

Spring 2015

A Constructive Account of Children's Moral Agency Drawing on Thomas Aquinas's Theory of Emotions

Ann Vinski

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Vinski, A. (2015). A Constructive Account of Children's Moral Agency Drawing on Thomas Aquinas's Theory of Emotions (Master's thesis, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/1314>

This Immediate Access is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact phillipsg@duq.edu.

A CONSTRUCTIVE ACCOUNT OF CHILDREN'S MORAL AGENCY
DRAWING ON THOMAS AQUINAS'S THEORY OF EMOTIONS

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Ann Crawford Vinski

May 2015

Copyright by
Ann Crawford Vinski

2015

A CONSTRUCTIVE ACCOUNT OF CHILDREN'S MORAL AGENCY
DRAWING ON THOMAS AQUINAS'S THEORY OF EMOTIONS

By

Ann Crawford Vinski

Approved February 23, 2015

Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Theology
Dissertation Director

James Bailey, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Theology
Committee Member

Darlene Fozard Weaver, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Theology
Committee Member

Maureen R. O'Brien, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Theology
Chair, Department of Theology

James Swindal, Ph.D.
Dean, McAnulty College and
Graduate School of Liberal Arts

ABSTRACT

A CONSTRUCTIVE ACCOUNT OF CHILDREN'S MORAL AGENCY DRAWING ON THOMAS AQUINAS'S THEORY OF EMOTIONS

By

Ann Crawford Vinski

May 2015

Dissertation supervised by Elizabeth Agnew Cochran, Ph.D.

This dissertation makes the case that children are moral agents engaged with the morality of their communities without being morally accountable as adults.

Contemporary Christian theological anthropology holds that children are fully human and in the image of God, and that they are already encountering good and evil in the world.

Childhood is viewed as an essential part of human life and as something that perdures throughout a person's existence. Through their emotions, children are able to engage with, make meaning of, and respond to their surroundings, and these early emotional experiences help to shape each person for the whole of that person's life.

Philosophical and theological theories of emotion that include a cognitive component help make the case for emotions' part in moral development and moral

agency. After examining some of these theories, the dissertation turns to Thomas Aquinas's theory of emotions for a robust description that integrates—while maintaining the distinction between—thought and passion in the complex, multilayered experience that we call emotion. Aquinas views reason and emotion as mutually informative and as having a cumulative effect on one another. Early passional experiences are the building blocks of what will become virtuous emotions, and emotion is necessary for an action to be truly virtuous, according to Aquinas. Aquinas's model allows us to attribute moral agency to children because children have emotions through which they engage the world and that partially motivate their actions. At the same time, because their rational powers are inchoate, their accountability is limited.

DEDICATION

For Jim,
and for J, C, K, and L,
with love and gratitude

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people contributed to the completion of this project. I would like to thank my director, Dr. Elizabeth Cochran, for her support, wisdom, and guidance throughout the process. My thanks to the Duquesne Theology department for its financial support, and for the encouragement of its faculty throughout my years in the program. Duquesne's Center for Women's and Gender Studies provided a graduate assistantship for three years of my graduate work; I am grateful in particular to Dr. Laura Engel and Dr. Elaine Parsons, who directed the Center during this time.

I thank my classmates in the doctoral program for their companionship during this journey. My thanks also to Jennifer Crawford and Carol Crawford for their proofreading assistance.

My deepest gratitude to my husband, Jim, who has been my constant cheerleader, and to our children, for their love and support.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	iv
DEDICATION	vi
ACKNOWLEDGMENT	vii
INTRODUCTION	xi
<i>Problematic Historical Views of Children</i>	xiii
<i>Aquinas’s Thoughts on Children as Constructive Resources</i>	xxii
CHAPTER ONE: THEOLOGY OF CHILDREN AND CHILDREN’S MORAL	
AGENCY	1
<i>The Child in Relationship with God</i>	3
<i>The Child in Relationship with Other People</i>	15
<i>The Child as Moral Agent</i>	25
<i>Moral Agency of Children with Respect to God</i>	27
<i>Moral Agency of Children in Response to their Environments</i>	35
<i>Moral Motivation</i>	47
CHAPTER TWO: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN CHILDREN’S MORAL	
DEVELOPMENT—CONTEMPORARY VIEWS	60
<i>What Is an Emotion?</i>	64
<i>Philosophical Contributions</i>	64
<i>Theological Contributions</i>	96
<i>Emotions and Moral Development</i>	109

<i>Philosophical Accounts</i>	109
<i>Theological Accounts</i>	119
CHAPTER THREE: AQUINAS ON THE EMOTIONS	131
<i>The Human Soul</i>	132
<i>Intellectual Apprehension</i>	137
<i>Intellectual Appetite</i>	139
<i>Sensitive Apprehension</i>	142
<i>Sensitive Appetite</i>	146
<i>The Passions</i>	147
<i>Sense Appetite Works in Conjunction with Sense Apprehension</i>	158
<i>Sense Appetite Works in Conjunction with the Intellectual Powers</i> .	162
<i>Aquinas on the Emotions</i>	167
<i>The Rule of Reason and the Passions</i>	168
<i>Human Emotions</i>	178
<i>Conclusion</i>	192
CHAPTER FOUR: CHILDREN’S MORAL AGENCY	194
<i>Morality of the Emotions in Aquinas’s Thought</i>	196
<i>Connaturality</i>	207
<i>Acquired Virtue</i>	209
<i>Habits</i>	210
<i>Emotions and Virtue</i>	217
<i>Choosing Emotions</i>	226
<i>Children’s Moral Agency</i>	232

<i>Desire and Dependency</i>	233
<i>Interaction, Action, and Moral Agency</i>	243
CONCLUSION.....	254
BIBLIOGRAPHY	260

INTRODUCTION

Although theological interest in children has seen a resurgence in the last few decades,¹ children's moral agency has remained largely on the margins in moral theology.² Much contemporary theological anthropology affirms the full humanity and

¹ Marcia Bunge, "The Child, Religion, and the Academy: Developing Robust Theological and Religious Understandings of Children and Childhood," *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (2006): 555-559. DeVries claims the resurgence is more recent, beginning with *Theology Today* 56 no. 4 (2000) and Marcia Bunge's (ed.) *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001) (Dawn DeVries, "Toward a Theology of Childhood," *Interpretation* 55, no. 2 [2001]: 162 n. 5). Thatcher argues that children are still neglected in all areas of theology (Adrian Thatcher, "Theology and Children: Towards a Theology of Childhood," *Transformation* 23, no. 4 [2006]: 194). Whitmore argues that the Catholic Church lacks an official teaching regarding children, and his article is an attempt to "redress the lacuna in official church documents" by offering "an alternative account of children based on themes drawn from Catholic social teaching" (Todd Whitmore [with Tobias L. Winright], "Children: An Undeveloped Theme in Catholic Teaching," in *The Challenge of Global Stewardship: Roman Catholic Responses*, ed. Maura Anne Ryan and Todd Whitmore [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997], 161-163). Wall divides theological scholarship on children into two "waves." The first wave made the case for the full humanity and agency of children in contrast to the then-common view of children as "adults-in-the-making." The second wave, which began in the late 1990s, sought "to include children as research and societal participants" (John Wall, "Imagining Childism: How Childhood Should Transform Religious Ethics," in *Children, Adults, and Shared Responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012], 137-138). Herzog contends that children have been absent from work in systematic theology, church history, and biblical theology (Kristin Herzog, *Children and Our Global Future: Theological and Social Challenges* [Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005], 1).

² See Wall, "Imagining Childism," 135; and Kate M. Ott, "Searching for an Ethic: Sexuality, Children, and Moral Agency," in *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views*, ed. Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu (Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010), 160. When considering children as a group separately from adults, it is

moral agency of children, but in moral theology, children are often seen as the objects of moral action rather than as fully human moral actors. One reason for this is that moral accountability is frequently closely associated with moral agency, and so children, who are not held accountable as adults, are also not considered to be moral agents. Moral accountability rests in part upon a level of rationality that allows a person to understand and control her actions. Children's inchoate rational powers preclude their being able to take the same level of responsibility for their actions that adults must. While I agree that children should not be held accountable as adults, I distinguish agency from accountability, and I critique the contemporary focus on rationality as central to moral agency.

In this dissertation, I define moral agency as a person's ability to engage as a moral actor within her environment, which includes her relationships with other people, the good and evil she encounters in the world, as well as the moral codes that are part of her context. This will often involve acting intentionally and having a level of ownership of those actions. I take both the moral engagement and the actions to be morally formative of that person. This agency is distinct from accountability for one's actions. Thus, while I argue that children have moral agency, I do not contend that they should be accountable to the same degree that adults are.

I suggest that turning to the emotional dimension of moral motivation and virtue can serve as a corrective that allows us to acknowledge children's agency even while their reason is developing and their experiences are still forming them. To do this, I draw

important to bear in mind that doing so risks "mask[ing] some communalities in how specific groups of children and their parents are marginalized" (Michel Vandebroek and Maria Bouverne-de Bie, "Children's Agency and Educational Norms: A Tensed Negotiation," *Childhood* 13 [2006]: 140).

on Thomas Aquinas's theory of emotions, which differentiates between reason and emotion, but at the same time maintains the cognitive penetrability of emotion. I argue that while reason and emotion are both involved in accountability and agency, accountability requires a level of reason and experience that children have not yet acquired, but at the same time, their emotions allow them to participate in the moral community as agents.

Problematic Historical Views of Children

Historically, there has been a tendency among some theologians to view children as either innately depraved or innately innocent.³ Neither characterization adequately accounts for the moral development of children as agents who are fully human, engaged with the good and the evil that they encounter in relationships and in their environments. When children are viewed as inherently depraved, the implication is that there is something fundamentally wrong with them when they enter the world. Children, on this view, have nothing to offer and require external discipline to overcome their evil tendencies. Some of those who have regarded children as innately sinful have made the theological move of attributing to them a need for grace due to this sinfulness.⁴ There is an ambiguity in understanding children both as created to be recipients of grace and created as innately sinful.⁵ To claim that children are fundamentally sinful implies that

³ John Wall characterizes these as the “top-down story” (children are innately depraved) and the “bottom-up story” (children are inherently innocent) (John Wall, *Ethics in Light of Childhood* [Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010], 15-18, 20-23).

⁴ Jensen names Proverbs, Augustine, Chrysostom, and Luther, noting that all of them see children as somehow sinful or touched by sin and requiring grace (David Hadley Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability: A Theology of Childhood* [Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2005], 6).

⁵ Jensen identifies this ambiguity (Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 4-6).

they are created such that they are essentially inclined away from God. At the same time, to claim that children require grace implies that they are open and receptive to God's presence and activity, which inherent sinfulness would seem to make difficult if not preclude.

In addition, when innate depravity is ascribed to children, they are seen as needing to become obedient both to their earthly parents and to God in order to overcome their proclivity to evil. Learning to obey their earthly parents is supposed to help them learn to obey God. I see a severely restricted understanding of agency being granted to children when their goal as children is to learn obedience.⁶ If they are only agents of another person's will for them through obedience, they do not learn to develop the ability to make moral decisions, or to develop their own understanding of their moral context and take responsibility for their own actions.⁷ Obedience can be one aspect of children's

⁶ Alasdair MacIntyre develops a similar position in his critique of the Stoic view that virtue consists in following universal laws. He argues that for the Stoics, adherence to the cosmic law becomes the good, and there is no *telos* beyond it. The cosmic law is singular and universal, and everyone must follow it. This disallows taking individual political situations, circumstances, and interests into account in making moral decisions (Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984], 169-170). MacIntyre's view is that, "knowing how to act virtuously always involves more than rule-following" (93).

⁷ Bunge explores the theme of children's agency through the lens of what she calls the vocation or calling of children. Children are to love and fear God (Marcia Bunge, "Beyond Children as Agents or Victims: Reexamining Children's Paradoxical Strengths and Vulnerabilities with Resources from Christian Theologies of Childhood and Child Theologies," in *The Given Child: The Religions' Contribution to Children's Citizenship*, ed. Trygve Wyller and Usha S. Nayar [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007], 44-45), to whom they owe ultimate loyalty (42-43). Bunge cites biblical sources that call children to honor and obey their parents, and she holds that children's vocation includes obedience to their parents (40-42), except when their parents are leading them into sin (42). They should disobey in these cases because their ultimate loyalty belongs to God. How the child knows when she is being led into sin is left unaddressed. At the same time, Bunge thinks children have the agency to "name and reject injustices" and to disobey anyone, including their parents, who asks them to "cause or perpetuate injustices." Their

moral formation, but I will argue that effective moral development leads to virtue, a moral excellence that shapes an agent's character in a manner that is necessary to her flourishing. This means that children must learn to identify for themselves the morality of situations and then desire to act in accord with the good as they understand it.

Another major historical view that deprives children of moral agency presents them as innocent and inherently good. John Locke thought children were completely impressionable and moldable,⁸ and Jean-Jacques Rousseau contended that children were inherently innocent and required protection from external corruption.⁹ The rise of the middle-class family in the West around the middle of the nineteenth century was the historical framework in which Christian writers began to describe children as inherently good.¹⁰ As children's economic value to society diminished, their emotional value to the

agency also includes serving others (47). Children's vocation means that they should prepare for their futures through their education (45) and be in the present in their play (46-47). Bunge sees this vocation of children as recognizing that their moral agency is already present, but that parents and other adults have a responsibility for teaching the children in their care (47, 48). Her position seems to presume a level of knowledge of what constitutes sin and injustice that is not always present in children's lives, and it offers a vision of children's agency that is based on obedience. Even if the child disobeys her parents in cases where she would be led into sin, Bunge suggests that her reason for doing so should be obedience to God. Bunge's account is beneficial in that it highlights the tensions that exist in children's agency—between obedience and judgment, and between being (children who play) and becoming (preparing for adulthood)—but it is unclear how the child moves from obedience to independent decision-making and eventual accountability.

⁸ Bonnie Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come: Re-Imagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003), 13.

⁹ Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 6; and Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come*, 14.

¹⁰ This model arose in a climate wherein men were considered suited to working in the world and women were to focus their attention on being excellent domestics (Cristina L. H. Traina, "Learning from the Tradition: The Religious Lives of Children," *New Theology Review* [August 2001]: 19).

family increased.¹¹ This corresponded to a shift in child-rearing from an approach that focused on teaching morality through obedience to an emphasis on nurturing children.¹² At the same time, the Western middle-class view of children within the family places the responsibility for their moral formation completely on their parents and denies that children have an active role in their own development.¹³ Thus, concurrently with children coming to be seen as romanticized and innocent, both morally and spiritually, adult concern for children's moral development decreased.¹⁴ On this view, society is the corrupting force in children's lives,¹⁵ and, in order to maintain their original innocence, children require protection from outside forces that might pervert them. But, if children are over-protected, what happens when they do encounter the mystery of evil in the world and in relationships? The same problem posed by ascribing innate sinfulness to children also results from this idealized view of children that excessively shelters them. Namely, they do not develop the abilities needed to engage moral situations and to determine what in their own desires is guiding them towards good and what towards evil.

¹¹ Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come*, 6. Van der Ven presents a description of "the relationships between economic processes and discipline" of children (Johannes A. Van der Ven, *Formation of the Moral Self* [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998], 44-47).

¹² Traina, "Learning from the Tradition," 19.

¹³ Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come*, 14. Traina notes that, according to some thinkers of the time, "children are delivered good but incompletely formed; their eventual character is completely dependent on the quality of nurture they receive from their parents, mainly their mothers" (Traina, "Learning from the Tradition," 19). Further, as Vandebroek and Bouverne-de Bie state, "the construction of the Fragile Child (the child at risk) was closely interconnected with the construction of the Responsible Mother with a dual responsibility: towards her child, as well as towards society" (Vandebroek, "Children's Agency and Educational Norms," 131).

¹⁴ Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come*, 6, 13.

¹⁵ Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 6.

A third problematic perspective of children presents them as adults-in-the-making.¹⁶ Thomas Aquinas held this view and thought that children grew into full personhood as their reason developed.¹⁷ Because Aquinas's thought serves as a constructive resource in this project, it is important to acknowledge that his legacy contains elements that pose difficulties when considered in light of contemporary theological anthropology that addresses children.¹⁸ In the remainder of this section, I will outline some of his troublesome ideas, and in the next section, I will discuss his thoughts that serve as building blocks for a constructive account of children's moral agency.

Three of Aquinas's positions on children are particularly problematic: the dismissal of young children as uneducable; the view of children as incomplete; and the notion that children cannot be in relationship with God. All of these stem from the centrality of reason in Aquinas's thought. According to Aquinas, being able to use reason is what allows people to worship God (ST II-II.10.12) and to be accountable for their

¹⁶ Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 8. Ellen Linder argues that although Christianity and Judaism affirm the dignity of the child, some of these religious communities treat children as not-yet fully human, as "potential subjects or agents." "In religious communities in which this notion of 'not yet' is linked with an ethic of love and concern for the child, this belief is so strong that early religious training of children is referred to as 'formation.' These communities believe that only through a process of formation can the raw material of humanity, a child, be transformed into the culmination of human striving, a mature believer" (Ellen W. Linder, "Children as Theologians," in *Rethinking Childhood*, ed. Peter B. Pufall and Richard P. Unsworth, [New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004], 57-58).

¹⁷ Wall, *Ethics*, 26. Aquinas did not provide a systematic treatment of the subject of children in his writings. Cristina Traina's essay, "A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood," mines the work of Aquinas for his thoughts and beliefs about children and childhood. She notes that Aquinas's references to children are scattered throughout his work and tend to appear when the subject at hand makes the mention of children logical (Cristina L. H. Traina, "A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood," in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001], 132).

¹⁸ I will discuss this theological anthropology in some detail in chapter one.

sins.¹⁹ Aquinas asserts that children under seven years of age are devoid of reason, rendering them unfit to enter any kind of contract, or even to be educated, because young children are unable “to learn from another.”²⁰ Children’s lack of rational powers diminishes their status as full persons in Aquinas’s eyes to the extent that he states: “so long as man has not the use of reason, he differs not from an irrational animal; so that even as an ox or a horse belongs to someone who, according to civil law, can use them when he likes, as his own instrument, so, according to the natural law, a son, before coming to the use of reason, is under his father’s care” (ST II-II.10.12).²¹ From this passage, the education and formation of young children appears to be futile. Contemporary research contradicts this assertion, and current thinking affirms the importance of early childhood in a person’s formation.

¹⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns, Oates, & Washburne, Ltd., 1920, online edition 2008 by Kevin Knight), accessed October 27, 2014, <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>, I-II.89.6, hereafter ST and cited parenthetically in the text. See also Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 9.

²⁰ Aquinas breaks down children’s maturation into three stages, each lasting seven years and determined by their ability to reason: “The age of seven years is fixed reasonably enough by law for the contracting of betrothals, for since a betrothal is a promise of the future...it follows that they are within the competency of those who can make a promise in some way, and this is only for those who can have some foresight of the future, and this requires the use of reason, of which three degrees are to be observed, according to the Philosopher (*Ethic.* I, 4). The first is when a person neither understands by himself nor is able to learn from another; the second stage is when a man can learn from another but is incapable by himself of consideration and understanding; the third degree is when a man is both able to learn from another and to consider by himself.” The first stage is from birth to age 7; the second stage is from age 7 to age 14; and the third is from age 14 to age 21 (ST Suppl. 43.2).

²¹ See also John Wall, “Animals and Innocents: Theological Reflections on the Meaning and Purpose of Child-Rearing,” *Theology Today* 59, no. 4 (2003): 562; and Traina, “A Person in the Making,” 126.

On this view, children are imperfect and incomplete as human beings because they are awaiting the development of their reason.²² Aquinas compares childhood to the imperfect knowledge of the law: “the state of the Old Law, because of the imperfection of knowledge, is as a child, compared to the state of grace and truth which came through Christ. In like manner, the state of the present life, in which we see through a mirror in a dark manner, is as a child, compared to the state of the future life, in which there is perfect knowledge of God.”²³ Later in the same commentary, he writes that Paul calls the Galatians “little children, to indicate the imperfection whereby they had become small.”²⁴ Aquinas says that the imperfection of childhood is separable from the human person, so as the person matures, the imperfect (child) becomes the perfect (“man”) (ST II-II.4.4). John Wall maintains that the development Aquinas advances is “from an animal state of irrationality and disorder toward ever greater capacities to order one’s own existence using ever more specifically *human* reason.”²⁵ Within this framework, the purpose of childrearing is “taking the raw potential of human nature and cultivating it into realized human, social, and theological goods.”²⁶ Thus, the human being begins as something almost less than human, in terms of the child’s lack of reason, and gradually develops the

²² See also Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 9. Art from some historical periods reflected this image of the child as immature or incomplete adult when it depicted children with incorrect proportions (Norma Cook Everist, “Who is the Child? Whose is the Child? A Theology of Children,” in *The Ministry of Children’s Education: Foundations, Contexts, and Practices*, ed. Barbara S. Wilson, Mark Gardner and James Satter [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004], 69).

²³ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, trans. F.R. Larcher, Aquinas Scripture Series, vol. 1 (Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1966), 109.

²⁴ Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians*, 132.

²⁵ Wall, “Animals and Innocents,” 563, emphasis in original.

²⁶ Wall, “Animals and Innocents,” 562.

human capacity of reason, which perfects what is lacking in the original state of irrationality.

Cristina Traina observes that this view of human development as moving from imperfection to perfection implies that maturity is valued more highly than the potential of youth in Aquinas's anthropology, and that childhood is left behind as a person matures.²⁷ Aquinas counts childhood as a necessary stage on the journey towards perfection,²⁸ but he values childhood to the extent that it leads to a more advanced stage, and the goal is the most advanced stage.²⁹ While Aquinas does allow that children can be spiritually mature even before they are physically mature (ST III.72.8), their immaturity and incompleteness make them inappropriate role models for adults.³⁰ He argues that just as a Christian would not revert to living under the Old Law, which is imperfect and comparable to a child,³¹ neither should adults use children as role models. Human life is irreversible, and Aquinas maintains that one "cannot return to infancy from old age."³² As I will show in chapter one, contemporary theology diverges from these positions and holds that children are already fully human, and that even very young children are able to learn from and engage with their surroundings on a moral level.

A third problematic thread from Aquinas's legacy is that he requires parental mediation for children's relationships with God. Aquinas believes that a child before the

²⁷ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 128.

²⁸ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 130.

²⁹ This is what DeVries calls an instrumental view of childhood, meaning that childhood is valued only insofar as it leads to the more advanced stage of adulthood (DeVries, "Toward a Theology of Childhood," 162-164).

³⁰ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 128.

³¹ Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*, 109.

³² Aquinas, *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, trans. James A. Weisheipl and Fabian R. Larcher, Aquinas Scripture Series, vol. 4 (Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1980), 186. See also ST III.66.9.

age of reason, “in the natural order of things, is directed to God by its parents’ reason, under whose care it lies by nature: and it is for them to dispose of the child in all matters relating to God” (ST II-II.10.12 ad 4),³³ even those concerning eternal life (ST II-II.10.12 ad 2; ST III.68.10 ad 1). Children before the age of reason are under parental authority to the degree that Aquinas argues that it is unjust to baptize Jewish children against their parents’ wishes, even though baptism was considered necessary for their salvation. One of Aquinas’s reasons is that children who are baptized but not raised in Christian homes will be more likely to abandon the faith (ST II-II.10.12; ST III.68.10). The other, more striking, justification of this position is that acting contrary to the parental wishes for a child is against nature because the child is part of the parents and is under parental authority before she is able to use reason (ST II-II.10.12). While maintaining parental responsibility for the spiritual nourishment of children is necessary, Aquinas’s position dismisses the possibility that children are able to be in relationship with God or have spiritual awareness. It could also be interpreted as removing from parents any obligation to spiritually instruct or guide their children before the children reach the age of seven.

In addition, Traina critiques Aquinas for not treating children more thoroughly and in more detail in his writing.³⁴ She also observes that his developmentalism carries the grave risk that young children, who are wholly subject to parental authority, will suffer exploitation at the hands of their families if those families do not act in the best interest of the children.³⁵ Wall critiques Aquinas’s view for neglecting the social aspect

³³ See also ST III.68.10 ad 3.

³⁴ Traina, “A Person in the Making,” 132.

³⁵ Traina, “A Person in the Making,” 132-133. For a contemporary example of biblically-based justifications of parental violence against children, see Michael and Debi Pearl, *To Train Up a Child* (No Greater Joy Ministries, Inc., 1994).

of children and child rearing. Aquinas seems to delegate the task of raising children to parents without saying much about what role society should play in their upbringing, in part because Aquinas does not think children are part of the social community before they have the use of reason.³⁶ Child rearing, while not something Aquinas tends to think the community needs to support, does in his estimation contribute to the common good.³⁷ This is certainly a problematic legacy for contemporary theological thought on children. It denies children's full personhood and their relationship with God, not to mention their capacity to function with a level of moral agency, all of which are affirmed by contemporary theology.

Aquinas's Thoughts on Children as Constructive Resources

Despite these concerns, some of Aquinas's ideas can serve as constructive resources for contemporary considerations of theology of children. Specifically, he advocates limited accountability for children; he takes seriously parental obligations; and he maintains a place for children legitimately to disobey their parents, thus alleviating some of the problems that obedience-based accounts of moral formation risk. He encourages more lenience with children than would be accorded adults,³⁸ and this is based in part on his conviction that children's limited rational powers preclude them from

³⁶ Wall, "Animals and Innocents," 564.

³⁷ Wall, "Animals and Innocents," 565. See also Stephen J. Pope, "Sex, Marriage, and Family," in *Human Evolution and Christian Ethics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 310.

³⁸ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 114, 118.

sinning (ST Suppl. 69.6).³⁹ Limited accountability is an important component of children's morality, including, I will argue below, of their developing moral agency.

One result of Aquinas's position that children are exempt from sin because of their lack of reason is that he does not share the view that children are inherently sinful. Traina argues that Aquinas's view is that human beings naturally seek God and the good, but that problems arise when people elevate one good over other goods in an inappropriate way. Thus, when children go astray, it is because this natural tendency to seek the good is distorted by "desiring and pursuing some goods more intensely than [they] should, neglecting others that need [their] attention and ought to have curbed [their] behavior."⁴⁰ As children mature, they develop the ability to recognize the good, which aids in their pursuit of it. Thus, Traina thinks that contemporary views of childrearing can benefit from Aquinas's thought by keeping in mind an understanding of nurturing that is at the same time "affirming, feeding, and encouraging children's dawning recognition of goods and of God," and fostering a development of habits of virtue in children to curb the tendency to elevate one good "too high above others."⁴¹

Aquinas's insistence that parents have serious obligations to their children is another aspect of his thought that is beneficial for contemporary considerations of children. While this dissertation is not focused on parenting, Aquinas's ideas on parental responsibility are instructive in terms of their implication of the value he ascribes to children. He holds that parents owe their children care, sustenance, education, and so on,

³⁹ See also *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, 189, and ST I-II.89. Aquinas reiterates this belief in his discussion of the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, which he does not think should be given to children. His view is that Anointing is given "as a remedy for actual sins, which are not in children" (ST Suppl. 32.4).

⁴⁰ Traina, "Learning from the Tradition," 21.

⁴¹ Traina, "Learning from the Tradition," 21.

in what Traina describes as an unending debt on the part of parents to their children.⁴² Aquinas says that parents love their children more than children love parents⁴³ because parents are to children as principles,⁴⁴ which means that parents love their children because children's existence depends in part on the parents. For this reason, parents owe their children care (ST II-II.26.9), support (II-II.101.2), and education (ST II-II.189.6).⁴⁵ Indeed, education is one of the primary obligations of parents to children,⁴⁶ and Aquinas exhorts fathers in particular to provide it with the good of their children in mind and not "by excessively restricting or subjecting them."⁴⁷ Children take a long time to raise, in

⁴² Children's obligations to their parents are less than parents' towards children. Children owe their parents obedience "(within the limits of the right and good) and the sort of honor, reverence, and service due to principles" (Traina, "A Person in the Making," 125). See also, Berryman, *Children and the Theologians*, 79.

⁴³ Wall, "Animals and Innocents," 563.

⁴⁴ Aquinas writes that "the principles of our being and government are our parents and our country, that have given us birth and nourishment. Consequently, a man is debtor chiefly to his parents and his country, after God" (ST II-II. 101.1). Thus, from the perspective of being indebted to one's parents, who are to the child more Godlike than the child is to the parents, "a man ought to love his father more than his children, because, to wit, he loves his father as his principle, in which respect he is a more exalted good and more like God." However, from the perspective of the one who is loving, Aquinas holds that "a man loves more that which is more closely connected with him, in which way a man's children are more lovable to him than his father" (ST II-II.26.9).

Children owe their parents honor (ST II-II.26.9), but not care, unless the parents have need of it. Thus their obligation is accidental, not essential (as in the case of parents to children) (ST II-II.101.2; ST II-II.189.6 ad 2). Further, in the cases of children who wish to enter religious life, their obligation to their parents takes precedence over their vocation only if there is no other means of support for the parents (ST II-II.101.4; ST II-II.189.6).

⁴⁵ Parents are not permitted to enter religious life if it means they will be unable to provide for their children's education (ST II-II.189.6).

⁴⁶ Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, trans. Matthew L. Lamb, Aquinas Scripture Series, vol. 2 (Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1966), 229.

⁴⁷ Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 230. See also Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians and the Letter to the Philippians*, trans. F.R. Larcher and Michael Duffy, Aquinas Scripture Series, vol. 3 (Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1969), 16.

part because their reason and experience take years to develop, and until they are developed, parents must instruct and guide their children.⁴⁸ Further, men have an obligation to provide for the upbringing of the offspring they produce.⁴⁹ Because Aquinas thinks that men by nature have more strength for punishing and more reason for instructing than women do, it is an obligation on the part of fathers to remain with their children to raise them.⁵⁰ In order to feel motivated to invest the time and energy needed to raise their children, men desire paternal certainty,⁵¹ for which reason Aquinas advocates indissoluble marriage and monogamy.⁵²

In these sections of Aquinas's thought, his beliefs about marriage are shaped by responsibility to children. Although considerations of the theology of marriage today focus on the spousal relationship more fully, and we have moved beyond his restrictive definitions of gender roles, Aquinas's dictates give evidence to his valuation of children. Children might be incomplete and irrational in his view, but that does not excuse slovenly exercise of parental responsibility. At the same time, his contention that children under the age of seven cannot be educated does leave open the possibility that he thinks young children do not need much in the way of parenting, which could lead to neglect of young children. He does not give parental advice *per se*,⁵³ which leaves his thought open to interpretations that support abuse of children, but his exhortations to parents to fulfill

⁴⁸ Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles: Book Three: Providence*, trans. Vernon J. Bourke (Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1956), III.ii.122.8, p. 145 (hereafter SCG).

⁴⁹ SCG III.ii.122.4, pp. 143-144. A number of the obligations of parents—and of fathers in particular—to their children are described in Aquinas's discussion of marriage. See also Wall, "Animals and Innocents," 564.

⁵⁰ SCG III.ii.122.8, p. 145. See also SCG III.ii.122.6, pp. 144-145.

⁵¹ SCG III.ii.123.5, p. 148.

⁵² SCG III.ii.124.1, III.ii.124.3, p. 151.

⁵³ Traina, "Learning from the Tradition," 21.

their obligations does point to a degree of valuation of children, at least in terms of what they will become, and to the importance of their formation.

Finally, Aquinas places limits around children's commitment to obey their parents. Aquinas says that children should obey their parents' instructions as a sick person has a duty to obey a doctor,⁵⁴ indicating that in his view, children are lacking and require "healing" or a remedy from those who have more knowledge than they. However, Aquinas limits children's obligation to obey their parents. He contends that children who have reached the age of puberty can disobey their parents when deciding whether and whom to marry and whether to enter monastic life, including which monastery (ST II-II.104.5).⁵⁵ A further limitation on children's obligations to their parents is that children are to honor parents, except when parents are leading them into sin (ST II-II.101.4).⁵⁶ Despite these limits, a tension remains between filial obedience and the legitimate use of one's conscience in opposition to parental wishes,⁵⁷ a tension that Traina notes is still present today, particularly as it relates to family responsibility for children.⁵⁸

Traina credits Aquinas's theological anthropology of childhood with providing the tools for later thinkers to resolve the controversy between the view of children as essentially innocent and the view of children as essentially depraved.⁵⁹ Further, Aquinas endorses a developmental theory of childrearing that Traina suggests can serve as a foundation for correcting justifications of violence toward children that are evident in the

⁵⁴ Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 227.

⁵⁵ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 108, 117.

⁵⁶ See also Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*, 228.

⁵⁷ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 109.

⁵⁸ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 132.

⁵⁹ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 131.

Christian tradition.⁶⁰ His limitation of children's accountability is a crucial component of a description of children's moral agency, and his emphasis on parental obligations in childrearing underscores the importance of adult responsibility in forming and educating children.

In addition to these positive elements of his thought with respect to children, Aquinas's theory of emotions is structured such that it lends itself to considering children's emotions within a moral context. For Aquinas, the emotions are intimately connected with virtue, and virtue involves the person's whole self being inclined toward the good, through her desires as well as her actions, her emotions as well as her reason. The Western moral tradition, including Aquinas, has tended to view rationality as central to morality, and so children have continued to be largely unrepresented in moral discourse on virtue.⁶¹ At the same time, one dimension of Aquinas's thought that offers a potential avenue for constructive reflection on children as moral agents is his theory that a virtuous action, in order to be virtuous, must be based in both reason and emotion. A good or right action undertaken solely on the basis of reason is incomplete as a virtuous action. I build on this perspective with respect to emotion and its importance in moral motivation as I make a case for children's moral agency.

My argument unfolds as follows. In chapter one, I articulate a contemporary theological anthropology of children that takes seriously the place of childhood in the

⁶⁰ Traina, "A Person in the Making," 130.

⁶¹ This is common in the history of the conversation regarding children's ability to participate in moral discourse. Frankel states, "Central to this [barrier to children's engagement in moral discourses] has been the question of children's ability to reason, and the philosophical themes it raises about the nature of the individual, and his or her capacity to realise and practise the moral codes within society" (Sam Frankel, *Children, Morality and Society* [New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012], 14).

whole of a human life. I do this by exploring Christian theology that addresses the issues of children and childhood, focusing on theological literature from the past 40 years. This is an attempt to establish a theological understanding of children and childhood based on contemporary theological work. I find that the contemporary Christian theological understanding of children that is the most convincing is that which maintains the full humanity of children, and which understands childhood to be something that perdures throughout a human life. Following this investigation, I explore the ways in which children can be said to have moral agency, and I make the case that children are moral agents, but that it is inappropriate to hold them to the same level of accountability for their actions as that to which we hold adults. I conclude with an argument that children need to be brought into the moral conversation as agents with limited accountability.

In chapter two, I turn to theological and philosophical accounts of emotions in moral motivation and the moral development of children. Cognitive emotional theories hold the primary place in my treatment because they tend to advocate that emotions should be considered moral. My focus in this chapter is on moral formation and moral education in a general sense rather than on moral education in a classroom setting. Important as it is to study the formal educational models of moral formation, they will take me too far afield from my purpose of arguing for the agency of children based on their emotions and emotional development. I find that the contemporary theories of emotion tend toward a level of cognitivism that precludes the inclusion of children in their definitions of emotions, and so from the moral agency that emotions make possible.

As a corrective to the cognitive emphasis of current emotional theories, I turn in chapter three to Aquinas, whose theory maintains the intimate relationship between

reason and emotion, but also establishes the distinction between the two such that the emotions are more than thoughts or judgments. On Aquinas's view, emotions and reason are mutually informative and have a cumulative effect on one another such that a person's experiences and thinking continually influence her emotions. At the same time, early passional experiences are the building blocks of what will become virtuous emotions.

I argue that children, because they desire goods and act on those desires, are already agents. The role of emotions in the moral life and in virtue is the subject of chapter four, in which I use Aquinas's view that the emotions are necessary for a complete virtuous action to make the case that children are already acting morally, and I use his distinction between emotion and reason to maintain children's lesser moral accountability. At the same time, the early experiences children undergo are formative. Because contemporary theology affirms the importance of childhood and childhood experiences, the ways in which children experience the world emotionally, which includes the ways they are taught by their caregivers, will have life-long implications for their moral development. Emotions indicate the value a person places on the objects of the emotions, and they motivate action with respect to those objects. They are also one of the primary means through which the person engages the world. For these reasons, I argue that because children have emotions, they are able to engage the moral world as agents with limited accountability.

CHAPTER ONE:
THEOLOGY OF CHILDREN AND CHILDREN'S MORAL AGENCY

Contemporary theological scholarship on children offers a corrective to problematic dimensions of historical Christian reflection on the nature of children and the purpose of childhood by including childhood as a perduring part of a human life and regarding children as moral beings who are engaged with their surroundings. Numerous voices in contemporary Christian theology view children as fully human and made in the image of God. Because children are made in the image of God and are loved by God, they have human dignity, and they are created for and are already in relationship with God. In addition, there are those who view childhood as an integral element of a whole human life, an unrepeatable and necessary time of life that is not left behind as one grows to adulthood but that is brought with the person as she matures and is a permanent part of who she is as a human being. Further, even from a young age, children encounter and engage with good and evil in the world, and I will argue that the way they interact with and respond to this is moral.

In this chapter, I strive to show that current theological considerations of children suggest that Christian moral theology takes children seriously not only as the objects of other people's (usually adults') moral actions, but also as moral actors in their own right. This theological anthropology addresses children's creation by and dependence on God,

as well as children's relationships with their environments and with other people. A person's interacting with her surroundings necessarily involves encounters with good and evil. Children are born into a world that is already conditioned by grace and sin, and they contribute to that world through their presence and their actions. I agree with scholars who claim that children's ability to interact with their surroundings is part of what constitutes their moral agency, and that this agency is an ontological quality that is characteristic of human beings and is distinct from moral accountability. Children learn the morality of actions from the example of others and from rules, but these lessons must become an integral part of the children's own motivation in order for children to want to choose (and so be likely to choose) to act in a good way themselves. Moral agency and virtue are deeply connected to moral motivation, which depends considerably on emotions.

The first section of this chapter explores recent theological scholarship that focuses on children in relationship to God. Children are made in the image of God and are created for relationship with God. They are already fully human and have human dignity.¹ But children, as do all people, live in the world and are formed by that world.

¹ See, for example: Herbert Anderson and Susan B. W. Johnson, *Regarding Children: A New Respect for Childhood and Families* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 9-10; Sheryl Anderson, "Maturity, Delinquency and Rebellion," in *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*, ed. Angela Shier-Jones (Peterborough, Great Britain: Epworth, 2007), 122; Bunge, "Beyond Children as Agents or Victims," 34-35; Pamela D. Couture, *Seeing Children, Seeing God: A Practical Theology of Children and Poverty* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000), 49, 51; Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 122; Jürgen Moltmann, "Child and Childhood as Metaphors of Hope," *Theology Today* 56, no. 4 (2000): 596; Vivienne Mountain, "Four Links between Child Theology and Children's Spirituality," *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 16, no. 3 (2011): 266; Karl Rahner, "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood," in *Theological Investigations: Further Theology of the Spiritual Life 2*, trans. David Bourke, vol. 8 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1971), 38-39.

The second section engages theological anthropology of children that highlights the relationships children have with other people and with their own surroundings. In the third section, I move to consider a particular dimension of what it is to be human—moral agency. As with the more general theological anthropology, I first examine children’s moral agency with respect to God and then turn to moral agency in relation to other people. I conclude the section on moral agency by studying several sources that give insight into moral motivation, particularly the place of emotion in moral motivation, which paves the way for the next chapter in which emotion is treated more fully.

The Child in Relationship with God

Christian theology maintains that all people are created by God, in the image of God, for relationship with God. Because human beings are created this way, we have value. A person’s worth is not something acquired; it is the dignity that is constitutive of each person by virtue of God’s calling her into being. Valuing children as fully human and with full human dignity cannot mean that they are valued only for what they will become. Their value and their full personhood are already present, even as we recognize that they, as do all people, will continue to grow and develop and live out their potential. Thus, childhood has value in and of itself as well as value that perdures into adulthood. The focus of this section is to explore the ways these beliefs are explicated in recent theological scholarship and to show how some theologians think of children’s relationship with God. This will set the stage for the next two sections of the chapter in which I consider children in relationship with other people, and the plausibility that children are moral agents.

Twentieth century Catholic theologian Karl Rahner played a central role in reconceptualizing a theological account of childhood. In his 1971 essay “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,”² he addresses the questions: “In the intention of the Creator and Redeemer of children what meaning does childhood have, and what task does it lay upon us for the perfecting and saving of humanity?” (33). He argues that because children are already fully human, and human life is a whole rather than fragmented stages, childhood is deeply valuable in several important ways. First, “childhood is valuable in itself” (37). Childhood, as with every other stage of life, is valuable because it allows for a “direct relationship with God” (33). The child is already a human being (37) whom God calls by name (38); God creates the child as a fully human person for relationship with Godself. Moreover, childhood is an unrepeatable stage of growth. In it happen things that cannot happen at any other time of a person’s life, and so the second way it is valuable is as a stage of development (36). The child thus is valuable both for who she is and for who she will grow to be. She is both being and becoming: “The child is a man *right at the very outset*. Christianity is aware of the mystery of that beginning which already contains all present within itself, and yet still has to become all.... What is already present in the child has still to be realized, to become actual in experience” (38-39). Finally, childhood’s value perdures, and, along with every other part of a person’s life, is taken up into the eschaton (36). Rahner affirms that children are fully human, and their lives *as children* have eternal value.

