character as pseudo problems needs to be explained.

The reason one could get this from Aquinas is the fact that moral goodness and evil resides in an act of the will. Therefore, if an act of the will is going to be morally defective in any absolute, categorical, nonhypothetical way, the goodness or evil of the act must be intrinsic to the act. And it can be intrinsic only if measured by the act's own finality. If the goodness or evil of the act of the will is measured by some finality other than that of the will, the quesion will always arise why that standard must be applied to the will's act. That question will always come up because goodness adds to being the relation of being an end to which an appetite is oriented, since that is what it means to be desired. Therefore, if an act of the will is declared good by reference to some other appetite, the question arises why the ends of that other appetite provide a standard for the will, since the will has its own ends. If the will's finality is so related to the that of the other other appetite that the will's finality cannot be accomplished without the other's, the act of the will is not being measured by an external standard to the exclusion of the will's own standard. The success or failure of the will's act is being measured by the will's own finality, even though the fulfillment of that finality depends on the fulfillment of the finality of another appetite. But if the fulfillment of the will's finality is not so related to the other finality, why must the will's act achieve that other finality?

Before going on, it is necessary to prevent a possible misconception. These remarks may make it appear that this analysis of obligation was deduced from metaphysical principles. That is not the case. The explanation of obligation resulted from a deliberate attempt to stay as far away as possible from the a priori level and analyze a concrete example of unethical behavior, unfairness toward another on a competitive examination. But Realist doctrines did guide my thinking heuristically. And one other Realist doctrine should be mentioned, the doctrine that consciousness is an existence for the object of consciousness, an existence other than the existence which the object has for itself as an entity. The existence of the term of consciousness within

consciousness has always been affirmed of cognition, and it should be true of the term of a conscious desire as well.

Those heuristic principles prepared me to see that in unfair behavior we were treating an equal as if it were the case that she was unequal, as if she were unequal in real existence. And just as the belief that we were not equal would be inherently defective as a belief, a decision treating us as if we were not equal would be inherently defective as an act of will. In each case, a conscious orientation to a goal would fail of its goal by treating something as if it were not what it is. And that defect in the act of the will was what the moral evil of unfairness consisted in, for we would not hold someone morally guilty who acted from inculpable ignorance of the equality. The decision to act unfairly, in other words, gave things an existence (a place) in our desires, and what things were as existing in our desires was not identical with what they were in themselves. Likewise, in false belief, what exists as term of the relation of belief is not identical with what exists in reality. Further, it seemed clear that any other analysis of the evil of unfairness would sacrifice either the principle that moral evil resided in an act of the will or the parallel between the transcendentals true and good with respect to their identity with being resulting from their denominating being as a term of a conscious relation. For that which is desired by the will to be a genuine, as opposed to illusory, good, there must be identity between what something is as a value for the will and what it is in itself. That identity is precisely what is lacking when I value my interests, and hence myself, more highly than the interests of another person, and hence more highly than the other.

In working these initial ideas out, however, it was necessary to minimize the use of technical metaphysics. No doubt the person on the street has an implicit grasp of the realities the concepts of Realist metaphysicsmake explicit. But there is also no doubt that the person on the street can grasp the objectivity, unconditionality, and knowability of ethical values without having those explicit concepts. Of course, it is neither desirable nor possible, in a philosophical discussion of the foundations of ethics, to leave out explicit metaphysics altogether. For example, I could not simply affirm human equality with respect to our underlying nature as rational beings without some explanation. And I hope the consistency of my explanation with Aquinas's principles is obvious to Realists. Nature, for Aquinas, is a causal concept; nature is essence understood as a source of activity. And our knowledge of human nature in particular comes from our reflective awareness of our conscious acts as emanating from their causes in the habitus, powers, and existence of the soul.

2. How These Ideas Relate to Some Others

Although my account of obligation was suggested by certain of Aquinas's fundamental insights, it may not be obvious how some aspects of the analysis are consistent with his ethics. Since there are various interpretations of his ethics, however, I cannot address all possible questions of consistency. Instead, I will comment on the issues that, in my judgment, are the most important or the most likely to need clarification.

For one thing, I have chosen to assume that the reader knows it is not the will that is oriented to making decisions; it is we who are oriented to make decisions by means of our wills. It is not the will that has the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge; it is we who have the finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge through our acts of will. And of course, it is not reason that knows what things are; we

know what things are by means of reason. But this book is meant to focus on the role of the will and to help make up for neglect of the will in the foundations of ethics. To accomplish that using the "we . . . by means of the will" construction would have made some already convoluted sentences even more convoluted.

Now to Aquinas's ethics proper. Aquinas calls the commandments to love God above all things and love our neighbors as ourselves first, common, and self-evident precepts of the natural law (ST I-II, 3 ad 1). The obligations expressed by these commandments are the very obligations explained by the rational appetite's finality of valuing things according to reason's knowledge of what they are. It is self-evident that a decision to love the infinitely perfect being above all else values Him according to what He is. And it is self-evident that a decision not to love a being equal in nature to us as we love ourselves does not value the other being according to what her nature is. Likewise, it is self-evident that, if we do not give another being who sets her own ends the place in our evaluations of someone directed to ends she gives herself, what she is in our evaluations is not what she is in reality. Thus, my analysis justifies giving the precepts to love God and neighbor the pride of place they deserve in ethics, while many discussions of Aquinas's ethics do not.

Some might object that Aquinas's self-evident ethical precepts express practical knowledge rather than speculative. In what sense, then, can the obligation expressed by the precepts to love God and neighbor be explained, as I have tried to explain them, by speculative truths about the equality of human nature and our knowledge of it, about the nature of the rational appetite, and about freedom of choice? If ethical precepts like those to love God and neighbor are deduced from speculative truths, such precepts can be neither ethical nor self-evident.

The first thing to notice here is that, while ethics is practical knowledge, the study of the foundations of ethics is speculative knowledge. For example, the statement "Ethics is practical knowledge" is itself an instance of speculative knowledge, not practical knowledge. Likewise, the statement "The precept 'God should be loved above all other goods' is a principle of practical knowledge" is an instance of speculative knowledge about practical knowledge. Secondly, the self-evidence of the precepts of natural law are not compromised by their justification in the foundations of ethics. Metaphysics explains and defends, for example, the self-evident principles on which mathematics, logic, the philosophy of nature, and natural science are founded (as I have tried to do in Causal Realism). But the principles of these sciences are not deduced from metaphysical truths. Rather, metaphysics defends them indirectly by reduction ad absurdum. Reductio ad absurdum works by showing that the denial of a self-evident principle, taken together with other truths, for example, that something is an F, implies a contradiction, for example, that an F is not an F.

Metaphysics also reflects on what it means for principles to be necessary, that is, on why the identity of diverse objects as things is necessary in the case of certain objects and not others. And the philosophy of man explains how self-evident principles come to be known as such, that is, how we are able to so objectify things that the necessary identity of some objects is knowable from their objectification. (See, for example, Germain Grisez's explanation of the necessity and self-evidence of the practical principle "Good is to be done and evil to be avoided.") But none of this amounts to deducing self-evidently necessary principles from higher principles.

(*Here, I have attempted neither a reductio ad absurdum defense of the principles of natural obligation nor an explicit deduction of speculative conclusions about the foundations of ethics from self-evident speculative principles. Having attempted to do that for speculative knowledge in general in Causal Realism, I have learned just how arduous a task that can be, not only for the writer but also for the reader -- and there is something to be said for writing books that are readable.)

"The good is to be done and evil avoided" plays the role in practical knowledge that the principle of noncontradiction plays in speculative. Hence, denying a self-evident practical precept like "The infinite being is to be loved above all others" amounts to denying that good is to be done and evil is to be avoided. The last sentence expresses speculative knowledge about the connection between two practical principles. Whether that speculative statement is directly deduced from self-evident speculative statements or defended indirectly by reductio ad absurdum, the process of reasoning will make use of other truths. At least some of these truths will express speculative knowledge, since the statement being defended is a matter of speculative knowledge. And in general, for every practically known truth P, there is a set of speculatively known truths like "P is a practically known truth," "P is self-evident to practical knowledge," "If P is false, the first principle of practical knowledge is not a principle of practical knowledge," and so on. Since the latter truths are speculatively known, they must be verifiable, directly or indirectly, by appeal to other speculatively known truths.

For example, the reason that denying the infinite being is to be loved above all amounts to denying that good is to be done is that loving the infinite being is what is the good is in the choice under discussion. But why is loving God above all the good to which the first principle of practical reason directs us? To love God above all is our good because it fulfills the finality of the will as an appetite oriented to valuing being. And to know the truth of the last sentence is to have speculative knowledge. But speculative knowledge about the will, as opposed to speculative knowledge about God, does not enter into our practical knowledge that God is to be loved above all, as I will explain in a moment.

Grisez and Joseph Boyle defend that practically known truth that human life is an intrinsic good by arguing that its denial leads to the denial of speculatively known truths about human nature.* Still, Grisez, John Finnis, Boyle and others do not think of themselves as giving the speculative knowledge of human nature the importance in ethics that Realists usually give it. For they believe the opportunity provided by Aquinas for handling the is-ought problem is in the practical character of ethical knowledge. They feel that making practical reason's grasp of obligation dependent on speculative knowledge of human nature commits the fallacy of deriving ought from is.

It is ironic that the intersection between Aquinas and Hume be located at Aquinas's commitment to the practical character of ethical knowledge. The irony is that Aquinas has an insight corresponding exactly to Hume's doctrine that reason cannot dictate to passion, but Aquinas's insight justifies the role of speculative knowledge in imposing obligation on the will. Hume's doctrine corresponds to Aquinas's analysis of good as a transcendental. The fact that reason's value judgments presuppose an appetite's orientation to an end is what the doctrine of good as a transcendental expresses by saying

that being becomes denominated "good" by being that to which an appetite is oriented. Hence, without our awareness of the existence of desires (in the broadest sense of the word), we could not have the concept of goodness and attribute goodness to being. Because "good" means being insofar as it terminates relations of appetite, when reason formulates judgments about what is or is not good, reason is formulating judgments about the conformity of things to appetites. And that is Hume's point about reason's value judgments presupposing passion or volition. (Of course, Aquinas's appetites have orientations to ends that precede what Hume would call passions or volitions, but we come to know the nature of our faculties only through their acts.)