This idea of the totality of a life being taken up into the eschaton points to the unity of each person’s earthly life as well. Rahner contends that viewing a person’s

² Rahner, “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” 33-50.

history as exhibiting a unified and essential wholeness contrasts with the common idea (which Aquinas seems to have held³) that life is a series of progressive stages. When life is seen as a linear progression, each earlier stage preparing the person for the next stage, then the earlier stages disappear once the later stage is reached. Childhood, on this understanding, is absorbed into adulthood, and “childhood itself disappears” (34). In this linear view of life, all that the person “possesses” is the present. Rahner opposes the linear view and suggests that a theological understanding of human life is one in which the person is a “subject” who is able at each stage of life to see herself in her totality—past, present, and future (34-35). Each person’s “future is the making present of his own past as freely lived” (35). The future is not somehow separable from the past or from childhood. Rahner writes, “childhood endures as that which is given and abiding, the time that has been accepted and lived through freely. Childhood does not constitute past time, time that has eroded away, but rather that which remains, that which is coming to meet us as an intrinsic element in the single and enduring completeness of the time of our existence considered as a unity, that which we call the eternity of man as saved and redeemed” (35-36). Because the past remains with the person as she lives her life, childhood is never left behind but is part of the person in her totality at each moment of her life, including at the end of her life.

Rahner’s conception that eternal life takes up all of a person’s life indicates how he thinks we should view our biological childhood. Whereas we saw above that Aquinas would have eschewed childhood as a spiritual model for adults, Rahner contends that childhood “is a basic condition which is always appropriate to a life that is lived aright”

³ See ST Suppl. 43.2; and Traina, “A Person in the Making,” 132-133.

(47). The main quality of childhood that Rahner thinks needs to perdure in a human life is openness (48), which includes other childlike qualities, such as receptivity (47) and an orientation towards God (48). If we are like children, we will live in trusting dependence on God, recognizing and submitting to God's designs. We will be open and able to commit to that which is beyond our comprehension. We will be able to play and to hope. In short, we will "preserve this state of being delivered over to the mystery" that childhood is and in this way preserve our "original childhood... forever" (42). Rahner suggests that when we are able to embrace the openness of childhood in our adult relationship with God, we understand what our biological childhood was and meant (47). The childhood we experience in relationship to God is always contained in our human childhood and "finds expression in it" (49). Rahner is drawing a parallel between childhood with respect to adulthood, and earthly life with respect to eternal life. When we see that all of our life is taken up into eternal life, we understand that our earthly lives are not simply a stage through which we pass on the way to eternal life. Rather, we take up and bring with us the whole of our earthly life—including our childhood—into the next stage of our existence, eternal life. The same is true in earthly life. Previous stages of a human life are not passed through and forgotten; they remain with us as part of the unified whole of who we are as human subjects. Thus, the child's relationship with God has perduring and eternal value for her and for God.

Rahner holds that each child is a beginning in two senses. The child is an absolute beginning in terms of being a uniquely created individual who has not existed before. As such, the child's situation is always pre-conditioned by grace—by God's offer of self-communication. But at the same time, she begins her life in a "pre-existing context, a

history already wrought out by man before this particular individual arrived on the scene” (39). This pre-existing context is defined by original sin as well as grace. In his article “Original Sin,” Rahner explains that the human condition includes death and concupiscence, which constitute the state of original sin.⁴ Original sin is one aspect of the situation in which human beings find themselves and in which they must make decisions that affect how they work out their salvation; original sin affects human freedom.⁵ At the same time, God’s self-communication changes the situation in which humans exist; human freedom and decision-making are also conditioned by God’s universal and permanent offer of Godself, which includes God’s will for human salvation.⁶ Thus, every moral and free decision a person makes is decided within the framework of both original sin and grace. According to Rahner, this is the context and history in which a child begins her life and over which she has no control.⁷ Children encounter and must engage with the goodness and the evil of the world. People’s interactions with the world also influence how they respond to God’s offer of self-communication. The level of security a person feels in childhood often indicates what her comfort level will be in opening herself to a loving and trusting relationship with God in her adulthood, which is another indication of

⁴ Karl Rahner, “Original Sin,” in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: The Seabury Press, 1975), 1148. Rahner is credited with changing Catholic understanding of the theology of baptism from its focus on washing away original sin to emphasizing it as a sacrament of entrance into ecclesial life (Mary Ann Hinsdale, “‘Infinite Openness to the Infinite’: Karl Rahner’s Contribution to Modern Catholic Thought on the Child,” in *The Child in Christian Thought*, ed. Marcia J. Bunge [Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001], 430).

⁵ Rahner, “Original Sin,” 1153.

⁶ Rahner, “Original Sin,” 1154.

⁷ Rahner, “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” 42.

childhood's abiding quality.⁸ I will return to the issue of the child's interaction with her surroundings in the next section.

Mary Ann Hinsdale provides additional insight into Rahner's contribution to Catholic theology of childhood. Her assessment of his work highlights several main themes. Of particular significance is his conception of children as embodying "infinite openness to the infinite" and "the beginning of human transcendentality." For Rahner, childhood is both the condition that allows a person to "love and be responsible" and "the state of spiritual maturity that characterizes our participation in the interior life of God and makes possible the experience of genuine human community."⁹ The implication for adults is that we are not only responsible to care for children, but also to remain children in the sense of allowing "our childhood trust, openness, expectation, and willingness to be dependent on others to be released" (445). Rahner held that childhood is intrinsically valuable (443), and not just at the beginning of life, but at every stage of life.¹⁰ The intrinsic value of childhood and children points toward and is the result of the child's being created by God for relationship with God. The child's imaging God is not

⁸ Rahner, "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood," 44-45. Rahner is careful not to oversimplify this connection. A negative experience with one's parents does not necessarily lead to lack of trust in God. Quite the contrary, it can possibly lead a person to seek with greater fervor the ultimate security of God. Vivienne Mountain maintains that children often experience love and acceptance in relationships through non-verbal body language and emotional responsiveness by adults, and this is key to children's emotional and social development. Without it, studies show that children have ongoing problems in their lives: "The insecurely attached child has been shown through longitudinal studies to have ongoing social and emotional difficulties" (Mountain, "Four Links between Child Theology and Children's Spirituality," 264).

⁹ Hinsdale, "Infinite Openness to the Infinite," 443.

¹⁰ Hinsdale argues that the implications of this theology of childhood include a call to Catholic social teaching to promote the care for and welfare of all children at every stage of their development, including but not limited to its current focus on the *in utero* stages of development (Hinsdale, "Infinite Openness to the Infinite," 444).

something that can be fully grasped. It is a mystery, just as the child is a mystery who cannot be fully understood or resolved.

The full implication of what it means to be made in the image of God, for relationship with God is indeed mysterious. Keeping this mystery and the human dignity that it reflects in mind when thinking about infants and children can foster a sense of wonder in us, according to Martin Marty. Marty's work builds on Rahner's,¹¹ and Marty acknowledges a particular indebtedness to Rahner with respect to the conception of wonder. Crediting Rahner with inspiring the theme of his book *The Mystery of the Child*, Marty writes that all of Rahner's proposals about childhood "support our focus on the mystery of the child and the response of wonder" (107).¹² Marty places the child's being *imago dei* as central to seeing the child as mystery (61). Mysteries are "fathomless" and cannot be fully grasped or solved (16).

Because the child is in the image of God, Marty identifies the child as both a person who wonders (66), usually at the marvels of the world around her, at mystery (152), and someone about whom it is appropriate to experience a sense of wonder (66). Wonder does not worry about *how* things are in the world, but marvels *that* they are (102). We wonder over mysteries—over what is unfathomable, not over what is unknown (103). Thus, to wonder over the child is to recognize her as mystery, as *imago dei*. We can assist the child (and the adult) in continuing to wonder when we allow and encourage imagination and play in an open way that allows the child's creativity to flow, without our trying to re-direct it toward what we think is the "right" way to see the world (118).

¹¹ Martin E. Marty, *The Mystery of the Child* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 107.

¹² Marty examines "Fifteen Resources of Wonder" that he thinks Rahner's essay "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood" provide (Marty, *The Mystery of the Child*, 108-117).

Children's receptivity is a principal condition for their being able to engage the world in wonder. Marty contends that, according to the gospels, this quality is the one adults must regain in order to be properly childlike, to become like children (86). For Marty, this is not a passive receptivity, but an openness and expectation, an acceptance of the lack of predictability in the world (195). This way of seeing the child presents openness and receptivity to mystery and wonder as manifestations of the child's being in the image of God. The way we relate to children and the way we understand childhood are based in the mystery of the child as created in God's image.

Marty's aim in *The Mystery of the Child* is to illustrate the difference seeing children as mysteries rather than as problems makes for those who are responsible for providing their care (1). Whether we view children as mysteries or as problems has significance for how we as adults approach moral formation in children. Problems, as he defines them, are finite, able to be seen in their completion, and have solutions that can be enacted (16). Adults who take this approach are often over-controlling of children (60).¹³ As I will show below, Aquinas's notion of virtue formation concurs with Marty's distinction, and it implies not attempting to control children's development by force, but teaching children to want to make good moral choices for the right reasons.

The Christian understanding of the mystery of the human person as created by God includes the person's being made for relationship with God. Both Rahner and Marty contend that the child's being created as open and receptive to God allows her to be in relationship with both God and the world. Karen Yust's 2004 book *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives* advances the argument of

¹³ See also "Care as Control," chapter 3 of Marty, *The Mystery of the Child*, 30-51.

openness to make the case that children are able to be in relationship with God and to have faith. Yust, a Protestant pastor and professor of Christian education, defines faith as “a gift from God. It is not a set of beliefs; nor is it a well-developed cognitive understanding of all things spiritual. It is an act of grace, in which God chooses to be in relationship with humanity.”¹⁴ Being faithful is responding to this gift. It is important for Yust to define faith in terms of grace rather than as a stage of human development, which is how it has sometimes been defined traditionally (3), because when faith is an act of grace, it is possible for children to be active faith participants, even before they have the cognitive ability or level of rationality to assent to a set of beliefs or theological principles. A child is someone with whom God wants a relationship and who can, even pre-rationally, respond to that grace. For Yust, as for Rahner, childhood is already a time when a person is capable, through grace, of being in an unmediated relationship with God.¹⁵

As Marty does, Yust holds that children have a natural sense of wonder (121), but she adds that they must be encouraged and taught to reflect on the things that cause them to wonder. If the child is not taught to do this, it is entirely possible that she will not learn spiritual awareness (122). Being created for relationship with God is not the same as having a mature faith, and while children are already able to be in relationship with God, this relationship must be nurtured to develop into more mature spiritual awareness. I will show below that some scholars argue that this relationship with God depends on human emotion, which motivates the person to foster relationship with God. These emotions

¹⁴ Karen-Marie Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 4.

¹⁵ Rahner, “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” 33.

need to be encouraged and cultivated as the person develops her relationship with God and her faith.

Most Christian theology maintains that the purpose of human life does not subsist in earthly existence, and that the relationship with God that human beings are graced to engage in while they are on earth indicates their ultimate end. Rahner's essay makes this point when he says that the whole of human existence is taken up into the eschaton.¹⁶ This flow from God and back to God—or, *exitus-reditus*—drives much of what Todd David Whitmore thinks Catholic social thought has to contribute to a theology of childhood. In his 1997 essay, "Children: An Undeveloped Theme in Catholic Teaching," Whitmore uses the theological virtues—faith, hope, and love—to tease out an understanding of children from Catholic social thought that emphasizes the gift-status of children.¹⁷ For Whitmore, our hope in children means seeing them as signs of the future within the *exitus-reditus* framework. Children are gifts from God, and they are destined to return to God and to be in union with God (178). Whitmore's argument is meant to emphasize that, because children are gifts with respect to God (as being created by and returning to God), adults should not treat children as commodities to which they have a right, an attitude that he finds to be reflected in the current use of for-profit reproductive technologies (177-178). Whitmore's view, while not denying the connection between parents and offspring, underscores that creating a child is the work of God, and that being created by God, for relationship with God, with the purpose of returning to God is what gives each person—at every stage of her life—her dignity.

¹⁶ Rahner, "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood," 36.

¹⁷ Whitmore, "Children: An Undeveloped Theme," 176-179.

Whitmore argues that children are not a gift of creation only in the moments of their conception and prenatal growth; children are “*ongoing* gifts created in the image of God” (178). Faith allows us to see and claim that the child is a gift of creation. Whitmore challenges the almost exclusive emphasis on reproduction as the “gift of creation” in Catholic thought, to the neglect of later moments in life. Church teachings focus on reproductive technologies, contraception, and abortion, but there is no dedicated theology of the child (177). As Hinsdale says Rahner’s work implies,¹⁸ Whitmore argues that it is important to recognize the child as gift in later stages of development. He is in agreement with Rahner that each stage of life is important and significant for its own sake. The virtue of love with respect to a theology of children means that adults have a responsibility to be stewards of their children. Children are to be formed in such a way that they are ready to participate in the “common good as understood in the *exitus et reditus* theological framework,”¹⁹ which holds God, to whom we are destined to return, at the center of our hope for the future (178).

Children are already in relationship with God and are created to return to God. This theological position affirms the belief that God loves each child, and, according to Jürgen Moltmann, it also indicates how God loves each person—with hope. In his 2000 essay, “Child and Childhood as Metaphors of Hope,”²⁰ Moltmann identifies children as metaphors of hope both in terms of human hope and, more importantly for this section, in terms of God’s hope for the world. Considering the child to be a metaphor of God’s hope can reveal a dimension of how God might view and relate to each child. A child, claims

¹⁸ Hinsdale, ““Infinite Openness to the Infinite,”” 444.

¹⁹ Whitmore, “Children: An Undeveloped Theme,” 178.

²⁰ Moltmann, “Child and Childhood,” 592-603.

Moltmann, is cause for hope for three reasons.²¹ First, as Rahner does, Moltmann holds that every child is a new and unrepeatable beginning, and it is this uniqueness of each person that allows for new possibilities in the world's future. Each new child represents the possibility of something original and different in the world—of an “open future.” Second, “with every beginning of a new life, the hope for the reign of peace and justice is given a new chance.” The child represents this hope for peace and redemption. Finally, children are emblematic not only of our hope for the future, but of God's hope for humanity. The focus on God's hope in the child helps to deepen our understanding of the child in relation to God. “God is ‘waiting’ for the ‘human person’ in every child, is ‘waiting’ for God's echo, resonance, and rainbow.” This includes and extends beyond hope for humanity in general. Saying that “God wants us, expects us, and welcomes us,” indicates that God's relationship with each child is one of deep love and wanting, and God hopes expectantly that the child will respond. Moltmann finishes his analysis of children and childhood as metaphors of hope by calling on those around children to “hold open the doors to this future and to walk with these children into their future.”

While Moltmann's call for hope in the potential that each child represents is laudable, it is important not to allow that hope to lapse into an idealization of children as innocent potential.²² Children are created by God, for relationship with God, and ultimately to return to God, but this does not mean that they are somehow exempt from grappling with good and evil. There are theologians who affirm the child's capacity to

²¹ All references in this paragraph are to: Moltmann, “Child and Childhood,” 603.

²² Moltmann, “Child and Childhood,” 593-595. Moltmann limits the circumstances of the children he considers to a “normal, peaceful, middle-class childhood” (593). While this is a valid limitation, other authors choose to focus at least part of their theology on disadvantaged and victimized children. I present some of their work below.

sin, and it is also vital to acknowledge the deleterious effects the experience of evil can have on a child. In the next section I turn to theological scholarship that explicitly treats the issue of the child with respect to the world around her, particularly her relationships with others.

The Child in Relationship with Other People

Children are created by God for relationship with God, but they must also learn to negotiate the world into which they are born. I turn now to recent theological work that considers children in relationship with other people. This section builds on the insights regarding children's relationships with God that I highlighted in the previous section, and it serves as a foundation for the following section that takes up the issue of children's moral agency. In the current section, two threads of thought regarding the relationships children have with other people emerge. One is that children have particular gifts to offer others. The second emphasizes children's vulnerability in the face of good and evil, an exposed state that is part of what it means to be in the image of God. To be in the image of God is to be in relationship, and to be in relationship, as we shall see, is to be vulnerable to others.

Children have qualities that touch the lives of those around them in positive ways. Herbert Anderson and Susan Johnson's book, *Regarding Children*, is a pastoral theology text that addresses the years of family life specifically engaged with raising children.²³ In their book, Anderson and Johnson coin the term "childness" to refer to those "qualities of being a child that continue in adult life: vulnerability, openness, immediacy, and

²³ Anderson and Johnson, *Regarding Children*, 1.

neediness.”²⁴ The qualities of childness bear some similarity to the qualities of children that Rahner mentions as worthy of emulation, although childness refers primarily to human relationships, while Rahner’s work is more focused on relationship with God. Vulnerability and neediness are childlike qualities that Anderson and Johnson discuss in terms of the dependence infants experience with respect to older humans, but even as adults, our dependence on others never disappears.²⁵ It is part of being human. Rahner says that being a child of God includes trusting dependence that God will give us what we need²⁶ and recognizing that “the powers presiding over existence are greater than our own design.”²⁷ He emphasizes human dependence on God, and Anderson and Johnson highlight human dependence on other humans, but the idea that human beings are not autonomous and isolated beings is common to both. By immediacy Anderson and Johnson mean the ability to respond to other people and to one’s surroundings honestly and with some spontaneity.²⁸ This echoes Rahner’s mention of play as a childlike quality that is worth maintaining as an adult.²⁹

Because immediacy and spontaneity are qualities that should be retained in adulthood, we must consider the implications of this kind of genuineness in responding to one’s environment. It seems evident that being spontaneous does not guarantee that the

²⁴ Anderson and Johnson, *Regarding Children*, 10. They expand on these ideas later in the text (Anderson and Johnson, *Regarding Children*, 22-26). Adrian Thatcher adopts their term and writes that our need to learn from the “childness of children” is an important part of constructing a theology of children (Thatcher, “Theology and Children,” 196, 197).

²⁵ Anderson and Johnson, *Regarding Children*, 25. MacIntyre also makes this point (Alasdair MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* [Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1999], 2).

²⁶ Rahner, “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” 41.

²⁷ Rahner, “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” 42.

²⁸ Anderson and Johnson, *Regarding Children*, 25.

²⁹ Rahner, “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood,” 42.

person will engage in good actions. The possibility that authentic responses might be morally bad raises the issue of how to attend to children's moral formation without squelching their honesty and spontaneity. How do we teach children to control their bad impulses while affirming their natural tendencies to be fully in the present moment? I think the answer is implied in Aquinas's distinction between despotic control and guidance that results in cooperation, as I mentioned above. As will become clear below, Aquinas's system allows for the possibility of cultivating one's emotions such that one's responses are genuine, immediate, and virtuous.

In addition to possessing qualities that need to be sustained throughout a person's life, children can also mediate grace to others. That human beings can be mediators of grace to one another is well established, and Jerome Berryman expands this to include children in particular.³⁰ Proposing that the church develop a formal doctrine of children, he turns to the idea of children as grace-filled and suggests that theologians consider children as sacraments. He argues that to be in the image of God is to be in the image of Creator, and so to be a creator as well (232). Children, according to Berryman, have intense creative energy that fuels their own activities and that can stimulate energy and creativity in the adults who encounter them. Berryman considers the energy of the creative process to be akin to grace, and for this reason he thinks that children's ability to stimulate creativity in adults marks them as means of grace (244). Children in this model are unintentional means of grace. They do not choose to cooperate with grace; they mediate grace simply by being children. Other thinkers credit children with being able to

³⁰ Jerome W. Berryman, "Children as a Means of Grace: A Proposal for a Formal Doctrine of Children," in *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace* (New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2009), 230-256.

choose to do good as a means of mediating grace. Berryman's account, however, allows for every child, regardless of her age or level of development, to be a source of grace to those around her.³¹ At the same time, his account runs the risk of privileging an idealized vision of children because it does not take into consideration the ways in which encounters with children are sometimes not moments and means of grace as Berryman describes them. If children are means of grace because they energize and inspire creativity in others, what happens when a person becomes tired or bored as a result of her encounter with a child?

Joyce Mercer's work provides the crucial contribution of arguing that children are gifts not to the extent that they are perfect, give us energy, or meet our standards of behavior. They are gifts even in their "messiness." She concurs that children are gifts from God and are equal in status to all other human beings,³² and she insists that the whole of what a child is—not just the pleasant aspects—constitutes the gift.

To say that children's messiness is included in their gift-status is simply to say that the gift that a child is depends not upon the conditions a child evokes in the lives of those around her or him. The gift that a child is depends solely on the child's being made in God's image and, as Rahner asserts, sharing in the childhood of God. Such an affirmation means that even a child whom others may experience in primarily negative terms...remains fundamentally a gift.³³ Mercer argues that an appropriate image of childhood is one of ambiguity, recognizing that children are neither innocent angels nor depraved devils. They are complex and

³¹ It is also possible to extend this idea to people of all ages whose disabilities impact their mental functions.

³² Joyce Ann Mercer, *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005), 245. Mercer writes that no one can "claim any superior status in relation to God based upon their more advanced human age." Indeed, all human beings, regardless of age, are children of God and, as such, with respect to God occupy "a human position of gratitude, need, vulnerability, culpability, agency, and vocation" (256).

³³ Mercer, *Welcoming Children*, 247.

“exist as the same strange mixtures of moral capacities as the rest of humanity”³⁴ and need to be embraced and welcomed as such. Thus, the mystery of a particular child might not inspire a sense of wonder or an experience of creative grace in those around her at any given moment—she might, in fact, evoke a sense of frustration, anger, or exhaustion—but the child even in that moment is in *imago dei* and is gift. This is an important point to bear in mind when thinking theologically about children because it can serve as a reminder not to idealize children but to accept their inspiring as well as their difficult qualities. In their very being as children, with all that that entails, they are gifts.

Not only are children bearers of grace and messiness, but they themselves also must contend with the grace and sin that are present in their surroundings. Their high level of dependence as well as their lack of experience and power leave them particularly vulnerable to the good and evil of the world. This second theme—children’s vulnerability—will occupy the remainder of the section. Vulnerability is definitive of the experience of childhood, but it also reflects what it means to be a human being created in the image of God. All people, by virtue of being in relationship with others, are at risk of being hurt by others. God, too, by choosing to be in relationship with people, makes Godself vulnerable in those relationships.

David Hadley Jensen’s theology of children makes the claim that children exist as difference-in-vulnerability, and this shapes his understanding of children’s experience of sin and grace. He suggests that, as adults, our response to children creates a vulnerability

³⁴ Mercer, *Welcoming Children*, 156. This includes being people “for whom the categories of grace, sin, sanctification, and redemption (and more!) have an appropriate use” (156).

in us as we care for them and “stake a claim with their lives”³⁵ that allows us to understand more fully what it means to be in the image of God. For Jensen, the image of God is not an invariability that all people share, some sort of stamp of sameness that makes all human beings in *imago dei* (14, 32). Rather, he sees the image of God reflected in the difference and vulnerability that people exhibit. Each person is different from all other people, and each person is susceptible to being hurt by others. Jensen states, “this difference implies that vulnerability and openness to others are constitutive of human life in God’s world, chords that we find echoed throughout scripture. The God of the Bible is not a monad enclosed upon itself, but a God who becomes vulnerable in relation to others, who calls us to live in vulnerability with others” (15).³⁶ Far from being a deficiency, vulnerability is an essential part of being in God’s image (126).³⁷

Because children are especially vulnerable, they are susceptible to violence, and this experience of violence is the lens through which Jensen explores the sin children encounter in the world (66). Jensen presents a number of ways in which children are

³⁵ Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 12.

³⁶ Jensen does note that the preference of God for the vulnerable is ambiguous and not always the case in scripture (Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 18-19).

³⁷ See also Xavier Le Pichon, “The Sign of Contradiction,” in *The Paradox of Disability: Responses to Jean Vanier and L’Arche Communities from Theology and the Sciences*, ed. Hans S. Reinders (Grand Rapids, MI: William B Eerdmans, 2010), 94-100. Le Pichon approaches the issue of vulnerability from the perspective of his encounters with the disabled members of the L’Arche community, but he extends his thinking to include aged persons as well as children. He also claims that vulnerability and fragility are constitutive of being human, and he finds that being in relationship with vulnerable individuals reveals the particular gifts that their vulnerability has to offer (100). Further, Jesus himself manifested vulnerability in his coming as an infant and in his dying on the cross (95). Margaret Guider argues that by choosing to come as a vulnerable and dependent infant, Jesus “dignified and sanctified the dependent interdependency of our human condition” (Margaret Eletta Guider, “Living in the Shadow of the Manger: Mission, Ecumenism, and the State of the World’s Children,” Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University (2003): 20-28, accessed December 11, 2013, <http://www.baylor.edu/christianethics/ChildrenarticleGuider.pdf>, 27).

victimized by violence, including poverty (67-69) with its concomitant problems of poor health (69-70) and child labor (including the child sex trade) (70-72), abuse (72-75), war (75-76), and neglect (76-77). In reflecting on these circumstances of sin, he asks a question that is not often asked in the tradition—what about the children? That is, sin is traditionally explored from the perspective of adults who are the sinners. And while he sees sin more as a state in which we live than as individual acts, he notes that sin’s effects on children are rarely recognized (88-92).

As a remedy for this, Jensen proposes first “encountering” children before trying to explain their nature from the perspective of the adult moral agent, which is seen as normative in the tradition. If we do this, Jensen posits that “a complementary understanding of sin can be developed: an understanding that begins with the suffering of children and with a welcome to the children in our midst” (92). His position claims both that all people are connected to one another in some way and that “each person is at all times both actor and acted upon—no matter how old or young, we are never reducible to passive vessels or masters of our own destiny” (95).³⁸ Jensen argues that taking this perspective allows us to see sin emerging not from the places most often suspected—self-centeredness and infidelity—but in the experience of being rejected. This follows from his argument that people are in *imago dei* as vulnerable and difference-in-relationship. That is, because we are vulnerable and are in relationships, and no two people have the same web of relationships in their lives, we are different yet still connected.³⁹ From this

³⁸ I will develop this idea with respect to children’s agency more fully below in the section on moral agency.

³⁹ Adrian Thatcher concurs that relationality is central to what it means to be a human being, and he situates the “parent-child relationships within the Relations of the social Trinity,” pointing specifically to the language that identifies the first and second person

perspective, sin is the rejection of other people. And from the point of view of the child who is completely vulnerable, it is the *experience* of being rejected, of refusal (93).⁴⁰ Children believe what they are told and taught by this refusal from those in power, and they internalize the worthlessness that it expresses to them (93). But the experience of being refused is not part of the nature of the child; it is the state of sin into which the child is born, and the child experiences the underside of the sin (94).⁴¹ This sin is not reducible to human depravity (96), however. It is reflective of the interconnectedness of all people, including children (95), and of all people's "vulnerability to refusal" (96). At the same time, vulnerability also means openness to relationship, to the grace of the world, and similar to Rahner, Jensen writes that it is into this grace-filled, sinful world that human life enters with the creation of each new person (98).

Some children's circumstances put them at an especially high level of vulnerability. Pamela Couture addresses this issue by considering the case of a notably susceptible group—poor children. Couture defines poverty in two ways: material

as Father and Son. He argues that being in relation is being in *imago dei*: "To be made in the image of the triune God is already to be 'in-relation', to have our being from other persons. A strong analogy is able to be made between two sets of relations—between the Father and the Son in the divine Trinity, and between parents and children in the human family" (Thatcher, "Theology and Children," 197).

⁴⁰ Here Jensen is using Susan Nelson's chapter "For Shame, for Shame, the Shame of it All: Postures of Refusal and the Broken Heart" in Park and Nelson, *The Other Side of Sin* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001).

⁴¹ Jensen neglects to articulate the ways in which some of the patterns he discusses are generational. Abused children often grow up to be abused or abusive adults. He does note briefly that boys who witness men abusing their partners are more likely to become abusive men, and girls who witness the same thing are more likely to remain in abusive relationships (Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 73), but he does not expand on the implications this has for thinking about how experiencing the underside of sin impacts later life.

deprivation⁴² and the “poverty of tenuous connections” (29-35).⁴³ She distinguishes between the two because, although material poverty and social isolation often appear together, they are separable, and it is sometimes the case that children experience one form of poverty without the other (23). Being conscious of both kinds of poverty heightens our awareness of the different ways in which children encounter evil in the world. All children are made in the image of God and reflect God (50), and all children need love and commitment from an adult who will protect them and promote their best interests, including meeting their basic needs of food, shelter, health care, and education (49).⁴⁴ Without this support, children live with the poverty of tenuous connections. For this reason, Couture holds that, although children and adults are of equal worth and value, a one-on-one adult-child relationship must also include responsibility and care on the part of the adult for the child (49).⁴⁵

When children’s needs are not met, they suffer. Couture calls attention to the suffering and agony of poor children by utilizing the Korean concept of *han*, which “refers to the suffering that is accumulated in the victims of sin, burdening them with

⁴² Couture, *Seeing Children*, 25-29.

⁴³ The first chapter of her book, “A Map of Children’s Poverties” (Couture, *Seeing Children*, 23-47), is an articulation of the multiform poverties under which children live. She addresses the general categories of material poverty and tenuous connections within that chapter.

⁴⁴ Forty years ago, Janice Sams called attention to the need for an account of the challenges under-privileged children in America face in their moral development. See Janice Sams, “The Ghetto Child and Moral Development,” *Religious Education* 70, no. 6 (1975): 636-648.

⁴⁵ See also Cynthia Willett, “Collective Responsibility for Children in an Age of Orphans,” in *The Best Love of the Child: Being Loved and Being Taught to Love as the First Human Right*, ed. Timothy P. Jackson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011).

agony” (62).⁴⁶ *Han*, as Couture presents it, is similar to Rahner’s conception of original sin as a pre-existing condition of death and concupiscence into which each person is born. However, *han* goes beyond focusing on the conditions to considering the consequences they mete out on their victims. *Han* acknowledges that people are born not only into sinful conditions, but into the suffering that is a result of those sinful conditions (66). This suffering often leads to the child’s exhibiting problematic behavior (62). Rather than simply imputing guilt to the child because of this behavior, Couture suggests addressing it within the context of *han*. That is, the behavior needs to be corrected while at the same time the child’s suffering needs to be alleviated (62). In order to move beyond the inheritance of *han*, children need empathy, compassion, and agency in their own lives (67). But when this agency includes the responsibility to care for herself too early in a child’s life, the child is in danger of at-risk behavior (95). Children need to play, to be creative, and to imagine, giving them structure and freedom in a balance that allows them to develop and to have adequate connections with adults. Children also need hope to encourage them not to engage in destructive and dysfunctional behavior (121), but to envision a hopeful future. Without their needs being met—or, as Jensen puts it, when they experience the sin of rejection—children will not be able to envision and effect a hopeful future for themselves, and they will, quite possibly, not be able to be a source of hope for the world. Couture’s emphasis is on the children themselves and the hope they need to feel, whereas Moltmann’s discussion of hope presented the child herself as the hope for the future. Couture’s call for hope within each child seems to be a necessary precondition for the child to function as an instrument of future change. The

⁴⁶ See also Andrew Sung Park, *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993).

two visions can thus complement each other—the child as one-who-hopes and the child as the object of others’ hope.

While it is necessary to remember that children’s lives—and, indeed, all people’s lives—are sometimes tragically conditioned by their surroundings, the person is not reducible to those surroundings but remains a distinct individual. Further, all children, including those who are not poor, are capable of problematic behavior due to their own proclivity towards sin. These caveats reflect the tension that exists between people’s own integrity as volitional agents and their condition as situated in and responsive to a world of good and evil. It is to this tension that I now turn.

The Child as Moral Agent

Some contemporary theology on children’s moral agency makes the case that children are moral agents even before they are able to comprehend or articulate moral reasons for their actions, or to be held fully accountable for those actions. For the purposes of this project, I define moral agency as a person’s ability to engage with the morality of her environment, which includes the good and evil she encounters in the world and the moral codes that are part of her context. This will often involve her having a level of ownership over intentional actions. I take both the moral engagement and the actions to be somewhat formative for that person. My definition is different from the literature in Christian moral theology that equates moral agency with responsibility.⁴⁷ As

⁴⁷ See, for example, Alasdair MacIntyre, “Social Structures and their Threats to Moral Agency,” *Philosophy* 74, no. 289 (1999): 311-329; Lisa Damm, “Emotions and Moral Agency” *Philosophical Explorations* 13, no. 3 (2010): 276; Darlene Weaver, “Moral Agency, Sin, and Grace: Prospects for Christian Hope and Responsibility,” *Conversion,*

will become clear below, I think that it is plausible to distinguish between moral agency and moral accountability, and to attribute agency to children without requiring that they be fully responsible for their actions. This distinction between agency and accountability is crucial to acknowledging that children engage in moral activities, even though they are still developing their understanding of the import of those actions and their ability to control their actions. Because they are very much in the process of being formed, they should not be answerable or legally responsible for their moral activities in the ways an adult would be.

All people, including children, live and act within a set of circumstances, but no one is reducible to those circumstances. Theologically, we can hold the seemingly contradictory positions that children are in relationship with God and have a degree of ontological integrity, and that children are conditioned by their environments. The two views are not mutually exclusive. Quite the contrary, recent scholarship on the moral agency of children considers ontological integrity and environmental impact to be mutually influential. Because the person is in relationships with others and lives in a social and moral context, her actions will be in response to her particular situation; at the same time, they will be her own actions that will, in turn, have an impact on that situation. The interaction operates in two directions: the environment informs the child's responses, and the child's responses help to shape the environment.

Responding to one's surroundings in a moral way involves the person's having reasons to do so. These reasons can be called a person's moral motivation. Making moral choices and being moved to act on them goes beyond following prescribed rules. One of

Covenant and Hope in the Human Future: New Frontiers in Jewish & Christian Thought International Conference (Jerusalem, 2011), 23.

the primary ways children learn moral behavior and reasons for acting is through their interaction with and observations of adult behavior. People must also integrate what they learn into their own lives, and there are scholars who argue that this must occur at an emotional level in order for individuals to understand why they should act in certain ways and to want to do so.

I begin this section with accounts of moral agency that emphasize the person in relationship with God. I then move to considering the person in relationship to her surroundings, which includes the interactive model of moral agency. I conclude the section by engaging the question of moral motivation. Much of the literature I review addresses children and their moral agency explicitly; a few of the authors I treat contribute to the conversation with fruitful discussions of moral agency as it relates to adults, and I will draw out the implications of their work for considering the moral agency of children. In this way, I provide the context to which I strive to contribute with this dissertation. I will build upon the arguments in favor of children's moral agency by focusing explicitly on the role emotions play in morality and agency.

Moral Agency of Children with Respect to God

Christian theology holds a place for both human agency and the agency of God. Although the person is dependent on God, her agency does not compete with God. Partly in conversation with Aquinas, Jennifer Herdt makes the case for a non-competitive relationship between human agency and God. Aquinas maintained a non-competitive view of grace and human agency simultaneously with his emphasis on the necessity of

grace for human perfection and salvation.⁴⁸ The issue at stake is the relationship between, on the one hand, infused virtue and the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and on the other, human activity. Although humans can do nothing to receive the grace of infused virtue or the gifts of the Holy Spirit, Herdt stresses that people are not rendered passive by their bestowal.⁴⁹ Both the infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Spirit perfect a person,⁵⁰ but the perfecting does not compromise the person's own agency. True human agency is operating most fully when it is "being willingly dependent, fully open to God's gift, thus perfecting the charity that unites human beings with God" (91),⁵¹ and its purpose is the "transformation of their own characters" such that salvation can be realized for the person (95). Herdt argues that, when considering human agency and grace, trying to determine

⁴⁸ The tension between what a human being can do on her own towards developing virtues through good behavior, and the virtue of character that comes through grace alone is one that Gilbert Meilaender points out is prevalent in Martin Luther's thinking (Gilbert Meilaender, "The Examined Life Is Not Worth Living: Learning From Luther," in *The Theory and Practice of Virtue* [Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984], 118, 120-121, 122). This tension "leaves unexplained the link between strenuous education efforts to inculcate virtue [in children] and the claim that these efforts are entirely unable to bring about the fundamental transformation that is needed.... Seeking the virtue which only God could work but mindful of its rarity, they [Lutherans in Germany following the Reformation] committed themselves—but only halfheartedly—to the external disciplines of moral education" (124). I will discuss Aquinas's treatment of this tension in chapter three.

⁴⁹ Jennifer A. Herdt, *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 90.

⁵⁰ "The gifts differ from the virtues in that while the virtues 'perfect man according as it is natural for him to be moved by his reason,' the gifts dispose human beings to be moved by God" (Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 90, citing ST I-II:68.1).

⁵¹ Rebecca DeYoung deals with pusillanimity and magnanimity, specifically comparing Aristotle's treatment of them with how Aquinas tweaks them given the Christian belief in a person's total dependence on God. Her contribution to my argument stems from her claim that accurate self-assessment comes from both humility and magnanimity. Humility allows the Christian to recognize her total dependence on God; magnanimity grants her the honesty to see her gifts and to use them for good, through the grace of God (Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, "Aquinas's Virtues of Acknowledged Dependence: A New Measure of Greatness," *Faith and Philosophy* 21, no. 2 [2004]: 221).

how grace and agency operate non-competitively is less fruitful than embracing *that* they do, that “the moral life...is at once both ordinary and mysterious” (97).

Christians look to Christ as the “perfect human image of God,” and one whom Herdt maintains it is proper to emulate as they strive for (albeit limited) perfection (8). Far from truncating human agency, Herdt interprets the “inexhaustibility in Christ’s exemplarity” (8) to be a fecund source of inspiration and mimesis for Christians. Because Christ’s human image of God is perfect and human beings are finite, each person is only able to participate in Christ’s perfection partially, and there are myriad ways of mirroring him. As a witness to this, Herdt points to the “rainbow cast of saints” that are held up as moral exemplars. Although there is great variety in the ways the saints lived, all of them were striving to emulate Christ. For this reason, Christians can engage in mimesis of Christ in ways that are authentic to who God created them to be (8). There is no cookie-cutter version of modeling one’s life after Christ’s. Further, given the rich diversity among the saints, contemporary Christians can exercise their moral agency in determining which saints and which actions they themselves are called to reflect (9). Herdt maintains that humans are dependent on God (343), but within that dependency, individuals can model their lives on Christ’s in ways that are authentic and original to them (344). While Herdt speaks of the emulation of Christ primarily in terms of the moral formation of adults,⁵² her ethic offers resources for exploring how each child is utterly reliant on God and simultaneously able to investigate and develop her own unique

⁵² Herdt discusses children briefly when she presents the views of moral development in Aristotle (Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 25-30), Luther (189-192), and Rousseau (292), but these sections do not include an account of her own thoughts on children and their moral formation. Because my focus in this chapter is on contemporary scholarship on children, these sections fall outside the scope of this project.

qualities in ways that reflect the perfection of Christ. In practical terms, this means that, while children should be encouraged to model their behavior on the good behavior of others, they must also be allowed and taught to discover their own ways of doing what is good. They must be taught virtue and discernment rather than unquestioningly to follow rules.

David Cloutier agrees that it is necessary to see human agency and divine grace as complementing each other rather than competing.⁵³ God moves the person's will, and the person freely chooses to do good. Cloutier explains that the difficulty with holding these two positions simultaneously stems from an incorrect view of God as a creature or thing (88). Properly understood, God's creative power working in the person is what makes her who she is. Because God is the creator and sustainer of the person, "human agency becomes most fully human when it is most dependent on God" (88). Thus, human agency in competition with God is less fully human than agency that is dependent on (and cooperating with) God because God creates and sustains each human being.⁵⁴

The form of agency that Cloutier advocates is neither individualistic nor based on following rules or laws (90). Rather, human agency is communal and eschatological (95). Cloutier finds the roots of the eschatological dimension of agency in scripture, which emphasizes "the future-coming-into-being-now of the new creation" (100-101). It is within this eschatological framework that each person finds her agency as part of the

⁵³ David Cloutier, "How Does the Wind Blow and the Fire Burn? The Holy Spirit and Moral Agency," *The Josephinum Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (2005): 87, 88.

⁵⁴ Darlene Weaver concurs with the argument that human agency is not in competition with God. She considers it a misrepresentation of the power of God to say that God's will being done means that God has taken control of a situation. God's power is not dominating; it is creative and sustaining, the ground and sustenance of our very being (Weaver, "Moral Agency, Sin, and Grace," 16-17).

Church community⁵⁵ moving towards that future (100). Without removing individuality through absorption into the community (101), Cloutier contends that the person moves towards her perfection by “being drawn into community, into communion” (100). The Spirit’s agency is also communal and eschatological (102), and it participates in the community’s moral life by granting the people of the community knowledge of God’s future towards which they are moving, and the power to enact that future (103).

Human moral agency is, according to Cloutier, a gift from God that grows and develops, and it is not something strictly interior to the person. Agency begins to form with the initial interaction of the person’s desires with her environment. Because agency grows through her interaction with her surroundings, moral agency requires attention and formation for it to develop well. Cloutier cites Alasdair MacIntyre’s contention that imagination is necessary for envisioning a *telos*⁵⁶ and that people who live in communities that do not foster and form this sense of imagination will not be able to visualize futures for themselves (104). Fostering good imagination is, therefore, one of the ways that community aids in agency formation, and it also meets the criterion of non-competition between God and the human agent. Cloutier argues that the Holy Spirit is both “God’s future” and “God’s imagination for us.” When we receive the Holy Spirit, we receive “the gift of sight and power” to envision God’s future and to live it (106).

⁵⁵ Cloutier acknowledges that defining the community as the Church “opens up questions of ecclesiology that go beyond the scope of the present text.” His purpose is to show “that the communalized self must exist on both universal and local (or personal) levels—the absence of one or the other will lead to distortion” (Cloutier, “How Does the Wind Blow,” 100).

⁵⁶ See also David Tracy, *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (New York: Crossroad, 1981).

Herdt's and Cloutier's non-competitive views of moral agency allow for an understanding of human agency that is consistent with theological anthropology that holds the full humanity of children, who are in the image of God and in relationship with God. Humans, including children, are brought into being and sustained by God's creativity. They are not manipulated by it, and their actions are not controlled by it. At the same time, everyone's actions, including children's, occur within the framework of God as the source and sustenance of their being. Further, the communal dimension of agency formation that Cloutier presents reminds us of the Christian understanding of the eschatological *telos* towards which Christian communities and the individual agents within them are moving.⁵⁷

Children share the human capacity for relationship with God, and their spirituality is partially constitutive of their agency. Miller-McLemore uses feminist theology to argue that children's spirituality gives them agency because they are not passive recipients of church teaching but are able to engage actively with their faith.⁵⁸ Their accountability is still less than an adult's, and it increases as children grow. Miller-McLemore argues that "with increased knowledge, authority, and control comes growing responsibility and culpability, and—ideally in the Christian story—liberation and grace" (80-81). As children learn and grow in the ability to control their actions, their accountability for those actions, both the good and the bad, increases.

⁵⁷ The human freedom at stake in Cloutier's argument is not only helped along by the community, but it can also be limited by structures of social sin and violence, a theme to which I will return in the next section.

⁵⁸ Miller-McLemore, *Let the Children Come*, 148. Recall that Yust puts forth a similar argument, contending that children respond to God's offer of relationship and, therefore, are active in their faith (Yust, *Real Kids, Real Faith*, 7).

Because human beings are also capable of sin, and sin affects a person's relationship with God, Miller-McLemore holds that it is important to take into account children's capacity for sin when considering their moral agency. She argues that sin, as a social reality and not just an individual action, affects children, who are vulnerable to the adults who surround them (158). In any account of sin and children, it is important to remember that "children are more often sinned against than sinners themselves," but at the same time, allowing that children sin gives them agency beyond victimhood (80). Children's capacity for being actors for good and evil indicates that they are moral agents.

As children come to understand that their actions have consequences and as they learn to control them, they grow in their ability to reflect on their actions and to take responsibility for them. They become conscious of their agency and develop a level of accountability. One particular experience—the Sacrament of Reconciliation—specifically addresses children's capacity for sin and for recognizing and taking a level of responsibility for their own sins.⁵⁹ Jennifer Beste examines the reactions of Roman Catholic second graders to receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the first time.⁶⁰ She finds that the greater the level of agency the children felt about receiving the sacrament, the more positive their experience of the sacrament on several levels. By agency, Beste means "whether they [the children] perceive themselves desiring and choosing the sacrament for a reason related to the sacrament itself" (340). This is significant for considering children's moral agency because her findings indicate that the

⁵⁹ In what follows, the focus is on the children's experience of the sacrament, not an examination of the sacrament itself.

⁶⁰ Jennifer Beste, "Children Speak: Catholic Second Graders' Agency and Experiences in the Sacrament of Reconciliation," *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 3 (2011): 327-350.

degree to which children understand themselves to be choosing an activity affects their experience of the activity.

Beste's purpose is not to determine why children felt the way they did regarding their agency in receiving the sacrament, but to investigate the effect that perceived agency had on their experience of the sacrament. Not only did the children's emotional response tend to be more positive if they felt they had chosen to receive the sacrament (339), but the children who perceived themselves having greater agency were also the ones who reported that their relationship with God was positively impacted by receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation (333, 339). Furthermore, the children who felt that their agency was engaged in choosing the sacrament reported that receiving the sacrament had a positive effect on their moral lives (345). Those children who did not feel a sense of agency tended to report more negative or neutral responses to their reception of the sacrament. Beste concludes that she has identified "a correlation between children's perceived sense of agency (or lack thereof) and (1) their affective response, (2) whether the sacrament is personally meaningful, and (3) its impact on their relationship with God and others" (347). The implications of this for children's moral development need to be explored further. It does seem plausible, however, that the degree to which a child feels a connection to the decisions she is making will affect her response to those decisions. This is worth bearing in mind as we consider the role of emotions in moral development and virtue below.

Psychologist Patrick Sean Moffett, who works with the Boys' and Girls' Towns of Italy, offers a definition of agency that concurs with Beste's focus on intentional choice. Moffett writes of the agency of the children who are citizens of these towns,

defining their agency as “intended engagement in activities that help to shape who I am and who I am becoming.”⁶¹ He believes such activities very possibly begin in infancy and become more conscious as the person grows: “From infancy, humans engage in activities that suggest intentionality. When we begin to speak, we communicate what we want to do and, in time, we explain why.”⁶² The agency he sees in the children with whom he works has its grounding in the intentional, self-defining actions of those children.

From these accounts of children’s moral agency, we can conclude that recent Christian theological scholarship on the agency of the child in relationship with God advances the following views: children are created and sustained by God, and their agency is most free when it is dependent on God; children act in grace-filled ways, but they are also capable of sin; and children’s participation as agents in their moral choices is connected to their experience of those choices and of the choices’ consequences. At the same time, all of these thinkers acknowledge that an individual child’s moral agency does not occur or develop in a vacuum. It is formed and shaped through the child’s interaction with her surroundings.

Moral Agency of Children in Response to their Environments

Children are undeniably formed by their environments, for better and for worse, and this influence shapes their responses to their surroundings. Recent scholarship makes the case that the interaction operates in both directions, and children also have an impact on their surroundings and the people in them. In this section, I begin with an explanation

⁶¹ Patrick Sean Moffett, “Promoting Agency Among Children and Adolescents at the Margins,” *The Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 30 (1995): 39.

⁶² Moffett, “Promoting Agency,” 39.

of interactive agency and then move to the theological considerations for children's moral agency within the context of their environments.

The theory of interactive agency originates in the social sciences but has import for theological considerations of children's moral agency. In explaining the interactive theory, I draw on the work of Sam Frankel. Frankel is an independent writer and consultant who utilizes his own empirical research with children in conversation with current sociological scholarship on children's agency to explain how he thinks the social agency of children translates into moral agency. While Frankel is not a theologian,⁶³ his thoughts on children's agency offer a clear explanation of and argument for the interactive view of children's agency that is prevalent in some social scientific thought,⁶⁴ and which influences the work of some theologians, including John Wall (discussed below). In the latter half of the twentieth century, social scientists began to "recast the relationship between structure and agency in favour of a growing recognition of the individual as social agent."⁶⁵ Broadly speaking, the social sciences conceive structure as the set of regulations and cultural customs that are already present and must be negotiated by each person.⁶⁶ The person's agency is her ability to respond to the cultural or social

⁶³ He is the founder and director of Educational Charity Act 4, UK. I use his explanation of the interactive model because I find it to be clear and because he relates the social agency of children that it advances to children's moral agency.

⁶⁴ See John Wall, "Childhood Studies, Hermeneutics, and Theological Ethics," *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (2006): 538; Peter B. Pufall and Richard P. Unsworth, "Introduction: The Imperative and the Process for Rethinking Childhood" in *Rethinking Childhood* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004), 9; and Karen L. Anderson, *Thinking About Sociology: A Critical Introduction* (Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2012), 268-274.

⁶⁵ Frankel, *Children, Morality, and Society*, 19.

⁶⁶ Frankel, *Children, Morality, and Society*, 19; Anderson, *Thinking About Sociology*, 265, 268.

structure and to affect it through her interaction with it (19).⁶⁷ This conception of agency also involves a person's ability to create meanings of her own from her interactions with her surroundings, meanings that make sense of what she encounters and that inform her actions as a result (18, 22, 24). The relationship between structure and agency is symbiotic, meaning that a child's agency cannot be considered without taking the social structure in which she lives into account, and the social structure is shaped by individuals' (including the child's) interaction with it (22). This sociological understanding led to what Frankel calls a new paradigm of children within society (20-22). Some sociologists began to see children as active with respect to their social world, not just as passive recipients of it. At the same time, the structure does exist, and children are not defining everything for themselves out of nothing. Therefore, children are active in "drawing on the social world as they seek to make sense of what is happening around them and to negotiate a way through it" (22).

Frankel makes the case that the social agency for which the new paradigm argues translates into moral agency as well. He includes children in the moral discourse through which people not only become trained in the morality of a particular culture, but also help to define that morality through their interaction with it. He argues that children learn this kind of morality from a very early age through an innate emotional awareness of their surroundings and the dynamics of the social interactions in which they engage (31). He claims that "it is by recognising children as agents, responding and reacting to the world around them, as they shape a sense of identity and belonging, that the case for children's moral agency and therefore their inclusion in such discourses can be made" (9, see also

⁶⁷ See Anderson, *Thinking About Sociology*, 270.

31, 44). The moral agency for which Frankel (and the theologians discussed below) argues is in contrast to those theories that present children as products of their surroundings whose inability to reason renders them incapable of moral engagement and agency (15). Structure and agency impact the child, just as both impact the adult. The key difference, according to this new paradigm, is that children lack the experience, not the ability, to interact with their structures.⁶⁸

Combined with his study of the new paradigm described by the social sciences, Frankel's empirical research leads him to conclude that children are indeed moral agents. In the demographic with which he worked,⁶⁹ agency involved being able to define oneself with respect to others and to define others with respect to oneself (94-95). It also involved negotiating one's world and one's power within that world to achieve a sense of belonging, which all the children sought (136).⁷⁰ One way children develop their moral understanding and learn what is and is not acceptable is through their social interactions.

⁶⁸ Frankel, *Children, Morality and Society*, 20-21. Wall concurs when he writes, "The difference between adults and children does not lie in *whether* they struggle with their own (and others') good and evil, but in the extent to which they have acquired the social and cultural capabilities and means for doing so" (John Wall, "Childism and the Ethics of Responsibility," in *Children's Voices: Children's Perspectives in Ethics, Theology and Religious Education*, ed. Annemie Dillen and Didier Pollefeyt [Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010], 255).

⁶⁹ Middle-class British children, aged 9-11 years. These children came from two-parent families (Frankel, *Children, Morality and Society*, 35-36, 153).

⁷⁰ Moffett observes that the children in Boys' and Girls' Towns also sought a sense of belonging as citizens of those Towns. The children did not have a sense of belonging in other areas of their lives, which was one reason they were not living with their families. "When I speak of children and adolescents 'at the margins,' I am referring primarily to their psychological experience of not fully 'belonging' to reference groups that have, or could have, particular significance for the individual" (Moffett, "Promoting Agency," 40). Couture refers to this lack of belonging to significant groups, particularly groups that include adults who can aid children, as the poverty of tenuous connections (Couture, *Seeing Children, Seeing God*, 29-35). Jensen would likely refer to it as the experience of rejection (Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 93).

In order to ascertain the moral codes of their community, children require experience as well as guidance from people with whom they have relationships (137). The children Frankel interviewed saw their moral development as a learning process, and as they gained experience and understood the morality of various issues, they became able to assess the morality of situations for themselves (140-141). Learning to understand and to navigate their surroundings and their relationships with others is part of children's developing moral agency. In addition, children's existence and actions make an impression on the very environment that helps to form them.

Recall that numerous theological voices draw attention to the good and evil that children encounter in the world. While it is true that there are many aspects of a child's environment over which she has no control, the child is not completely determined by her surroundings. Rather, she is created by God as a person with an organic integrity that will be impacted by her experiences, but that also affects her surroundings, including the people in them. Her ability to influence and make meaning of her surroundings and experiences is part of what it means for her to have agency. It seems reasonable that another aspect of the child's developing moral agency is her capacity to engage in intentional actions, which I see as part of the interactive model (she is acting on her environment) that will foster her budding ability to be accountable for her actions.

John Wall advances an interactive model of children's agency, and he writes that a child's agency is a factor both of the child's environment's acting on her and of the child's ability to act on, interpret, and to an extent create her environment through her interaction with it.⁷¹ This interaction between the child and her environment occurs both

⁷¹ Wall, "Childhood Studies," 538.

passively and actively. Children cannot control certain dimensions of their lives, and Wall explains that they experience those dimensions passively. In other ways, children actively participate in their social worlds and do not simply mold themselves to the ways adults train them (539). This is not to negate the importance of socializing and morally educating a child. Rather, both the passive and the active aspects must be borne in mind in order not to “dehumanize” the child by overemphasizing either her agency or her need for moral and social education (541). Because Wall is articulating a view that sees people, and so children, as both interpreters of their worlds and as interpreted by their worlds, and because these worlds include those dimensions that benefit the child and those that harm her, his work follows on the theological anthropology that holds that children’s lives are shaped by both good and evil. The child is interpreting and acting upon the world by which she is influenced and shaped, and this is her agency (540).

When we accept that children are able to be moral agents, we see that teaching them to use that agency well and to make good moral choices is vital. To that end, Christine Gudorf endorses an increased level of agency for children within the family.⁷² Beginning with Catholic social teaching that advocates for all people to be involved in decision making in a society, she writes: “Social justice is best created not through merely attempting to persuade the powerful to take into consideration the needs of the powerless but through structural change that empowers the weak to recognize their own legitimate needs and to interact with others in order to meet them” (147). As promising as this teaching is, Gudorf notes that it has not been extended to children. She argues that families must operate with justice, meaning that children’s thoughts and needs must be

⁷² Christine Gudorf, “Rights of Children,” in *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, ed. Judith A. Dwyer (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994), 143-148.

taken seriously by their parents.⁷³ When children are allowed to participate in family decisions, they learn how to make decisions by being part of the process that affects their own lives (147). The implication for their agency is that participation will permit children to be active in family life rather than passively obedient. Further, learning discernment in decision making will aid in the development of their agency as well as prepare them to be adults who are responsibly accountable for their decisions.

Cristina Traina agrees that agency functions interactively, but she articulates the crucial distinction between acting morally and being accountable for those actions. She argues that children—even those who are quite young—should be reckoned moral agents.⁷⁴ Agency is a quality that develops with time, she claims. “Agency is not a skill or ability that one does not have today and achieves tomorrow; it is an ontological quality that deepens and develops in response to, and within the limits of, a social world” (29). Agency develops in relationship with other people and with one’s environment, and it is determined by whether one is engaging in “self-consciously moral action, which...is always contingent and interdependent” (21). At the same time, she argues that moral agency does not require the ability to give moral reasons for one’s actions, nor does it demand autonomy, accountability, or legal liability (21).

Traina emphasizes the significance of individuals’ interactions with their surroundings in the formation of their agency. Even before a person can articulate the

⁷³ One extension of this concept is the bond parents and children form in shared storytelling. Children gain a sense of themselves through this process, and they also learn emotional processing and development. See Robyn Fivush, “Parent-Child Reminiscing: Creating Best Love through Sharing Stories,” in *The Best Love of the Child: Being Loved and Being Taught to Love as the First Human Right*, ed. Timothy P. Jackson (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011).

⁷⁴ Cristina L. H. Traina, “Children and Moral Agency,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 29, no. 2 (2009): 21.

reasons for her responses to her surroundings, her responses are shaped by her circumstances and the information they convey to her.⁷⁵ As each person gains experience, she will gather new information from those experiences that will help to shape her responses to future situations. Children's unarticulated reserve of moral experience that influences their moral actions grows and changes quickly because they are still learning about their world and cannot yet express their reasons for acting in a particular way (24).

Traina also argues that autonomy is not necessary for agency. Theologically, she says, requiring autonomy as a necessary condition for "agency, accountability, and dignity before God" would risk eliminating the personhood of an individual in the face of the mitigating circumstances and actions of other people that affect her choices (24). All people must choose among what they determine are available options when making moral decisions. That those options are limited by and made in response to a particular set of circumstances does not remove the agency of the actor from the situation. Therefore, children, even in their dependence⁷⁶ and vulnerability,⁷⁷ are agents (24).

Finally, Traina holds that accountability cannot be required for a person to have agency; a person's blameworthiness cannot be identified with her ability to engage in moral acts (29). The reason it is appropriate not to hold children accountable as adults,

⁷⁵ Traina makes this statement in the course of discussing Nomy Arpaly's *Unprincipled Virtue: An Inquiry into Moral Agency* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), which I examine below. I am indebted to Traina's article for making me aware of Arpaly's work and its relevance for this project.

⁷⁶ Traina argues further that dependence is a circumstance that surrounds agency for all people (Traina, "Children and Moral Agency," 30-31). MacIntyre argues that the virtues of independence and autonomy need to be considered in conjunction with what he calls "the virtues of acknowledged dependence, and that a failure to understand this is apt to obscure some features of rational agency" (MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 8).

⁷⁷ Traina makes a case that victims of abuse also possess a level of agency (Traina, "Children and Moral Agency," 25-27).

Traina writes, is that “moral accountability is not a predictable, linear capacity gradually and permanently acquired but...one that we must continue to develop in response to life’s imperfect unpredictabilities. Thus, most children have acquired fewer moral languages of accountability than most adults, and all are ontological moral agents” (30).⁷⁸ Being a moral agent is part of what it means to be a human being; accountability is acquired. When we think about this in terms of children’s formation, the implication is that children must be afforded the time and opportunity to engage in actions that exercise their agency within limits that proscribe the level of harm that can result from those actions. For example, children need to learn that physical violence is not a morally acceptable way to acquire a toy from a playmate. If one child hits another child, that action can be described as a moral action, and the child should be corrected for it, but she should not be held accountable for assault.

As children grow, their experience and understanding of the world increases, and they learn to exercise their agency in response to the morality they have been taught and within the limitations of their particular circumstances. As they gain experience, they also increase their praiseworthiness and blameworthiness in those circumstances. Consider again the child who hits her playmate. A child who has been repeatedly corrected for hitting another child will likely be blamed for hitting again, whereas initial experimentation with hitting to get one’s own way will be less likely to incur blame. Caregivers might initially see refraining from hitting as something the child needs to

⁷⁸ Kate M. Ott echoes this distinction in her discussion of Traina, Beste, and Wall: “As children and adults, we will experience differing levels of autonomy and rational capacity throughout our lifetime, but we are all equally moral agents. Our accountability for our actions is not determined by whether or not we have agency, but by growing knowledge and experience of moral requirements to self and others” (Ott, “Searching for an Ethic,” 162).

learn. As children gain moral experience, we expect them to be able to apply that experience to new situations and to be accountable for their actions in similar situations in the future. Traina's assertion that accountability is not permanent or linear reminds us that children may be faced with situations so new that knowing how to behave in them is beyond what can be expected, and so they should not be blamed for their actions. The distinction between agency and accountability is crucial to arguing for children's moral agency while protecting them from blame that presumes a level of experience, discernment, and control that they are still developing.

Agency and accountability function within the conditions of good and evil each person encounters in the world. Interaction with sin in the world can limit one's choices as well as one's ability to recognize her accountability for the consequences of those choices, argues Darlene Weaver. She makes the case that "sin preconditions freedom because we become selves through social processes that are themselves sinful."⁷⁹ Focusing on structural violence, by which she means the organized repression of some people by others within a social context (examples are "racism, sexism, heterosexism, ageism, and economic oppression" [113]), Weaver makes the case that these structures, along with grace, are the pre-conditions of human agency (115).⁸⁰ She draws attention to the ways structural violence influences the agent-in-formation in two ways. First, the structural violence negatively impacts its victims. Second, because the violence is structural, people who act within its structure participate in it, often without knowing that they are perpetuating systems of violence and injustice, and in this way it "mask[s] the

⁷⁹ Darlene Fozard Weaver, *The Acting Person and the Christian Moral Life* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011), 112.

⁸⁰ Weaver's articulation of this is very much in line with Rahner's understanding of original sin and grace as conditioning human freedom (see above).

effects” their actions have on others in the world (113-114).⁸¹ When extending this idea to a consideration of children’s agency, we can see that children participate in structural violence without knowing that they are or understanding the import of their actions, and they should not be held accountable for participating in structural violence in the ways that adults are. While Weaver’s account is not concerned with children explicitly, it is a useful resource for considering children’s moral agency in the context of sin.

Kristin Herzog offers an explicit consideration of children’s agency within some of the worst cases of structural violence. Arguing that children are capable of being agents for good or for bad in the contexts in which they find themselves,⁸² she explores both types of agency. Children are capable of being cruel and of committing atrocious acts, but they are not responsible for having created the circumstances that sometimes lead to these actions (165-166). Within the problematic circumstances of children’s agency, her emphasis is on child labor and in particular on child soldiers. While she contends that there is room for cultural differences in what constitutes acceptable work for children (74-75), she insists that one area of child labor that should be abolished is child soldiering (83). When children are forced or recruited to be soldiers, they are in the complicated position of being both victims and agents.⁸³ Poverty, the adults who recruit them, and the war-torn, violent situation in which they live circumscribe their available options and train them to be violent (84, 86). The military leaders use the children for

⁸¹ Weaver maintains that God’s grace is necessary to correct the structural violence in the world (Weaver, *The Acting Moral Person*, 115).

⁸² Herzog, *Children and Our Global Future*, 1, 162.

⁸³ The same is true for many other child laborers as well (Herzog, *Children and Our Global Future*, 74-81).

their own purposes, in some truly horrifying ways.⁸⁴ At the same time, it is the children who do the killing, the torturing, and the fighting at the command of their military authorities.

Herzog notes that when the child's community of origin knows that the child has committed these evil acts, the relationship between the child and that community is understandably fractured. There are groups that work to rehabilitate the child soldiers and to reintegrate them into their communities, when possible. In some areas of Uganda, for example, people perform a ritual purification of former child soldiers before they are reaccepted into the community. The members of the community know that these children have killed. They have performed evil acts and they must be cleansed of the evil (88). The magnitude of their actions requires that the children be accountable on some level, but as Herzog points out, the children are also victims of the military leaders who recruit and use them. Herzog argues that allowing children to have agency bears the same risks that allowing adults to have agency does—people make bad choices sometimes. The way we respond to children who have done evil is the key to helping them learn why what they did was wrong and to learn the necessary skills and qualities to make better choices in the future (166).

Children are also able to be agents of good and of positive change. Herzog thinks that children's "dependence on love and care keeps them open to an ever new and surprising future, to the vitality and enjoyment of life itself, and to trusting relationships"

⁸⁴ "Child soldiers are favored by ruthless leaders because they are cheap and easily manipulated. They work as spies, guards, carriers, sex slaves, human shields, and removers of mines. Under the influence of alcohol or drugs they can turn into cold-blooded murderers" (Herzog, *Children and Our Global Future*, 83).

(165). Children can be taught to be agents of good,⁸⁵ as when children who have abundant material possessions can become aware of and choose to act in response to the crippling poverty of so many of the world's children (168). They can also be role models for adults and reminders of what we must become again (171). They can do this by serving as testimonials to adults of the need to protect and care for the environment (169), of the reality that human value subsists in being rather than in what a person is able to do (168), and of the peace that comes with reconciliation (170).

On these accounts, being able to interact with and interpret one's surroundings in both good and sinful ways is what makes a person a moral agent. Moral accountability and moral responsibility develop in a person over time, but the person herself is always an agent. Agents are active; they are learning and forming (sometimes unarticulated) ideas about how the world works, and they are acting in that world. Their interaction with their surroundings shapes their moral inclinations, which, in turn, drive their future actions. In the next section, I turn to the question of what motivates a person to make moral choices.

Moral Motivation

Moral actions are rarely the result solely of rational moral reasons that can be articulated as such. Rather, a person's individual history, her experiences, and her emotions also contribute to her motivation to act as she does. In this section, I consider

⁸⁵ See also Peter L. Bensen and Eugene C. Roehlkepartain, "When 'Good Enough' Isn't Really Good Enough: Aiming for the 'Best' for All Young People," in *The Best Love of the Child: Being Loved and Being Taught to Love as the First Human Right*, ed. Timothy P. Jackson (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011), 34-35. Bensen and Roehlkepartain argue that children's moral formation must include teaching and expecting them to use their gifts to be agents of good.

different views of moral motivation. By moral motivation, I mean to include those factors that influence a person to respond to a situation in a particular way, which is related to but not reducible to the person's moral judgment of the situation.⁸⁶ Moral motivation is part of moral agency; it is what drives a person to action. A person's interaction with her surroundings helps form the meaning she makes of the world and her understanding of moral situations. Even at a sub-conscious level, this understanding shapes her motivation to notice and respond to those situations. Emotions are crucial to attaining moral understanding and to moral motivation.

Robert Coles is a pediatrician and psychiatrist who has studied children in particularly difficult situations, such as racial integration in the U.S. South in the 1960s and the poverty of the *favelas* in Brazil. He is concerned with how and why a person learns to become what we would call a moral person who makes good choices and behaves in good ways, but he does not attempt to provide simple answers to the questions. Coles's focus is on people's concrete actions rather than on their ability to articulate moral principles.⁸⁷ This distinction is important to him, because he holds that while we can teach rules and reasons to people, real situations will call for action, and that action will be based on factors that go beyond reflection and rational rules.⁸⁸ The circumstances of a child's life and the influences of the adults around her will be key to determining her moral development and her motivation to act in particular ways. At the

⁸⁶ Moral motivation is not a resolved issue in philosophy. See Connie S. Rosati, "Moral Motivation," in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2008 Edition, ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/moral-motivation/>.

⁸⁷ Robert Coles, *The Moral Life of Children* (Boston, MA: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986), 26.

⁸⁸ Coles, *Moral Life*, 21; Robert Coles, *The Moral Intelligence of Children* (New York: Random House, 1997), 10, 131.

same time, children are not simply molded by those around them. Some children exhibit qualities that help them to act in more moral ways than others.

A striking example of the influence of parents on children's reasons for acting comes from Coles's interview with a woman reflecting on her upbringing in pre-Civil-Rights New Orleans.⁸⁹ She recalls that her father would spew venomous rhetoric regarding racial minorities, Catholics, and Jews (226-227). Her mother worked hard not to hate these groups and to show the children that the father's hatred was not to be emulated; she winked at them when he went on a drunken verbal rampage (227). That kind of counter-force was deeply influential to this woman, whose mother also encouraged her to use whatever means she could to get out of the poverty in which they lived. (The woman was a beauty queen and was able to use that to escape her poverty. She also educated herself through reading and taking courses at Tulane University [227].) The woman's brother, on the other hand, was materially rewarded in one poignant instance for his perpetuation of the hatred their father was teaching them. The father paid the brother \$5 for swearing at an African-American woman (228). While the woman Coles interviewed was able to leave her impoverished life and marry a rich man, her brother joined the Ku Klux Klan (228). The children grew up in the same home with similar influences, but they developed along different paths, even at a very early age. The reason each was shaped by a different set of influences is not what concerns Coles. The result, however, points to the agency of the children at work as they made meaning of their parents' actions and the racial tensions in their community, and then acted on the motivation that that cultivated. One child chose to follow the path of actively

⁸⁹ Coles, *Moral Life*, 226-228.

perpetuating racism, while the other child acted in ways that allowed her to escape the poverty of her childhood. Although they were raised in the same household, the children's interaction with their environment—which includes their exercise of agency within that that environment—led them to be morally motivated to act in different ways.

A second example illustrates the influence the community can have on children as well. Coles tells the story of a young girl named Marty,⁹⁰ the 13-year-old daughter of a family of migrant farmers, who was the sole survivor of a car crash that took the lives of her father and one of her brothers (113). Coles tells of Marty's spiritual reflectiveness and empathy for others. Her life was impoverished and in many ways quite harsh, and yet she yearned to be a source of comfort and care to those around her. As Coles reflects on his encounters with her, he is impressed by her spirit and moral purpose (118), and he notes that her family, under the leadership of her mother, stayed close to as much of a community as they could muster in their lifestyle (124). There was a minister (118), a nurse who worked with the migrant families (120-121), and a teacher (121-122), all of whom were supportive of Marty and her family. Coles also credits Marty's deep religious faith for giving her a purpose and a direction in her moral life (123-124). These relationships offered moral examples as well as support and protection to a vulnerable child.

Somehow, Marty's supportive relationships translated into her being morally motivated by a concern for others.⁹¹ The ability to see beyond themselves is an important aspect of children's moral development. Coles remarks, "Generally speaking, what characterizes a not-so-good person is a heightened, destructive self-absorption, in all its

⁹⁰ Coles, *Moral Life*, 113-125.

⁹¹ Coles, *Moral Life*, 119-120.

melancholy variations.”⁹² It is difficult for children to learn a level of moral connection with others when they are feeling vulnerable themselves. Coles argues that feeling susceptible can undermine moral connectedness in two ways. “This tendency to flee ourselves, either to take moral cover in the company of others or to place ourselves at a firm distance *from* others, is no small aspect of a child’s growing moral life.”⁹³ The connection is important both in terms of having supportive, nurturing connections with others, and in terms of seeing oneself as an actor in those relationships.

Coles’s experience with children leads him to conclude that they are moral beings who are making moral choices, and their choices are influenced to a large extent by their surroundings. They are learning from those around them about what kinds of behavior are moral and acceptable, and they are learning either to distance themselves from the other or to cultivate a sense of empathy for the other, and those distinctions play out in their actions. This is not to say that the children are reflecting abstractly on their surroundings, but rather that their moral actions are shaped by their experiences, including what they witness adults doing, and how they internalize those experiences.⁹⁴

Rational reflection was not required for the kind of influences that shaped the moral motivation Coles noticed in his interactions with children. They were often influenced by the actions of the adults who surrounded them, and they learned to engage other people with empathy or to distance themselves from others through their experiences with particular people and situations. It is also possible to argue

⁹² Coles, *Moral Intelligence*, 22.

⁹³ Coles, *Moral Life*, 241.

⁹⁴ Coles, *Moral Intelligence*, 132. Coles wonders about but does not provide an answer to the question of how people end up with the qualities they do: Why some are strong in the face of adversity and others are weak; why some privileged children become good and others lack moral strength (Coles, *Moral Life*, 94, 106, 112).

philosophically that conscious reasoning is not necessary for moral motivation. Nomy Arpaly is a moral philosopher whose book *Unprincipled Virtue* addresses this issue of moral motivation that does not stem from conscious rational processes. Her work does not deal with children specifically, but it encourages a broader understanding of rational decision making and moral agency that has implications for how we consider the moral agency of children.

Arpaly focuses on the possibility that people can (although they do not always) make rational moral decisions based on emotions or reasons that they cannot articulate or have not yet articulated, and that sometimes the best course of action is that which is against one's best judgment. This is relevant for the current study because it means that articulated, conscious rationality is not necessary for an action to be either moral or rational. When Arpaly refers to acting rationally, she assumes, "for the purposes of argument, that one only has a reason to act in a certain way to the extent that the relevant course of action is likely, given one's beliefs, to satisfy one's desires, and that acting rationally, whatever it turns out to be, involves doing what one has overwhelming reasons

to do, for these reasons.”⁹⁵ She includes beliefs made in and based on emotional states as legitimate responses to the data at hand.⁹⁶

It is sometimes difficult to distinguish between rationality and irrationality in practice, both when looking at others and at ourselves (60). Arpaly argues that *akrasia*, which she defines as, “acting against one’s best judgment” (35), is not always irrational. Indeed, she thinks that sometimes when people act against their best judgment, they are following the most rational course of action. A somewhat obvious case of this would be a person whose best judgment was based on mistaken assumptions or beliefs. Less obviously, sometimes people’s reasons for doing what they do are deep-seated and are not conscious to them.⁹⁷ They act in a way that is against their best articulated judgment, but their decision is based on what would actually—given all their circumstance, beliefs, and desires—be in their best interest, although those reasons might be unconscious to

⁹⁵ Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 37. I understand Arpaly to mean satisfying one’s desires in a very broad sense, not as an indication that morality is merely directed toward self-interest. Her paradigmatic example of Huck Finn’s protection of Jim indicates that she sees Huck’s actions being morally praiseworthy and rational even though they are not directed toward himself. Further, the issue of whether moral actions can ever be truly empathic and altruistic or are always driven by some level of self-interest is one that continues to be debated (Jesse J. Prinz, “The Moral Emotions,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie [New York: Oxford University Press, 2010], 520).

⁹⁶ “A belief formed in some sort of an emotional state—even a belief generated by an emotional state—is not necessarily a belief that does not respond to evidential considerations” (Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 44).

⁹⁷ Philosopher Patricia Greenspan makes the case that unconscious emotions can also serve as motivators. “We sometimes have multiple propositional objects of the same feeling, one of them unrecognized but causally operative, the other wrongly identified as the feeling’s cause.” It is only upon recognizing the unconscious cause of the emotion, thus bringing it to consciousness, that the agent is able to make decisions about whether to allow that emotion to continue to have motivational force (Patricia S. Greenspan, *Emotions and Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification* [New York: Routledge, 1988], 27-28).

them at the time.⁹⁸ Arpaly employs a term called “inverse *akrasia*,” to refer to these “cases in which an agent does the right thing but does so against her best judgment.”⁹⁹

This is an explanation for the kind of person who holds official views that are considered problematic (racist, sexist, etc.) but in practice is kind and caring to those of a different race or sex. The person’s articulated moral reasons do not match her actions, although her actions would still be considered rational and moral.

Arpaly does not require deliberation to be a part of rational decisions or actions.¹⁰⁰ Because children are less well-equipped for rational deliberation, her position is significant for bringing them into the moral conversation. Arpaly argues that deliberation cannot be part of every decision or action that we would call rational. In cases of fast, almost reflexive action (she uses the examples of a tennis player and fast conversation), people do not have time to deliberate but must act quickly, and yet their actions would still be called rational. Further, the case of deliberation itself illustrates the non-necessity of deliberation regarding a rational decision. If deliberation were required to make a rational decision, then in order for the deliberation to be rational, one would have to deliberate whether to deliberate in a particular case, and then deliberate about whether to deliberate about deliberating, and so on in infinite regression (57). In addition, sometimes

⁹⁸ “[O]ne can act for good reasons (where good reasons are thought of in terms of desire satisfaction given one’s beliefs) without *knowing* that one is acting for good reasons” (Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 50).

⁹⁹ Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 75. Huck Finn’s not turning in Jim to the slave catchers is a classic example, she says. Huck chastises himself for his weak will and thinks he should be turning Jim in, but he cannot bring himself to do it (Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 9).

¹⁰⁰ Neuroscientific studies support the rejection of a dichotomous view of deliberative and automatic information processing (Michael L. Spezio, “The Neuroscience of Emotion and Reasoning in Social Contexts,” *Modern Theology* 27 no. 2 [2011]: 231-232).

people have what she calls “dawning” experiences, where, upon extended exposure to new evidence, they change their minds without deliberating (54). This can be a rational experience, but it is not necessarily one.

This ability to use prior knowledge in an effective way in decision making seems to have a connection to emotion. This will be discussed in more depth in the next chapter, but at this point it is worth noting that emotions feature in a person’s morality because a morally concerned person will find the thought of doing something immoral “quite painful.”¹⁰¹ Arpaly cites neuroscientist Antonio Damasio’s study wherein patients whose brain damage removed their ability to feel emotions were found to be very bad at practical reasoning.¹⁰² These patients made bad decisions precisely because they did not have “feeling-based access to their own background knowledge in making those decisions” (59). People who are able to access their feelings have emotional responses to some possible courses of action based on their past experiences and do not deliberate over every possibility. For example, Arpaly says that the idea of assigning Martin Heidegger’s *Being and Time* in an introductory-level undergraduate philosophy course causes her to feel amusement and thus is not deliberated upon but simply dismissed. This

¹⁰¹ Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 86. The other two features of moral concern are motivation (which she defines as how likely one is to act on one’s moral convictions) and cognition (a morally concerned person “notices morally salient things that a person indifferent to morality would not notice”).

¹⁰² Arpaly, *Unprincipled Virtue*, 58, citing a study by Antonio Damasio recounted in his book *Descartes’ Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1994). Spezio provides a clear account of Damasio’s study of Phineas Gage’s case (Spezio, “The Neuroscience of Emotion and Reasoning in Social Contexts,” 226-228). Mattison also cites Damasio’s study and observes that even when patients could reason through possible courses of action in a moral dilemma, they might still not know what to do in a real situation (William C. Mattison, III, “Examining the Role of the Emotions in the Moral Life: Thomas Aquinas and Neuropsychology,” in *Theology and the Social Sciences*, ed. Michael H. Barnes [Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001], 285).

dismissal is a rational, although not deliberated, decision. She concludes that rational actions can—and sometimes must—spring from something other than deliberation and that “no action and no belief is purely the result of deliberation” (59). Deliberation is always, at every stage, informed by prior experience that is not itself deliberative.

Arpaly’s analysis is helpful for considering virtuous moral agency because a virtuous person is virtuous in her daily life, not just in moments of great moral challenge, and daily life is lived in a largely non-deliberative way. Her argument that Huckleberry Finn acts in a morally praiseworthy way and for morally significant reasons when he does not turn in Jim to the slave catchers¹⁰³ indicates that her theory has relevance for considering children and their morality. Huck’s reasons for protecting Jim stem from his experience of getting to know Jim as a fellow human being. Although Huck’s articulated stance remains racist, his actual moral reasons for acting have shifted, through the kind of dawning experience mentioned above, to those of someone who views Jim as a person of equal value to himself (77). Without the benefit of being able to reason abstractly (75, 77), Huckleberry Finn’s receptivity to new experience provides him with the moral reasons to act in a praiseworthy way (76). This argument can be extended to a consideration of all children, whose inchoate rational powers disallow their reasoning their way to conclusions about what is morally right. If Arpaly is right, and I am inclined to think she is, then children’s experience, intuition, and emotions can lead to their having moral reasons that have not yet surfaced in their rational consciousness, and this must be included when considering their moral agency and motivation.

¹⁰³ See also Jonathan Bennett, “The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn,” *Philosophy* 49 (1974): 123-134.

In addition to shaping some of the moral reasons that motivate action, emotions also play a crucial role in moral concern, which is another important part of moral motivation. Lisa Damm makes a case for the necessity of emotion for moral motivation based on her consideration of studies of persons whose psychological conditions have left them with diminished emotional capacities.¹⁰⁴ Distinguishing moral judgment (an agent's ability to assess the morality of a situation) from moral motivation (an agent's reason for doing something), she finds that persons without affective capacities are unable to be morally concerned and so moved to act morally. Moral judgments result from moral reasoning, but moral motivation is distinctly tied to emotion and "is a concern for what is right or wrong based on considerations involving the welfare of other individuals in their community" (276). She finds that emotion contributes to moral motivation in three ways. First, a person must feel concern for others in order to be motivated morally. She needs to understand and be perceptive of the needs of other people in order to be able to take moral concepts from the abstract and understand why she should follow them. Second, a person must be able to grasp that other people also have feelings and concerns, and she must be able to recognize these in others in order to be motivated to act morally. This is a kind of emotional perspicuity with respect to others that persons with impaired emotional capacities (specifically persons with autism) have exhibited difficulty developing.¹⁰⁵ Third, and very much in agreement with Arpaly's assessment above, "emotions represent

¹⁰⁴ Lisa Damm, "Emotions and Moral Agency," 275-292. Her account ties moral agency to moral responsibility, which differs from my working definition; however, I find her distinction between moral judgment and moral motivation and the role of emotion in the latter to be convincing regardless of whether one holds a person responsible for her actions or not.

¹⁰⁵ Damm summarizes some of the research on persons with autism (Damm, "Emotions and Moral Agency," 280-281).

a source of embodied knowledge that contributes toward helping persons select and act in accordance with moral decisions in their lives” (288). On this account, emotion is necessary for moving from abstract concepts to understanding why those concepts are important and acting on them in one’s life—in other words, for moral motivation. This is not to remove the importance of moral reasoning for arriving at moral judgments, but it does point to the necessity of more than reason in moral motivation and moral action. These are the kinds of emotional qualities that become significant when considering children’s moral development from the perspective of emotions, as we shall see in the next chapter.

Children are in relationship with God and with other people because they are human beings created in God’s image. Their moral agency is based on the individual child’s ability to interact with and contribute to the good and evil in her environment. The child’s agency grows and develops in connection and relationship with other people. Because she is created in God’s image and in relationship with God, her agency is not in competition with God, but rather is most fully human when it is most dependent on God. Finally, much of the child’s interacting with and learning to negotiate the world in which she lives occur at an emotional level. Children might feel an emotional connection or degree of choice that moves them to have a positive experience of their action, as with the second graders in Beste’s study. They might also have unexpressed, unconscious emotional experiences that lead them to make decisions that are contrary to their articulated stance, as with Huck Finn and his decision not to turn in Jim to the slave catchers. As the child grows and develops, her moral agency develops as well, and her emotions will continue to be integral to her agency and moral growth. In the next chapter,

I explore some contemporary theological and philosophical views of the role of emotions in morality and moral development.