But the same fact about the transcendental concept of goodness requires, contrary to Hume, that speculatively known truths determine ethical goodness or evil. For the relation by means of which we formulate the concept of goodness exists in the appetite, not in that which is desired. Being-desired is truthfully attributed to the term of a relation of desire, but being-desired is itself only a relation of reason that posits nothing real in that which is desired. Therefore, goodness involves strict identity between what something is as a value for us (as that which is desired) and what something is in itself. In other words, every conscious desire evaluates a thing to be something, namely, to be the kind of thing to which the appetite is oriented. And since our decision making ability is an appetite oriented to valuing things to be what they are as known by reason, the speculatively known truths that objectify what things are in themselves determine what decisions are good or bad for the rational appetite to make. For example, a decision not to love God above all evaluates Him as if He were not an infinitely perfect being. Hence, speculatively known truths determine the truth or falsity of practical judgments about the goodness or evil of decisions.

The way out of the is-ought problem provided by Aquinas is not the practical character of ethical judgments but the nature of the will as a rational appetite together with the logical distinction and real identity of being as being and being as a value. If the will is not as I have described it, an appetite oriented to valuing what things are in real existence as known by reason, then Aquinas's theories of the beatific vision, of the end of man as intellectual contemplation, and of freedom as deriving from the will's having the same object as the intellect cannot stand. But since the will is a rational appetite, the content of speculatively known truths determines the goodness or evil of decisions. For it is by means of speculatively known truths that the will has the target of its evaluations, what things are, proposed to it.

Then why is practical knowledge not derived from speculative? Consider, again, the practically known truth that God is to be loved above all things. The obligation to love God above all is a speculatively knowable state of affairs consisting of the facts that God is what He is and that the will is what it is, namely, something with the finality of valuing being as known by reason. To have practical knowledge of that obligation, we need the speculative knowledge that God is what He is, but we do not and cannot need the speculative knowledge that the will's finality is what it is. As Grisez and Finnis point out against Hume himself, speculative knowledge of finality does not make practical knowledge practical. To the speculative knowledge that God is what He is, the practical knowledge of the obligation to love God does not add our speculative knowledge of the will's finality. What then does

the practical knowledge of our obligation add to our speculative knowledge of God?

It adds, not reflexive awareness or conceptual awareness of the will's orientation to value being as known by reason, but the existence of that orientation. Practical reason is reason functioning to direct our actions. But for reason to direct our actions, it must direct acts of our decision making faculty, for as rational beings, our primary actions are the decisions by which we direct other actions. Reason alone does not cause us to act, as Hume and Aquinas knew. Practical reason is reason functioning in the service of that by which we do cause our acts; hence practical reason is reason functioning in the service of the rational appetite. Practical reason is not reason plus volition. Grisez is, again, correct in pointing out that adding volition to reason does not solve the is-ought problem. But the intellect's practical function presupposes the existence of the will's orientation to make decisions. The practical function of the intellect presupposes this orientation as that which gives that practical function its reason for being and its nature, since the intellect's practical function is just the intellect providing direction for the will's decisions.

But how does this answer the question about what the practical knowledge of the obligation to love God adds to the speculative knowledge of what God is? When practical reason asks "Should we love God above all?", practical reason is, <u>in effect</u>, asking whether loving God above all fulfills the finality of the rational appetite, or equivalently, whether loving God above all fulfills our finality as makers of decisions. But practical reason is not literally asking that question, for the question is speculative. The question asks for the relation between what speculative reason knows of God and of the will. And since the question is speculative, its answer does not explain how the "should" comes into our practical knowledge that God should be loved above all. The answer to that speculative question explains why "God should be loved above all" is a <u>truth</u>, but explaining why a statement is true does not explain how it is <u>known</u>, either speculatively or practically. (Conversely, however, the fact that the truth of an item of practical knowledge can be explained speculatively does not render practical knowledge speculative. As said above, speculative reason has the job both of defending and explaining the truth of propositions known to practical reason and of explaining practical reason's knowledge of those truths, without practical reason's mode of knowing being that of deduction from speculatively known truths.)

But in recognizing that God should be loved above all, practical reason is recognizing that the decision to love God fulfills the finality of the will. That recognition does not take place by practical reason's conidering the truth of "The end if the will is such and such," but by practical reason's considering the truth of "God is the infinitely perfect being." To say that the latter truth is considered practically is to say that it is considered by reason undertaking the task of directing the decisions of the will to the end of the will. But the will's relation to its end does not enter practical reason as a truth to be objectified; it enters as the extraobjective state of affairs existing prior to practical reasoning that makes practical reasoning necessary. The will's finality is presupposed by practical reason, where "presupposed" does not refer to a logical premise but to the existential state of affairs that causes there to be such a thing as reason functioning practically.

What this mode of presupposition means is that, when practical reason asks if we should to love God above all, it would be irrelevant for practical reason to also ask "Should from what point of view; by the standard of what finality?" If the point of view, the finality, determining what "should" means were not that of the rational appetite, reason would not be asking this question practically. It would be asking the question speculatively, as it might ask whether exposure to air helps fulfill a fish's goal of self-preservation. The act of asking practically whether we should love God above all is the act of asking that question in order to direct the will to its end. That is what it is to ask that question practically instead of speculatively. If it were necessary for practical reason to add "Should by the standard of the will's finality," there is no such thing as practical, as opposed to speculative, knowledge of the obligation to love God above all.

To put it another way. When practical reason asks, "Should I love God above all?", it would be irrelevant to also ask "Should from whose point of view; by the standard of whose finality?" The person whose finality provides the standard by which the question is to be answered is presupposed in the asking of the question. "Should I love God?" amounts to "Does loving God fulfill my finality?" But insofar as I am a decision maker, my finality is the finality of the rational appetite. Therefore, the finality of the rational appetite is presupposed in the asking of the question just as necessarily as my finality is presupposed.

How then does the fulfillment of the will's finality by loving God above all become known practically? As a result of knowing (speculatively) that God is the infinite being, we know (practically) that God should be loved above all, because the will's finality enters practical knowledge but as a conscious orientation, a conscious inclination, the conscious inclination without which we would not be thinking practically. The will's finality enters practical knowledge, not as that which is objectified directly, but as the means by which God's infinite being is objectified as a good to be loved. To ask how we become practically aware that God should be loved above all is to ask how we become practically aware of God's being as completely fulfilling the will's finality. We become practically aware that God's infinite being fulfills the will's finality by means of the existence of a conscious inclination to value being as known by reason's (peculative) knowledge, a conscious inclination provoked by the existence of speculative knowledge of what exists. For things are revealed as "good" by being revealed as ends to which desires are directed. And it is as goods that things are objects of practical knowledge.

Without our awareness of inclinations and desires, we would not have our awareness of things as good, since things become denominated good by their conformity to appetite, and we become aware of appetites through their acts. To be aware of something as a good is to be aware of it as that to which a desire is directed and, therefore, as conforming to the appetite producing the desire. Thus, our awareness of being as conforming to appetite comes from the existence of conscious inclinations. From this initial awareness of being as conforming to appetite, we derive our concepts of "good", "end", "fulfillment of finality", etc. Using those concepts we can achieve both speculative and practical knowledge about good (and evil). But our practical knowledge does not derive from our speculative knowledge of good. Our practical knowledge of good is practical because it derives directly from our awareness of good by means of the conscious inclinations that precede our concept of good.

Practical knowledge employs the concept of good and cognate concepts. But it either gets those concepts directly from our awareness of the inclinations without which we could not have those concepts, or it gets them from our speculative use of those concepts. If the latter, practical knowledge is not practical.

What then does practical knowledge add to the speculative knowledge of God's infinite being? It adds the awareness of God's infinite being as satisfying the finality of the will, which awareness practical reason has through the existence of conscious inclinations elicited from the will by reason's speculative awareness. Practical reason does not make the will's conscious inclinations an object of reflexive awareness. Practical reason is concerned with the terms of the will's relations of desire, concerned with that to which desire is directed. Practical reason is concerned with what that which is desired is, since it is desired for being what it is.

However, is not practical reason concerned with what is desired only as what is desired, since it is only as term of a relation of desire that what exists becomes denominated a good? Yes, but a conscious desire makes us aware of what something is as good, and so makes practical reason concerned with what is is that is revealed as good. The alternative is the dilemma of Section 2.3: the cognized object that provokes desire would be the satisfaction of desire, and what practical reason would objectify as that which satisfies desire would be the satisfaction of desire. Practical reason becomes aware of something as good, not by reflecting on the existence of the desire, but simply by the desire's existence being a conscious existence that does not require reflection to make it conscious. Reflection occurs after the existence of the desire and, therefore, after the existence of that which makes us conscious of what something is as good. When we reflect on the existence of desire, we are already aware of something as a good, because that i what a conscious desire does, namely, make us aware of that which is desired as a good.

A comparison will help. When we exercise our faculty of sight, we are not just aware of the object seen. When we see an object, we cannot not be aware of ourselves as seers of the object. But it is not by means of an act of reflection distinct from the act of sight that we are aware of ourselves as seers of the object. We are made aware of ourselves as seers by the act of sight itself, since sight is a conscious act. Likewise, we cannot not be aware of ourselves as beings oriented to deciding according to reason's knowledge of what is simply by the existence of conscious inclinations provoked in the will by reason's grasp of being. Just as we are conscious of the act of sight through the act of sight itself, we are conscious of the will's inclinations through the inclinations themselves, since they are conscious acts. And just as the act of sight is directed to the object seen, not to the subject seeing, practical reason is directed to that which is recognized as good, not to the inclination by which it is recognized as good.

Do the conscious inclinations I am speaking of really exist, or are they a philosopher's invention, generated by the dictates of theory rather than reality? The consciousness of the will's orientation to its end is not some special tingle or twitch. It is our awareness of ourselves as oriented to valuing what things are as known by reason, our awareness of ourselves as beings who use what reason knows about things to direct ourselves toward ends. That awareness is a constant part of our nonreflective self-awareness.