CHAPTER 2: THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN CHILDREN'S MORAL DEVELOPMENT—CONTEMPORARY VIEWS

Emotions are far from value-neutral. Quite the contrary, the idea that emotions are fundamentally ethical is not new, according to Robert Solomon, who provides a brief history of Western thought on the emotions. He acknowledges that philosophers have at times been skeptical of the potential emotions have to contribute positively to a person's life. Even those thinkers, such as Aristotle and Hume, whose work is now used to explain or champion the place of emotion as central to human life, required that emotion or passion be subservient to reason.¹ There were early Christian thinkers who designated some emotions as sinful, categorizing certain emotions, such as envy and lust, as among the seven deadly sins.² At the same time, throughout history, some philosophers and theologians have viewed emotions as necessary to the moral life. Aristotle held that emotions are moral, and he incorporated emotion into his theory of virtue—one must feel the right emotion, in the right way, to the right extent, at the right time. Some early Christians elevated particular emotions, such as gratitude, to a divine status.³ Aquinas's

¹ Robert Solomon, *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life* (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993), 10.

² Robert Solomon, *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 130-131.

³ Solomon, *True to Our Feelings*, 130-131.

theory of emotions draws on Aristotle's, and we will see below that he holds that if emotions are properly formed and cultivated, they can contribute to a person's virtue.

Emotions are morally significant because they are involved in moral motivation and because emotions can indicate the value people place on the objects that elicit the emotions. A person who has developed compassion will experience an emotional response to the suffering of others. However, if she is overcome with grief at the sight of a child crying as the child receives a vaccination against a life-threatening disease, we would likely conclude that her emotions are not virtuous in that instance. She might be feeling the right emotion (compassion for the child who is frightened or in some pain), but it is excessive since we know that the vaccination will benefit the child more than it hurts her. Experiencing the right emotion in the right way at the right time can motivate a person to act in ways that are appropriate to the situation because her emotions have allowed her to notice the morally salient aspects of the situation and, if something is morally amiss, to determine what needs to change to rectify the situation. Many philosophers and theologians argue that emotions also play a role in moral development, which has direct bearing on the current study of children's moral agency.

I begin this chapter with a consideration of philosophical cognitive theories of emotion, which argue that emotions are fundamentally evaluative judgments or thoughts.⁴

⁴ John Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions in Modern Philosophy and Psychology," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17. Cognitive theories are distinguished from accounts of emotions that stem from the work of William James. James identifies emotions with the bodily feelings that are associated with them (Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 20; Solomon, *True to Our Feelings*, 139). On James's view, a person does not cry because she is sad. She is sad because she cries. For him, a person's hearing tragic news results in neurological and physiological changes that produce crying, and the crying is prior to the experience of sadness (Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 20). Contemporary neo-

In my consideration of these theories, I find that their focus centers on what the emotion is in terms of the person's internal experience. The cognitive dimension is what allows emotion to be morally evaluated and educated. Cognitive theories of emotion are useful in a number of ways for considering children's emotions, but because they tend to define emotion as a category of thought conceived in terms of propositions, they limit the experience of emotion to those people who have developed rational powers, thus excluding children from the discussion. This is one reason I will look beyond cognitive theories when constructing an account of children's moral agency. Another reason is that I agree with the literature that argues that if children are to develop morally, they must learn to detach their thinking from their emotions enough to assess whether any given emotional response is warranted and is leading them toward a good end. If they are to grow in virtue (as Aquinas defines it), they must then reintegrate their emotions with their thoughts and wills such that they want to do that which they think and understand to be good. Such a distinction and reintegration requires that emotions not be defined as thoughts.

In the second section, I explore theories of emotion that include a cognitive dimension but are not exclusively cognitive. The emphasis among these thinkers is on what the emotion means in terms of the person's moral development in response to and relation with her surroundings. Within this body of scholarship, some philosophers and

Jamesians, basing their theories on neuroscientific findings, maintain the physiological foundation of emotions. They claim that non-deliberative actions (crying, recoiling in fear) are constitutive of the emotion (Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 33). These are not moral actions, nor are emotions conceived in this way a source of moral motivation to engage in moral action. Further, this physiological view seems to remove education of the emotions as a means of fostering moral development in children. For these reasons, I do not find the neo-Jamesian accounts useful in thinking about moral agency in children.

theologians address the agency of the individual as an actor for whom emotions are motivational. A few of the scholars whose work I review discuss children's emotional development explicitly, but most do not, and in those cases, I will indicate the implications of their work for considering children's moral development. In each section, I begin by engaging philosophical scholarship and then move to theological scholarship.

Although I am not proposing a definitive theory of emotion,⁵ my understanding of emotion for this project has been informed by cognitive thinkers such as Martha Nussbaum and Robert Solomon, as well as those whose theories move beyond strict cognitivism, most notably Diana Fritz Cates, and I will discuss their theories more fully later in this chapter. I argue that emotions have both cognitive and moral dimensions. An emotion, as I will use the term,⁶ is a multifaceted response to an object or situation, and that object or situation can be real (I am afraid of a violent bull who is in an enclosed field with me), perceived but not real (I am afraid of the violent bull who is in the field,

⁵ Given the complicated nature of emotions, some scholars have called for a cessation of attempting to articulate a coherent emotional theory in favor of engaging each emotional theorist on his or her own terms to understand that particular thinker's approach to emotions. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty advances such a plea (Rorty, "Enough Already with 'Theories of the Emotions,'" in *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, ed. Robert C. Solomon [New York: Oxford University Press, 2004]). Elsewhere, Rorty argues for the complexity of emotions. "Emotions do not form a natural class. A set of distinctions that has generally haunted the philosophy of mind stands in the way of giving good descriptions of the phenomena." Those distinctions include passivity and activity, the degree to which psychological states can be explained physically, rational-irrational versus non-rational, and voluntariness (Rorty, "Explaining Emotions," in *Explaining Emotions* [Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980], 104).

⁶ I am not distinguishing between emotion and passion in this chapter. Most of the literature I engage uses the term "emotion," but a few scholars (notably Solomon and Harak) use "passions" to refer to the same phenomena that others define as emotion. I will use the term emotion throughout this chapter except when quoting material from authors who use the term passion. In chapter three, I will explain the distinction between emotion and passion as it pertains to Aquinas's thought.

but the bull is safely confined even though I cannot tell that he is confined), or imagined (I am sitting in a room imagining being in a field with the bull, and I am afraid of the imagined bull). The person experiencing the emotion will usually experience an affective response and/or have a physiological response associated with the emotion. An emotion is elicited by something that is of value to the person, and as such, the emotion has moral implications and can be a factor in her moral motivation. Because emotions include cognition, they are somewhat controllable and, equally important when considering children's emotional development, educable. Further, as people live and gain experience, they develop emotional patterns that can either foster or inhibit moral development. These emotional patterns often become habitual such that people's emotional responses include a history. That is, emotions from a person's past will frequently resurface in new circumstances, and her way of responding emotionally will usually follow a predictable pattern. This is of paramount importance when considering children's emotional development because it means that the patterns people establish in childhood have life-long repercussions.

What Is an Emotion?

Philosophical Contributions

Current philosophical literature contains a broad range of perspectives regarding what emotions are and their relationship to the value people place on the objects that elicit emotion. Philosophers hold different views regarding the duration of emotion. There is discussion but no consensus on whether a person can change an emotion she is experiencing, or how a person can alter her predisposition to have particular emotions in

response to particular objects. (I will return to this issue in chapter four.) Because most of the theories of emotion are focused on the emotions of adults, children remain largely on the periphery of the conversation. (Martha Nussbaum is one notable exception to this tendency, although her treatment of children is susceptible to critiques that cause me to look beyond it when considering emotion's place in children's moral formation and agency.) However, contemporary theology of children maintains that they are fully human and bear a measure of moral agency. The emotional dimension of human experience can assist us in advancing the case for children's moral agency, and the cognitive dimension of emotions helps explain the moral import of emotions.

The thinkers I engage in this section ascribe at least a cognitive dimension to emotion, and some promote a fully cognitive theory. Because cognitive theories of emotions take evaluative judgments to be constitutive of emotion, these theories hold that emotions themselves can be evaluated to ascertain whether or not they are warranted, given the circumstances in which they arise.⁷ For example, if I am frightened because I am in a pen with a violent bull, my fear is warranted because the bull poses a real danger to me. Both my judgment of the danger and the associated emotion (fear) are warranted. On the other hand, if I am afraid of a bull that I know has been tranquilized and is safely contained away from me, then my fear is not warranted because the bull at that time poses no threat or danger. I am judging something to be a danger that is not, in fact, a danger, and so my judgment and the emotion it constitutes are not warranted. If the judgment is appropriate and accurate, then the emotion is as well, because the emotion is essentially the judgment. An incorrect judgment will result in an unwarranted emotion,

⁷ Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 26.

and cognitive theories maintain that changing one's cognitive judgment will change the associated emotion.⁸

In addition to evaluating a given emotion, cognitive theories provide tools to aid us in distinguishing among emotions. The example John Deigh cites is the distinction between contempt and anger in response to another person's bad behavior. Contempt is based on a judgment that the other person is "low or unworthy of your esteem in view of that behavior." Anger, on the other hand, results from the judgment that the other person's behavior has in some way wronged or insulted you or someone close to you.⁹ Being able to distinguish among emotions and to determine an emotion's appropriateness can be useful in thinking about the moral quality of emotions because it allows us to reflect on our emotions and the judgments that constitute them.

Martha Nussbaum's cognitive theory of emotions¹⁰ is particularly relevant to this dissertation both because she views emotions as deeply connected to ethics, and because she addresses the emotions and emotional development of children with respect to morality.¹¹ For Nussbaum, emotion is not composed in part of a cognitive element; an emotion *is* cognitive judgment. While she understands cognition broadly, the focus remains thought.¹² Nussbaum explains her view of emotions:

⁸ There can be cases where the memory of an emotional experience results in the emotion surfacing again, even when the object of the emotion does not warrant it. In such a case, the memory of a frightening experience with a violent bull might well cause me to be afraid even of a tranquilized, contained bull.

⁹ Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 26.

¹⁰ Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹¹ Nussbaum discusses the emotions of infants and children in the fourth chapter of her text, "Emotions and Infancy" (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 174-237).

¹² Cates summarizes Nussbaum's inclusive concept of thought: "It includes, for example, entertaining an initial appearance, assenting to an appearance as 'the way things *are*,'

[E]motions are appraisals or value judgments, which ascribe to things and persons outside the person's own control great importance for that person's own flourishing. It thus contains three salient ideas: the idea of a *cognitive appraisal* or *evaluation*; the idea of *one's own flourishing* or *one's important goals and projects*; and the idea of the *salience of external objects as elements in one's own scheme of goals*.¹³

Thus, for Nussbaum, emotions are deeply personal because they involve an individual's "important goals and projects," and because they are the evaluative judgments of whether an external condition will have bearing on those goals and projects that are important to the person. But it is because emotions involve judgments that Nussbaum argues they must be included as necessary components in systems of ethical reasoning (1).

Evaluative judgment is crucial to Nussbaum's conception of an emotion. If a person judges the value of an object to be inconsequential, she will not experience an emotional response to the object. Nussbaum is not saying that the emotion might or might not follow the person's judgment. The judgment that an object has value in the way Nussbaum describes is itself the emotion, and this value judgment is all that is necessary for something to qualify as an emotion (56-57). According to Nussbaum, feelings often accompany emotion, but they are neither necessary nor sufficient for emotion. The kinds of feelings she is referring to are "without rich intentionality or cognitive content, let us say feelings of fatigue, of extra energy, of boiling, of trembling, and so forth" (60). Even

pondering one's goals and projects, and assessing what is happening with a particular object that bears on one's goals and projects. 'Thought' includes picturing an event in one's imagination; it also includes apprehending formal musical structures that embody 'ideas' of urgent need. Emotions are thoughts about 'how things are with respect to the external (i.e., uncontrolled) items that we view as salient for our well-being.' They are 'judgments in which the mind of the judge is projected unstably outward,' like a 'geological upheaval,' into a world full of value" (Diana Fritz Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry* [Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009], 50-51).

¹³ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 4, emphasis in original.

those feelings that frequently accompany a particular emotion are not necessary for the emotion to be occurring (60-61).

Nussbaum does not propose that all feelings are detached from the moral realm. She argues that *some* emotions are feelings, but not all emotions involve feelings, and not all feelings are emotions. Rather, some feelings, namely those with “rich intentionality,” very frequently are part of an emotion. Nussbaum explains that intentional feelings—“feelings of the emptiness of one’s life without a certain person, feelings of unhappy love for that person, and so forth” (60)—are of a different kind than non-intentional feelings, and are more properly identified as judgments and evaluations (60). Thus, feelings that can be identified with value judgments can be considered emotions, but non-intentional feelings cannot. Further, emotions may be nonconscious, but feelings are not (61). Nonconscious emotions will, therefore, be different from emotions that are intentional feelings. Nor are emotions necessarily physiological, although she does qualify this statement by saying that physiological manifestations often accompany emotions and that it is not clear from the available research which physiological effects are caused by the emotion and which might be constitutive of it (58).

Nussbaum also draws a distinction between those emotions that arise from an encounter with a specific object or circumstance, and those that are long-term and continue through the vicissitudes of life. Situational emotions arise when particular circumstances elicit them (69). “Background” emotions persist over time and are often nonconscious. Love for a significant person in one’s life or anger at a continuing injustice are the kinds of emotions that Nussbaum refers to as background. The reason she argues that these are emotions is that they are based on evaluative judgments pertaining to the

flourishing of the individual experiencing them, and they tend to affect the choices and actions of that person (70-71). The category of background emotions—some of which begin in childhood—is significant for considering the ways emotions can affect a person throughout her life, including the contribution they can make to her development of virtue.

Nussbaum explores children's emotions because she holds that emotions that begin in childhood have relevance within the larger context of a human life. She argues that it is not possible to understand a person's emotions when she is an adult without appreciating whence they came—that is, without understanding their history (179, 231-232). The history of an emotion includes the object of that emotion and its intentional content. Intentional content is the active perception that the person who experiences an emotion has of the object of that emotion. The object is not observed in a detached way such that the person notices it and then simply moves on; it is something that is perceived as having meaning for the person. This attributed significance tends to persist with respect to the particular object, and it can also be transferred to objects that trigger similar emotional responses. In this way, a person's emotional responses to situations in her life reflect the emotional pattern that Nussbaum refers to as background emotions. Because she identifies emotions with evaluative judgments, it would follow that the history of an emotion is also the history of habitual experiences of evaluative judgments. Accordingly, when a person encounters new objects or situations, she brings this history with her and evaluates and responds to the new objects in ways that draw on and are shaped by the emotional responses that were directed toward objects in her past (175). Thus, the emotion a person experiences at a point in her life beyond early childhood will be

directed toward the current object of the emotion, but it will often also be directed toward the experience of similar emotions in her past. Nussbaum writes, “new objects of love and anger and fear bear the traces of earlier objects; one’s emotions toward them are frequently therefore also, in both intensity and configuration, emotions toward one’s own past” (175).

This view of emotions that includes their history places weight on children’s emotions in a particular way because those experiences will shape the emotional landscape of a given child’s life for the whole of that life. However, the value the person ascribes to the object of her emotion can be based on a faulty view of that object (27-28), and so her emotion might be appropriate to her perception and at the same time be inappropriate to the object as it is in reality.¹⁴ This possibility brings into question the reliability of emotions for decision-making and as the basis for action. It is also significant when considering the development of children’s emotional patterns. If those patterns are based on inaccurate perceptions that are not corrected, the person will have great difficulty changing her emotional habits when she is older because they will have become habitual evaluative judgments that are also invested with meaning regarding her “conception of well-being” (233). I would add that in addition to shaping situational emotions, early patterns of emotion will begin to determine the kinds of experiences that Nussbaum refers to as background emotions that will persist in a person’s life. For example, a person will be more likely to develop a background emotion of love toward her mother if her early experiences of her mother are emotionally positive. The importance of childhood emotional experiences to a person’s later emotional life is

¹⁴ I will address whether anyone can know what “reality” is below.

reminiscent of Rahner's claim that childhood is brought with the person as she grows and that it has ramifications on the rest of her life.¹⁵ Nussbaum's analysis underscores the dimension of emotional history that will shape the child's emotional responses for the rest of her life.¹⁶ How, then, does Nussbaum think emotions develop in an infant and young child?

There are three main issues that Nussbaum addresses as she explores emotions in infancy. The first two deal with the normal development of emotions and their relationship to ethics. To wit, she asks whether there are aspects of a normal emotional development that promote moral formation, and whether there are aspects of a normal emotional development that are "intrinsically problematic from the ethical viewpoint." The third issue involves variations in emotional development, both individually and socially or culturally, and she inquires to what degree it is possible to optimize development so that it assists moral dispositions (179).

Nussbaum's description of the normal course of children's emerging emotional patterns involves children's sense of self and their awareness of their lack of power. Both recognitions occur very early in an infant's life and are interrelated. The infant becomes aware "that some processes of profound importance to one's being are arriving and departing in a way that eludes control" (190). I take these processes to refer to the array of things that are important to an infant's thriving. There are pleasant arrivals such as the arrival of food when the infant is hungry and warmth when she is cold; there are also uncomfortable situations due to illness, pain, and so on. All of these appetitive, bodily

¹⁵ Rahner, "Ideas for a Theology of Childhood," 35-36.

¹⁶ Nussbaum cites neurological studies that support the idea that established emotional patterns are resistant to change (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 115, see also 36, 233).

desires are highly significant for the infant experiencing them (her sense of self), and none of them are within the infant's control either to bring about or to alleviate. (The infant's crying may—and should—elicit a response from the caregiver, but the act of crying itself does not directly bring about the arrival of a response. Whether or not the caregiver—if there is a caregiver in the vicinity—is able or willing to respond to the infant at any given moment is beyond the child's control.) Infants also have the need for security and holding, which Nussbaum distinguishes from the appetitive desire.¹⁷ It is the recognition both that these arrivals are significant and that they lie outside one's control that Nussbaum says is constitutive of early emotions (190).

The child's emotions at this point are without a distinct object, but Nussbaum argues that as the child learns to distinguish between herself and others, the objects of her emotions become more clear (190-191). Eventually, the infant learns that other people are complete people who continue to exist independently of her (191). Emotions in infants are inchoate cognitive appraisals, and they “arise out of the infant's developing awareness of the uncertainty of the good and its [the infant's] own lack of omnipotence” (200).¹⁸ As the infant grows, emotions become her “map of the world” through which she is aware of good and bad things outside of herself that are, to a large extent, beyond her control (206-207). She also comes to learn that good and bad exist within herself, and the

¹⁷ Aquinas has a broader understanding of appetite, as we will see below.

¹⁸ Nussbaum refers to infants as “it” but changes to the personal pronoun “she” when the child grows beyond infancy and Nussbaum considers that gender differences need to be addressed (*Upheavals of Thought*, 208, n. 83). I will use personal pronouns for infants throughout this dissertation because I think that is consistent with the theological anthropology that sees infants as fully human and in God's image. Nussbaum's approach reflects one of the issues that is critiqued regarding cognitive theories of emotion, namely, that they exclude infants and very young children. Thus, even while she is considering infants' emotional development, there is a sense in which they remain marginalized through the use of the pronoun associated with non-human objects.

emotional awareness of this is the ground on which Nussbaum argues morality is built (214-216). I think that this is significant for considering moral agency in children, because it means that emotions are the way the child engages the world and learns to be moral.

It is at this point that the ethical import of normal emotional development comes to the fore. Nussbaum contends that seeing and accepting the bad in oneself is necessary to being a moral person, but it must be tempered with the realization that there are ways to make reparation for the bad one does. When a child learns that she is capable of doing bad, she should at the same time be taught that she is capable of performing actions or speaking words that atone for the infraction and that help to heal the rift that her misdeed perpetrated. When this kind of normal emotional development occurs, it aids the child's moral formation. Returning to the need for holding an infant, Nussbaum compares morality with the holding a loving parent bestows on a child. Morality, properly conveyed to the child, accepts the child in her humanness and imperfection, loves her, and assures her that the internal aggression she feels is not going to "cause the world's destruction" (217).

Childhood emotional development is paramount to the child's moral development. Nussbaum's theory is that early lessons of accepting the bad one does and learning to atone and make reparation for it become the person's "moral defense." This is the origin of morality, and it helps the child feel safe against the forces of her own badness that she fears will consume her (216). This morality teaches the child to understand and accept that other people have "legitimate activities" as well as needs and concerns that are separate from the child (217). A child who never learns that others have

needs will be tyrannical in her demands for her own desires to be met and will be unable to be moral (218). In other words, this moral development takes the child out of self-centeredness and engages her with others who are also moral beings, who do bad, and with whom she must learn to negotiate. A person who is able to accept, atone for, and attempt reparation for her own wrongful actions will be more likely to accept that other people also act badly, to receive their reparation, and not to demand perfection of them.

Perfectionism in this schema is counter-productive to the goal of emotional maturity and morality. If a person is not able to accept her own imperfections—her shortcomings and ability to hurt others—and if the possibility of reparation for that “badness” or imperfection is not present in the child’s upbringing, then the child’s human relationships and sense of morality will be damaged (217, 219). Parents who demand perfection of a child do not allow the child to learn the lessons and good ways of relating that are needed for morality, and this deficit can have life-long consequences.

Perfectionism also proves counter-productive to moral development when a person demands of herself that her emotions line up perfectly with reason or with some ideal of what her emotions should be (234). Nussbaum’s basis for this argument lies in her contention that the earliest sources of emotions in humans stem from our own lack of omnipotence coupled with our neediness. Recall that the infant notices on some level that processes that are important to her well-being come and go in her life and are outside her control. The result of this kind of radical neediness and dependence on others creates ambivalence in the infant. Nussbaum states, “the roots of anger, hatred, and disgust lie very deep in the structure of human life, in our ambivalent relation to our lack of control over objects and the helplessness of our own bodies. It would be naïve to expect that

projections of these negative emotions onto other people will not take place—although we may certainly hope to moderate their number and intensity” (234). As we will see below, Alasdair MacIntyre has a different view of the way dependence should shape emotions, and he advocates virtues of acknowledged dependence for all people.¹⁹ Further, from a Christian theological standpoint, accepting one’s dependence on other people can foster the spiritual acknowledgment of dependence on God.²⁰ However, for Nussbaum, one result of infant dependence is “negative” emotions, which are already present from the beginning of our emotional development; they are part of what it means to be a person who responds to her surroundings in an emotional way.

Nussbaum sums up her review of emotional development by stating: “As we see, then, a view of emotional development reveals some problems that emotions, as acknowledgments of neediness and incompleteness, contain for morality; they also reveal rich resources for morality. Indeed, the story strongly indicates that without emotions morality could not come into being, and that it relies on them continuously for sustenance” (222). Emotions are not something to be overcome or controlled tyrannically. Nussbaum argues that they are to be molded and shaped through loving relationships that lead one to be able to relate to oneself and to others in a fruitful and loving way. The goal of this process is mature interdependence, which is when a person can think of others as separate from herself and recognize that she is limited, that others are limited, but that she needs them, and that they need her (224).²¹

¹⁹ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 8.

²⁰ See, for instance, de Young, “Aquinas’s Virtues,” 221.

²¹ Mature interdependence includes “acknowledging the imperfection of the human body, and its needs for material goods.” This acknowledgment of the need to share the goods and resources of the world leads to Nussbaum’s contention that the emotional structures

Martha Nussbaum's theory is a rich and nuanced resource for thinking about emotions in children's moral agency. It is limited, however, as are other cognitive theories of emotion, and Deigh explores some of these limitations when he discusses two main reservations regarding the cognitive model. The first objection is that the cognitive model does not explain the emotions people sometimes feel "toward something that one knows lacks the properties it must have for the emotion to be warranted."²² Deigh's example is the fear of falling from a precipice when one knows that one is not in danger of falling. This is distinct from the fear of falling based on the memory of falling; it is the fear of something that does not pose a real danger. The second concern surrounding these theories is that they do not adequately account for the presence and experience of emotions in animals and human infants.

According to Deigh, thinkers such as Nussbaum subscribe to the "perceptual" model, which is a modification of the cognitive model that allows the evaluative judgments that are constitutive of emotions to be based on perceptions. Perception is a category that includes more than accepting propositions on a conscious level, and it accommodates those perceptions and emotions that contradict beliefs or judgments. For example, Deigh says that if someone standing on the edge of a precipice fears falling off when she is perfectly safe, her fear of falling is a perceived danger, even though she is

of some cultures are more conducive than others to producing emotional health and morality for all people (Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 227). Nussbaum discusses this further in *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), which emphasizes the need for fostering love to counter social and cultural tendencies and emotions of disgust, hatred, stigma, and exclusion (see especially chapter 7, "'Radical Evil': Helplessness, Narcissism, Contamination," 161-198).

²² Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 27.

not in any real danger of falling. The perceptual model successfully accounts for the contradiction between the person's awareness and the reality of the situation.²³

However, the perceptual model does not fare so well on the issue of emotions in human infants (or animals) because, Deigh argues, it operates on an understanding of perception that is conceptual and abstract. He contends that “the cognitive content of a perception of someone, the man with the stick, say, as dangerous is the same as the cognitive content of a judgment that this man is dangerous. In either case, the concept of danger is deployed in a cognitive representation of the situation, and to have and deploy a concept of danger is to be capable of propositional thought,” which human infants and animals are not.²⁴ That is, in the perceptual model, the person must understand what she is perceiving on a conceptual level in order to have an evaluative judgment—an emotion—in response to it. I think this critique holds for cases where the experience is new and must be associated with other perceptions from our experience. However, there is a level of habitual emotional response, such as fear, that can develop in animals and possibly in infants in response to a particular stimulus. A dog whose owner repeatedly beats it with a stick will recoil when it sees the owner with the stick. Deigh is arguing that this recoil is not fear as the perceptual model would define it because the recoil does not involve an evaluative judgment of the danger but a response based on experience. This is not the kind of emotional response Nussbaum describes in infants. She ascribes a level of abstract and conceptual understanding to their emotions—frustration at lack their lack of omnipotence and acceptance of imperfection—that leaves her theory susceptible to this

²³ Deigh, “Concepts of Emotions,” 29-32.

²⁴ Deigh, “Concepts of Emotions,” 29.

critique. Despite her efforts to include and analyze infant emotional development, her analysis remains abstract.

Another critique that can be leveled against Nussbaum's description of children's moral development is that it is disproportionately negative in its focus. While she mentions that children need to learn morality in the context of loving relationships, she focuses her attention on children's wrong-doing and the importance of fostering children's recognition and acceptance of their own bad actions so that the children can make reparation for them. On one hand, this confirms the theological anthropology that affirms children's capacity for sin, and in one way their moral agency, and as such, it concurs with Aquinas's anthropology that holds that all human beings share in original sin and are disordered because of this (ST I-II.82.4; ST I-II.81.1). On the other hand, it places the child's failings at center stage and does not acknowledge the child's capacity for relationship with God and for engaging in good actions and attitudes that go beyond making reparation. I find this a troubling approach to children and their moral formation. Nussbaum's consideration of children in light of the imperfection of all human beings insightfully suggests that children must learn that they are imperfect and accept this imperfection in themselves and in others. They must learn to recognize when they have done wrong and to atone and make reparation for their wrongs. But that is not the only foundation of morality. Morality, I would argue, also begins when good actions are modeled for the child, and when she imitates them, receives affirmation that they were indeed good, and then moves on to perform good actions of her own volition. Some virtue ethicists emphasize the powerful effect mimesis can have on a person's moral formation. Recall that Herdt advocated mimesis of Christ and of the "rainbow cast of

saints” in a Christian’s moral development.²⁵ In contrast to this view, Nussbaum’s description seems overly concerned with combating perfectionism and not enough concerned with the whole person—both the good and the bad aspects—who is learning to be moral. Despite these limitations surrounding her depiction of children’s moral development, her argument does help to advance the case that emotions are significantly involved in the formation of morality and agency.

The relevance of emotion in people’s lives extends beyond its involvement in moral formation to include the way people experience and respond to the world, and this has bearing on emotion’s place in agency. Human engagement with circumstances, objects, people, and relationships is more than an exercise in intellectual learning or rational analysis. People generally have a level of investment in themselves and in those with whom they have relationships such that their encounters with other human beings and objects are also emotional experiences. Robert Solomon shares this view and argues that people live through their emotions. At the same time, as does Nussbaum, he defines emotions as constituted by evaluative judgments. Solomon provides some nuances to this interpretation, but his theory of emotions remains cognitive. Further, he contends that as human beings, we have the ability to manage our emotions.²⁶ This is highly significant for thinking about moral agency with respect to emotions. If moral agency involves

²⁵ Herdt, *Putting On Virtue*, 8. This exemplarity can also happen through narratives, a position shared (among others) by Augustine (67) and Erasmus, who particularly emphasized the example of Christ in the Gospels (111). In addition, Adams discusses Platonic theories that human goodness reflects and imitates divine goodness. He writes, “theists may say that God is the standard of goodness, to which other good things must in some measure conform, but never perfectly conform” (Robert Merrihew Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999], 29).

²⁶ Solomon, *True to Our Feelings*, 168.

engagement in and action with the moral world, and if emotions influence how we experience the world and serve to motivate action, then emotions are paramount to moral agency. Further, drawing on Solomon's argument that we can manage our emotions, it seems that emotions are significant in our learning to be accountable as moral agents. One of the difficulties in using Solomon's thought for an account of children and moral development is that he acknowledges that the theory he has developed is only effective for considering older children and adults who are able to be self-reflective (218-219).²⁷ Nevertheless, his theory helps advance the case for the centrality of emotions in moral agency.

Solomon's theory of emotions is cognitive, and in his early work, similar to Nussbaum, he was rigid in his identification of emotion with judgment.²⁸ However, even in his final book, *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us* (2007),²⁹ he states, "if an emotion is structured by evaluative judgments, this means that understanding an emotion is understanding its constitutive judgments, whether or not there may be much more to understand as well.... Evaluative judgments are both based on beliefs and express attitudes. They also have their reasons (often good reasons) and they constitute, not just accompany, our emotions" (206). It is because emotions are evaluative judgments that Solomon thinks they have ethical import. The judgments constituting emotions are value judgments, meaning that they are based on values that the person holds. He writes, "the emotions have ethical significance not just because they

²⁷ This is one of the problems with cognitive theories of emotions that Deigh noted (Deigh, "Concepts of Emotion," 29).

²⁸ See, for instance, Solomon, *The Passions*, 125-126.

²⁹ This is the text I will engage because Solomon states that it contains his more mature thought, which goes beyond his conception of emotions in his earlier publications (see Solomon, *True to Our Feelings* 10, 204-205, 232-233).

take place in ethically charged situations but because they are constituted by judgments that are through and through value laden. They provide our basic orientation to the world and to one another” (217). In addition, emotions are ethical because people (of adequate cognitive capacity) are able to reflect on them (126). Solomon states that infants are not capable of this kind of reflection, but that “it has become an essential part of our [adult] emotional life” (218).

Solomon nuances the identification of emotion with judgment by including other components in what it means to have an emotional experience. He argues that emotional experience is about the self in the world (242), and in addition to its constitutive judgment(s), it is comprised of thoughts (243), desire, action (which includes the body) (238), and feelings, although emotion is not reducible to feelings (141). By incorporating these aspects, Solomon endeavors to account for the complexity of what it means to have an emotion. However, because his theory remains cognitive, it succumbs to a further critique of cognitive theories of emotion, namely that it does not always reflect human experience. Diana Fritz Cates expresses this concern in her discussion of Nussbaum’s work, but it is relevant to Solomon’s thought as well. Cates notes that, “there is sometimes a psychological gap, and there appears to be a logical distinction, between judging that ‘this is good for me,’ and being drawn toward it—or between judging that ‘this is bad for me,’ and being repelled by it.”³⁰ This distinction, or gap, is one that Aristotle—and Aquinas after him—remedy by distinguishing between appetite (or desire) and thought. I will develop this point in some detail in chapter three.

³⁰ Diana Fritz Cates, “Conceiving Emotions: Martha Nussbaum’s *Upheavals of Thought*,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 332.

Even with these caveats, Solomon's theory is useful for our consideration of children's moral agency because he holds that emotions are central to human life. He states, "*we live in and through our emotions*. Our lives do not just *include* episodes of anger, fear, love, grief, gratitude, happiness, humor, shame, guilt, embarrassment, envy, resentment, and vengeance. Our lives are *defined* by such emotions" (10, emphasis in original). Emotions are not add-ons to an otherwise neutral life. Emotions are the way we live our lives, and to an extent, they "have the power to *constitute* reality" (162). By this, Solomon means that we tend to attribute to the object of our emotions the characteristics that we are perceiving in our emotional response to that object. Thus, if we are afraid of something, it is frightening and possibly dangerous in our minds. It is not that we see the object in a neutral way and then notice that certain of its characteristics are eliciting emotions in ourselves. Through our emotion, which is an evaluative judgment, we see the object as dangerous, and that is its reality for us. Solomon's idea that emotional awareness is the way we learn about ourselves can be useful for considering children and their agency. It suggests that the way a child learns who she is in the world and how she experiences the world happen through her emotions. Further, because emotions are the way she experiences herself, the world, and herself-in-the-world, emotions are key to her ability to interpret and act on her environment.

Emotions are also something for which people can have a degree of accountability, according to Solomon. While this element of his theory requires developed cognitive capacities and so excludes infants and young children, it is instructive with respect to the education of emotions. A person's ability to reflect on her emotions allows her to have a level of responsibility for those emotions (126). Reflection

enables us to gain a perspective on why we are feeling the way that we are feeling, to understand what feeling that way means for us (“What am I getting out of this?”), and to experience emotions less as happening *to* us and more as though we have some control over them (200). Further, Solomon contends that reflecting on our emotions is the means through which we gain a sense of self—of who we are (219). Being able to reflect on our emotions requires a level of thought that allows us to separate “me” from “how I feel,” which is something it is unlikely a young child will be able to do.³¹ Solomon holds that emotions are not separate from us; they are not something that happens to us from the outside. Rather, our emotions can be “cultivated, educated, and sometimes even *willed*, not just controlled” (144). The ability to foster certain emotions within ourselves makes us responsible for more than our particular emotions. In some ways it makes us responsible for the quality of our lives, because the purpose of emotions is “to enhance our lives, to make them better, to help us get what we want out of life” (182). If we were subject to the whims of emotions that were beyond our control, our participation in achieving a good life and in attaining goals in life would be largely usurped by something external to ourselves. Claiming that people can be instrumental in determining their emotions allows Solomon to hold that emotions’ purpose is beneficial and worthwhile to our lives and at the same time that people are somewhat responsible for whether or not their lives are so enhanced and made better. If we extend Solomon’s ideas to children, his claim implies that emotions are educable and that children can be taught to be reflective agents of their emotions (provided their cognitive capacities are sufficiently developed).

³¹ Hobson makes the case that this separation is a developmental achievement (R. Peter Hobson, “Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism: A Developmental Perspective,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie [New York: Oxford University Press, 2010], 447).

The duration Solomon attributes to some emotions is also significant for considering children's moral and emotional development. As Nussbaum does, he holds that many emotions have a narrative quality that proceeds through time. He uses the example of romantic love that begins, develops, and continues in a fairly predictable pattern in people's lives, thus unfolding as a narrative. Other emotions—nearly all of them—have a narrative quality as well (148-149). Solomon goes on to place the narrative of emotions within the narrative of a person's life. "Emotions are processes, and even brief emotions take time, refer to the immediate past and anticipate the immediate future. Most emotions, however, are very much involved in time. They involve memory and anticipation" (263). Thus, the unfolding of a person's life contains the history (the narrative) of emotion, such that "any emotion of any significance will involve a background of other emotions" (241). He is, of course, referring to people who have lived long enough to have a background of emotional experience to influence their current emotions. I would argue that infants and young children are building that background. This is important to keep in mind when considering how children develop emotionally. The child's circumstances and personal history (her life narrative) as well as her history with a particular emotion (such as love for a caregiver) will contribute to how her emotions and the morality that stems from them develop.³²

Another dimension of Solomon's analysis that can be extended to children's emotional development is the attitude that is conveyed through the ways we discuss and describe emotions. Often, the words we choose to name emotions are already evaluative. For example, describing an emotion as love or as infatuation reflects how deep we think

³² Recall that Nussbaum makes a similar claim above.

the emotion is and how seriously we take it. Saying we hate someone is different from saying we resent someone (7, 135). It seems plausible that the way we name a child's emotion as we reflect back to her what we see in her expression of that emotion can influence the child's interpretation of it and feelings about it. Further, our own attitude toward the child's emotions will impact our response to the child, and this attitude will likely be evident in the tone and words we use to discuss the child's emotions and emotionally motivated actions with her. All of this will redound in the child's future attitudes towards and experiences of emotion, which will, in turn, impact how she perceives and values that which she encounters, and how she manages her emotions and her agency stemming from them.

Both Solomon and Nussbaum define emotions as evaluative judgments, and they recognize that experience contributes to the judgments and valuations each person makes. On this view, individuals can have distinct emotional repertoires based on different experiences and different interpretations of those experiences. A person's emotions reveal the way she encounters the world. Marcia Cavell's theory of emotions concurs with this assessment. Cavell is a cognitivist philosopher, and her analysis of emotion falls very much in line with the theories of Nussbaum and Solomon.³³ Focusing on the subjective quality of emotions, Cavell argues that they are psychological attitudes of a particular person that reveal the experience of being that particular person (133). Emotions are comprehensible only within the context of the person's life; they are indicative of what she cares about, or values; and they reveal her orientation to and

³³ Cavell also notes that there is not one coherent theory of emotion that is agreed upon by everyone (Marcia Cavell, "Valuing Emotions," in *Becoming a Subject: Reflections in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2006], 126).

relationship with the world (126). Cavell argues that emotions form in a person a disposition to act, but they are not the cause of the acting (128).³⁴ She does think emotions serve a motivational role, and she makes a brief but poignant reference to motivation in children:

A consensus has been growing in psychoanalytic theory that places emotion, rather than ‘drive’, at the heart of a theory of motivation. This emerging theory accommodates the fact that the child does not come equipped with a fixed repertoire of motives; it helps us understand both the flexibility and the fixity of human motivation; and, most important, it sees the individual as embedded in the world, becoming what she is only through interactions with other persons and things beyond her own skin (137).

Similar to the interactive theory discussed in chapter one, this understanding of emotion and motivation points to the influence that the world has on the child, and to the budding awareness in the child of her own ability to impact the world. The person’s becoming in the world will include her developing her emotions in relation to the world and in relationship with others.

Cavell also contends that emotions have an objective component because they are conditioned by external factors. The person experiencing the emotion appraises the factors and places value on them (126). Because they are assessments of external realities, her emotions themselves can be appraised. An individual can converse with other people regarding their emotional responses to a given object, and in this way she can expand her thinking and refine her own emotional responses (133-134). This kind of dialogue and comparison is how Cavell explains the “objective” dimension of an emotion. She is not suggesting that a person test her emotions to determine whether they correspond to objective reality. If Solomon is correct and we live through our emotions,

³⁴ Cavell does not investigate the factors that lead to action in her discussion of emotion.

then everyone assesses reality through the lens of their own emotional experience, and achieving an Archimedean reference point with respect to reality is not possible. Cavell's claim is that we can turn to others to gain outside perspectives, and our own sense of reality can be enriched as we gain experience. However, a concern remains because it is possible that a whole community will have a particular sense of reality that is grounded in an emotional response that is distorted. Instances of communal hatred of another group illustrate this. Nussbaum's contention that emotions are needed to correct emotional tendencies that are grounded in disgust, hatred, stigma, and exclusion underscores this point.³⁵ In addition, emotions can distort our perspective such that what we perceive to be real is distinctly different from the reality someone who is not emotionally invested would notice.

This potential distortion is at the root of Peter Goldie's critique of cognitive theories of emotion. Goldie maintains that emotions involve both feeling and thought, mutually influencing one another, and both affecting the judgment the person has of the object of her emotions. Examining the thought component of emotions can provide valuable insight into a given emotional experience,³⁶ perhaps allowing a person to discover what sort of an emotion she is experiencing.³⁷ At the same time, the person's judgment is impacted because of the feeling component of her emotion.³⁸ Contrary to

³⁵ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2013), 161-198.

³⁶ Peter Goldie, *The Emotions: A Philosophical Explanation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 20.

³⁷ Goldie, *The Emotions*, 26.