When a situation demanding a rationally conscious decision occurs, in order to make the decision, we do not have to first move ourselves into a conscious state of readiness to employ what reason knows in making decisions. If we are sufficiently conscious to make a rational decision, we are already in the conscious state of readiness to do so. That state of readiness is precisely our conscious inclination toward the end of deciding according to what we know, that is, deciding according to what things are.

To further demystify the role of conscious inclinations in practical knowledge, recall that the speculative and the practical intellect are not distinct faculties. They are just different uses of the intellect. The reason that the practical function of the intellect uses neither reflective nor conceptual awareness of the will's orientation to its end is just that this is what distinguishes the practical use of the intellect from the speculative.

The concept of good has a primacy in practical knowledge analogous to the primacy the concept of being has in speculative knowledge. In stating that the source of the concept of good is awareness of conscious inclinations, I am a answering a question about the concept of good similar to the question we answer about the concept of being, when we say that the concept of being derives from judgment. Since judgment involves an implicit reflection on the intellect's own act, that reflection is one of the things required for forming the concept of being. Although that reflection precedes our concept of being, as well as our concept of judgment, the point is not that no concepts are involved. In order for there to be an act on which to reflect, a proposition making use of concepts must be formed. Likewise, in order to have the awareness of the will's finality from which the concept of good is formed, we must have and use concepts of things that are good. But what makes practical knowledge practical does not derive from a concept of goodness preexisting our awarenessof the will's finality by means of the will's own conscious inclinations.

Conscious inclinations are the source of the concept of the good and of the practical knowledge of the truth of self-evident practical precepts such as "Equals should be treated equally." To say that the concept of good derives from consciousness of the will's inclinations is to say that it derives from awareness of something as fulfilling the will's finality. Unless reason had presented the will with an object that provokes the will's natural inclination to the object as fulfilling the will's finality, we could not have an awareness that depends on a conscious inclination of the will toward its end. If we could have this awareness without reason's prior presentation of an object, the will's nature would not be that of a rational appetite, an appetite oriented to valuing things as known by reason. Therefore, the concept of good arises from the prepropositional awareness of something as terminating a relation of finality, the awareness brought to propositional expression in formulas like "Treating equals equally is to be done."

The practical knowledge of the precepts directing the decisions of the will to the achievement of its finality is not deduced from speculative knowledge. In particular, it is not deduced from speculative knowledge of the will's inclinations. What practical knowledge adds to the speculative knowledge that, for instance, an infinitely perfect being exists, is an awareness of that existence as terminating the will's inclination toward its end. Practical knowledge adds an awareness that this existence

constitutes a good for the will, is something to be valued by the will, because the will's orientation to ends is what it is. The concept of good involved in this practical knowledge derives from our awareness of the will's inclinations to ends. If practical reason does not get its knowledge of good directly from the will's conscious inclinations, it must get it from some other use of the concept of good that comes from these inclinations. And the only other use is the speculative use. Or, if the concept of good had it source in the speculative analysis of the will, the practical knowledge of God's existence as a good for the will, as something to be valued by the will, would be derived from speculative knowledge. On either analysis, practical knowledge would not be practical.

In directing the will to decisions, the practical function of reason makes use of our speculative knowledge of what things are. For there is nothing else for it to make use of but the will's orientation to value what the things known by speculative reason are. And as just argued, the will's orientation enters practical knowledge, but not as something known speculatively. However, what things other than the will are enters practical reason from speculative knowledge, since speculative knowledge provides the will with the terms of its relations of desire. Thus, practical reason decides that God should be loved above all on the basis of what is known speculatively about God, not what is known speculatively about the will. When practical reason asks whether God deserves our highest evaluation, it is asking whether what He is deserves our highest evaluation. Practical reason tells the will that God deserves all the will's love because of what God is.

The truth of principles like "The infinite being should be loved above all" or "Equals should be treated equally" is self-evident to practical knowledge. If they are not true, then what fulfills the will's finality is not to be done and what frustrates its finality not to be avoided. In moving from self-evident practically known principles to practical conclusions, practical reason again makes use of speculative knowledge of what things are; there is nothing else for it to make use of. But now speculative knowledge is viewed in the light of practical principles. That is what makes the reasoning practical. (See, for example, the use of speculative knowledge in the practical reasonings of Section 4.4.1.)

As I have already said, the role of conscious inclinations in our initial knowledge of the principles of practical reason in no way implies that these principles cannot be rationally explained and verified. There is a form of "intuitionism" in our discovery of these truths. (How else are any truths discovered, if not by some form of intuition?) But the process of discovery is one thing; the processes of verifying that something is true and explaining why it is true, as well as the process of explaining our knowledge of its truth, are other things. And the intuition in question is not the discovery of some property unknown to reason, but the discovery that the properties known by reason satisfy the inclinations of the rational appetite and, therefore, determine the success or failure of acts of the rational appetite as measured by their own intrinsic finality.

Now I must make a crucial qualification. Inclinations produced by the rational appetite are not the only inclinations we possess. In fact, many of our most important inclinations toward ends exist prior to the inclinations produced by the will: the inclinations to self-preservation, to the propogation of the species, to socialize, to have physical comfort and pleasure, and so on. It is from awareness of such inclinations that we first

derive our concept of good and its cognate concepts, for use by both speculative and practical knowledge. Likewise, ethical reasoning is not the only kind of practical reasoning; there is also art, in the broadest sense of that term.

But I have been talking about ethical goodness specifically. The concept of ethical goodness derives from conscious inclinations produced by the will toward the end of valuing things as known by reason. Up to some point in a child's development, the meanings of "good, "should," and other evaluative terms describe ends that are not freely chosen or means to such ends. But once consciousness develops to the point where practical reason can direct the free choice of ends, these terms cannot avoid acquiring their ethical meanings. We do not always use them with those meanings; practical reason still functions technically. But the conclusion of a technical deliberation requires a free choice in order to be put into practice. In older children and adults, therefore, the meanings of evaluative terms that practical reason is primarily concerned with are ethical meanings, since the ethical meanings directly govern decisions. Not all decisions involve the technical meanings; but all decisions involve the ethical meanings, the meanings that derive from the conscious inclinations of the will.

However, the existence of other inclinations to ends brings me to a possible line of agreement between my analysis of obligation and the very original and enlightening ethical work done by Grisez, Finnis, and their school.

3. Where These Ideas Might Lead

The rational appetite is always directing us toward the ends of other inclinations and faculties. Again, this is consistent with Aquinas, although it may not be obviously so. To see the agreement with Aquinas, consider the fact that even the ultimate end sought by the will, the beatific vision, is not its own act but the act of another faculty, the intellect. The will's final act, at which all its other acts are directed, is an act of love provoked by the intellect's attainment of its end. That end is attained in the intellectual experience of God, and the will's love is directed toward the object attained in that intellectual experience.

Because it is the rational appetite's nature, as a human faculty, to direct us toward the ends of other inclinations and faculties, and since the Grisez/Finnis theory of ethics is based on the fulfillment of natural inclinations toward goods, inclinations preceding free choice, perhaps there is room for our theories and mine to accommodate each other, at least to some degree. In particular, perhaps it can be argued that an act of the will is intrinsically defective, defective by the standard of the will's own nature, if the act does not direct us toward the goods that are ends for those other inclinations, since it is the will's nature to direct us toward those goods.

Because the purpose of this book is to open a new mode of ethical inquiry, I do not want to discourage the line of thought just mentioned. In fact, I believe it deserves to be pursued. There may be a way to show that the connection between the finality of other inclinations and the finality of the will is such that failure to direct us toward the finality of other inclinations constitutes a failure as measured by the will's own finality. But without discouraging this line of inquiry, I want to mention some difficulties it must overcome.

The difficulties concern the way Grisez, Finnis, and others connect other goods with ethical obligation. First, it does not seem to me that we make ethical judgments by consulting principles of the kind they offer as practical precepts. The principles we consult to make ethical judgments are not like "Knowledge is a good to be pursued" or "Respect the good of knowledge, life, religion, etc. in every act." The principles we consult are like "Equals should be treated equally," "The common good should be preferred to the individual good," "Free beings should not be used for my ends in ways that deprive them of the opportunity to achieve their ends."

The point is not that principles like "Knowledge is a good to be pursued" are not self-evident and practical. They can be both since we have inclinations other than the will's inclinations that can reveal things to practical reason as human ends. But the question is whether these other human ends determine ethical obligation, that is, goodness and evil with respect to the end of our decision making ability itself. Aquinas, for example, may have meant that these other inclinations determine the scope of the will's activity without determining which decisions aimed at fulfilling these inclinations are ethically good and which are ethically bad. (*Refer Langan.)

Of course, Grisez and Finnis might want to reply that the principles they cite are the foundations of principles like those I have just cited, and the reason we don't cite their principles is that we rarely push back to foundations when deliberating practically. In other words, the basis of the truth of precepts that immediately and proximately direct the will is expressed through these other precepts. And the proximate precepts could still be self-evidently known, since the fact that their truth is founded on more remote principles does not imply that our knowledge of their truth is derived from knowledge of the more remote. For example, in the Grisez/Finnis theory, the basis of the obligation to be fair seems to be that other humans can participate in the basic goods just as we can. Therefore, in not respecting the rights of others, we are not respecting the basic goods, since other people are like us in being capacities for participation in these goods. In failing to be fair, I would be failing to fulfill my nature's orientations to participate in the basic goods.

But the obligation to be fair must either be derivative from other goods that are more basic or itself be one of the basic goods. If it is one of the basic goods, the other goods do not determine the obligation to be fair. The reason I am failing to fulfill my nature's orientations is that fairness is one of the goods to which I am oriented. But then the reason why I am so oriented itself needs to be explained, and reference to other basic goods will not help explain it.