³⁸ Peter Goldie, "Intellectual Emotions and Religious Emotions," in *Faith, Rationality and the Passions*, ed. Sarah Coakley (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012), 246.

cognitivist theorists who do not conceive feeling as a necessary part of emotion,³⁹ Goldie argues that the proper place of feelings in a “correct conception of emotional experience” is at center stage, “playing a centrally important epistemic role in revealing things about the world.” Once we acknowledge the epistemic place of feelings, we can address their potential to misguide us in providing information about the world.⁴⁰ In a fascinating critique of the cognitive view, Goldie argues that emotions are essential to how we see the world, and it is they that shape (and distort) our knowledge of and interpretation of the world. It is not the case, he contends, that emotions follow from or can be equated with judgments. Emotions are our response to our surroundings, and we perceive our emotions to be reasonable because we perceive their objects to have the properties to which our emotions respond. For example, we think that an object that elicits the emotion of disgust actually is disgusting.⁴¹ This, Goldie argues, is because “our emotional responses can reveal to us what we value, and what we value might not be epistemically accessible to us if we did not have such responses.”⁴² According to Goldie, young children and animals are capable of unreflective emotional responses to situations,⁴³ and as children grow older and their mental abilities develop, they can reflect on their emotions and then ascribe to the objects of their emotions the properties that the emotions perceive.⁴⁴ Emotions can also be educated such that children learn appropriate emotional

³⁹ These theorists base emotion on “feelingless attitudes,” according to Goldie (Goldie, *The Emotions*, 83). On Goldie’s account, because these experiences lack feelings, they are insufficient for what we would call emotions. Goldie refers to this as the “Mr. Spock complaint;” Spock has all the relevant beliefs and desires, but no emotion (50).

⁴⁰ Goldie, “Intellectual Emotions,” 92.

⁴¹ Goldie, “Intellectual Emotions,” 97-98.

⁴² Goldie, *The Emotions*, 48-49.

⁴³ Goldie, “Intellectual Emotions,” 96.

⁴⁴ Goldie, “Intellectual Emotions,” 97.

responses to situations, for example, responding with fear when the child recognizes danger.⁴⁵

Goldie's critique has serious implications for considering how people perceive the world and emotion's place in shaping that perception. Not only do we tend to think that the object of our emotions has the properties we emotionally observe it to have, but moods and recent major emotional experiences can also interfere with our perceptions. Goldie states, "emotions can also distort perception and reason so that the world seems to us other than it really is: as I will put it, the emotions *skew the epistemic landscape*."⁴⁶ One result of this skewing is that, because it is generally more feasible to change one's thoughts than one's emotions, people tend (often unconsciously) to allow their thoughts to be skewed to remain in line with their emotions, rather than alter their emotions to acquiesce with their reason.⁴⁷ Goldie is not saying that it is impossible to change one's emotions; he is saying that it is more likely that a person will change her thoughts to match her emotions. In contrast to cognitive theorists, Goldie's argument presents emotions as sources of knowledge that are different from and sometimes more compelling than knowledge gained through reason.⁴⁸ If emotions have such epistemic power, then strong emotion will likely be difficult to sway, even in light of persuasive arguments that draw on "objective" reality and appeal to reason.

The relative entrenchment of emotional patterns in a person indicates the ongoing impact of significant childhood emotions on the whole of a person's life and underscores

⁴⁵ Goldie, *The Emotions*, 28.

⁴⁶ Goldie, "Intellectual Emotions," 99, emphasis in original.

⁴⁷ Goldie, "Intellectual Emotions," 100-101.

⁴⁸ For this reason, Goldie claims that some emotions have "cognitive impenetrability" (Goldie, *The Emotions*, 76), and that cognitive therapy is sometimes only partially successful (77-78).

the importance of attending to children's emotional and moral formation. Ronald de Sousa's theory of paradigm scenarios offers an explanation for why emotional patterns that are established early in a person's life can exhibit this tenacity and resistance to change. He addresses the formation of emotions in human infants through what he calls "paradigm scenarios."⁴⁹ The paradigm scenario comes into being when an infant has an instinctive response to a particular situation, and the instinctive response becomes associated with the infant's emotional response to that situation. For example, perhaps an infant has an instinctive response of smiling in moments of comfort or pleasure, and she connects smiling with happiness such that smiling comes to be an aspect of the emotion (happiness) for her. Thus, if a child smiles when she feels joy, her response is an expression of her emotion (285). But smiling (or crying or other instinctive expressions) are not part of an emotion if they occur outside of an emotional "scenario" (286). De Sousa's argument seems to suggest that an infant who smiles because she is exploring the muscle movements of her face is not expressing an emotion; on the other hand, an infant who smiles because her discomfort is alleviated or because she perceives the arrival of some pleasant object is expressing an emotion. As the infant grows, de Sousa argues that the child learns what instinctive and emotional responses are appropriate to which general types of situations (paradigms), and these paradigms form her emotional framework for the rest of her life. For instance, an infant whose smiles are met with positive responses from those around her will learn that smiling with happiness is an appropriate response to pleasant objects. She will be likely, when encountering other pleasant objects, to be happy.

⁴⁹ Ronald De Sousa, "Self-Deceptive Emotions," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 285.

De Sousa claims that “we learn our repertoire of emotions, much as we learn at least some of our verbal repertoire—our vocabulary of concrete predicates—by ostensive definition. In the paradigm situation, an emotion is appropriate ‘by definition.’ Once learned, it is correctly ‘applied,’ like a learned predicate, to situations that are relevantly similar to the paradigm scenario in which it originates” (286). The foundation these paradigm scenarios build becomes a permanent feature in the person’s later emotional life. “Paradigm scenarios determine the *meaning* of the emotions of which they constitute the prototypes.”⁵⁰ Further, through transference, we apply to new people and situations the emotional significance of those from the past. The patterns from childhood are never overcome; they remain a part of the emotional landscape. De Sousa explains, “acquiring genuinely novel emotions, like coming to understand novel concepts, is like building a cantilevered platform: standing on a firm old section, you reach out to set up and consolidate the new.”⁵¹ Because people have different contexts for their emotional development, they will have paradigm scenarios that are specific to them.⁵² These divergent experiences can result in emotional misunderstandings, since each person has a particular interpretation of an emotion based on the long-forgotten original experiences (paradigm scenarios).⁵³ Paradigm scenarios continue to be shaped “both in their origins and in their reenactments through our lives, by the increasingly complex contexts in which they occur.”⁵⁴ Emotions that are learned in this way become deeply formed habits in the person.

⁵⁰ Ronald De Sousa, *Emotional Truth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 34.

⁵¹ De Sousa, *Emotional Truth*, 34.

⁵² De Sousa, *Emotional Truth*, 101.

⁵³ De Sousa, *Emotional Truth*, 34.

⁵⁴ De Souse, *Emotional Truth*, 102.

De Sousa's argument suggests that the family, community, and culture in which a child grows up will help to shape the kinds of paradigm scenarios she encounters as well as the emotional responses that she learns are appropriate in those situations. This means that the interrelationality that we saw was central to theological anthropology is also fundamental to emotional development. In particular, a child will learn the moral codes of her community through her interaction with the members of that community. Peter Hobson is a psychologist who studies the ways that this interpersonal interaction serves to advance children's development such that they become able to distinguish which dimensions of their experience are feeling, which thinking, and which willing.⁵⁵ While he agrees that emotions are mental components of a person's life, Hobson contends that thinking, feeling, and willing are not yet separated in children, and that learning to separate them is a "developmental achievement" (447). In order to accomplish this, a person's emotional development must be interactive. He writes, "what become the relatively, but never wholly, separate components of thinking, feeling, and willing have their origin as aspects of relatedness between a human being and the personal and non-personal world," and this "accounts for the connectedness between thoughts and what those thoughts are about" (461). That is, the connection between the emotion and its object is something we learn through our relationships with the world and with other people in the world. This is how the intellectual aspects of emotions come into being and can be explained. However, Hobson argues that even as the child learns to separate the different components of her thinking, the intuitive and unconceptualized understandings

⁵⁵ Hobson, "Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism," 447. Hobson studies atypical children's development of emotion as a way of better understanding typical emotional development in children.

of the world that she gained as an infant and a young child are never completely replaced by cognitive understandings (457).⁵⁶

If Hobson is right that the child retains these non-conceptual components into adulthood, then this raises questions about the identification of emotion with cognition in cognitive theories. In chapter one, I discussed Arpaly's argument that non-deliberate dimensions are always part of deliberated rationality. The same would seem to be true for emotions and cognition. Thoughts and judgments about the world will always, according to Hobson, retain something of the pre- or non-rational in them. This means that the judgments that constitute emotions in cognitive theories will always contain pre- or non-conceptual interpretations and understandings. Aquinas's theory of emotion will prove useful for explaining what these non-conceptual contributions are and how they connect to the person's reason. Hobson's contention that the person's perception of objects continues to be informed by her early experiences seems to corroborate De Sousa's position with respect to paradigm scenarios that continue to impact a person's perceptions and upon which her new experiences and understandings are based.

The ability to distinguish between her emotion and its object extends to the child's burgeoning understanding of herself as a person and of other people as distinct individuals in their own right. Hobson argues that children come to learn that other people are "persons-with-minds" because children have the emotional experience of identifying with other people. It is not the case that children come to have emotional experiences of identifying with other people because they understand those people as

⁵⁶ Hobson finds that these early interpersonal relationships and emotions are also necessary for the child's later ability to think ("Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism," 448).

separate persons-with-minds (468). Social experiences are necessary to understanding ourselves and others, and if children do not have these engagement experiences, they develop only a partial understanding of “what it means to have mental states” (449). Children develop an understanding of person-world relatedness through identifying with other people’s emotions and responses to shared experiences and objects. They come to know their surroundings, in part, through the responses of their caregivers,⁵⁷ and they learn that other people might have different responses to the same object or experience.⁵⁸ As Hobson puts it, “an infant can identify with someone else’s attitudes prior to conceptualizing another person as a person”⁵⁹ through their emotional connection with the other people.⁶⁰ This is imperative to keep in mind as we consider the role of emotions in moral development. Hobson’s research indicates that a lack of emotional attachment leads to a deficit in moral development based on the inability to perceive the other person’s needs, to understand how one’s own actions might impinge upon the other person, and to want to behave in a way that does not negatively affect the other. If emotional development is not properly interactive and does not include experiences of identifying with others, then it is possible that the person’s later morality will be compromised through her not being able to see others as a full persons-with-minds.

I am convinced that this differentiation between self and other is essential to normal emotional and moral development, and Hobson argues that people learn this

⁵⁷ Peter Hobson, *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origins of Thinking* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 72-73. Hobson refers to this as the beginning of the infant’s “Copernican revolution.”

⁵⁸ Hobson, “Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism,” 454.

⁵⁹ Hobson, “Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism,” 456.

⁶⁰ Hobson, *Cradle of Thought*, 59. Hobson’s studies reveal that adolescents and children with autism will sometimes treat other people as insignificant (48), and he believes this is due to their lack of emotional connection with other people (59).

discernment through the developmental achievement of separating feeling, thinking, and willing. Being able to attain some detachment from one's emotions in order to determine whether they are appropriate and contributing to one's moral growth is important. However, one cannot live in a constant state of intellectual reflection on one's emotions. To do so would compromise not only one's ability to live in an engaged way, but also one's capacity for being attuned to moral situations through one's emotional response to them. (This point will be developed more in the next section.) Further, I think it is plausible that the achievement of Aquinas's conception of virtue involves the reintegration of a person's thinking, feeling, and willing, not into one indistinguishable mode, but in terms of wanting to do that which we think to be right and good. I will discuss Aquinas's theory of virtue in more depth in the next chapter, but here I point to his contention that a right or good action performed without the person's emotions being involved is incomplete as a virtuous action (ST I-II 58.3). Thus, for an action to be virtuous, a person would need to know that the action is good, would want to perform it, and would will herself to do so. Too much of a separation among thinking, feeling, and willing would not foster virtue. At the same time, we do need to be able to distinguish among these functions in order to reflect on and control our emotions and the actions that stem from them.

Philosophical thought on emotion advances several important ideas for considering children's emotional and moral development. The evaluative component of cognitive theory points towards the moral import of emotions. Emotions are certainly one way—although arguably not the only way—we engage the world and assess the significance of what we encounter. When we relate to other people, their emotions also

have an effect on us, and this interplay is part of the emotional experience of both parties. That our emotions impact others gives them moral significance beyond indicating the value we ascribe to their objects. In the next section, I discuss the work of two Christian theologians who take up some of these themes within a theological framework.

Theological Contributions

In this section, our considerations of theological contributions to the understanding of emotions are centered around two theologians—Simon Harak and Diana Fritz Cates—who bring Aquinas’s thought into conversation with contemporary thinking on the emotions. Both Harak and Cates explicitly engage Aquinas in extended studies of the emotions, and so their work has particular relevance for my own project, which is also focused on Aquinas and his theory of emotions.⁶¹ Both theologians base their theories of emotion on Aquinas’s understanding of passions as movements of the soul, and they argue that emotions have cognitive components but are also physical experiences.⁶² Most important for this project, they argue that emotions shape human morality. Simon Harak makes the case that the valuation involved in emotions has moral significance not only because it indicates the kinds of things we value, but also because the way we value other people influences how they come to see themselves. Diana Fritz Cates argues that discussions of emotions must include considerations of the religious

⁶¹ Many other scholars also treat Aquinas’s theory of emotions, and I will explore some of their work in the next two chapters.

⁶² I will return to Harak’s and Cates’s treatment of Aquinas in chapter three. Other scholars do not share their view that the physical dimension is necessary to emotion in Aquinas’s theory. See for instance Nicholas E. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 229.

ethics that inform our morality, and she contends that our emotions are deeply entwined with that morality.

Harak utilizes an interactive model in his theory of how emotions arise and how they shape people's lives over time. By interaction, Harak refers to the same process described in chapter one,⁶³ by which the person is influenced and formed by her surroundings—including her relationships—and she also impacts her environment and changes it. This is the social dimension of virtue ethics.⁶⁴ Grounding his theory in a theological anthropology that includes the incarnational character of Christian theology, Harak subscribes to a whole-body moral anthropology, in which emotions cannot be detached from the body (4). In so doing, he rejects the mind-body dualism that is a legacy of Cartesian-based ethics (29ff). Harak defines passions⁶⁵ as the experience of being moved (2), and the social-science idea of interaction is at the core of his theory of emotions. He contends that what moves us, what our emotions are, is indicative of what kind of person we are (47), which has moral implications and ramifications.

In order for interaction to occur among people, Harak argues, there must be emotion. Without being moved, a person will not relate with other people or with her surroundings. She will be “impassible,” unmovable. Through her emotions, that which is external to her can influence who she is as a person and how and why she responds to

⁶³ See, for instance, Frankel, *Children, Morality, and Society*, 19, 31; Wall, “Childhood Studies,” 538.

⁶⁴ Simon Harak, *Virtuous Passions: The Formation of Christian Character* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 4.

⁶⁵ Although Harak uses the term “passions” throughout his text, the experiences he discusses fall under the heading of what other thinkers are describing as emotions: they ascribe value; they arise through interactions with others; they have a moral dimension; we are responsible for them. I will use the term “emotions” in my discussion of his work in order to maintain consistency in my terminology throughout this chapter.

situations. This is because, in order for a person to notice something in an interaction, it must have meaning for her—it must move her—which means that she will have an emotional response to it. Something that has no meaning for a person will not move that person—it will not even register with her (21). Because a person’s emotional responses to her surroundings hinge on the meanings she ascribes to those surroundings, Harak maintains that emotions include a valuation of the object toward which they are directed (32). The moral implications of Harak’s claim are substantial. People will not notice that a situation is moral or that it deserves their attention if the features of the situation hold no meaning for them. Further, what moves a person will have direct bearing on her moral agency because it will delimit what she notices and how she responds.⁶⁶

In the interactive model, the person responds to her environment, and she is also formed by it. One way that she is formed is through the way that others see her. Harak explains that other people’s responses to a person in word and action shape the way she learns to view herself and the kind of person she becomes (21). To illustrate this point, Harak tells the story of a young man named Fabian who was serving as a “big brother” to a child who had been beaten repeatedly. After a soccer game, Fabian raised his hand to give a congratulatory pat on the shoulder to the child. Because of the child’s experiences with being beaten, he perceived a raised hand to be a threat, and he recoiled (1). Harak goes on to describe the conversation he himself had with Fabian following this incident.

⁶⁶ Ben Spiecker argues that children move from being taught right responses through habituation to acquiring virtue in part through their emotions. “Coming to feel emotions like anger, pity, regret or shame is inextricably linked to learning to discern features of circumstances which warrant such emotional responses. It is via attention to such particulars that young children are brought to discern what is affectively salient in a given situation” (Ben Spiecker, “Habituation and Training in Early Moral Upbringing,” in *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education*, ed. David Carr and Jan Steutel [New York: Routledge, 1999], 223).

Fabian described himself as being “moved” by the reaction of the boy (2). Both the child and Fabian were formed by their interactions with others. The child’s experiences had shaped him such that his entire body recoiled at the sight of a raised hand. The boy’s response underscores the ways in which human beings experience the world physically, and it is plausible to infer that this bodily knowledge contributes to the person’s thoughts and emotions. Fabian was also “moved” by the experience. The way the child reacted affected Fabian’s own experience of the situation, and in that sense, the child was an agent and Fabian’s emotion was in response to the child’s actions. Harak does not use this story to advance a deterministic theory wherein a person is completely at the mercy of her surroundings and the people in them. In any interaction between people, he maintains, each person is influenced by the interaction, but each remains a distinct person, and the tension between each person’s organic integrity as an individual and the impact her environment has on her must be borne in mind (39).⁶⁷

One of the moral implications of the interactive model, as Harak describes it, is that people ascribe value to others and perceive the way others value them through interpersonal interactions. When a person encounters an “other,” she ascribes value to that other. By “other,” Harak means anything that is not the agent’s self, including other people, inanimate objects, and events (2). At the same time, both the person in question and the other have intrinsic value. A morally good interaction requires that a person correctly assess the value of the other; if the interaction is between people, then each person should ascribe the appropriate value to the other (32). Christian theological anthropology holds that each person is made in the image of God, and so fitting valuation

⁶⁷ Wall also argues for personal integrity in his discussion of interaction (Wall, “Childhood Studies,” 538-539).

of each person must reflect this basic dignity. I think it is important to extend this idea to include the proper valuing of oneself.⁶⁸ When a person does not value herself, she will be more likely to allow herself to be treated as a person without worth. If she does not see her own value, she will not know what she is able to contribute to the world. At the same time, an overvaluation of the self can result in an imbalanced view of the world that focuses too much on the individual herself. Recall that Nussbaum highlights the necessity of curbing self-centeredness in children and teaching them that other people have needs.⁶⁹ For this reason, Harak's insistence on the importance of interactions between infants and their caregivers cannot be overemphasized (23). These interactions, claims Harak, are how infants learn emotions—how they learn to be moved, and how they learn what should move them, including how they should value themselves and others.

A person cannot be held responsible for the emotional patterns that result from interactions early in life, but she is responsible for her emotions over the course of her lifetime. A person's emotions have significant bearing on her morality, and when they are properly integrated with her thoughts and will, they foster virtue. One way she can exercise responsibility for her emotional formation is through the influences she chooses to bring into her life. According to Harak, the formation of habit is due in no small part to the "training" a person receives, and to the degree that a person chooses to engage in

⁶⁸ Numerous contemporary thinkers have taken up the idea of proper self-love. See, for instance, the discussion of feminist critiques of self-sacrifice in John Lippitt, "True Self-Love and True Self-Sacrifice," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 66 (2009): 129-134. Lippitt concludes his article by suggesting that true self-love includes a kind of pride that is not self-aggrandizing or self-centered, but that recognizes the value of the self (136-137). This corroborates de Young's suggestion that I mentioned in chapter one that magnanimity can serve as a remedy for pusillanimity. A person must have an accurate and proper valuation of her gifts in order to be able to use them for good (De Young, "Aquinas's Virtues," 221).

⁶⁹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 218.

repeated actions that shape her responses, she is responsible for the habits that result therefrom. Particular learned actions and responses will lead to particular types of appraisals of situations; a person will be more or less attuned to different aspects of a situation depending on what she is in the habit of noticing. Therefore, to the degree that we choose and invest in our own training, we are responsible for how that training shapes our thinking and our appraisals (34). In addition, we have a degree of choice regarding what we allow to capture our attention and focus (35), and the activities to which we choose to give our time and energy will have a bearing on our becoming attuned to particular features of objects and situations. We grow into these levels of responsibility as we mature, but we are always involved in the interactions that shape our emotions.

It is possible to extend Harak's case for emotional responsibility and his interactive approach to a consideration of the distinction between accountability and agency I discussed above. To the degree that a child notices and responds to her environment, she exercises her agency. As she grows, she can direct her agency to help shape who she is and who she is becoming, and in this way, she begins to be accountable for herself, her formation, and her actions.

The moral significance of being (and becoming) emotionally responsible is central to Diana Fritz Cates's work on emotions. Cates equates Aquinas's passions with emotions, which leads her to define emotions as "interior motions."⁷⁰ As is the case with Harak, her view is that emotions are always mediated physically.⁷¹ Emotions include cognition, although Cates does not subscribe to the cognitive school of thought that holds

⁷⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 2. Despite this identification, Cates uses the term "emotion" in her work.

⁷¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 8.

that emotions are cognitions or that they are in essence value judgments. She maintains that cognition and evaluative judgments are aspects of emotion that influence the person's experience of emotion, but they are only part of the story. In her critique of Nussbaum, Cates makes a place for appetites or desires as a component of emotion.⁷² According to Cates, "for good or for ill, an emotion can affect the way we function as moral agents. It can affect our thoughts, perceptions, desires, judgments, deliberations, decisions, actions, and interactions."⁷³ Because Cates says that emotions "affect" these aspects of our lives, it follows that she is not equating emotion with any one of these aspects. In assessing the prevailing thinking on emotion, Cates states (accurately, from my read of the literature) that most scholars "agree that emotions have a cognitive dimension, that they involve thought, judgment, and evaluation." There remains, however, disagreement on *how* cognition relates to emotions,⁷⁴ a dispute that Cates does not attempt to resolve. Most scholars "agree that emotions have objects, and that they tend to be about people, things, or circumstances that a person considers to have some bearing on his or her own happiness or well-being."⁷⁵ Some philosophers call into question the perception of reality that is reflected in the value judgments of emotions (see Goldie,⁷⁶ for instance), and most ascribe a level of educability to emotions, although scholars might disagree on how to educate emotions and to what degree they can be educated.⁷⁷

⁷² Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 330.

⁷³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 3.

⁷⁴ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 326.

⁷⁵ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 326.

⁷⁶ Goldie, "Intellectual Emotions," 92.

⁷⁷ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 326-327.

Cates does contend that emotions and thoughts mutually inform one another. In the course of a discussion on the virtue of compassion,⁷⁸ Cates argues that the best form of passion is one that has been educated and is shaped by thought, and that the best form of thought is responsive to feeling and is shaped by love.⁷⁹ Thinking and feeling can influence one another for ill as well as for good. The moral judgments involved in emotions can be erroneous, resulting in emotions that miss the mark of morality. Cates states, “the emotion has as its defining focus an object of perception or imagination (such as a person or a situation) that we judge to be morally good or bad. Moral judgments can be wrong, and the emotions that are informed by them can be misguided.”⁸⁰ She cites as an example emotions directed toward a person whom we construe to be evil. It is morally wrong, Cates argues, to direct toward that person an emotion that derives only from our judgment of her wickedness and that does not also take into account her basic humanity and human dignity. This is because our emotions should be nuanced and informed by our thoughts and knowledge. In the case of the person who is perceived as evil, we know that she is made in the image of God, and our emotions toward her must reflect this knowledge of her human dignity in conjunction with our judgment of her immorality. Thus, for Cates, emotions involve moral thoughts and judgments, which are, in turn, informed by emotions, and because of this mutual influence, emotions have moral import.

⁷⁸ Diana Fritz Cates, *Choosing to Feel: Virtue, Friendship, and Compassion for Friends* (Notre Dame, IN: The University of Notre Dame Press, 1997).

⁷⁹ “Our best feeling is thoughtful feeling (i.e., passion that has been educated over time to arise and to persist ‘in the right way’), and our best thinking is feeling-full thinking (i.e., thinking that takes place fundamentally in the service of love)” (Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 171).

⁸⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 6.

Cates's contention that emotions are part of the moral life leads her to advocate cultivating particular emotions, especially those that lead to particular virtues. Cates argues that morality in everyday life has several defining features. First, "morality is partly a practice in which persons give and demand reasons of *one another*...and...of *themselves*,"⁸¹ and as long as people are not behaving in a way that is obviously immoral, they usually do not have to justify their actions to others. Second, "to the extent that one acquires good habits of character one is likely to take many of one's moral commitments as given, not needing to be subjected to constant reflection,"⁸² provided they coincide with the moral norms of one's community. It is exactly this general lack of reflection on one's moral commitments—especially those that are learned early—that makes it difficult to ascertain which habits in oneself are bad and to try to change them. When a person has a habit of a particular moral commitment, it often does not occur to her that she should reflect on it. By following the moral norms of one's community and culture, one is "participating in a morality,"⁸³ and this participation is usually not highly articulated or intellectualized. Cates goes on to say that "much of the moral life is not about defending particular moral views and challenging others to do the same; it is about trying to form our views in the first place and trying to figure out what to do with those views as we gain additional information and perspective."⁸⁴

How, then, do we shape our emotions such that they are properly informed by thought and are able to help direct our thoughts toward what is morally good? Cates

⁸¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 23.

⁸² Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 23.

⁸³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 23.

⁸⁴ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 24.

maintains that we are responsible for our emotions over time.⁸⁵ Some emotions are reactive or instinctive responses that do not involve deliberation. In other cases, there are points within the emergence of an emotion at which we can make a choice about the emotion. That we are responsible for how we act under the influence of the emotion is generally accepted,⁸⁶ but Cates is submitting that we have responsibility for the emotion itself, particularly for whether we continue to feel it or not. “Inasmuch as an emotion affects our own or another’s well-being, and we have some choice in its regard, the emotion is something for which we have a degree of moral responsibility.”⁸⁷ We should ask ourselves from time to time whether it is appropriate in a given circumstance to feel the emotions we are experiencing, and, Cates argues, “the very act of observing our emotion and asking the *question* of whether it is appropriate to the situation...changes the emotion in subtle ways.”⁸⁸ Choosing what sorts of emotions to cultivate in ourselves contributes to our capacity to choose what sorts of persons we would like to be. We can also cultivate within ourselves virtues that have significant emotional components (such as compassion⁸⁹) by reflecting on our emotions in the context of a given situation. This seems a difficult task, given the possibility that our rational reflection on a given emotion in light of the circumstances eliciting the emotion will be distorted by that same emotion. For this reason, Cates insists that conversation about emotions must include considerations of morality and religious ethics.

⁸⁵ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 4-5.

⁸⁶ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 3.

⁸⁷ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 3.

⁸⁸ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 4.

⁸⁹ For example, we can work to summon up the complacency that is needed for compassion when we are not feeling it already (Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 183-187).

Cates holds that morality is best understood within the framework of religious ethics in which it develops because that ethical construction will advance conceptions of how people *should* think and feel.⁹⁰ She finds Nussbaum's exploration of the "socially conditioned nature of much human emotion"⁹¹ useful on this point. Cates writes,

Nussbaum's work helps us to appreciate that some emotions are composed, at least in part, of religious beliefs, assumptions, intuitions, wonder, and concern. Some religious 'thoughts' might function primarily as background beliefs until they are evoked by a situation that demands more than a surface interpretation and assessment. Some of them might be at work in composing emotion-laden meanings in ways that are barely evident to consciousness and are difficult, even upon reflection, to identify.⁹²

Having a religious perspective, according to Cates, involves being attuned to what is extraordinary or revelatory in the world. "Religion involves 'seeing' certain things or situations as involving or *possibly* involving something more or other than meets the eye of the inattentive, unenlightened, or unimaginative observer."⁹³ Cates holds "that developing a theory of the emotions requires delving extensively into questions about what is really (and not only apparently) real."⁹⁴ She acknowledges that the difficulty of knowing that what one perceives is an accurate reflection of how things really are makes it complicated "to determine how one *ought* to feel."⁹⁵ At the same time, addressing questions of what people believe to be really real is indispensable in ethics because the answers to those questions will shape what people think morality is and how they think

⁹⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 27.

⁹¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 53.

⁹² Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 58.

⁹³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 40.

⁹⁴ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 340. Cates approaches her analysis of Aquinas's theory of emotions with this in mind. Because Aquinas sees everything within a religious framework, the way he approaches emotions will presume that they have ramifications in people's religious lives, in part because they can attune people to the religious dimensions of our lives.

⁹⁵ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 57. See also Cates "Conceiving Emotions," 326.

moral people ought to act. Religions tackle these questions; therefore, in order to understand people's moral commitments, we must investigate the religious dimension of their lives.⁹⁶

Cates's position is compelling. We have seen that emotions reflect values, even if emotions are not equated with value judgments, and those values will often stem from the religious beliefs and values of the culture and faith in which the person is formed. When people are formed by the moral commitments of their religion, those values often remain unarticulated, unexpressed, and unexamined. And yet they underlie our emotional life; they influence, shape, and frame our thinking, what we value, and what we construe as good and praiseworthy, and in so doing inform our emotions. Thus, when reflecting on the morality of emotions, Cates holds that it is important to bring religious values into the conversation. We can apply the importance of religious values to her example of how we feel about a person whom we perceive to be evil. Cates contends that we must include that person's basic humanity in our emotions about that person, and this position reflects Cates's own underlying beliefs in the value of each person's basic dignity. Harak's notion that people and objects should be valued properly also has its basis in his Christian beliefs.

While Cates does not fully explore children's moral development, it is important to note that her description of the moral life as including the formation of a person's moral views in light of her gaining new information and perspectives⁹⁷ lends itself to being extended to considerations of the ways children are participating in the moral life. Children, whose reserve of experience is quantitatively less than adults', are gaining

⁹⁶ Cates, "Conceiving Emotions," 340.

⁹⁷ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 24.

information and perspective at a rapid rate. When a child gains a new experience, it is proportionally more significant to her limited reserve of experiences than it would be to an adult's. Through this process, children are arguably deeply engaged in the moral life. Their interaction with the morality and religious ethics they encounter shapes the kinds of moral commitments that they will take for granted later in life. If Cates is right that children's thoughts and emotions mutually inform each other during this formation, then children's emotions and moral life are inextricably bound up together. This will be an important point to keep in mind when thinking about Aquinas's theory of emotions with respect to virtue below. However, much of the responsibility for emotions that Cates advances occurs through reflection on one's emotions, which as we saw above, is beyond the capacity of infants and young children. Nevertheless, if we consider Cates's account in conjunction with the interactive model of agency advanced by the social sciences, it seems plausible that children's agency in the moral life is based on their emotions, while their responsibility for their emotions and their moral accountability come later as they gain cognitive maturity.⁹⁸

Children's moral agency, as I use the term, involves interaction with their surroundings. Harak explains how this can occur on an emotional and personal level in terms of the valuation people extend to one another. Cates affirms the significance of religious ethics in morality, and her description of the moral life allows for children to be active participants in it. Because emotions function in the moral life and reflect values, emotions are critical components of children's moral agency and moral formation. In the

⁹⁸ Solomon would likely maintain that accountability is also tied to emotions (Solomon, *True to Our Feelings*, 144, 168).

next section, I turn to recent philosophical and theological scholarship that more explicitly addresses the role of emotions in moral development.

Emotions and Moral Development

A person's emotions have moral import not only in terms of the values they reflect, but also in terms of how she develops as a moral person with agency. Here I engage philosophers and theologians whose work on emotions explores the contribution emotions make to a person's moral development. The scholars in this section are not of one mind in every aspect of their analyses, but they all agree that without emotion, a person's moral development is stunted.

Philosophical Accounts

In this section, I engage several philosophers whose work addresses the ways emotion aids moral development and moral motivation. None of these scholars subscribe to the cognitivist theory of emotions that equates emotions with evaluative judgments, although all of them maintain a place for cognition within emotional experiences. Several of them explicitly treat the role of emotion in children's moral formation. It is important to think about the emotional dimension of moral development and motivation when addressing children's moral agency, in part because children's rational powers are still developing and cannot guide their actions in the way that reason might be able to guide the actions of adults. Nevertheless, as I will argue in later chapters, the emotional component of moral motivation allows children's responses to moral situations to be

reflective of their agency in those situations, despite their inchoate reason and lesser accountability.

A person's morality includes the value and importance she ascribes to herself, other people, objects, and so on. Bennett Helm is a philosopher who argues that this value arises from emotion, which he distinguishes from desire and judgment. At the same time, he maintains the logical consistency of these three—desire, emotion, and judgment—with one another. Helm defines emotions as “intentional feelings of import,”⁹⁹ where import means vigilance in attention to something and a preparedness to act on that thing (309). Emotion and desire arise with import in a holistic way, both responding to import and constituting that import (313). The import a person ascribes to an object also stems from the value she places on it, and Helm contends that this valuation is a commitment to having other emotions that follow logically from the first emotion (319),¹⁰⁰ but he does not think they are properly identified as judgments. In fact, he suggests that emotions function in concert with judgments and desires to create the evaluative perspective through which the agent sees the world (315). These three dimensions—emotion, desire, and judgment—are “rationally” connected and together form a single world-view (317).

The rational connection among judgments, desires, and emotions is such that the import they ascribe to an object will forge a unity of perspective among them (315). It follows, then, that conflict between emotion and judgment will always be a *non sequitur* (317). For example, if I value my car, and I believe you have stolen it (to use Helm's

⁹⁹ Bennett W. Helm, “Emotions and Motivation: Reconsidering Neo-Jamesian Accounts,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 310.

¹⁰⁰ For a view of emotions that argues for their inconsistency, see Sabine A. Döring, “Why Be Emotional?” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).

example, 315), my judgment registers that this is an offense toward me and my property, I experience the emotion of anger, and I desire to act in such a way that you are brought to justice and I retrieve my car. Helm's theory requires further that my commitment to the import of the object of the emotion implies that I also commit to feeling the emotions related to the continuation of the situation (316). This position suggests that if my car is returned, I will feel relief. If my car is not retrieved, I might continue to feel anger towards you or sadness at its loss. The rational connection between judgment and emotion disallows the possibility that I value my car and yet feel relief at your having stolen it, or that I discover that you have not, in fact, stolen it, and yet I continue to feel angry with you.

Although emotions and judgments are not equal in Helm's view, emotions still follow logically from external situations that we deem to be important. Helm writes, "emotions motivate not because they involve mere dispositions to behave but rather because they are rational responses to things we care about, responses that sometimes rationally demand intentional action" (303-304). Emotions involve desires as well as judgments, and he writes that desires indicate "something in favor of pursuing the relevant course of action in light of its significance to the subject."¹⁰¹ He contrasts this with the actions a computer that is programmed to play chess well will perform. The computer will make the relevant moves, but it will not do so because it cares about winning or about the game. Its programming gives it a goal toward which to work, but the goal contains no significance for the computer, as it might for a human being.¹⁰² A

¹⁰¹ Bennett W. Helm, "The Significance of Emotions," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31, no.4 (1994): 319.

¹⁰² Helm, "The Significance of Emotions," 319.

human being who cares about winning will be motivated in the chess game because winning has significance for her, a significance that has arisen in concert with her emotions and desires.

Helm's theory seems consistent with the theology of childhood that points to the life-long significance of one's early years. Because he argues that import develops with emotion and desire, the objects to which a child ascribes importance will also have emotional meaning for that child, and the correlation between the emotion, the object, and the import will likely be difficult to change later. At the same time, Helm's view connects emotion and judgment in such a way that explaining anomalous emotions proves difficult. His theory does not seem to account for how complex emotional responses can be. For instance, it is possible that a victim of child abuse will feel both love and hatred (as well as other emotions) toward her parent, and I find Helm's theory to be inadequate for explaining such situations. Further, while the judgment, emotion, and desire might be logically connected to and consistent with one another, it does not necessarily follow that the import they are ascribing is itself praiseworthy. The internal consistency Helm argues for does not contain an appeal to external sources for validation of the evaluative perspective through which the person views the world. It is possible to have an evaluative perspective in which judgment, emotion, and desire are logically connected but skewed such that the person deliberately engages in harmful or immoral behavior. This possibility serves to highlight the importance of ethics in emotional formation. In order to contribute to moral functioning in a positive way, emotions must be formed well, and they must ascribe the appropriate import to objects.

Helm's argument points to the importance of establishing good and ethical emotional and thought patterns in children. If children are inculcated with destructive or hate-filled rhetoric and emotional reinforcement, then that will likely be difficult to change later since it will have been part of their formation in their early years.¹⁰³ This is supported by Helm's connection among desire, emotion, and judgment, but the ascribed power of early emotional formation is even greater in theories that maintain the precedence of emotion. Philosopher Jesse Prinz focuses on the function of emotions in moral life, with their "eliciting conditions and their action tendencies."¹⁰⁴ He is not concerned with the cognitive/non-cognitive debate surrounding what emotions are, but he argues that emotions motivate moral behavior and play a crucial role in moral epistemology (520). As Helm does, Prinz associates emotions with perceptions, but he argues that when a person has an emotional response to something, that emotional response is the basis of the person's moral evaluation. This is distinct from the cognitive theories that hold that emotions are evaluative judgments. According to Prinz, our moral evaluation follows from our emotions (520), and praise and blame emotions impact our moral responses to moral situations and are pivotal to moral education.

Moral emotions of praise and blame function in society as a way of maintaining moral standards, argues Prinz. Deviating from the standards of one's culture will evoke emotions of blame from others (anger, disdain), and often from oneself (shame, guilt). Because these emotions are unpleasant for most people, most people will avoid occasions that elicit them and will comply with social norms. Praise emotions arise in response to

¹⁰³ This is what happened to the brother of the woman Robert Coles interviewed. It appears that he embraced the racist attitudes his father taught him in his judgments, emotions, and actions (Coles, *Moral Life*, 228).

¹⁰⁴ Prinz, "The Moral Emotions," 522.

moral goodness, but we tend to reserve them for instances of extreme or unusual displays of moral goodness, not for complying with moral norms. We generally expect that people will follow the moral standards of their culture, and so we do not find it praiseworthy when they do. Because Prinz holds this position, he wonders if blame emotions are more important than praise emotions for maintaining social moral standards (529).

Another category of emotion that Prinz finds significant for fostering moral functioning in society is “prosocial emotions”—empathy, sympathy, and concern (531). Empathy is not itself an emotion, but the capacity for it leads to other emotions. When I apprehend that you are experiencing an emotion, such as joy, and my recognition of this causes me also to feel joy, it is empathy that allows me to experience your emotion. Empathy is not the emotion—joy is—but my empathy gives me the capacity to experience joy in the given situation (531). This has moral significance in that it can lead the person experiencing empathy to be motivated to action in a situation. Prinz cites an example of my feeling empathic fear because you are in danger and afraid. If this motivates me to act in a way to bring about your safety, then a moral action has been motivated by emotion (532).

Sympathy is also a capacity to feel emotion rather than an emotion itself, and Prinz thinks the emotions it elicits are always negative. A person experiences sympathy when she feels a negative emotion about someone else’s emotion. For example, if you are angry and I feel sad that you are enraged, that is sympathy. The emotions we feel as a result of empathy are always the same as the emotions to which they are responding. The emotions that arise because of sympathy may be the same as or different from their eliciting emotions. As with empathic emotions, sympathetic emotions can motivate

people to act in morally significant ways (532). Concern is slightly different, on Prinz's view, such that I can experience concern for you without your having any negative emotions. As does sympathy, concern always leads to a negative emotion for me (the person who is concerned), but unlike sympathy, it implies that I want to do something to help you. Sympathy *may* lead to moral action, but Prinz thinks concern is *likely* to result in my finding a way to help you (533). Each of these prosocial emotions can motivate a moral agent to act in ways that alleviate suffering.

I would argue that there are also moral implications to the interrelational benefits of mutual joy and other positive emotions. Relationships between human beings must include concern and sympathy, but bonds are also formed through shared experiences of joy, success, and so on. According to the theological anthropology outlined in chapter one, interrelationality is essential to being human, and so, I would argue, it must be part of the emotional landscape of morality. In addition, it is plausible that deeper bonds between people will serve to increase their prosocial emotions toward one another, and in this way further motivate the actions Prinz describes.

Prinz maintains that teaching children morality involves their emotional development and emotional lives. Caregivers use blame emotions and punishment (or the threat of punishment) to dissuade children from engaging in negative behavior in what Prinz describes as a "careful manipulation of emotions."¹⁰⁵ He cites studies in which children explain the importance of maintaining moral codes by appealing to emotions, particularly emotions that exhibit the sympathy the child feels for the victim of the moral

¹⁰⁵ Jesse Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 35.

infraction.¹⁰⁶ Prinz suggests that the understanding children develop of the distinction between moral and conventional norms (for example, between stealing and neglecting to raise one's hand in class) stems from the emotional responses that adults have when the child behaves contrary to one of the norms. Moral-code violation tends to produce a stronger response in the caregivers than conventional-code violation does.¹⁰⁷

Many caregivers also use words of praise in response to the child's behaving well in an attempt to elicit positive emotions in the child that will encourage the child to continue to engage in morally praiseworthy behavior. This is a significant part of how children learn what the norms of their society are and how to follow them. Prinz speculates that children crave love, and so they will act in ways that help them avoid blame emotions. In addition, their natural aptitude for empathy allows them to perceive and experience the negative emotions of caregivers, and learning which actions have negative emotions associated with them will inspire children to avoid those behaviors.¹⁰⁸ I think Prinz is correct that cultivating the prosocial emotional tendencies in children is vital to their moral development, a contention to which I will return below.

If moral codes were transmitted only through praise and blame emotions, children would not learn to make moral assessments and judgments in new circumstances. Patricia Greenspan concurs with Prinz that emotions play a key role in establishing and maintaining social and cultural norms, but on her view, the process of being educated morally includes learning moral judgments, moral language, and moral emotions

¹⁰⁶ Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, 36.

¹⁰⁷ Prinz, *The Emotional Construction of Morals*, 38.

¹⁰⁸ Prinz, "The Moral Emotions," 530.

simultaneously.¹⁰⁹ Moral judgments and emotions are distinguished later in a person's life.¹¹⁰ Greenspan purports that emotions play a substantial role in children's moral education. Because there is an inherent emotional part of each human being that is educated and formed by cultural norms,¹¹¹ she argues that the mechanisms by which children learn emotions seem to be innate.¹¹² Further, "specifically moral emotions result from having the linguistic resources to capture social norms, plus some way (whether evolutionary or social) of acquiring an aversive reaction to a norm violation."¹¹³ Thus, the emotions are part of how a child learns to be a moral person in the particular culture into which she is born. Her moral language, her moral emotions, and her moral judgments of particular situations will arise together and form her moral perspective. This hearkens back to Helm's idea of the integrated nature of judgment, emotion, and desire in a single evaluative perspective. As with Helm's position, the unity Greenspan espouses in moral education presumes a level of consistency in a person's moral life.

Although both Helm and Greenspan argue that emotion and judgment become distinguishable later in a person's life, Greenspan's contention that these aspects of moral development are united in children raises the question of what happens to the child who is taught contradictory messages. Recall the woman Robert Coles interviewed whose father was a blatant racist and whose mother tried to counter these messages.¹¹⁴ The

¹⁰⁹ Patricia Greenspan, "Learning Emotions and Ethics," in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, ed. Peter Goldie (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 553.

¹¹⁰ Greenspan, "Learning Emotions," 555.

¹¹¹ Greenspan, "Learning Emotions," 540.

¹¹² Greenspan, "Learning Emotions," 541.

¹¹³ Greenspan, "Learning Emotions," 547.

¹¹⁴ Coles, *Moral Life*, 226-238.

woman he interviewed chose to educate herself and escape her poverty;¹¹⁵ her brother became a member of the Ku Klux Klan.¹¹⁶ These children were taught conflicting moral messages by their parents, and each child chose a different path as they matured. Perhaps as they were able to distinguish their moral judgment from their moral emotion, they were able to make a conscious choice based on judgment. However, given the role emotions play in teaching children the moral code of their culture and then in maintaining the social and moral norms, it does seem likely that the woman interviewed and her brother, even as children, had different emotional experiences of and responses to the conflicting messages they received and the parents who transmitted those messages, and that those emotions had a hand in shaping their subsequent actions and choices.

Greenspan strengthens the case for emotions' role in moral agency because she argues that emotions are what give moral judgments the motivational impetus to result in action.¹¹⁷ While she asserts that acting on emotions is distinct from exhibiting emotions,¹¹⁸ she does maintain that the motivational force of emotions lies in "the pressure they exert on us to express them somehow in behavior."¹¹⁹ This pressure results from the deep investment of the person in her emotions. Whereas "'perfect' rationality" is detached,¹²⁰ emotions are motivational because they reflect our values and are (as Cates and Harak argue) that which moves us. Greenspan distinguishes two phases of emotional "reasoning": first the object of emotion evokes the emotion, and then the emotion leads to

¹¹⁵ Coles, *Moral Life*, 227.

¹¹⁶ Coles, *Moral Life*, 228.

¹¹⁷ Greenspan, "Learning Emotions," 556.

¹¹⁸ Patricia S. Greenspan, "A Case of Mixed Feelings: Ambivalence and the Logic of Emotion," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 239.

¹¹⁹ Greenspan, "A Case of Mixed Feelings," 224.

¹²⁰ Greenspan, "A Case of Mixed Feelings," 240.

behavior.¹²¹ Because she holds that these two phases are distinct, she can argue that we usually have some control over whether we act on our emotions.¹²² Similar to Prinz, Greenspan thinks that one way emotion serves to motivate behavior is through blame emotions. Greenspan agrees that blame emotions can function to dissuade people from actions that break social norms, and she adds that this functioning must incorporate a concept of the future. Without being able to conceive of what will likely follow from a particular action, including “self-punitive” emotions such as shame and guilt, the motivational force of the blame emotions will remain inert.¹²³ Thus, anticipated emotions have motivational force as well. Because she ascribes such motivational significance to emotion, Greenspan holds that morality must be learned in conjunction with emotion if the person is going to live the morality.¹²⁴

These accounts explain how important emotions are in moral formation and moral living. Of particular significance is that children develop the capacity to recognize and be moved by the circumstances of other people. Prosocial emotions are a focal point for theological considerations of the place of emotions in moral development, and it is to those that we now turn.

Theological Accounts

In this final section of the chapter, I focus on theological accounts of the role of emotions in children’s moral development. As do philosophers, the theologians I engage here cite the significance of prosocial emotions (empathy and sympathy) in terms of

¹²¹ Greenspan, “A Case of Mixed Feelings,” 243.

¹²² Greenspan, “A Case of Mixed Feelings,” 239.

¹²³ Greenspan, “Learning Emotions,” 554.

¹²⁴ Greenspan, “Learning Emotions,” 554.

moral motivation. Emotions contribute to the development of moral awareness and to learning the moral codes of one's community. Further, the case can be made that emotions are necessary for people to be in relationship with God and for children's spiritual formation.

Christine Gudorf makes a case for fostering empathy as a central part of how one becomes a moral person. She argues that people need to be able to read each other's emotions in order to function morally.¹²⁵ Before we can help another person in need (110) or respond to someone's suffering (112), we must realize that they are in need or suffering, and empathy is the means through which we become aware of this. Gudorf's research leads her to suggest that accurately reading other people's emotional cues is a capacity that can be cultivated (114). Moral interaction requires that we also be able to express our needs and suffering, trusting that others will notice and respond (112). This contention of the mutuality of empathic responsibility can be extended to considerations of children's moral formation. A child who is learning moral interaction with others must have her own needs met and should also learn to ascertain and feel motivated to meet the needs of others. This can help to foster the child's sense of another prosocial emotion—compassion.

Compassion can be taught in lived and concrete experiences, but it can also be taught through modeling it to children in other ways. Catholic theologian John Hesch explores compassion as an example of pro-social behavior that is interconnected with

¹²⁵ Christine E. Gudorf, "Gendered Identity Formation and Moral Theology," in *Applied Ethics in a World Church: The Padua Conference*, ed. Linda Hogan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008). While Gudorf's essay is concerned with differences between empathic capacities in men and women, some of her arguments and conclusions are germane to the current study.

empathy and sympathy.¹²⁶ He defines empathy as “having a feeling that is more appropriate to another’s situation than to one’s own” (31), and sympathy as occasions “when major elements of condolence, pity, and/or agreement are present” (31). He, unlike Prinz, allows sympathy to include positive emotions. Prosocial behaviors occur when the situations causing empathy or sympathy result in actions “intended to alleviate the other’s distress or come to the other’s aid” (31). One way Hesch suggests to foster prosocial behaviors in children is through narratives.¹²⁷ It is not necessary that the child understand the story completely; the image of the compassion (or other prosocial behaviors) that the characters exhibit will serve as examples of how to think with compassion, empathy, or sympathy. It will provide illustrations of the way prosocial behaviors function—what kinds of situations elicit them and what kinds of responses are appropriate—and it is possible that this modeling will foster those attitudes in the child as she grows (35-36). Another way of thinking of Hesch’s suggestion is that stories can offer examples of agency at work. The multiple characters on which the child can draw in learning compassion and other prosocial emotions are similar to the “rainbow cast of saints” Herdt pointed to above as models of Christian mimesis.¹²⁸ The child can “try out” through play, imagination, or imitation, the kinds of actions and responses the stories’

¹²⁶ John B. Hesch, “Fostering the Development of Compassion in Young Children,” *Pastoral Psychology* 41, no. 1 (1992): 36.

¹²⁷ Other scholars also suggest story-telling as a means of emotional and moral education in children. See Greenspan, “Learning Emotions,” 545; and Fivush, “Parent-Child Reminiscing.” MacIntyre makes the case for the centrality of fictional narratives in teaching children who they are in the lived narrative of their own lives. Through stories, a child learns why others respond to her they way that they do, and she learns how other people are likely to interpret her responses to them (MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 216).

¹²⁸ Herdt, *Putting On Virtue*, 8.

characters engage in. In this way, she will have multiple models of prosocial behavior to explore as she determines how she will exercise her own agency.

Learning to control or manage one's actions that result from emotions, as well as to manage the emotions themselves, is a key aspect of moral development. Johannes van der Ven explores this issue in his practical-theology text, *Formation of the Moral Self*. He works within the interactive model described in chapter one, meaning that he conceives of human development as a process whereby the individual impacts her surroundings, and the individual's environment is a formative influence on her.¹²⁹ He discusses various aspects of the person's development as a moral being, and his work on emotional formation is of particular relevance for this project.¹³⁰ After explaining what an emotion is and then delving into how emotions form and why they matter for moral development, van der Ven discusses the ways in which people can manage their emotions.

Van der Ven subscribes to a "cognitive interaction emotion theory." He clarifies that "the term *cognitive* refers to human goals and beliefs, with which emotions are connected and from which they receive their intentionality" (287). Thus, van der Ven is a cognitive emotional theorist. He explains that emotions are "cognitively embedded" and involve the person's having some frame of reference in which to understand them. The frame of reference can be unconscious, but the person will have some sense of the cause of the emotion.

Whether consciously present or not, this cognitive frame of reference, or web of meanings, channels, mediates, and directs the emotions that are felt, and it does so by, for example, identifying the cause of these emotions (oneself, another person, a situation), and by interpreting, assessing, and

¹²⁹ Van der Ven, *Formation of the Moral Self*, 28-30.

¹³⁰ See his chapter of the same name: Van der Ven, "Emotional Formation," 283-337, in *Formation of the Moral Self*.

evaluating them. A theory of emotion is nothing other than making explicit, elaborating on, and explaining this cognitive embeddedness of emotions (287).

Thus, emotions are processes that are intimately connected with other aspects of the person and her life, such as her goals, beliefs, and context (288). The term *interactive*, he writes, “concerns the way in which the person interprets the context he/she is in, appraises the events that take place in this context and change it, copes with these changes, acts from this coping, feels emotions, and expects future outcomes of both the changing context and his/her actions in that context” (287-88). His perspective can serve as a good reminder that emotional responses involve not only the person’s values and emotional history, but they are also deeply engaged with the other aspects of a person’s life at any given moment. Coping strategies can be diminished and emotional responses intensified when a person is functioning on a sleep deficit, for example. It is possible that these contextual factors are more significant in children than in adults because children lack the experience to put a given context in a broader perspective.

Emotions are morally significant because we need them for moral action and moral dispositions. Van der Ven explores the development of a number of different emotions that he perceives to have moral relevance: ego-identity (309-310), basic trust (310-312), empathy and sympathy (313-315), justice (315-318), shame and guilt (318-323), and sex and love (323-331).¹³¹ I will take as an example his discussion of empathy and sympathy because they are the emotions commonly addressed by other scholars I study in this chapter. The literature I have reviewed so far indicates that empathy and sympathy have to do with understanding that other people have emotions, being able to

¹³¹ Van der Ven categorizes these as follows: “‘natural emotions’ [are] ego-identity, basic trust, empathy and sympathy, sex and love... ‘moral emotions’ [are] sense of justice, shame, and guilt” (van der Ven, *Formation of the Moral Self*, 309).

identify those emotions, and experiencing an emotion in response to the emotions of others. Van der Ven distinguishes between empathy and sympathy by saying that sympathy includes “the desire to help the other” (314), whereas empathy is the ability to discern what the other is feeling and to share those feelings (313-314). He, like Prinz, does not define empathy and sympathy as emotions *per se*, but as propensities for emotions (313). That these tendencies exhibit very early in human life is clear from the studies van der Ven cites showing that human infants cry in response to hearing another baby cry (313-314). After tracing empathy and sympathy through a number of developmental stages (314-315), he concludes that they are necessary to normal, healthy social functioning. Being able to perceive that others have emotions and to have that perception evoke an emotional response in oneself is key to motivating a person to action, and it has serious moral implications. If a person can understand on a rational level that others are also persons, but she does not connect with them emotionally, she will likely not be motivated to help when they are suffering. She might be unable to identify situations that warrant interventive action, and so she will lack social functionality (315). He draws similar conclusions with respect to the other emotions he discusses—without these emotions and emotional tendencies, the person is ill-prepared and ill-equipped to function socially and morally (310-312, 315-331).

With this framework in mind, it is defensible that the formation, management, and education of emotions is essential for the moral life. Van der Ven identifies two interconnected approaches to managing the emotions (307), both of which he holds are necessary for establishing ways of dealing with and thinking of emotions such that they foster the moral life. These two approaches working together allow emotions to provide

information about what we value, and at the same time, they can be brought into collaboration with our goals such that they promote the fulfillment of those goals. The first approach is called “ordering,” and those who subscribe to it view emotions as needing to be ordered properly such that “their affective flow is directed toward the moral goal or value at which the person is aiming, while their affective energy is purposively used for approximating and reaching it” (303). Van der Ven associates this approach with Aquinas and with virtue theory. In it, “the emotions are not inspected for their possibly negative influences, but positively taken up into the purposive human striving to perform virtuous actions and approximate excellence in virtue” (304). The second tack that van der Ven finds useful is the “processing” approach, which views emotions as unique sources of information to which we need to pay attention (304-305). Processing does not conflate emotions with thoughts or judgments; in fact, it values emotions because they are sources of knowledge that are distinct from thoughts and judgments. Van der Ven further argues that the dialectical relationship between the ordering and processing management approaches reflects the interactive model that frames his work. Thus, the person experiences emotion (processing) and then discerns which emotions are “authentic” and will be acted on (ordering). The processing is the environment’s influence on the person; the person’s ordering and subsequently acting on her emotions includes her impacting her environment (308).

Van der Ven claims that children’s emotions form through observation, experience, and concept. Observation can aid a child’s emotional development when the child sees adults who genuinely and consistently care about her and each other, and who deal with emotions (even negative ones) and conflicts as they arise (332). Observation is

part of how a child is socialized (121), and this includes learning to compromise (123). Experience involves children themselves dealing with emotions. They learn to navigate their emotions in different situations and to allow the emotions to guide them morally. For example, experiencing authentic shame and guilt help a child to know when she has broken a moral norm or harmed someone else (334-335). Finally, conceptual learning happens later when the cognitive capacities are more developed, and the child is able to think abstractly about emotions, although conceptual learning must also include concrete cases. Conceptual learning can be used to reinforce and correct learning that results from observation and experience, and for this reason, caregivers need to talk to children about their emotions (336).

I find van der Ven's explanation of children's moral formation to be a more comprehensive and balanced reflection of children's experience of emotion than Nussbaum's. He includes observation of good and loving behavior, whereas Nussbaum centered her description of children's emotional formation on their concern about their own wrong-doing and their own limitations. Van der Ven includes the morally significant and necessary process of learning to curb one's tendencies toward bad actions, but he adds the equally necessary dimension of observing and emulating good and loving behavior. It is not enough to teach children what to avoid. They must also see what they ought to do. For this reason, I would argue that praise emotions are often just as significant as blame emotions in children's moral formation. Prinz might be right that blame emotions are in fact more important than praise emotions in maintaining social and moral norms,¹³² but I think both are needed to establish the child's understanding of those

¹³² Prinz, "The Moral Emotions," 529.

norms. Further, from a Christian standpoint, human beings are created by God for relationship with God and each other. Those relationships involve emotions of love and good will as well as of keeping oneself in check. Thus, moral development from this standpoint must go beyond Nussbaum's idea of accepting and atoning for one's bad behavior. At the same time, I do think her insistence on the reparation for bad actions is an important piece of moral formation that is largely neglected in the other research on children's moral and emotional formation. Every child is going to do something wrong at some point, and the child must be taught to try to repair the damage done by her actions in order to foster and maintain good relationships with others and God.

Van der Ven's work is useful both for the way it associates emotional development with moral learning and for its emphasis on the interpersonal aspects of emotional development. At the same time, it remains uncommitted in terms of what a well-developed moral emotional life leads to specifically. Presumably the goal will vary depending on the social and cultural context in which one finds oneself. However, as is the case with other thinkers, his position seems to be that emotions' function is to serve pre-existing social and cultural moral norms. What those norms are must be fleshed out with thick theological descriptions of moral development. Because his work uses interactive theory, the potential exists to extend his thinking to include children's moral agency. However, his insistence on the cognitive embeddedness of emotions makes his theory susceptible to Deigh's critique that cognitive theories are not able to accommodate infants and very young children.¹³³

¹³³ See Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 29.

Including infants and young children is central to my argument and to the Christian theological anthropology I advanced in chapter one, which holds that infants and young children are created by God for relationship with God and so are already spiritual. This spirituality requires emotion, contends Laurence Scheindlin. He argues that emotions are also necessary for moral perspicacity. On his view, emotions are both judgments regarding the “personal salience” of a situation or object and the mechanism through which we are aware of our judgments.¹³⁴ Similar to Harak, he contends that emotions are the way that we notice a moral problem to be a moral problem; they are *how* we see the problem and are the reason *that* we see the problem (182-183).

Scheindlin goes further and claims that emotions are also crucial to spirituality and spiritual experience, and he sees the greatest hindrance to children’s moral and spiritual development resulting from our cultural animosity towards emotion. He writes,

Spirituality’s cultural nemesis is neither secularization nor individualism *per se*, but rather the prevailing climate of emotional coolness.... [This issue] contains, I believe, significant practical consequences for those of us interested in the spiritual and moral development of children. This project will be greater than overcoming privatization, and even more fundamental than developing moral and spiritual emotions. A society that tamps down intense emotion in everyday life and which deploys embarrassment (itself a reduction in emotional intensity from shame) as a means of social control...quite naturally stigmatizes as an embarrassment spiritual experience, which is, by definition, intense. Before spiritual emotions can be nurtured, emotional experience *itself* needs to be restored as a *primary means by which we apprehend the world and connect with it* (186-187, emphases in original).

Whether or not current American culture is tamping down emotions is an issue that requires its own study, and I will not attempt to prove or disprove it here. Scheindlin’s point remains relevant either way. He is crediting emotion—strong emotion—with being

¹³⁴ Laurence Scheindlin, “Emotional Perception and Spiritual Development,” *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 8, no. 2 (2003): 182.

the “primary means” by which human beings engage the world. Further, theological anthropology maintains that one of the aspects of being human, indeed one of the purposes of human life for which each human being is created, is relationship with God. Scheindlin offers emotions as a mode of relating to God. His account seems to indicate that emotion is significant for more than being a value judgment or a means through which to maintain social norms and order. Emotions go beyond fostering a preference for choosing actions that lead to virtue for the sake of virtue. These aspects of emotion are morally relevant, but emotion, when it is how we engage the world and how we fulfill our humanity in relationship with God, is also the foundation of human agency. If agency is based on interacting with the world and God, and emotion is the “primary means” of that interaction, then emotion will be at least one of the primary means through which people, including children, exercise agency.

Much of the work studied in this chapter can serve as a useful resource for thinking constructively about emotions’ role in children’s moral agency. The definition of moral agency I am using in this dissertation centers on a person’s ability to engage with the morality of her context. Emotions function in teaching children moral norms and moral behavior, and they themselves can be educated and formed. In addition, the centrality of emotions in relating to others and to God is key to thinking about children as created by God for relationship. While the philosophers and theologians I have studied in this chapter help make the case for emotions’ part in moral development and moral agency, I turn to Aquinas for a robust theory of emotions that integrates—without conflating—thought and passion in the complex, multilayered experience that we call

emotion. Aquinas's thought incorporates the whole person, body and soul, in her relatedness to the created world, to other people, and to God. His theory offers a thick theological description of the purpose and goals of a human life, thus positioning emotion within a religiously ethical system. Further, it accounts for the cumulative effect of emotions and experiences throughout a person's life, thus maintaining and underscoring the importance of childhood experiences.

CHAPTER 3: AQUINAS ON THE EMOTIONS

The philosophical and theological accounts of emotions reviewed in chapter two provide useful tools for thinking constructively about moral agency, particularly in terms of the role of the emotions in the moral life. Understanding the emotions as partly cognitive allows us to see that emotions are at least one component of the way that a person engages and interacts with the world. However, cognitive theories tend to base emotions on levels of evaluative judgment that are beyond young children's intellectual capacity. Aquinas's thought on emotions maintains the cognitive dimension that helps to ensure that emotions are part of the moral life, and it goes beyond strictly cognitive accounts of emotions (such as Nussbaum's) by separating the assessment of the object of the emotion from the attraction (or repulsion) the person experiences with respect to the object. This distinction provides a way of explaining both anomalous emotions—those that contradict a person's thoughts and beliefs—and children's emotions without requiring that they be based on propositional knowledge. Aquinas would likely have resisted using his work to include children as agential participants in the moral community, since he thought their inchoate rational powers rendered them basically irrational. However, when his thinking is incorporated into a contemporary context, and considered as a resource for working with a theological anthropology that includes children as already fully human beings, Aquinas's understanding of the ways that

thoughts, feelings, senses, and reason interact in a complex web of mutual and cumulative influence opens the realm of emotions and morality to those whose rational powers are immature.

In this chapter, I focus on Aquinas's thought as it pertains to emotions, beginning with a brief overview of how he conceives of the human soul, which is necessary to understanding his views on human passionate and emotional responses to the world. I first consider the distinct powers of the soul and their functions, and I then strive to show how these work collaboratively rather than in isolation from one another. I argue that it is in the mutual influence and interaction of the powers of the soul, over time, that the person's emotional life unfolds. In chapter four, I will elaborate on the role of emotions in the moral life, including the connections between emotions and virtue.

The Human Soul

Aquinas's conception of the human soul and its relationship to the body is the context within which his thoughts on emotions are developed. He believes that the human being is a union of body and soul, and that neither on its own adequately encapsulates what it is to be human.¹ His is a hylomorphic anthropology, in which the soul and body

¹ Barnes calls this a "metaphysical unity" (Cory Ladd Barnes, "Thomas Aquinas on the Body and Bodily Passions," in *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity*, ed. Margaret D. Kamitsuka [Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010], 88). The hylomorphic unity of body and soul indicates Aquinas's positive view of the body, although the desires of the body are corrupt by sin. Barnes summarizes: "the hylomorphic [*sic*] nature of a human being grants positive value to the body and bodily passions. The faculty of sensuality is a natural and beneficial feature of humanity, providing the sense data necessary for cognition and fostering the preservation of the individual and species. Aided by original justice in the state of integrity, the body and the sensitive appetite are perfectly ordered to the soul and reason.... Original sin disrupts this proper order with the result that the sensitive appetite immoderately desires mutable goods beyond any rational

are united such that they are mutually dependent. Although the soul is “something subsistent,” it is only complete when considered in union with the body (ST I.75.2 ad 1). Aquinas eschews an anthropology that equates the person with her soul, and he insists that the person is both body and soul.² Although the soul is subsistent, it is not itself corporeal, but it is the form of the body, meaning that it gives the body (matter) its actuality.³ To give the body its actuality is to take the potential of the material that makes up the body and give it the qualities that make it this particular person.⁴ The dependence is not unidirectional. The soul also depends on the body and the ability of the senses to perceive the world in order to gain knowledge (ST I 84.6, 7).⁵ That being said, my focus in this chapter is on Aquinas’s thoughts on the (embodied) soul, as they pertain to the emotions.

All living beings have souls, according to Aquinas. Plants have vegetative souls; irrational animals have sensitive souls; and human beings have rational souls (ST I.78.1).⁶ The vegetative soul in a plant acts only on the corporeal plant itself (ST I.78.1) and performs the functions necessary for the plant to live and grow (ST I.78.2). The vegetative soul does not allow the plant to interact with other objects because its powers

limits and without any proportioned relation to the preservation of the individual or the species” (93).

² Aquinas takes this position in the context of arguments that maintain that the soul is properly called the person and that it uses the body. Aquinas writes: “Since, then, sensation is an operation of man, but not proper to him, it is clear that man is not a soul only, but something composed of soul and body” (ST I. 75.4).

³ “[I]t belongs to the notion of a soul to be the form of a body” (ST I.75.5), and “the soul, which is the first principle of life, is not a body, but the act of a body” (ST I. 75.1). See also ST I.76.6.

⁴ Barnes, “Thomas Aquinas on the Body,” 95.

⁵ Barnes, “Thomas Aquinas on the Body,” 87; Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 169-170.

⁶ I use the terms “intellectual” and “rational” interchangeably when discussing Aquinas’s understanding of the human soul and its powers.

are limited to the plant itself. In animals, the sensitive soul allows for interaction with other sensible objects, in addition to acting on the given animal's body, to which it is united (ST I.78.1). For this reason, creatures with sensitive souls are able to perceive and respond to the objects they encounter, which they do in cooperation with their physical senses.⁷ The intellectual soul of the human being is created by God (ST I.118.2, ad 2) and distinguishes humans from other creatures.⁸ The rational soul is the principle of life in humans (ST I.76.1), and it is capable of comprehending universals (ST I.75.5, ad 1), whereas the sensitive soul perceives particulars. Aquinas holds that human souls are by definition intellectual, but that they contain the powers of the sensitive soul and nutritive soul as well (ST I.76.3).

Within the sensitive and intellectual souls, Aquinas distinguishes between apprehensive and appetitive powers, a distinction that will prove central to developing an understanding of emotion that maintains its cognitive component but does not equate it with cognition. Generally speaking, the apprehensive power is the ability to perceive some object or idea,⁹ and the appetite is the inclination toward that object or idea. In humans, intellectual apprehension perceives universals and truths, while sensitive

⁷ Aquinas holds that “sensation and the consequent operations of the sensitive soul are evidently accompanied with change in the body; thus in the act of vision, the pupil of the eye is affected by a reflection of color: and so with the other senses. Hence it is clear that the sensitive soul has no ‘per se’ operation of its own, and that every operation of the sensitive soul belongs to the composite [of body and soul]” (ST I.75.3).

⁸ God, who is the highest intellectual power, is also the source of “light” for the intellectual soul (ST I.79.4).

⁹ Cates provides a useful description of apprehension: “The power of apprehension makes it possible to find an object of thought intelligible; it allows one to regard an object *as* an object of a certain kind. The power of apprehension also makes it possible to find an object of sensation sensible; it allows one to pick something out as a sensible object and recognize its sensible properties. In short, the power of apprehension makes it possible to entertain something *as* an object of consciousness or awareness” (Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 66).

apprehension perceives particular objects. The apprehensive power then presents the object it has perceived to the appetitive power to which it corresponds (ST I-II.13.1). Intellectual appetite follows intellectual apprehension, and sensitive appetite follows sensitive apprehension (ST I.79.1, ad 2).¹⁰ In Aquinas's words, "We must needs say that the intellectual appetite is a distinct power from the sensitive appetite. For the appetitive power is a passive power, which is naturally moved by the thing apprehended" (ST I.80.2). Thus, if the "thing apprehended" is particular, the sensitive powers apprehend it, and sensitive appetite follows; if the "thing apprehended" is of a universal nature, the intellect apprehends it, and intellectual appetite follows.¹¹ The appetitive power always follows apprehension and is that which "inclines" the being toward or away from the object or idea apprehension presents to it (ST I.80.1). Aquinas explains that this means that the person apprehends something as "sensible or intelligible," and she then desires it (with her appetitive power) as "suitable or good" (ST I.80.1, ad 2). The goal of the apprehensive power is to perceive an object, and once that object is perceived, the

¹⁰ There is a third appetitive power, which Aquinas calls "natural appetite," and it tends toward "a form existing in the nature of things, while the sensitive appetite, as also the intellective or rational appetite, which we call the will, follows from an apprehended form" (ST I-II.8.1). The apprehension on which natural appetite is based does not come from its own powers; rather, it is "an appetite which arises from an apprehension existing, not in the subject of the appetite, but in some other" (ST I-II.26.1), for instance, a rock having a natural appetite for the earth and so falling to the ground when lifted. The sensitive appetite is higher than the natural appetite: a "superior inclination belongs to the appetitive power of the soul, through which the animal is able to desire what it apprehends, and not only that to which it is inclined by its natural form" (ST I.80.1).

¹¹ Aquinas goes on in the same article to say: "It is not accidental to the thing desired to be apprehended by the sense or the intellect; on the contrary, this belongs to it by its nature; for the appetible does not move the appetite except as it is apprehended. Wherefore differences in the thing apprehended are of themselves differences of the appetible. And so the appetitive powers are distinct according to the distinction of the things apprehended, as their proper objects" (ST I.80.2, ad 1).

power's work is complete (with respect to that object), and it rests. The function of the appetite is directed toward moving the person toward or away from the object that apprehension presents to it, and it achieves this goal in inclination or movement (ST I.81.1).

These four are the main categories of powers in the human soul in Aquinas's system: intellectual apprehension, intellectual appetite (called the will), sensitive apprehension, and sensitive appetite (which are the passions). They are distinct but interrelated powers. This is not to say that the separate powers of the soul mean that the person is divided in herself. Rather the distinctions are for the sake of discussion, and are not to be taken as literal divisions among independent and isolated powers.¹² In what follows, I consider each of these powers, beginning with intellectual apprehension, then the intellectual appetite that follows from it. I then turn to the sensitive powers of the soul and discuss sensitive apprehension. I end this chapter with sensitive appetite. This category of powers is the one most frequently associated with our contemporary conception of emotions, and I will explore it in some detail, both as a power in its own right, as well as how it functions in relation to the other powers of the soul. All four of these categories of powers are interconnected in Aquinas's account of the human soul, and they are mutually influential in my interpretation of his thought on emotions. It is,

¹² “[A]lthough Aquinas employs a ‘faculty psychology’ in his analysis, he does not divide the self into various semiautonomous agencies. The divisions are used only for analysis or convenience. Statements about what a power does always can be reformulated as statements about what human beings as possessors of a power do or can do” (Lee H. Yearley, “Mencius and Aquinas’s Theories of Virtue,” in *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Concepts of Courage* [Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990], 72).

therefore, important to set the stage for the discussion of the emotions by examining all of the powers of the soul.

Intellectual Apprehension

Intellectual apprehension allows a person to perceive intellectual objects and to make sense of her world. Aquinas writes, “We must therefore assign on the part of the intellect some power to make things actually intelligible, by abstraction of the species from material conditions. And such is the necessity for an active intellect” (ST I.79.3).¹³ The intellect’s act is to understand (ST I.79.10), and to understand on the basis of universals abstracted from particulars. In human beings, “whatever we understand, we know by comparison to natural sensible things. Consequently it is not possible for our intellect to form a perfect judgment, while the senses are suspended, through which sensible things are known to us” (ST I.84.8). Aquinas is saying that the intellect is able to abstract the essence of a given object from its particulars. For example, it can determine that a particular chair fits into the category of “chair” because the intellect is able to understand the principles of “chair” that are present in that chair.¹⁴ People gain this understanding by abstracting what it is to be a chair from their experiences with particular chairs. They do not begin with a pre-existing concept of “chair” which they then apply to particular chairs; they are only able to apply the category “chair” to a given chair after they have successfully abstracted the concept of “chair” from experiences of other chairs.

¹³ Aquinas also posits a passive intellect (ST I.79.3, ad 1) that receives and retains apprehensions (ST I.79.7).

¹⁴ The intellect does this through “phantasms,” which are created by the sensitive apprehension. A phantasm presents an image of the material object to the intellect, which is then able to know it (ST I.85.1).

This process does not guarantee that the person will have an accurate understanding of the world or the objects in it, an important caveat that Cates mentions. She explains that “human intellect is a power that makes it possible for one to find intelligible the world in which one lives,” but using the intellect does not guarantee an accurate understanding of that world.¹⁵ We are capable of mistaken apprehensions.¹⁶

The human intellect depends upon the sensitive powers in order to perceive and make sense of the world. To be sure, it does not require the body in order to operate: “the human soul is the highest and noblest of forms. Wherefore it excels corporeal matter in its power by the fact that it has an operation and a power in which corporeal matter has no share whatever. This power is called the intellect” (ST I.76.1). At the same time, Aquinas explains that, because humans are the lowest of the rational beings, human intellect does not have knowledge of truth by its nature. Rather, humans must gain knowledge through particulars, and this requires the senses, which are corporeal. Therefore, in humans, the intellectual soul is fortuitously united with a body in order to move towards knowledge of the truth (ST I.76.5).¹⁷ The hylomorphic unity of the human person is such that the sensitive and intellectual apprehensive powers function in a way that is often simultaneous and mutually influential. These intellectual apprehensions are then presented to the intellectual appetite.

¹⁵ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 167.

¹⁶ See ST I.85.6.

¹⁷ Angels, on the other hand, are pure intellect and have knowledge of the truth naturally (ST I.76.5).

Intellectual Appetite

Aquinas identifies the intellectual appetite, or the will, as that which “flow[s] freely from an apprehension in the subject of the appetite” (ST I-II.26.1). Because it follows from the intellectual apprehension, which is concerned with universals, “the intellectual appetite, though it tends to individual things which exist outside the soul, yet tends to them as standing under the universal” (ST I.80.2, ad 2), and it is moved by objects with respect to their goodness. Because it flows freely, it is not inclined to objects by necessity, but “free-will is the cause of its own movement, because by his free-will man moves himself to act” (ST I.83.1, ad 3). Choice is an act of the will (ST I-II.13.1),¹⁸ and free will is not a separate power from the will (ST I.83.4). Therefore, the will is free in its choosing. Aquinas explains that the will can choose or not choose any given object, in part because the will is free to think or not to think of the object. However, there is one exception to this: when the will is offered an object that “is good universally and from every point of view, the will tends to it of necessity, if it wills anything at all; since it cannot will the opposite.” And it necessarily tends away from an object that is “not good from every point of view” (ST I-II.10.2).¹⁹ This universal and unqualified good is happiness (*beatitudo*): “the will must of necessity adhere to the last end, which is happiness” (ST I.82.1; also ST I-II.10.2).²⁰ For every other good, the will makes a choice.

¹⁸ “Choice is the final acceptance of something to be carried out. This is not the business of reason but of will. . . . Choice is nevertheless not an act of the will taken absolutely but in relation to reason” (Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on Truth*, vol. 3, trans. Robert W. Schmidt [Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1954], Q22.15, p. 90).

¹⁹ The will can be mistaken, as when it incorrectly thinks an action (such as fornication) will lead to happiness (Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q22.6, p. 58).

²⁰ Jean Porter argues that Aquinas’s claim that all human actions are aimed at one final end must be understood as a “metaphorically informed analysis of rational action, which still leaves room to admit that some behaviors which do not meet this ideal can still be

Being able to make a choice about a particular good requires that the person know what the good (in that instance) is, and that she be able to apply it to the particular situation²¹ (this is done by means of the particular reason, as we shall see below). Although humans do not choose their own *telos*,²² human choice is significant in the means we choose to achieve that end (ST I.82.1, ad 3), and there is no necessity in the means.²³ Intellectual apprehension can present several things to the will at once and is able to make comparisons among those things. The will is then able to choose among them (ST I. 82.2, ad 3), because the end to which the will is inclining the person is happiness (*beatitudo*), and “there are certain individual goods which have not a necessary connection with happiness, because without them a man can be happy: and to such the will does not

said to be rational, and hence true human actions, albeit in a derivative sense.” This is because she correctly assesses that “if Aquinas does indeed claim that each person *always* directs *all* her actions and activities toward some one goal or ideal, then I do not see how that claim could be defended” (Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* [Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1990], 73), and the person who comes close to the ideal seems “fanatical” (72).

²¹ Porter illustrates this point in reference to choices that will promote health in the individual, and she distinguishes the human being’s selection from among various options with the inclinations in animals that lead them to opt naturally for that which promotes their health and survival (Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue*, 71).

²² “Although the will wills the last end by a certain necessary inclination, it is nevertheless in no way to be granted that it is forced to will it.... The will does not will anything necessarily with the necessity of force, yet it does will something necessarily with the necessity of natural inclination” (Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q 22.5, pp. 52-53). Eleonore Stump argues that Aquinas’s account of freedom of the will does not equate freedom with the ability to do otherwise. While he does hold that coercion is contrary to freedom, being inclined to something by natural inclination is not (Eleonore Stump, “Aquinas’s Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will,” in *Aquinas’s Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays*, ed. Brian Davies [New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006], 215-216).

²³ Until we have seen God in the Divine Vision, we do not necessarily desire either God or “those things which are of God” (ST I.82.2). Cates’s read of Aquinas’s view is that “there is no intentional content, short of the direct vision of God, that necessitates a motion of the will in relation to that content. The direct vision of God is possible only in the life to come,” which means that the person is free to will or not to will, to think or not to think about this end and the means to it (Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 207).

adhere of necessity” (ST I.82.2). This is not to say that the will is always inclined toward right or good things. It can make mistakes, usually on the basis of mistaken intellectual apprehensions and judgments, which then incline the person toward objects that are not good.²⁴

This possibility of error, especially error based on intellectual apprehension, is one of the reasons it is imperative not to equate moral agency with moral accountability when considering children. Aquinas’s position is that children, because their intellect is in its formative stages and their rational powers are undeveloped, are not capable of committing sin.²⁵ They are still gaining knowledge of the world through their encounters with particular objects, and they are still growing in their experience and moral judgment of what is good and right. Cates’s explanation of the function of the will is helpful here: “the main function of the will in a human being is to enable one to tend toward the good as it appears in—or with reference to—particular objects. The main function of the will is to enable one to make one’s way in the world as a moral agent by engaging daily situations in ways that contribute to one’s own or others’ complete happiness, as one understands that,” both in terms of one’s ultimate end and in terms of particular and intermediate ends.²⁶ I think it is plausible to say that children do not lack a will when they engage the world, but that they often lack the knowledge, wisdom, and experience to

²⁴ Yearley, “Mencius and Aquinas,” 75. Aquinas holds that these errors are caused by faulty use of the intellect rather than a mistake on the part of sensitive apprehension. He argues that the sensitive apprehension and intellect relate to one another as follows: “in its relation to the intellect, sense always produces a true judgment in the intellect with respect to its own condition, but not always with respect to the condition of things” (Thomas Aquinas, *The Disputed Questions on Truth*, trans. Robert W. Mulligan, vol. 1 [Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1952], Q 1.11, pp. 48-49).

²⁵ ST Suppl. 69.6. See also *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*, 189, ST I-II.89, and ST Suppl. 32.4.

²⁶ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 192.

have a full grasp of the import of their actions. Thus, while it seems evident that children are making choices that pertain to happiness and so utilizing their wills in their moral engagement with the world, their responsibility for those choices needs to be in accord with what they can be expected to understand based on their experience and knowledge. As they live, they will encounter more objects and situations from which they can abstract knowledge, and these encounters will occur through their sensitive apprehensions.

Sensitive Apprehension

The sensitive powers of the soul include apprehension and appetite, and they function with the intellectual powers to play an important role in Aquinas's understanding of how human beings interact with the world. Sensitive apprehension functions through both exterior and interior senses. Exterior senses are what we think of as the five senses—sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell (ST I.78.3)—and they know a sensible object in its proper sense, meaning that they perceive the object as it is, having the properties that the particular corporeal sense organ perceiving it apprehends (ST I.78.4, ad 2).²⁷ When encountering an upholstered armchair, for example, the sense of sight can distinguish colors in the pattern of the upholstery, hearing senses a high-pitched noise from the squeak of the springs when someone sits in the chair, and touch apprehends the texture of the fabric. Aquinas's understanding is that each of the external

²⁷ Aquinas states that the soul is in each part of the body as act, but it is in each part of the body with the particular powers it gives to that part of the body; thus, it is in the eyes as sight, the ears as hearing. "The whole soul is in each part of the body, by totality of perfection and of essence, but not by totality of power. For it is not in each part of the body, with regard to each of its powers; but with regard to sight, it is in the eye; and with regard to hearing, it is in the ear; and so forth" (ST I.76.8).

senses is designed to accommodate the various powers of the soul (vision, hearing, and so on). It is not the case that the soul is adapted to perceive what the corporeal organs sense (ST I.78.3). Therefore, the power of vision is the reason that we have eyes that are designed for seeing, not the other way around. Apprehensions of objects that occur through the external senses involve a change in the body of the being who is perceiving (ST I.75.2, ad 2); for instance, seeing an object involves a change in the eyes. The exterior senses are significant because without them we would be incapable of any knowledge of the world.