However, Grisez seems to hold that the obligation to be fair is derivative from the obligations imposed by more basic goods (*refer Grisez and Boyle). It is important to understand what a paradoxical position this is and how the rational appetite analysis of obligation dissolves the paradox. The most obvious example of ethical obligation, quoad nos, is the obligation to be fair to other human beings. For many, that is the whole of obligation: if it does not hurt someone else, it is all right. Believers in other obligations are always on the defensive when they speak for those obligations. To make the most obvious form of obligation derivative from others is to make the more obvious derivative from the less obvious.

More importantly, making the obligation to be fair derivative seems to take away the meaning of that obligation. The other person is owed fairness from me because what she is is owed a certain place in my values, not because some other good is owed a place in my values. If unfairness is evil because directed against some aspect of my flourishing other than the aspect of valuing other persons for what they are, then the evil of unfairness does not consist directly in the failure to give other persons what they are due by being what they are.

On the other hand, the rational appetite analysis makes fairness a relation to what other persons are at the same time and in the same way that it is a relation to our own ends. The rational appetite's end is to give things the value of being directed to ends they set for themselves or to ends we set for them, according to what reason knows about whether things are directed to ends they set for themselves. Thus, the rational appetite analysis makes the obligation to be fair a matter of human flourishing and a relation to what other persons are for the same reason: our end as rational deciders is to value things according to what they are.

It is less clear in Finnis whether the obligation to be fair is derived from other obligations. He may be interpreted as holding that our nature's orientations to participate in basic human goods require us to respect any other participants in these goods. Participation in these goods is the moral ultimate, and I am not the only being which can participate in these goods. Still, this interpretation does not direct obligation immediately at persons and the value of persons. The reason unfairness prevents me from fulfilling the orientations of my nature is that it prevents me from participating in goods other than the good itself of valuing other persons for what they are. No matter that the inference to the value of persons requires only one or two steps, the value that persons have for us because of what they are is not direct; t depends on the relation of persons to goals that can only be described, in contrast to persons themselves, as somewhat abstract. The good of knowledge, the good of religion, the good of play, etc. do not have to be looked on as abstract. But when they are made the basis from which the value of other persons is derived, the value of the more concrete is being derived from the less concrete.

The response may be that, on any analysis, the value of any finite person, myself or another, is derived from the ends the person can achieve. What makes the nature of a person more valuable than the nature of a subrational being is what a person's nature enables her to do. For example, the obligation to treat others as setters of their own ends is based on the fact that they can set their own ends. Yes, but that fact imposes an obligation on me because of my rational appetite's orientation to value things according to reason's knowledge of what things are with respect to the rational valuing of things, not because of the rational appetite's orientation to toward any other end. Or, if I am valuing the finite being because I know her relation to the infinite being, I am valuing one concrete entity because of her relation to another concrete entity. Another way to put it is that the reason I am wrong if I treat another unfairly is not that I am failing to fulfill my own inclinations, unless it is the inclination to evaluate her according to what she is, the rational appetite's inclination.

Another difficulty. For Grisez and Finnis, our orientation towards the basic goods does not obligate us to be seeking them in every act, since that is an impossibility; but that orientation does minimally obligate us never to will an act directed against any of the basic goods. For example, the procreation and education of children is a good to which we are oriented by nature. Choosing to prevent contraception when I engage in sex is choosing a positive act directed against this good. Hence, artificial contraception is not a moral possibility. However, choosing to refrain from sex when I could otherwise engage in it is not choosing an act directed against life; it is refraining from an act directed toward life. And I am not obligated to seek every basic good in every act. Pursuing the course of action that would result in the greatest number of children that I could expect to adequately rear would prevent me from pursuing other human goods. Hence refraining from the marital act when I could otherwise engage in it is at least an ethical possibility.

But moral goodness and evil reside in the act of the will (or the refraining from making an act of the will) which directs us to perform or to refrain from performing other acts. Moral goodness and evil do not reside in the acts directed by the will except insofar as they are so directed. There is clearly an important sense in which the will of the temporary refrainer from sex is not directed against the good of procreation as the will of the user of contraceptives is. For whoever chooses to use contraceptives also has the option of refraining from sex. But what about the will of the person who chooses to be celibate? Here it is not a matter of the impossibility of pursuing every good in every act but of choosing never to pursue a particular human good. Why is that decision, as an act of will, less directed against that good than is the decision to employ contraceptives? Again, the issue I am raising is the need to establish a connection between ends ther than those of the will itself and the finality of the will, so that a failure with respect to other ends can render the act of the will defective by its own standards. Can it be ethical for our will to choose against some basic good as long as no external acts chosen by the will are opposed to that good? Then what is the connection between the ends of external acts and the will's finality?

The rational appetite analysis avoids this problem. Neither the temporary nor the permanent celibate evaluates herself as a sexual being to be other than she is. The righteousness of her decision does not depend on some good other than the good of valuing things, as ends or means, according to what they are.