The soul also apprehends by way of its interior senses, which Aquinas describes in three categories: common sense, the memorative power, and cogitation, which is also called particular reason. Common sense (*sensus communis*) is the “common root and principle of the exterior senses” (ST I.78.4, ad 1). It functions by taking in information from the exterior senses and understanding it in a unified way. In the example of the upholstered armchair, each exterior sense is only able to apprehend those features that are proper to it, so that sight cannot perceive the squeak of the springs. The exterior senses notice only distinct bits of information about the object. However, when common sense compiles the information that the separate exterior senses apprehend, we are able to comprehend a chair that is at once patterned, soft, and squeaky (ST I.78.4, ad 2).²⁸

The memorative power allows humans to “apprehend a thing not only at the actual time of sensation, but also when it is absent,” and we can not only call to mind but also seek that absent thing (ST I.78.4). Because we have memory, we can think about the

²⁸ On Cates’s read, “the common sense makes it possible to have a unified sensory experience of an object that has many sensible properties, and to be aware that one is having such an experience” (Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 113).

upholstered armchair when we are not with it, we can remember its particular features, and we can be inclined to go to it and sit in it. Aquinas explains that the memorative power does this by way of imagination, or “phantasy,” which is, “as it were a storehouse of forms received through the senses” (ST 78.1). In human beings, memorative power also allows the person to think or reminisce about the past (ST I.78.4), thus permitting a person to remember times when she sat in the upholstered armchair, and this reminiscence can be part of her inclination to seek out the chair. Aquinas places the memorative power in the sensitive part of the soul because it deals with individual things being held in memory from the past; but there is also an intellectual memorative power that retains general concepts, or “species,” rather than particular individual representations of species (ST I.79.6). By this distinction, Aquinas seems to mean that a person’s intellectual memory retains the concept of “chair,” while her sensitive memory holds the “phantasy” of the upholstered armchair.

The third category of interior sense apprehension is the cogitative power. This power is most closely linked with the intellect, and it serves as a medium through which the intellectual and sensitive parts of the soul are able to communicate with one another. It is also a source of motivation towards action. Aquinas explains that the cogitative power in humans is a higher version of its corollary in animals, the estimative power, which allows the animal “to seek or to avoid certain things, not only because they are pleasing or otherwise to the senses, but also on account of other advantages and uses, or disadvantages” (ST I.78.4). He gives two examples of an animal’s estimative powers at work: one is a sheep that perceives a wolf and understands it to be dangerous or potentially harmful to said sheep, and the second is a bird that comprehends that straw is

useful for nest building (ST I.78.4). Both examples are illustrative of how the estimative power perceives what Aquinas calls the “intentions” of objects. Rather than simply apprehending the wolf as large, grey, and so on, the sheep is able to assess the wolf’s danger to the sheep. The bird sees the straw’s usefulness rather than only long, thin, yellowish objects. These estimations also serve as motivators to the animal, so that the sheep flees from the wolf, and the bird gathers the straw and builds a nest.²⁹

Whereas animals’ estimative power determines the relative usefulness or non-usefulness, advantages or disadvantages of objects it apprehends as a function of natural instinct, in humans, the cogitative power functions through a “coalition of ideas” through which it “discovers these intentions” (ST I.78.4). Cogitation “compares individual intentions, just as the intellectual reason compares universal intentions,” and because of this it is also called particular reason (ST I.78.4). Intentions and particular reason are central concepts in Aquinas’s understanding of how the sensitive appetite functions in humans, and I will discuss their role in more detail in the section on the passions below. For now, it is worth noting that the particular reason serves as the mediator between the intellect and the sensitive appetite: “in man the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by this particular reason. But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason: wherefore in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions” (ST I.81.3). An example of a syllogism that combines the universal with the particular reason might be:

Promoting health is a good thing.
This apple will promote my health.
Therefore, this apple is good.

²⁹ In animals, the estimative power naturally moves the sensitive appetite (ST I.81.3).

In this way, the particular reason functions with the universal reason to determine that this apple is good.³⁰

Aquinas writes that “the cogitative and memorative powers in man owe their excellence not to that which is proper to the sensitive part; but to a certain affinity and proximity to the universal reason, which, so to speak, overflows into them” (ST I.78.4, ad 5). Cates interprets this to mean that “Aquinas posits the cogitative power...as the power of interior sensory apprehension that is closest in operation to the power of the intellect.”³¹ Thus, human sensitive apprehension is not isolated, nor does it function independently from the intellectual powers of the soul. It works in cooperation with the intellectual powers to provide the material to which the sensitive appetite responds.

Sensitive Appetite

The sensitive appetite follows the sensitive apprehension. Sensitive appetite is also called “sensuality” (ST I.81.2) or the passions, and it involves a physical change—a “corporeal transmutation”—in the person experiencing the inclination (ST I-II.22.3). As we saw in the previous section, on Aquinas’s account, sensitive apprehension is comprised of both the exterior and interior senses. For this reason, sense appetite is more

³⁰ Just as intellectual apprehension can be mistaken, so too can practical reason. Drawing on ST II-II.53-55, Osborne highlights the ways in which practical reasoning can fail or be erroneous, and he argues that we require grace to overcome the tendency to err. “All of these failures either involve a mistake in the reasoning itself, a mistake in the premises of a practical syllogism, or in the act’s execution. The mistaken premises are most important for understanding erroneous practical syllogisms.... Aquinas argues that the uncertainty of human affairs shows that practical reasoning about the good life requires not only the infused virtue of prudence but also a special gift of God,” which is the gift of counsel bestowed by the Holy Spirit (Thomas M. Osborne, Jr., “Practical Reasoning,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 282-283).

³¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 171.

complex than a person's simply being inclined to an object she finds attractive for its observable characteristics. Sensitive appetite arises from sensitive apprehension's assessments of the object's advantages and usefulness in addition to its appeal, and from the person's ability to compare any particular object with others from her memory. Further, the intellectual powers are able to influence sense appetite through their association with the particular reason.

The sense appetite and the emotions in Aquinas's thought will occupy the remainder of this chapter. I will first discuss the passions considered in and of themselves and will aim to show that when the roles of the intellect and cumulative experience are included in the account, the experiences they describe are emotions. Further, I will argue that Aquinas's system successfully addresses critiques leveled at contemporary cognitive theories of emotion, while maintaining the cognitive component needed for the emotions' role in the moral life.

The Passions

Aquinas's "Treatise on the Passions" (ST I-II.22-48) provides his most developed thought on the passions of the soul.³² In the Treatise, he provides an account of passions that presents them as at once passive and dynamic. He distinguishes eleven passions, which are broken down into two categories—concupiscible and irascible—and these function in collaboration with the sensitive apprehension and the intellectual powers.

The sense appetite, according to Aquinas, is passive. Passivity can mean one of three things, which he describes in ST I-II.22.1. First, something can be passive by virtue

³² Peter King, "Emotions," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 209.

of receiving something without losing anything. But this is not how a passion is passive because “this is to be perfected rather than to be passive.” The second description of passivity is the “proper sense” of passive, and it is “when something is received, while something else is taken away,” as when someone loses something suitable and gains something unsuitable (such as losing health and becoming sick). The third way of being passive is the reverse of the second, namely losing something unsuitable and gaining something suitable (losing illness and gaining health). Aquinas contends that a body is more clearly passive when it is drawn away from what is suitable to it (as in the second sense of passive). Therefore, he can maintain that “when this transmutation is for the worse, it has more of the nature of a passion, than when it is for the better: hence sorrow is more properly a passion than joy,” because sorrow involves the person being drawn away from what is suitable to her.

Passions are passive potencies, according to Peter King, which means that the soul is able to experience them, but that their experience is caused by an external object.³³ King explains that this means that a given passion arises because of something external to the passion itself. “The external principle exercises its influence on the subject, causing a change within it in some way, one that persists so long as the external principle continues to exercise its influence.”³⁴ His example is the anger that arises as a result of an insulting comment. When I hear the comment and understand it to be insulting, anger is brought from potentiality to actuality in my soul.³⁵ King uses the analogy of vision, which is also

³³ Peter King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” in *Aquinas’s Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, ed. Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999), 102-103.

³⁴ King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” 104.

³⁵ King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” 105.

a passive potency, to clarify the nature of passions. Just as a person's eye must be moved by an external object in order for vision to occur, so too must the sensitive appetite be moved by an apprehension in order for a passion to occur. Both vision and passion have an object; the eye sees something, and the passion is about something. However, whereas the object of sight must be present, the object of passion need not be present,³⁶ and Aquinas says that imagination, which includes memory since it is the storehouse of sensory impressions, can cause passions (ST I. 81.3, ad 2).

King's description of the passions as passive potency might lead one to conclude that "we are at the mercy of our passions" and that "passivity entails that the passions are not voluntary." That would be an error, he argues, and he makes a convincing case against both of these "fallacies."³⁷ The first argument falls in line with the complex and interrelated nature of the soul and its functions that we saw above. The reason that "the passivity of the passions does not make us passive with respect to our passions"³⁸ is that the soul is not limited to the sensitive appetite. The sensitive appetite is part of the soul as a whole, and the soul as a whole includes the intellect.³⁹ The sensitive and intellectual powers of the soul work together so that, most of the time, the will consents to a given passion in order for it to continue.⁴⁰ The consent of the will answers the concern of the second fallacy, that the passions are not voluntary, because the will consents freely. The

³⁶ King, "Aquinas on the Passions," 109.

³⁷ King credits Robert Gordon with the identification of these fallacies (King, "Aquinas on the Passions," 121).

³⁸ King, "Aquinas on the Passions," 121.

³⁹ King, "Aquinas on the Passions," 121-122.

⁴⁰ The exception is cases of intense passion wherein the person's reason is "wholly bound, so that he has not the use of reason" and the person's response stemming from that passion is akin to the responses of irrational animals (ST I-II.10.3). See King, "Aquinas on the Passions," 122-123.

integration of the sensitive and intellectual powers of the human soul allows us to be influenced by, but not completely controlled by, our passions.

Aquinas's account of emotion involves two moments—the apprehensive perception and the appetitive response. This is distinct from the Stoic view that emotion is the second stage of a two-stage process. The Stoics maintain that in the first stage, the person experiences the onset of a “first movement.” A first movement is always a disruptive force; it is not something over which the person has control;⁴¹ and it is not a thought.⁴² A first movement includes the person perceiving that something seems to be good or bad, but this is limited to the level of appearance, and it is not yet an emotion.⁴³ The second movement, which is voluntary,⁴⁴ constitutes the emotion, and it occurs when the person consents to the first movement by way of two judgments. The first judgment is that the person's apprehension that something is good or bad is accurate, and the second judgment is that acting in response to this is apposite.⁴⁵ Seneca postulates a third movement in his discussion of anger, and this final movement occurs when a person disobeys her reason and is carried away by emotion.⁴⁶ Similar to cognitive theories, the Stoics hold that emotions arise as evaluative judgments. However, the Stoic position that emotions are cognitive evaluations and judgments does not mean that they think emotions are based on proper assessments of reality. In fact, Stoics think of emotions as something

⁴¹ Richard Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 68-69.

⁴² Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 9, 35.

⁴³ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 3.

⁴⁴ Simo Knuuttila, *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 65.

⁴⁵ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 29.

⁴⁶ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 61.

to be eradicated from one's soul.⁴⁷ According to Knuuttila, the Stoics define emotions rationally in terms of being evaluative judgments, but they also hold that emotions are inherently irrational in terms of being value judgments of particular objects that ascribe a level of importance and worth to those objects that is out of proportion with reality and with what the wise or good person would assign.⁴⁸

In Aquinas's system, the sensitive apprehension determines the "sensitivity" of the object and presents it to the sensitive appetite. It is the sensitive appetite that then desires the object as suitable (or rejects it as unsuitable) (ST I.80.1 ad 2). The passion is the second "movement," and it is not equivalent to thought. Although apprehension and appetite occur simultaneously much of the time, logically, apprehension precedes appetite for Aquinas (ST I.80.1). For the Stoics, the emotion is the second movement precisely because it is thought. Thus, as do the Stoics, Aquinas places the appearance of an object before a person's passional response, but unlike the Stoics, his category of passion or emotion is distinct from cognitive judgment.

The proper sense of passion in Aquinas's thought involves a physical change in the one whose appetite is moved (ST I-II.22.1),⁴⁹ and because of this, passion is in the sensitive rather than the intellectual appetite. The bodily change necessary for passion means that the proper sense of passion can only be said to be in the soul accidentally, in terms of the composite nature of humans as body and soul. The transmutation occurs in

⁴⁷ Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 55. This is due in part to their view that emotions represent valuing particular objects beyond what is appropriate (59). However, Knuuttila notes that this view was considered unrealistic and "inhuman" (68).

⁴⁸ Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 59. For instance, "Chrysippus equated emotions with mistaken non-evidential judgments" (62).

⁴⁹ According to Sorabji, the physical dimension of first movements was debated by the Stoics, and there was not consensus among them regarding whether first movements were mental or physical or both (Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 34, 67).

the body, and because the soul is composite with the body, the soul can be said to have passions.⁵⁰ Nicholas Lombardo's interpretation of the interaction and mutual influence of the body and soul on one another with respect to the passions is helpful in thinking about children and their emotions. Lombardo explains that,

two main principles emerge in [Aquinas's] discussions of body-soul dynamics. First, the relationship between bodily aspects of passion and the mental aspects of passion is more than accidental: the body expresses and resembles on a physical level the experience of the soul. Second, bodily conditions and changes have a direct bearing on our passions, since they can make us disposed to react more or less powerfully to various stimuli.⁵¹

People's bodies—their health, their well-being, their relative state of hunger or tiredness, and so on—have an impact on how they interpret the world around them and experience and express emotions.

Children's physical discomfort can be the source of an emotion that they express, and can sometimes be an indication to their caregivers that they need something. This can be beneficial to children who are pre-verbal, and their fussiness or crying indicates that they are hungry or tired or otherwise in physical need. Further, the experience of being hungry or tired will often cause a child to react to situations differently from how she would when full or well-rested. She might find that even small frustrations lead more quickly than usual to a state of emotional frustration or irritation. Expressing themselves emotionally does not solve the problem, but it does alert those around them that all is not copacetic, and provide a moral call to provide care. If these needs go unmet on a regular basis, the child's perceptions of the world might be developed in a way that reflects her physical deprivation, and this may have an impact on her emotional development.

⁵⁰ See also ST I-II.22.3: "Passion is properly to be found where there is corporeal transmutation. This corporeal transmutation is found in the act of the sensitive appetite."

⁵¹ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 47.

A person's passional experience can indicate a basic human desire, such as hunger that leads a person to desire food, but appetites have a significance in human life that goes beyond identifying physical needs. Lombardo offers an interpretation of Aquinas's view of the appetites that highlights this importance. Although Lombardo's treatment of appetites falls within a discussion of creation in general, his position lends itself to a claim that appetites are good and are necessary for people to engage the world and to grow toward fulfilling their potential. He states:

The perfection of anything is also good...and (we can infer) so too must be the appetite that inclines it toward that perfection. In God's plan, creation is inherently dynamic: created imperfect and permeated with appetite, it cannot help moving toward its perfection. Without appetite, there would not be this dynamic movement, and creation would not move toward its perfection. Instead, creation would stagnate. Appetite is not just intrinsically good; it is integral to creation's inherent dynamism.⁵²

Without appetite, then, the person would not seek the good; she would not grow; and she would be unable to move toward her *telos* of happiness in this life and the Divine Vision in the next.⁵³ Appetite—including sense appetite—is necessary for a person to function as a human being and to live fully. It is important to remember that Aquinas would not give *carte blanche* to appetitive desire as a catalyst to growth and human flourishing. Desire must be directed toward good objects, and it must be ordinate with respect to reason. For

⁵² Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 28.

⁵³ Loughlin also argues that the sensitive appetitive powers contribute to excellence in human living, and that "Aquinas's definition of passion is to be understood within the context of the unity, end and perfection of the sensitive being itself. The passional life thus extends beyond its occurrence in the sensitive appetite to include the person's natural and intellectual aspects" (Stephen Joseph Loughlin, "A Response to Five Critiques of Aquinas's Doctrine of Passion," [PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1998], iii). Loughlin later explains: "The movements of the sensitive appetite, in human beings...reflect and partake in what one considers to be those things or matters which are perfective of one's human nature. In this respect, these movements take on a certain excellence and nobility not enjoyed by the animal lacking reason" (Loughlin, "A Response to Five Critiques," 125).

example, the sensual appetite can be experienced in accord with natural law, or it can lead to lust and to fornication of one sort or another (ST II-II.154.1).

Thus far, we have seen that, according to Aquinas, the sensitive appetite is both passive and dynamic. The passions respond to sensible objects⁵⁴ in a way that either draws the person toward the objects or drives her away from them. They operate in a sequence that includes three parts: inclination, movement, and rest (ST I-II.23.4). When the object is good, the progression of passions is from love to desire to joy. The good object first causes an inclination that Aquinas calls love, which is a “complacency in good” (ST I-II.25.2) with respect to that object. Next, if “it be not yet possessed, it causes in the appetite a movement towards the attainment of the good beloved: and this belongs to the passion of ‘desire’ or ‘concupiscence.’” Finally, “when the good is obtained, it causes the appetite to rest...and this belongs to the passion of ‘delight’ or ‘joy.’” When the object is evil, the progression is from hatred to aversion or dislike, and finally to sorrow or sadness (ST I-II.23.4; also ST I-II.26.2).⁵⁵

The movements involved in these progressions are the concupiscible passions, which are the appetitive power “through which the soul is simply inclined to seek what is suitable, according to the senses, and to fly from what is hurtful” (ST I.81.2).⁵⁶ There are three pairs of concupiscible passions corresponding to the three-part sequence described

⁵⁴ Peter King cautions against interpreting “sensible” too literally; on his read, “Aquinas only means that, as the sensitive appetite depends on sensitive apprehension (perception), its object must be capable of being perceived. He certainly does not mean to exclude non-present targets of the passions, and he carefully allows some passions to be directed at things in virtue of the kind of thing they are” (King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” 110).

⁵⁵ This is the order of execution of the concupiscible passions. In the order of intention, love is last because resting in the good is the goal that drives the progression (ST I-II.25.2).

⁵⁶ Aquinas explains that “the object of the concupiscible power is sensible good or evil, simply apprehended as such, which causes pleasure or pain” (ST I-II.23.1).

above. The pairs are: love and hatred, desire and aversion, and joy and sorrow (ST I-II.23.4). Love in this sense means a recognition and acceptance of the goodness of the object (ST I-II.26.2). Hatred, on the other hand, has as its object evil (ST I-II.29.1), and it arises because the object is “contrary to a suitable thing which is loved” (ST I-II.29.2). In Aquinas’s system, hatred serves a useful purpose by inclining a person away from that which would be detrimental to her (ST I-II.29.1).⁵⁷ A simple example of a sequence of concupiscible passions might be seeing a delicious-looking apple on the kitchen counter and recognizing that it is good (love). The person then desires the apple, and when she picks it up and eats it, she experiences joy in attaining that which she desired. Or, if she sees a rotting apple, she might feel repulsed by it, be inclined to avoid it, and perhaps seek to destroy it or discard it.

When attaining (or evading) the object of the sense appetite involves some difficulty, Aquinas says the irascible passions are involved.⁵⁸ Any good or evil that is “of an arduous or difficult nature, is the object of the irascible faculty.” These passions “regard good or bad as arduous, through being difficult to obtain or avoid” (ST I-II.23.1). The irascible passions arise from and rest in the concupiscible (ST I-II.25.1), and for this reason, they only occur in the middle portion of the three-part movement. The

⁵⁷ Cates distinguishes among different categories of hatred: natural hatred, which even inanimate objects exhibit (for instance, iron “hates” oxygen and moisture and rusts as a result); sentient hatred, which is “a painful dissonance (*dissonantia*) that we feel when we apprehend an object as unsuitable for our being and thus capable of harming us or someone who is important to us”; intellectual hatred, which involves our consenting to the feeling of hatred that is already present in us; and spiritual hatred, which pertains to those things that are harmful to our attainment of our ultimate end of union with God. See Joel Gereboff, Keith Green, Diana Fritz Cates, and Maria Heim, “The Nature of the Beast: Hatred in Cross-Traditional Religious and Philosophical Perspective,” *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 29, no. 2 (2009): 188-191.

⁵⁸ The concupiscible and irascible powers are only in the sensitive appetite; they are not in the intellectual appetite (ST I.82.5).

concupiscible power of love (or hatred) gives rise to desire (or aversion), and when this desire (or aversion) involves difficulty, the irascible powers are engaged. Just as the concupiscible powers can be categorized in contrary pairs, so too can the irascible passions: hope for the good and despair in the face of evil that is difficult to overcome; fear of difficult evil and daring in facing that same evil; and finally anger, which has no contrary (ST I-II.23.4) because it arises from the presence of evil, but the presence of good elicits no irascible passion (ST I-II.23.3; ST I-II.25.3).

The order of generation of the eleven passions (six concupiscible and five irascible) is outlined by Aquinas based on the inclination-desire-rest sequence, and on whether the object of the passion is good or evil, with good preceding evil. Because hatred is aroused by an evil object that is apprehended as being contrary to a good (ST I-II.29.2), the good logically precedes the evil. That is, complacency in the good (love) must exist prior to a passion that responds to something that is contrary to that good. The order of the eleven is: “love precedes hatred; desire precedes aversion; hope precedes despair; fear precedes daring [which precedes anger]; and joy precedes sadness” (ST I-II.25.3). In this way, we can see that Aquinas places the passions whose object is good prior to those whose object is evil, and the concupiscible passions give rise to and complete the irascible.

From among these eleven passions, Aquinas highlights four as the principle passions. Two are concupiscible and two are irascible, and they have to do with good and evil, present and in the future. Joy and sadness are the (concupiscible) passions in which “all the other passions have their completion and end,” and so Aquinas argues that “they arise from all the other passions” (ST I-II.25.4). Joy arises from a present good, and

sorrow arises from a present evil. The other pair of the principle passions, fear and hope, “complete [all the other passions] as regards the movement of the appetite towards something” that is in the future; hope completes the movement toward a future good, and fear completes the movement toward a future evil (ST I-II.25.4). The Stoics also posit four principle passions, and as Aquinas does, they categorize them according to whether they are responding to perceived good or evil, and whether that is present or anticipated (future). The Stoics’ four are: “distress” (present evil), “pleasure” (present good), “fear” (future evil), and “appetite” (future good).⁵⁹ Whereas Aquinas describes these four as the passions toward which and from which all other passions arise, the Stoics’ categories purportedly encompass all other emotions.⁶⁰

Even though Aquinas’s schema proposes a more extensive list than the Stoics offer, when we reflect on our passional experiences in terms of Aquinas’s system, the limitation of the passions to eleven does seem to curtail fine-tuned distinctions among emotions that cognitive theories provide tools to distinguish. The passions Aquinas discusses in the Treatise might better be thought of as categories of passions into which human experiences can be sorted such that, in the example we saw in chapter two of an insulting comment, the contempt that results from a general disregard for the person

⁵⁹ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 29. Although the emotions Aquinas and the Stoics highlight are similar, they are not the same. Aquinas’s are: *gaudium*, *tristitia*, *timor*, and *spes* (ST I-II.25.4). The Stoics’ are: *laetitia*, *aegritudo*, *metus*, and *appetitus/cupiditas* (Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 29). Augustine followed the Stoics (Cicero) in categorizing emotions according to these groups, and these are the terms he employed (Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 156). Knuuttila notes, “this systematization was very influential in ancient times, and was often used also by authors who did not accept other parts of Stoic theory” (Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 52). For instance, Augustine thought that “emotions belong to the present condition of human beings, and can even be of some moral value,” a position with which the Stoics would have disagreed (Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 157).

⁶⁰ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 29.

making the insult, and the anger that results from the judgment that the other person's behavior is a wrongful affront,⁶¹ are two versions of the irascible passion arising from a present evil (anger). Aquinas's discussion of and reduction of various passions to these eleven throughout the Treatise supports this read.⁶² When I discuss emotions below, the role of the intellectual powers of the soul will contribute to a fuller explication of emotion in Aquinas's thought.

As King explains, the sensitive appetite is a response to something external—something good or evil, present or anticipated.⁶³ Recall that sensitive appetite follows sensitive apprehension, and so all of these external things to which the passions respond must be perceived by the sensitive apprehension and presented to the sensitive appetite.

Sense Appetite Works in Conjunction with Sense Apprehension

One way the sense appetite functions, in Aquinas's system, is by being drawn to physical objects that are apprehended through the exterior senses. He writes, "we desire things which are apprehended through the bodily senses. And thus the bodily senses appertain to sensuality as a preamble" (ST I-II.46.8). Exterior senses apprehend objects, which are then either desired or rejected by the sensitive appetite. The visually appealing apple that I see on the kitchen counter becomes an object of desire because the

⁶¹ The example was cited in Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 26.

⁶² See, for instance, Aquinas's discussion of anger, in which he categorizes wrath, ill-will, and the desire for vengeance as "things which give increase to anger" rather than distinct passions (ST I-II.46.8), as contemporary theories might be inclined to do, particularly when seeking to determine the cause of the emotion.

⁶³ Miner interprets the three-part sequence (love, desire, rest) and the concupiscible passions giving rise to the irascible, which then rest in the concupiscible, to mean that passions can also be the cause of other passions in a fairly predictable manner (Robert C. Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of "Summa Theologiae" 1a2ae 22-48* [New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009], 82-87).

apprehension of my sight is able to comprehend its sensible attributes, which my appetite then desires as suitable (ST I.80.1). This type of appetitive movement is among the most basic of the passional responses. I apprehend something; I am inclined toward it because of its sensual appeal; I desire it; and when I have the apple and am eating it, I experience pleasure or joy.

However, there is more involved in the appetitive movement toward the apple than simple sight apprehension. This is evident when we consider the ways in which infants and toddlers seem to be drawn to objects in their vicinity. They are often drawn to objects that appeal to them visually, but they are unable to discern what about the object is attractive to them. Often it involves contrast of light and dark, color, or movement that simply attracts their attention. They have no way of understanding why a red apple might be desirable the first time they see one. Their investigation of their world involves discovering which objects are pleasant to experience with their exterior senses. As they explore, they begin to build a memorative reserve of which objects they enjoy and which they do not. The result is that, after several pleasant encounters with apples, a person remembers that apples are desirable.⁶⁴ The practical reason will be engaged in determining that this particular apple is desirable.⁶⁵

In this way, the interior sensory powers play a crucial role in the activation of the sensitive appetite (ST I. 81.3, ad 2), which means that, for Aquinas, passions can be more than mere urges or inclinations. Passions can involve memory, thought, and an

⁶⁴ Lombardo makes a claim for the role of memory in Aquinas's account of the formation of the "intention" of a given object (Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 25).

⁶⁵ The intellect will have had to abstract the concept of "apple" from these encounters if the person is conscious that the apple is an apple. It is possible that a young child will remember and desire an object or a category of object without abstracting a universal concept of that object on a conscious level.

engagement with the intellectual powers. Thus, in the example of the apple on the kitchen counter, the memorative power is at work reminding the person of the tastiness of apples. The person's cogitative power is also engaged, working in conjunction with her universal reason to discern that this particular object is an apple possessing qualities that other apples possess, qualities such as a delicious flavor, nutrition that promotes health, and so on.

The apprehensions of the interior sensory powers not only allow a person to discern qualities of particular sensitive objects, but they also present the person's sensitive appetite with more complex objects. Robert Miner's discussion of the causes of passions includes an insightful look at the interior sensitive apprehension. He argues that common sense (*sensus communis*) is able to evoke the appetite in ways that simple sensory apprehensions are not. Recall that common sense is the faculty that allows a person to observe multiple facets of an object and unify them in her perception. Miner writes, "if I perceive a certain combination of qualities as united in the same painting, I may be affected by the painting as a whole in a way quite different from how I would be affected if I were only to perceive the proper sensibles of texture, color, shape, etc., without recognizing them as belonging to a unified object."⁶⁶ Thus, the common sense's unification of several individual sensory qualities results in an apprehension that is distinct from any of those qualities in itself. Further, the interaction between sensation and imagination can result in a passion that neither would have elicited on its own. Recall that the imagination is how Aquinas thinks past sensory apprehensions are retained in the soul. Because they are retained, a sensory apprehension of something here and now can

⁶⁶ Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 67.

elicit a memory of a past object or event that results in a passional response on the part of the person perceiving and remembering that exceeds the response she would have had without the memory.⁶⁷ In addition, a person can imagine an object that is not present and have an appetitive response to it.

Finally, in terms of the cogitative power, on Miner's read, "the particular reason is the capacity to arrive at estimations of utility or danger by associating sensible forms, neutral in themselves, with stored images that are charged with pleasure or pain. As such, it presupposes the imagination."⁶⁸ These "estimations" then move the sensitive appetite. While animals do this instinctively, human beings must learn to discern what is good for them and what is not.⁶⁹ Returning to the example of the apple, the cogitative power must be a cause of the appetitive movement if the appeal of the apple involves its flavor or nutritive properties, both of which would be learned through experience, either direct encounters with previous apples (flavor) or through being taught that fruit is beneficial to health. Through these previous encounters, the person would have discerned that "apple" is pleasant to eat and nutritious, and she would use her particular reason to determine that the red object on the counter fit the category of "apple" and so has the desirable qualities of "apple." The cogitative power is an interior sensory power, but it is also the conduit through which the intellectual powers interact with the sensory powers. How the intellect influences the passions is the topic to which I now turn.

⁶⁷ Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 68.

⁶⁸ Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 78.

⁶⁹ Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 80. Miner goes on to say that because experiences of sensitive apprehension and appetite involve the body and the soul, patterns that are formed in one's early years are very difficult, although not impossible, to change later (Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 80-81).

Sense Appetite Works in Conjunction with the Intellectual Powers

Generally, the sensitive and intellective powers function simultaneously and in cooperation with one another, and both intellectual apprehension and appetite influence the passions. Through practical reason, the universal reason of the intellect has an indirect impact on sense appetite. In *Aquinas on the Emotions*, Cates considers in some depth the ways in which the different powers of the soul operate in collaboration with one another, and her analysis is helpful for understanding the interplay between intellectual and sensitive apprehension. She makes the important observation that when encountering a sensible object, “a person is generally able to reflect on the sensible object intellectually as well, finding it intelligible; in a rational animal the sensory powers ordinarily function in tandem with the intellectual powers.”⁷⁰ These powers can function such that they agree with one another (the intellect discerns that the attractive object is indeed good), or such that even though the sensory impression one has of an object is attractive, one’s intellect tells one that it would be better to invest one’s energies elsewhere.⁷¹ This is because the intellect is able to consider the universal qualities of goodness that a sensually attractive object has for a person’s overall pursuit of true happiness. Specifically, “it is the power of the intellect that allows one to consider forms of union with sensible objects as intermediate ends with respect to one’s highest end.”⁷² This is the function of the syllogism of the universal and particular reason noted above (see ST I.81.3). When considering a particular object, the intellectual apprehension provides a standard of goodness on a universal level that the particular reason is then able to compare with the

⁷⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 67.

⁷¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 184-185.

⁷² Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 185.

qualities the sensitive apprehension has perceived in the object, and then the person can determine the advantages of this particular object for her. This process of discerning useful and advantageous qualities in particular objects is vital to human beings because we do not live in the universal—we live in the material world as hylomorphic beings pursuing our *telos*. As Cates puts it,

humans rarely wish simply and abstractly to unite with goodness as such. Usually we wish to unite with particular objects in respect of their goodness. In tending toward good things, we tend toward possibilities for ourselves and for others that we cannot help but imagine, in some form, with reference to phantasms, examples, or experiences. If a way of uniting with a prospective good strikes us as significant for our well-being, partly through the use of our interior sensory powers, then our sensory appetite is likely to become engaged.⁷³

I think Cates is correct that humans strive toward their goal of happiness that comes through uniting with the good by seeking that good in particular objects and encounters, and this is possible because of the intellect's collaboration with sensitive appetite.

Lombardo also agrees with Cates on this point, and he explains how being able to encounter and discern the good in particular objects results in appetitive movements toward those objects. He makes the case that the apprehensive powers, both intellectual and sensory, work collaboratively in practice and produce the “intention” a person has about a given object.⁷⁴ Intentions result from the interior sensory apprehensive power of cogitation, as discussed above in the section on sensory apprehension. However, the cogitative power, as we saw, does not operate in isolation; it functions as a medium between sensory and intellectual apprehension. For this reason, Lombardo argues that Aquinas distinguishes between sense and intellectual “cognition” as a

⁷³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 202.

⁷⁴ For a similar account, see King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” 127-129.

structural clarification, and that they should be understood as usually simultaneous and mutually interpenetrating. The kind of apprehension that elicits passion is more than sheer perception. It involves both kinds of cognition and includes shaping the perception into a coherent object from an undifferentiated blur of data, and some evaluation of the sensible object vis-à-vis the subject. Aquinas refers to the sense perception of an object combined with cognitive evaluation of its relevance to the subject's interests as an "intention."⁷⁵

According to Lombardo's description, intentions are necessary for perceiving the value a given object has for a person and her goals, and intentions also impact the sensitive appetite by presenting it with a "coherent object" whose perceived value will likely elicit an appetitive response. As Cates argues (above), people do not usually respond emotionally to universal and abstract concepts of goodness, but they can respond to the goodness in particular objects, which they understand by way of the particular reason or cogitative power. Further, Lombardo proposes that "the concept of intention is necessary in Aquinas's account to explain how memories shape the passions." Repeated encounters with the same or similar objects will be stored in memory and will then be transferred as intentions either to those objects or to new objects that evoke memories of the original objects. His example is a basket of visually appealing apples, several of which we try and find to be tasteless and mealy. Following these experiences, which are then stored in our memories, we will cease to find the apples desirable, despite their visual beauty.⁷⁶

It is clear that the intellectual powers work in collaboration with the sensitive apprehensive powers—both interior and exterior—in applying universals to particular objects or experiences that will often lead to a movement of the appetite. This means that as a person gains experience, she will simultaneously abstract universals from particulars and apply those universals to new particulars by way of intentions. Young children who

⁷⁵ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 21.

⁷⁶ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 25.

are exploring their environments are gaining a storehouse of particulars from which their intellects will begin to abstract the universals. Those abstractions can then be applied to new particular objects in ways that involve intentions and that might elicit emotions. Further, through encounters with particular goods, children will be able to abstract the concept of universal goodness. This is because the human intellect gains knowledge by abstracting universal concepts from particular objects (ST I.84.8). The developing conception of universal good then functions with the practical reason to evaluate the goodness of other objects. In these experiences with other objects, the child (or adult, for that matter) has the opportunity to abstract further understanding of universal goodness, and so on. The sensitive and intellectual powers work together, mutually informing one another, and as a result, they also influence the passions.

When a person experiences a passion, the will becomes engaged and either grants or withholds its consent with respect to the passion. In this way, the intellectual appetite influences human passions. Whereas animals' movements follow directly from their sense appetites (ST I.81.3), humans possess a "superior appetite" in the will, which is the source of movement in humans. Aquinas writes, "man is not moved at once, according to the irascible and concupiscible appetites: but he awaits the command of the will, which is the superior appetite. For wherever there is order among a number of motive powers, the second only moves by virtue of the first: wherefore the lower appetite is not sufficient to cause movement, unless the higher appetite consents" (ST I.81.3, *sed contra*). Elsewhere, Aquinas writes that passions can arise on their own, but the will provides the necessary consent to their continuation. "Although the will cannot prevent the movement of concupiscence from arising...it is in the power of the will not to will to desire or not to

consent to concupiscence. And thus it does not necessarily follow the movement of concupiscence” (ST I-II.10.3, ad 1). By consenting to a given sensitive appetite, the will permits the passion to continue and to be experienced by the person.

The Stoics also maintained that first movements are involuntary.⁷⁷ Their distinction between the first movement and the person’s acquiescence to the appearance of good or evil hinges on the person’s judgment being in agreement with the appearance. Richard Sorabji argues that in the Stoics’ thought, assent is given to propositions.⁷⁸ For this reason, the Stoic view of emotion is susceptible to the same critiques that Deigh levied against the strictly cognitive theories of emotion in chapter 2. At the same time, because judgment is engaged in the transition from first movement to emotion, the implication is that people have a choice in whether or not to consent to a given first movement. The Christian Evagrius takes this notion of consent and incorporates it into a theory of sin. A person cannot control when she experiences first movements, which Evagrius describes as thoughts and temptations, but she can control whether she allows the thoughts to continue.⁷⁹ Evagrius claims that permitting herself to take pleasure in these thoughts is sin.⁸⁰

Aquinas’s account of the influences of the sensitive appetites does not necessarily equate them with sinful inclinations, and he posits a direct influence of intellectual powers on the passions. Cates interprets him as saying that the will’s consent to emotions

⁷⁷ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 69.

⁷⁸ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 41.

⁷⁹ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 358-359.

⁸⁰ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 360. Knuuttila explains that Evagrius was writing for monks, for whom thoughts presented the primary source of temptation (Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 141). Evagrius’s articulation of eight cardinal thoughts to be eradicated (143) was later adapted into the Christian categories of the seven cardinal sins (142).

is as follows: “The ‘will as agent’ moves the sensory appetite, in particular, by allowing particular sensory-appetitive motions to continue in their initial form, by allowing those motions to continue in some other form, as directed by reason, or by disallowing their continuation, such that one tries to stop them in their course.”⁸¹ Her summary of the ways in which the will can affect passion approaches the issue of a person’s responsibility to control emotion, which will be taken up in chapter four.

For Aquinas, the intellectual soul’s influence on the sensitive appetite means that humans are not at the mercy of their passions. Further, it is this influence that allows the cultivation of emotions that can benefit a person in her moral life. In the next section, I aim to show how Aquinas’s account of the interaction among the powers of the soul results in a description of emotions that can be used to understand how children, through their emotional lives, are able to participate in a moral community.

Aquinas on the Emotions

The interaction that Aquinas posits among the various powers of the soul in bringing about a response of the sensitive appetite points to the rich resources of his thought in terms of human emotions. Although he does not write about emotions as we understand them today, Aquinas’s account can make a constructive contribution to contemporary thought on emotion. This section on emotions contains two main parts: the first considers the relationship between reason and passion, and the second focuses on drawing together the themes from the rest of the chapter into a unified description of Aquinas’s conception of human emotion.

⁸¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 227.

The Rule of Reason and the Passions

In order for the passions to be moral in Aquinas's schema, they must be under the rule of reason (ST I-II.24.3). Although Aquinas thinks the passions have a level of freedom of their own, he also holds that being under the rule of reason comes naturally to the passions and does not violate this freedom. In justifying his position, Aquinas differentiates between passions in irrational animals and passions in human beings. Passions in irrational animals arise "from necessity and not from free-will. Such is, in irrational animals, the 'sensitive appetite,' which, however, in man, has a certain share of liberty, in so far as it obeys reason" (ST I-II.26.1). This argument suggests that because human sensitive appetite can obey reason, the passions themselves possess a level of freedom, and at the same time that human agents are not necessarily subject to their passions. The alternative to the passions' being able to obey reason is that passions would arise as necessary responses to apprehensions, which is what happens in irrational animals, who possess no freedom with regard to their passions. For Aquinas, then, the passions' being under the rule of reason is a positive thing. If the human passions were not by nature amenable to reason, the rule of reason would do violence to the passions. They are, however, inclined to obey reason, as Aquinas explains: "the sensitive powers have an inborn aptitude to obey the command of reason...in so far as they obey reason, in a certain sense they are said to be rational" (ST I-II.50.3, ad 1).⁸²

⁸² Lombardo makes the point that passions do not obey the whole intellect, but only obey reason, which is one aspect of the intellect: "The passions obey reason, not the intellect [or understanding]... it is reason rather than intellect that applies universal principles to particular reason, and thus reshapes the intentional objects to which passion responds" (Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 97).

The sensitive appetite is not itself rational, but it is rational by its participation in human reason. According to Aquinas, “it is manifest that the sensitive powers are rational, not by their essence, but only by participation” (ST I-II.50.4). Because of this, Aquinas is able to propose that passions are under the command of reason in a way that does not do violence to them but cooperates with their natural inclinations.⁸³ Passions come under the rule of universal reason by way of the particular reason. Aquinas states:

[The cogitative power] compares individual intentions. Wherefore in man the sensitive appetite is naturally moved by this particular reason. But this same particular reason is naturally guided and moved according to the universal reason: wherefore in syllogistic matters particular conclusions are drawn from universal propositions. Therefore it is clear that the universal reason directs the sensitive appetite, which is divided into concupiscible and irascible; and this appetite obeys it (ST I.81.3).⁸⁴

Because practical reason functions by way of syllogisms, such that the universal principles known in the intellect are applied to particular situations, intellectual reason directs practical reason, which guides the sensitive appetite with a natural kind of rule which the passions are inclined to obey.

⁸³ The primacy of reason over the passions follows from Aquinas’s teleological ordering of the human soul, according to Mark Jordan. In Aquinas’s teleological hierarchy, reason is above passion, and thus the passions come under the rule of reason (Mark D. Jordan, “Aquinas’s Construction of a Moral Account of the Passions,” *Freiburger Zeitschrift Für Philosophie Und Theologie* 33, no. 1-2 [1986]: 95). Jordan bases this idea in part on the lack of moral exhortation within the “Treatise on the Passions,” which he says points to the function of passion within the *Summa*. Namely, Aquinas’s goal “is not to lead one to choose the good, but to place in one’s possession a clear knowledge of the ways that lead to a good already chosen” (96). Aquinas assumes that his readers have “already been passionately converted by the Gospel,” and so they have already chosen the proper good in terms of the hierarchy of the soul (97).