A final difficulty. If there is such a thing as a self-evident practical precept it is the following: when the pursuit of the good of play would interfere with the pursuit of the good of religion, prefer the good of religion. This example illustrates two points. First, by its nature an ethical decision is hierarchical. When we decide, we cannot avoid giving something a higher place in our values than something else; for the reason we have to make decisions is that existentially incompatible values confront us. Therefore, the job of ethics is to tell us what concrete instances of value to prefer to others. Perhaps Grisez and Finnis can account for the <u>truth</u> expressed by the cited precept consistently with their nonhierarchical analysis of value at the level, not of specific choices, but of prevolitional orientations to basic goods. But, and this is the second point, can they account for our <u>knowledge</u> of this precept? Its self-evidence as a practical

principle depends on our speculative knowledge of human nature and of the realities to which we are related by human nature. Because the intellect and will are what they are, that is, have the finalities our nature gives them, and because God is what He is, religion is more essential to the fulfillment of our finalities as rational decision makers than is play. In other words, for an ethics to provide a knowledge of the hierarchy of values, in the sense in which an ethical decision requires a hierarchy of values, ethics must rely on our speculative knowledge of human nature to determine what is and is not more important to us as pursuers of goals.

Because of difficulties like these, it might be said that Grisez and Finnis have added to the problem of deriving "ought" from "goods" to that of deriving "ought" from "is." No matter how enlightening their analyses of basic human goods are, you are left wondering about the connection with obligation as you prephilosophically understand it. And if they are allowed to reply that obligation must be so explained because there is nothing else by which to explain it, why cannot the the same claim be made for deriving ought from being? The lacuna in both accounts, as hitherto presented, is the nature of the rational appetite and its own orientation toward the good. An analysis of the will's own finality is what has been missing from Realist accounts of ethics. This work is meant to begin to make up for that omission.

And despite my criticisms, there is something intuitively correct about the view that other natural orientations to ends can impose obligations on the will, since the will's finality as a human faculty includes the job of directing us to the fulfillment of other orientations to ends.

One of the motivations behind the basic goods analysis of obligation is to avoid consequentialism or proportionalism, the view that the ethical value of any act is to be judged by the proportions of good and evil in the consequences of the act. The basic goods analysis isan attempt to show that some acts are intrinsically good or evil regardless of their consequences. Hopefully, it is clear that the rational appetite analysis also shows this. For example, a decision for artificial contraception, drunkenness, and suicide would be intrinsically defective regardless of its consequences in a particular situation. In other words, the definitions of some terms, like "suicide" or "murder," or "artificial contraception," happen to include conditions sufficient to render the choice of any act so defined defective by the standard of the will's finality. As defined, the acts are always opposed to the will's finality. No matter what good effects such acts may have in addition to the effects by which they are defined, the conscious choice of those acts would evaluate things as if they were other than they are. For example, the choice of murder or suicide always require evaluating an end-in-itself as if it were not an end-in-itself, and the choice of artificial contraception always requires making the value of a means to an end-in-itself to be something less than an being a means to an end-in-itself.

The definitions of other terms, like "knowingly telling a falsehood," happen to include conditions sufficient to render the choice intrinsically defective unless other conditions occur that involve something the will should value more highly than the communication of the truth in question, given that human nature is what it is. For example, it would be wrong to send a person to an unjust death rather than tell a lie. Communicating truth is a good by the standard of the rational appetite, but not an end-in-itself. Only persons are ends-in-themselves; all other goods are relative to the goals, especially the prevolitional goals, of ends in themselves. The possession of most truths is such a relative good, as is freedom from pain. (If the same cannot be said for truths like "God exists" or "Human life is immortal," the reason is that values for persons other than the value of truth alone are at stake.) Since truth is a relative human good, "lying" is defined by an effect that is an evil. And lying, considered just as such, is an evil act, as is inflicting pain. But since lying is a relative evil, other effects that are more important for ends-in-themselves can render telling certain lies the ethical thing to do, just as the correct ethical decision can require us to inflict pain.

The definitions of still other terms, like "playing loud music at 4 a.m." do not include conditions sufficient to render the choice of the act so defined either successful or defective by the standard of the will's finality. Human nature's orientations to ends does not make loud music at 4 a.m., considered just as such, either a relative good or a relative evil. Effects other than those by which "playing loud music at 4 a.m." is defined must be examined to decide whether the decision to play music then would be good or evil (see Section 4.4.1).

The conditions that render suicide always wrong and lying wrong in default of more important values do not depend on custom. Custom might determine that a particular lie would be justified in one culture though not in others, due to the relative unimportance of that lie and the relative importance of some other value in the culture. But as defined, telling a falsehood always needs a justification. On the other hand, it is possible that the customs of all human societies render playing loud music at 4 a.m. ethically evil, in default of more important values. But it is not necessary that that all societies have customs rendering loud music at 4 a.m. evil; human nature does not demand such customs.

Do not confuse an "intrinsic" like suicide, a "relative," evil like lying, or a "neutral" act like playing loud music at 4 a.m. with the evil in the decision to perform such acts. In normal circumstances, the conscious decision to play loud music at 4 a.m. is intrinsically evil as an act of will, even if the effects which make it evil are not included in the definition of "playing loud music at 4 a.m." And finally, there are greater and lesser degrees of intrinsic evil in acts of the will, just as there are greater and lesser degrees of the values to which those acts are opposed. Reason knows, if it knows anything, that ill-timed music does not interfere with another person's pursuit of goals as much murder does.