⁸⁴ Miner sums up the goal of the relationship between reason and passion: “Cultivating the particular reason so that it conforms to the judgment of rightly directed universal reason is the key to perfecting the passions” (Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 82).

In addition to the passions' possessing the freedom of an "inborn aptitude" to acquiesce to reason's commands, human freedom with regard to the passions also follows from the passions' having "something of their own" by which they can resist reason. This does not mean that they *must* resist reason, just that it is *possible* for them to resist, and on this basis, Aquinas describes reason's rule as political rather than despotic. Despotic rule is likened to the rule over slaves, where they are unable to "resist in any way" because "they have nothing of their own." The soul rules the body in this way (ST I.81.3, ad 2). In political or royal rule, the subjects have "something of their own," which means that, although they are subject to the authority of the leader, they "can resist the orders of him who commands." Therefore, according to Aquinas, the sensitive appetite

has something of its own, by virtue of which it can resist the commands of reason. For the sensitive appetite is naturally moved... in man by the cogitative power which the universal reason guides, but also by the imagination and sense. Whence it is that we experience that the irascible and concupiscible powers do resist reason, inasmuch as we sense or imagine something pleasant, which reason forbids, or unpleasant, which reason commands (ST I.81.3, ad 2).⁸⁵

Even if a person knows what is right or good with her reason, her passions might have a contrary response to it, such that she wants to do what she knows to be wrong, or does not want to do what she knows is right or good.

Aquinas's account of the passions' freedom in relation to reason distinguishes passions such that they cannot be equated with thoughts or judgments. At the same time, his system integrates reason with passion as a naturally occurring and desirous state, although one that does not occur necessarily. His theory accommodates those occasions when our emotions run contrary to our thoughts, something that the strictly cognitive theories of emotion are less well-equipped to handle because they claim that emotions are

⁸⁵ Aquinas also explains this distinction in ST I-II.56.4, ad 3, and ST I-II.58.2.

constituted by evaluative judgments. While the case can be made that there are simultaneous but contradictory evaluative judgments and so contradictory emotions in the cognitive theory system, Aquinas's distinction accounts for the experience of disjunction between what we hold to be true and good and what we sometimes want because his system distinguishes evaluative judgment from desire.

The way in which the passions obey reason and whether they are beneficial or something to be overcome is debated among some interpreters of Thomas Aquinas.

Elisabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens explains that passions can be beneficial in human life because of their participation in reason. She writes,

according to Thomas, the sensitive soul can obey reason...and is meant to obey reason.... By its very nature the sensitive soul is directed toward reason and open to its influence.... If this original, mutual relationship between reason and the passions of the soul did not exist, the influence of reason on the passions would be an act of violence, and further, the passions would never be able to constitute a positive contribution to the human act.⁸⁶

The passions are naturally amenable to being ruled by reason, but at the same time, they have “a dimension of something uncontrollable,” and it is this dynamic—the tendency to obey reason as well as the “independence of the passions”—that results in the political relationship rather than the despotic, according to Aquinas.⁸⁷ In other words, Uffenheimer-Lippens concludes that reason must rule politically (rather than despotically) as a consequence of the “something of their own” possessed by the passions, and at the same time, the independence and rule-ability of the passions makes them constructive contributors to human acts. Reason increases the qualities of passion

⁸⁶ Elisabeth Uffenheimer-Lippens, “Rationalized Passions and Passionate Rationality: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Reason and the Passions,” *The Review of Metaphysics* 56, no. 3 (2003): 543.

⁸⁷ Uffenheimer-Lippens, “Rationalized Passions,” 544.

that are already inclined toward reason, and it diminishes “their unpredictable and uncontrollable character,” thus lessening the reactive dimension of passions’ arousal by impacting the apprehensive or evaluative perception upon which they are based.⁸⁸

Reason can exert its influence over passion either before or after passion arises. Claudia Eisen Murphy clarifies the role of reason at different moments of the emotional experience by demonstrating that reason can exercise control over the passions either by instigating a passion or by controlling the passion once it is aroused. Some passions arise directly and often obviously from reason (by way of particular reason) or from overflow of the will,⁸⁹ and they are consistent with our perception of the good in a universal sense.⁹⁰ An example of this might be the syllogism mentioned above in which the person desires and eats the apple in order to promote health. In these cases, the reasoned judgment can be said to be the cause of the passion;⁹¹ the benefit of the apple leads to the desire for the apple. This is not the same as saying that the judgment of the apple’s goodness is itself the passion or emotion, as cognitive theories purport. The Stoic view concurs with that of the cognitive theories, and for them the judgment that the apple is good and therefore something to which they should react (worth eating) is the emotion.⁹² Murphy maintains Aquinas’s differentiation between apprehension (perceiving or judging that the apple is good) and appetite (wanting the apple). One helpful result of the distinction is that, in human experience, some passions arise from the sense or the

⁸⁸ Uffenheimer-Lippens, “Rationalized Passions,” 546.

⁸⁹ Claudia Eisen Murphy, “Aquinas on our Responsibility for our Emotions,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 8, no. 2 (1999): 183.

⁹⁰ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility,” 190.

⁹¹ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility,” 181, 183.

⁹² Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 29.

imagination, and these do not have reasoned judgments as their cause,⁹³ although these passions can still depend on reason in a non-causal way in cases where the person's will consents to the passion.⁹⁴ For instance, if I feel suddenly delighted by the taste of chocolate, my sense of taste might be the immediate cause of the passion, but in order for delight to continue, my will must consent to it.

Thus, according to Murphy, Aquinas's system involves a two-part understanding of reason's relationship to passion, either as the source of passions that arise from reasoned judgments or as the consent needed for passions to continue when they are caused by encounters with objects of sense or imagination. However, given Aquinas's commitment to the integrated nature of the soul, I do not think the distinction should be overdone. As we have seen from the discussions of the interrelation among the sensitive and intellectual powers, as well as their cumulative effect and mutual influence on one another, it is fair to say that some emotions arise from a conscious consideration of universal good and others do not, but it is also plausible to say that emotions that are not caused by reason can contain the indirect influence of reason. That is, given that the intellect and sense depend on one another for human beings to engage and interact with the world, it is possible that some seemingly spontaneous emotions include an aspect of universal understanding of goodness in their causes, although this is not true of all spontaneous emotions, particularly those of young children who might not have had time to abstract universals from their particular experiences.

⁹³ These passions stem from our "cognition of objects as having naturally attractive properties" that we perceive to be "sensory goods that naturally move my sensory appetite, but won't be able to appeal to goodness in general, or overall" (Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility," 189-190).

⁹⁴ Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility," 183.

The idea of spontaneous emotions is an instance in which Aquinas's account goes beyond exclusively cognitive theories of emotion. Cognitive theories, as we have seen, claim that evaluative judgments constitute emotions, and in so doing they exclude children whose cognitive powers do not yet function on the propositional level.⁹⁵ Aquinas's theory allows for the sensitive appetite to function non-propositionally because sense appetite is a passional response to an object, and it serves as the building block for more complex emotional experiences. While reason is ideally the ruler of the passions, it is plausible that passions' independence allows them to function in the moral lives of those people whose rational powers are undeveloped. At the same time, in order to become complex emotions, the spontaneous passions must be incorporated into the other powers of the person's soul, including (when she is able), the person's reason. Because of the nature of the passions themselves, the way reason brings even spontaneous passions under its rule must be political.

Not all scholars agree with Murphy and Uffenheimer-Lippens, however. In terms of bringing the passions under reason's rule, Leonard Ferry takes a different position and sees no dissimilarity between political and despotic rule.⁹⁶ He understands passion's ability to resist reason as a negative quality.⁹⁷ Ferry makes this claim in response to Miner, who thinks that there is a difference between bringing the passions under perfect subjection to reason by way of political rule, and the despotic rule that would dominate them.⁹⁸ When Ferry discusses the relationship between passions and reason in Aquinas,

⁹⁵ Deigh, "Concepts of Emotions," 29.

⁹⁶ Leonard Ferry, "Passionalist or Rationalist? The Emotions in Aquinas' Moral Theology," *New Blackfriars* 93 (May 2012): 295.

⁹⁷ Ferry, "Passionalist or Rationalist?" 300.

⁹⁸ Ferry, "Passionalist or Rationalist?" 295.

he conflates political and despotic rule. Ferry asserts “that there is really no difference to the distinction between control-as-subordination and control-as-domination,”⁹⁹ and he states that “in trying to understand what Aquinas has to say about the emotions it makes better sense to treat domination, subordination, and perfect subjection as largely synonymous terms.”¹⁰⁰

Ferry misses the distinction between the two types of rule that results from Aquinas’s position that the passions are to be shaped by reason, not dominated by it, and that this is a natural occurrence. Although the passions can and sometimes do resist or rebel, as Miner shows,¹⁰¹ they are naturally inclined to obey reason and often cooperate with it. The difference is between shaping an emotion in a way that elicits cooperation so that it willingly agrees with reason (political rule), and forcing or demanding obedience (tyrannical rule), which, as Uffenheimer-Lippens points out, would do violence to the passions.¹⁰² Let us assume for a moment that reason did dominate the passions despotically. Such a situation would do violence to the passions and would not result in the integration of a person’s thinking, feeling, and willing that is part of virtue for Aquinas. Further, it seems plausible that passions that are forced into submission through domination would use their independence to rebel more frequently than those that acquiesce through shaping and cooperation. On the other hand, those passions that are molded by the political rule of reason might be more likely to respond in a manner in keeping with reason in new and unexpected situations. It seems that the ruling style that

⁹⁹ Ferry, “Passionalist or Rationalist?” 295.

¹⁰⁰ Ferry, “Passionalist or Rationalist?” 296.

¹⁰¹ Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 82.

¹⁰² Uffenheimer-Lippens, “Rationalized Passion,” 543.

is used can affect whether the passions are amenable to continuing to obey reason as the person strives to live a life that approaches virtue.

Ferry's consideration of the passions in Aquinas's account leaves him skeptical about the potential of the passions to contribute to good living.¹⁰³ His point is worth remembering since Aquinas does not say that the passions are unqualifiedly good. Ferry concludes, "the passions *are* disruptive and threatening. They can contribute to human good, but they can also endanger it by undermining the resources that rationality can bring to bear in our practical decision-making."¹⁰⁴ His concern should be kept in mind, but so too should Aquinas's contention that passions are (in general) naturally inclined toward the good, however that is perceived.¹⁰⁵ They are naturally designed to be responses to apprehensions and to draw people toward their *telos* of happiness in this life (ST I.82.1) and the divine vision in the next (ST I-II.2.8; ST I.12.1). Aquinas is realistic that the passions have the potential to derail a person's striving for virtue, in part because spontaneous and strong emotions can influence action in a way that is contrary to what the person would choose when engaging her reason (ST I-II.77.2).¹⁰⁶ At the same time, as

¹⁰³ Thomas Dixon views the passions in an even dimmer light, as I will show below.

¹⁰⁴ Ferry, "Passionalist or Rationalist?" 308. Cates also acknowledges and explains the harmful effect emotions, particularly intense emotions, can have on reason and will (Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 233-235).

¹⁰⁵ "Aquinas does not hold that the fundamental orientation of the passions toward human flourishing implies that each and every movement of the sense appetite reliably directs us toward our proper *telos*. The passions require the guidance of reason, especially in our fallen condition" (Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 41).

¹⁰⁶ Ferry suggests that there is a spectrum of human appetitive responses relative to the level of cognitive involvement they contain, and these responses range from mere sense perception to acts of the will. Ferry goes on to say that there is always at least a minimal level of reason involved in sense. He holds that "human emotions are always to be conceived of in relation to reason. It is impossible, in other words, for humans to fully free even their sense experiences from the influence of reason" (Leonard Ferry, "Troubling Business: The Emotions in Aquinas' Philosophical Psychology," in *Bringing*

we saw in chapter two, the independence of the passions that keeps them distinct from reason allows them to be a source of information regarding a person's perceptions of the objects she encounters, and this can be influential in her moral life. This constructive function of emotions will be suffocated if reason rules them despotically.

It is clear that reason can mold human passion, but it is also possible to argue on Thomistic grounds that emotions affect reason. One way this can happen is if a particular kind of emotion recurs and is repeatedly consented to by the will. In these instances, the passions arise, and the will's consent allows them to continue. Then, because they are permitted to persist, these emotions can become part of the way the person responds to and rationally interprets the world.¹⁰⁷ Another way of looking at passion's impact on reason is to recall that Aquinas holds that the way people come to understand universals is through abstracting from particulars. It is plausible that the particulars from which the universals are abstracted will include an appetitive component. The influence of the passions on the intellect can certainly go badly and lead a person away from good living, but the effect is not necessarily negative. For instance, a person might learn the concept of "dog" in a detached way, but if she has interacted with dogs, her concept of "dog" might include the emotional component of these encounters, perhaps pleasure if she has liked dogs, or fear if she has been attacked by them.¹⁰⁸

the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy, ed. Rebecca Kingston [Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008], 104). The more complex the cognitive participation, the more responsible the person is for the resulting emotion (81).

¹⁰⁷ In chapter two, we saw that Goldie has concerns that the emotions can in this way skew the intellect (Goldie, "Emotion, Feeling, and Knowledge of the World," 100-101), but I do not think the influence is necessarily negative.

¹⁰⁸ If the person acts as a result of her emotional response, then that might corroborate Arpaly's conception of dawning experiences and non-deliberate reasons for acting (see chapter one).

Aquinas does not think that passions, even with their independence, are something to be feared or avoided—a point that is crucial for thinking about their role in children’s morality. Rather, they are to be shaped and guided by reason so that they contribute to the moral life. The mutual influence of the passions and the other powers of the soul, some of which I just mentioned, is helpful in developing a description of the complex human experience of emotion.

Human Emotions

Describing a discrete moment of appetite or apprehension can be useful for specifying the powers of the soul and their distinctions, but it is artificial in terms of human experience because those moments are extracted from a person’s life, which is lived as an organic whole rather than as a series of disconnected moments. In chapter one, we saw that contemporary Christian theology of children, particularly as expressed by Rahner, presents an understanding of life as a unified whole, of which childhood and past experiences are a part. Past apprehensions and appetites have a cumulative influence on the person and her subsequent experiences. Aquinas holds that “The sensitive appetite has an inborn aptitude to be moved by the rational appetite, . . . but the rational powers of apprehension have an inborn aptitude to receive from the sensitive powers” (ST I-II.50.3, ad 3). This mutual influence means that the different powers of the soul are able to work together. Kevin White explains,

If the human intellect is not fully an intellect without sense-powers, neither is it wholly itself without two further powers: will, the tendency following from its own universal apprehensions, and sense-appetite, the tendency following from the time-and-place-conditioned apprehensions of its sense-powers. The completed intellectual power of the human soul as an intellectual substance is constituted by intellect, senses, will, and the

sense-appetite together. Sense-appetite and its movements, the passions, are themselves “intellectual”—present on account of the intellect—in the human soul.¹⁰⁹

Apprehensions and appetites, intellectual and sensory, and their interactions with one another accumulate in the person’s storehouse of experiences, and they affect her future interactions with the world, both how she interprets her surroundings and how she responds to them.

It follows, then, that Aquinas’s account of passions presents them as being more complex than simply being instinctive urges or inclinations toward particular objects irrespective of the rest of the person’s thoughts and appetites. Aquinas’s discussion of passions rather than emotions makes it difficult to determine exactly how his theory corresponds to our contemporary understanding of emotion, and scholars debate which aspects of the person’s experiences should be definitive of emotion. Some scholars equate Aquinas’s passions with emotion, which requires that emotions include a physical component, while others claim that the intellectual category of (non-corporeal) affection is sufficient for emotion. One of the difficulties scholars face in studying Aquinas on the emotions, and one of the reasons for the debate over what in Aquinas’s theory qualifies as an emotion, is that Aquinas did not provide an explicit account of emotion as we understand it today. As Lombardo puts it, “The central difficulty in reconstructing Aquinas’s account of emotion is that Aquinas never wrote about emotion. He wrote about appetites, passions, affections, *habitus*, virtues, vices, grace, and many other subjects that relate to the contemporary category of emotion, but the word ‘emotion’ has no direct

¹⁰⁹ Kevin White, “The Passions of the Soul (Ia IIae, Qq. 22-48),” in *The Ethics of Aquinas*, ed. Stephen J. Pope (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 105.

parallel in the Latin vocabulary of the thirteenth century.”¹¹⁰ In this section, I will explore the complexity of the concept of emotions in Aquinas’s thought with an eye to showing how the integration of intellect and sense in the human person allows us to think of the passions, in their collaboration with other powers of the soul, as emotions. In what follows, I find the arguments that posit a physical dimension in the experience of emotion to be convincing, given an incarnational, hylomorphic, Christian anthropology.

One way scholars understand emotion in Aquinas’s thought concludes that passion is not necessary for an experience to be an emotion, and they argue that the Thomistic category of affection is emotion. This line of scholarship portrays emotion as only sometimes an embodied experience, and it does not require a physical dimension (including the sensory powers) for an emotion to occur. Jettisoning the physical dimension of emotion does not bring these interpretations into the realm of strictly cognitive theories. Nussbaum and other cognitive theorists hold that emotion does not require a physical component, but they also equate emotions with evaluative judgments,¹¹¹ which is distinct from what the scholars here are doing. The Thomistic scholars to whom I am referring advance a definition of emotion that includes affections of the intellect in addition to sensitive appetitive responses, which they base in part on Aquinas’s statement about affections in the *Summa*: “Love, concupiscence, and the like can be understood in two ways. Sometimes they are taken as passions.... They may,

¹¹⁰ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 15. Dixon makes a similar point: “We cannot expect to find in Augustine (or any other pre-modern author) any attitude towards the ‘emotions.’” Rather, a “set of distinctions between appetites, perturbations and passions on the one hand, and higher affections on the other, can be discerned in Aquinas” (Thomas Dixon, “Revolting Passions,” *Modern Theology* 27, no. 2 [2011]: 183).

¹¹¹ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 4, 58.

however be taken in another way, as far as they are simple affections without passion or commotion of the soul, and thus they are acts of the will” (ST I.82.5, ad 1).¹¹²

Anastasia Scrutton appraises the distinction between passions (as corporeal) and affections (as emotions that do not involve the body) to be a result of Aquinas’s argument for the possibility of something resembling emotions in God. She interprets Aquinas to say that “real emotional feeling and personal involvement with creation is attributed to God, and yet this is never contrary to God’s reason and will, and never results in fickleness or infidelity to the world.”¹¹³ Scrutton asserts that, in Aquinas, “passions are viewed as involuntary, in the sense of not authorized by the will, while affections are both voluntary and active.”¹¹⁴ She also agrees that passions involve a physical change, while “affects and affections are not necessarily related to the physical.”¹¹⁵ Her suggestion for solving the passion-emotion debate is to stop using the term emotion with respect to Aquinas’s thought, and to return to “the Augustinian-Thomist distinction between passions as extreme and overpowering feelings, and affections as feelings that are in accordance with reason and the will.”¹¹⁶ Scrutton seems to be arguing that some passions arise on their own, and if the will consents to these, they become affections. But she also appears to understand affections as including both consented-to passions and

¹¹² “The emotions found in the *appetites sensitivus* are called *passions animae*. The same emotions insofar as they are found in the *appetites intellectivus* (the *voluntas* or will) are called *affectus*” (Carlo Leget, “Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on the Emotions,” *Theological Studies* 64, no. 3 [2003]: 573).

¹¹³ Anastasia Scrutton, “Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas: A Way Forward for the Im/passibility Debate?” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 2 (2005): 176.

¹¹⁴ Scrutton, “Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas,” 175.

¹¹⁵ Scrutton, “Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas,” 176.

¹¹⁶ Scrutton, “Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas,” 176.

incorporeal acts of the will.¹¹⁷ Therefore, her distinction is between sense appetites, which are passions, and intellectual appetites, which are affections, but neither is properly called emotion. In fact, she suggests avoiding the term emotion when discussing Aquinas's thought, and using the more exact vocabulary of passion and affection.¹¹⁸ Such a distinction might be helpful for precision when discussing Aquinas's work, but if we want to bring the richness of his thought into conversation with current scholarship, we must strive to determine how that thought corresponds to contemporary understandings of human emotional experience. Further, Scrutton's separation of passion and affection does not account for the mutual influence of the powers of the soul that we saw above is one of the constructive elements of Aquinas's thought.

Thomas Dixon's argument has echoes of Scrutton's, but it goes further in its separation of passions and affections. He writes that, for Aquinas, the "passions proper involved physiological modification and were ungodly. Affections were acts of will, therefore they involved no bodily disobedience, and were quite godly."¹¹⁹ On his read of Aquinas, "passions proper were diseases or disturbances in so far as they were allowed to run wild. However, once under the control of reason, these passions were tamed to become acts of movements of the will, which were quite proper parts of virtuous living."¹²⁰ According to his interpretation, the goal is to bring passions under the control of reason so that they cease to be base passions and become acts of will, or affections,

¹¹⁷ Scrutton, "Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas," 175.

¹¹⁸ Scrutton, "Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas," 176.

¹¹⁹ Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 56.

¹²⁰ Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 52.

whose objects are incorporeal.¹²¹ On Dixon's read, the passions that are directed toward physical or worldly objects (including other people) are among the vicious passions and affections. Emotions, on the other hand, are good and consist of those movements that are acts of will ("rational and voluntary") and are directed toward an "incorporeal ideal." Thus, he contends that for Aquinas the "reason – passion dichotomy was decidedly not a reason – emotion dichotomy."¹²² Dixon's negative interpretation of the passions in Aquinas's thought¹²³ disallows his viewing them as naturally inclined toward the good or as that through which we constructively encounter, engage, and interact with the world. Further, his read denies the physical dimension of the hylomorphic anthropology undergirding Aquinas's thought on human beings. Human beings live in the material world and must interact with that world. It is through our living in the world that we are able, in this life, to acquire virtue and to strive toward happiness. Dixon's insistence that emotions are directed toward incorporeal objects (perhaps a notion of universal good) does not resonate with real human experience which seeks the good in particulars.

Lombardo's critique of Dixon includes several clarifications of Dixon's read of Aquinas. First, Lombardo corrects Dixon's understanding of the passion-affection distinction and explains that sometimes passions and affections are referred to interchangeably by Aquinas himself. Further, passions, contrary to Dixon's dismal view of them, are important to the pursuit of virtue. Lombardo notices that Aquinas "regards passion as essential to virtue," and that by placing passion in the sense appetite, Aquinas opens the possibility of virtuous passions. The passions naturally incline us toward what

¹²¹ Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 56.

¹²² Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 53-54.

¹²³ "Passions were, in Christian psychologies, signs of our fallen state" (Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions*, 56).

is good (ST I.81.2), as well as toward “happiness and moral excellence.” Finally, Dixon’s constrained categorization of passions as having corporeal objects and affections as being inclined toward incorporeal ideals is too strict. As we have seen, the sensory and intellectual powers interact and do not function in isolation from one another in a human being. Because of this, “virtuous passions may well respond to abstract ideals, either by being shaped by rational considerations or by sharing by overflow in the affections of the will. Similarly, the affections of the will may rejoice or sorrow virtuously in sense objects (see ST I-II.31.3, 34.1, 34.4).”¹²⁴ Lombardo’s critique is valid, and it helps to correct the strict dichotomy that Dixon sets up between passion and affection, between the material world and the incorporeal ideal, which in human life are not as mutually exclusive as Dixon wants to make them.

Lombardo’s own view of the affections approaches a more integrated understanding of the human person in Aquinas’s thought in terms of the human being as a body-soul composite and the place of the passions within that schema. Lombardo argues for defining emotion as affection rather than as passion. Although he notes that “affection...is never explicitly defined by Aquinas,”¹²⁵ which makes defining emotion in terms of affection something of a challenge, he reads Aquinas such that all passions are affections, but not all affections are passions. “Aquinas should be seen as advocating a theory of emotion that equates emotion with intentional feeling, views emotion as intrinsically dependent on cognition (including perception), and usually but not necessarily involving the body, and limits emotion’s extension to discrete psychological events, thus excluding long-term affective dispositions from being considered

¹²⁴ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 16-17, n. 61.

¹²⁵ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 75.

emotions.”¹²⁶ By “discrete psychological events,” I understand Lombardo to be saying that an emotion is a particular experience in time, not that it is isolated from the rest of the person’s life and experiences. On his read, “for Aquinas, the category of affection denotes a class of psychological phenomena that includes both movements of the sense appetite and movements of the intellectual appetite, that is, the will. Unlike passion, affection does not necessarily imply either corporeality or passivity.”¹²⁷ Unlike Floyd and Scrutton, he thinks that affection is a category broad enough to include the passions, but also to include acts of will that do not involve corporeal change. In making this claim, Lombardo is arguing in a manner reminiscent of Nussbaum’s, that emotion can and often does involve the body, but that it does not need to.¹²⁸ Lombardo’s theorizing about non-corporeal affections is consistent with Aquinas’s claim that the operations of the intellect do not require the body (ST I.75.2), but it is important to remember that all human experience is embodied, so that if there are emotions that do not involve physical change, they still occur within a hylomorphic creature.

Cates explicitly rejects the identification of Aquinas’s category of affection with emotion. She focuses her study of emotion on Aquinas’s view of the passions as they occur in embodied humans.¹²⁹ She argues: “In my view, what Aquinas says about the affections that we experience as embodied being is best understood by starting with the emotions and then considering how the emotions function in relation to motions of the will.”¹³⁰ Her starting point is the human being, body and soul, and from this she considers

¹²⁶ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 229.

¹²⁷ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 75.

¹²⁸ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 58.

¹²⁹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 8.

¹³⁰ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 9.

the intellectual affections. She argues that affections and passions differ in Aquinas's thought in that "affections are 'simple acts of the will' that are 'in one's own command. An act of the will...cannot be 'sensible.'... An act of the will can, however, cause a related motion of the sensory appetite which *can* be 'sensed.' Passions or emotions are motions of the sensory appetite. They are always constituted, in part, by bodily changes. They are subject to the power of the will but are not always obedient."¹³¹ For Cates, then, the passions (emotions) maintain a level of independence from the movements of the will (affections). Lombardo, on the other hand, begins with affections and interprets emotion—including passion—in light of the person's intellect, which is not necessarily, on his view, responding to the sensible world. I find Cates's interpretation of Aquinas on the affections and emotion convincing, and I will return to it below.

Loughlin's position is somewhat comparable to Lombardo's, but he successfully navigates the possibility of intellectual emotions without separating them from the whole person. Loughlin maintains that human beings experience both intellectual emotions and sensitive emotions, and these share some characteristics but differ in others. Intellectual and sensitive emotions are similar in that "the emotions attributable to, or having their genesis in, the rational appetite are described by Thomas as they show a likeness to a central characteristic of sensitive emotion, namely, the approach to and withdrawal from the *conveniens* and *inconveniens* respectively."¹³² The differences are that emotions of the sensitive appetite involve a physical change and are directed toward particular objects as specifically suitable or not, while the emotions arising from the rational appetite do not

¹³¹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 45.

¹³² Stephen Joseph Loughlin, "Similarities and Differences Between Human and Animal Emotion in Aquinas's Thought," *Thomist* 65, no. 1 (2001): 51.

require a physical change, and they are able to take into account both the particular suitability of an object “as well as a more universal good or evil, but both with respect to the very reasons for the appetibility of something.”¹³³ This second type of emotion seems to draw on the particular reason, which is in the sensitive apprehension but is influenced by and in conversation with the intellectual and universal powers of the soul. The intellectual emotions, then, occur in relationship to the sensitive soul, even if there is no perceptible physical change. Loughlin’s distinction does not hold a place for non-corporeal affections of the will that are unrelated to the sensible world, as some of the other accounts do, and his assessment upholds the complexity of emotion that comes from its association with both sense and intellect.

Other scholars contend that passions are a necessary part of emotion, but emotions are not reducible to passions. Shawn Floyd suggests that, because human beings are embodied, we experience our emotions as necessarily involving a physical change.¹³⁴ At the same time, he states that the emotions in living, embodied humans are not equivalent to the passions. Emotions are constituted by the passions working in conjunction with the person’s cognitive powers. “If emotion has a cognitive component, which I will assume without further argument, then it appears that what we call emotion consists for Aquinas in two acts: an apprehension of good or bad plus a passion. On this view, it seems appropriate to reserve the term passion for the sort of changes that attend sense appetite and emotion (and here I mean human emotion) for the combination of

¹³³ Loughlin, “Similarities and Differences,” 52.

¹³⁴ Shawn D. Floyd, “Aquinas on Emotion: A Response to Some Recent Interpretations,” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1998): 170.

cognition and passion.”¹³⁵ On Floyd’s read, it is possible to maintain that people’s more instinctive responses to sense objects are properly called passions and their more complex and advanced appetites are emotions. His distinction is reminiscent of the Stoic theory that first movements are impulses of one sort or another and that the cognitive judgment regarding the first movement constitutes the emotion,¹³⁶ although his definition combines the two movements and maintains a place for passion in emotion. Still, on Floyd’s read, the passion is not an emotion until the cognitive powers become involved. To a degree, his definition resonates with experience. There is clearly a significant difference between complex experiences of love for a parent, for instance, and feeling the urge to eat chocolate. Other cases will be more ambiguous and determining where exactly the line of demarcation between passion and emotion might lie could prove difficult, particularly given Aquinas’s understanding of the integrated relationship among intellectual and sensory powers. Floyd’s point can be helpful for underscoring that there is a difference between spontaneous sensory attraction and more complex emotional experiences, although the requirement of cognition does make his description vulnerable to the critique against exclusively cognitive theories in that it seems to exclude children’s having emotions.

A third approach to Aquinas on emotion leans on his complicated and multi-layered cumulative description of the powers of the soul, and it allows us to establish a place for young children as agents in the moral community by virtue of their emotions. At

¹³⁵ Floyd, “Aquinas on Emotion,” 168. Ferry’s read is similar: “Acts of the sensitive appetite, accompanied by bodily change, are called passions. Acts of the will are not. Yet the same emotion terms (such as love, joy, and delight) describe the acts of each of the appetites, intellectual and sensitive. This means that we use such terms analogously, not univocally” (Ferry, “Troubling Business,” 106).

¹³⁶ Sorabji, *Emotion and Peace of Mind*, 29.

the beginning of his essay on the emotions in Aquinas's thought, Peter King explains that "Aquinas's theory of the emotions (*passiones animae*) is cognitivist, somatic, and taxonomical: cognitivist because he holds that cognition is essential to emotion; somatic because he holds that their physiological manifestations are partially constitutive of emotions; taxonomical because he holds that emotions fall into distinct natural kinds that are hierarchically ordered."¹³⁷ King interprets Aquinas's passions to be emotions, which necessitates the inclusion of the physical aspect of emotional experience because passions are necessarily corporeal. On his read, Aquinas's theory is much like contemporary perception theories, particularly in that in this system, emotions are "modes of engagement with the world."¹³⁸ This engagement with the world—the material world in which humans live as embodied beings—lends itself to the conclusion that the physical aspect of emotions cannot be jettisoned in Aquinas's thought. Simon Harak agrees, and he argues that, given that human beings are hylomorphic, the body is always involved in emotions.¹³⁹ As we saw in chapter two, Harak also identifies emotion and passion, arguing that an incarnational theological anthropology cannot maintain a dualism that separates mind from body,¹⁴⁰ or emotion from body.¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ King, "Emotions," 209.

¹³⁸ King, "Emotions," 223.

¹³⁹ Brian Davies makes a similar case: "For Aquinas, then, we are embodied souls. And one of the things this means for him is that we have emotions.... He does not think that people are just observers. He notes that they react to things around them... because they are bodily creatures. For him, emotion is chiefly a physical thing. It arises as our bodies meet other bodies and are affected by them" (Brian Davies, *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1992], 220).

¹⁴⁰ Harak, *Virtuous Passions*, 29ff.

¹⁴¹ Harak, *Virtuous Passions*, 4.

Cates explains emotion in Aquinas's thought by equating Aquinas's "passions" with what we would call emotions.¹⁴² In doing so, she does not reduce emotion to the sensitive appetite as a physical response to a sensory apprehension, detached from the intellect and the rest of a person's life. Rather, she insists on the composite (body-soul) nature of emotion, and includes the interior sensitive powers and the intellect as influential in eliciting and sustaining the passion, or emotion. I find her understanding of how emotions function in Aquinas's framework to be fruitful for including children as agents with emotions, and much of her robust explication is described throughout this chapter. The following quotation is a summary of her read of Aquinas on the emotions:

[Aquinas] argues that *passio* or an emotion is a motion of a soul-body composite. It is a motion that occurs with respect to the appetitive dimension of an embodied soul. In other words, it is a motion that occurs through the exercise of one's appetitive powers. An emotion occurs, in particular, through the exercise of one's sensory appetite. As such it has a material element. It is composed, in part, of patterned bodily changes that can be subtle, but are often noticeable in the form of felt bodily sensations. Yet an emotion is also intentional. It concerns some object—again, a thing, a person, a relationship, a situation—which one apprehends in a certain way, as bearing directly or indirectly on one's well-being. An emotion is evoked and defined, more precisely, by sensory judgments, images, and impressions, which are basic forms of cognition. Yet a given emotion is ordinarily informed, in a human being, by higher forms of cognition as well, which allow one to interpret on different levels the significance of an object of concern—in ways that further determine one's experience of emotion.¹⁴³

Cates's interpretation of Aquinas on the emotions resonates with the complexity of actual human emotions, including the many layers of experience that underlie any one emotion, as well as the values, goals, and other emotions (such as hope or fear) that undergird it. Her read of Aquinas affirms the role of value judgments, meaning that if an object holds value for me and my well-being, I am more likely to have an emotional response to it.

¹⁴² Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 8.

¹⁴³ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 62.

Cognitive theorists also acknowledge that objects that impact the well-being of those for whom I care will elicit emotions.¹⁴⁴ However, unlike the strict cognitivists, Cates's read of Aquinas's account incorporates the hylomorphic human being in emotion. In Aquinas's system, the interaction among sensory appetite and apprehension, and intellectual appetite and apprehension is constant and mutually influential, and Cates successfully maintains the distinctions among the powers of the soul without conflating them.

The description of emotion-as-passion offered by Cates, King, and Harak, concurs with cognitive theories to a point but differs from them with respect to the necessity of physical involvement in emotion. Recall, for instance, that Nussbaum allows that the body is often affected by emotions, but she maintains that the physical component is not necessary for an emotion.¹⁴⁵ The case for including the physical manifestations of emotions in a Christian theological anthropological context has convincing aspects to it. It is possible that people are not always aware of the physiological changes they experience in conjunction with emotions, but that does not necessarily mean that the physical dimension is not present. I do not intend to enter the fray of how physiology plays a role in emotions—the debate is far too complex for the current project—but I do want to suggest that in an incarnational and hylomorphic context, we must take seriously the role of the body in human experience, including emotional experience. When considering children, this will include their physical needs, wants, and experiences as they learn about the world and respond to it. In the next chapter, I will address this type

¹⁴⁴ For an account of how this functions in Aquinas's system, see Kevin White, "Wanting Something for Someone: Aquinas on Complex Motions of Appetite," *The Review of Metaphysics* 61, no. 1 (2007): 3-30.

¹⁴⁵ Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought*, 58.

of need within a context of the virtues of acknowledged dependence, as outlined by Alasdair MacIntyre.¹⁴⁶

Conclusion

Emotions are not equivalent to passions in the sense of being uncontrolled urges toward or away from sensible objects. Aquinas's account of what attracts us and why is rich and is tied to his hylomorphic anthropology, meaning that we do experience things in our bodies, but that we are also intellectual, rational beings. The two are not separable. The responses of the sensitive soul to the physical world, even at a simple and preliminary level, serve as building blocks for the more complex emotions. The ability of Aquinas's thought to incorporate these experiences, which even infants and young children can have, into a description of human emotion addresses the concerns we saw in chapter two, namely that cognitive theories define emotion in terms of abstract concepts that exclude children's having them. I find the most fruitful way of approaching Aquinas's thought as a resource for thinking about emotion is by remembering the cumulative effect and mutual influence of the sensory and intellectual powers as they interact in a person's encounters with the world through time. The emotional reservoir a person begins to establish in childhood is brought with her as she grows into adulthood. Her early emotions, even those she experiences as an infant and very young child,¹⁴⁷ become part of the makeup of her soul, both the intellectual and the sensitive. Further, the emotions she experiences are a mechanism through which she interacts with her

¹⁴⁶ See MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 68.

¹⁴⁷ These would include de Sousa's paradigm scenarios (De Sousa, "Self-Deceptive Emotions," 285).

surroundings. They are not merely appetites whose effect pertains only to her. Emotions are also involved in the actions she performs and the relationships she develops, and as such they are central components in Aquinas's theory of human virtue.

CHAPTER 4: CHILDREN'S MORAL AGENCY

Aquinas's distinction between apprehension and appetite, which at the same time maintains that reason and passion mutually influence one another and that emotions are partially formed by the intellect, opens the possibility of thinking of moral agency as part of but not equivalent to moral accountability, particularly in children. In this chapter I will suggest that this model allows us to attribute moral agency to children because children have emotions through which they engage the world and that partially motivate their actions. Because their rational powers are inchoate, they cannot and should not be held morally accountable for their actions in the way that adults are. This is not to say that they stand outside the moral community and should bear no consequences for their actions. Rather, children are learning right from wrong, good from evil, and are discovering how to discern and follow the best course of action in each situation. As they are learning the moral codes of their community and to use their practical reason, they are already engaging in moral actions of which they are the agents.

In the first half of this chapter, I argue that emotion is necessary for an action to be truly virtuous according to Aquinas. Morality is not for machines but for human beings,¹ who are by our very nature appetitive, and so passionate and emotional. If we could rationally calculate the best course of action and then follow it, we might be

¹ Hayden Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue: Integrity and Morality* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1997), 129.

performing good actions, but they would be mechanical instead of virtuous. Acquiring virtue, according to Aquinas, is a life-long process, and it is one in which children are already engaging, both through gaining the knowledge and habits they will need for virtues later in their lives, and also by acting in ways that reflect their desire for the good as they perceive it. Virtue requires that we want to perform the good action (or refrain from the evil one), and this emotional motivation occurs most easily in people who have a level of connaturality with goodness such that they are already inclined toward good without having to deliberate about it.

The second half of this chapter expands on Aquinas's thought to make a case for children as moral agents. Children are already on the path toward virtue or vice. Much of what forms them is outside of their control, but they still participate in the moral community through their (largely appetitive) responses to their surroundings. These early appetitive responses are the building blocks of their later emotional tendencies and habits, which can develop into virtues. The child's emotions allow her to participate in the moral community both as someone who requires a moral response from adults and other children, and as a person who is learning the moral codes of her community and adapting her behavior accordingly. Her moral agency is engaged as she interacts with others in the course of learning those moral codes. Further, her actions within the moral system are emotional responses that allow her to be a moral agent both in terms of her emotions and in terms of her moral actions that are motivated by emotion. I will conclude the chapter by briefly discussing a narrative that depicts the development of compassion in a child, and I will point to the ways in which it illustrates how the child's appetites and emotions are involved in the process.

Morality of the Emotions in Aquinas's Thought

In this section, I consider whether and how passions and emotions can be deemed moral in Aquinas's account, and in the following section, I expand this discussion to show that the emotions can and do play a role in his description of acquired virtue. The passions, according to Aquinas, are not themselves good or evil (ST I-II.24.4). Their moral quality depends on that which moves them. If they are inclined toward good objects or away from evil ones, then the passions can be called good. Passions that incline us toward evil or away from good are considered evil (ST I-II.24.4, ad 2). Aquinas writes that in action or passion, "we do not consider anything pertaining to the notion of good or evil: because movements and passions have not the aspect of an end, whereas good and evil are said in respect of an end" (ST I-II.49.2). That is, the passion itself is neutral, but the object of the passion can be assessed as morally good or evil.

Nevertheless, even within Aquinas's system, passions and emotions are subject to moral scrutiny. Stephen Loughlin argues that because Aquinas treats the passions within the context of ethics,² the passions are a fitting topic of moral assessment. Loughlin's main argument is that Aquinas's theory of the passions, seen as a psychological description, can be properly brought into the moral domain.³ He contends that

the fullness of Aquinas's views concerning the passions, as well as the justification for the transposition of a psychological doctrine into a moral context, depend upon viewing the passions not as disparate psychological phenomena acting freely within the human being (as if they had a life of their own and were thus something that had to be subdued like a wild animal), but rather as movements of the human appetitive aspect, integrated into his whole being and living.... These phenomena involve

² Loughlin, "A Response to Five Critiques," 149.

³ Loughlin, "A Response to Five Critiques," 148.

the full human being in his physical, appetitive and cognitive aspects, not only in their various and interdependent psychological operations, but most importantly as these are the means by which the person attains to what is most good and true in his life.⁴

Loughlin's argument supports the position that passions are moral when considered in conjunction with the other powers of the soul and as contributing to the whole of the person. This integrated description of emotion that stems from the human appetite is one of the foundations of human agency.

Aquinas holds that we know through reason whether the object of a passion is good or evil. Therefore, a passion is considered good to the degree that its object is in accord with the person's reason, and evil to the degree that the object is not in accord with reason (ST I-II.24.4). We can also determine the morality of the will—whether it is inclined toward good or evil—by assessing that in which it takes pleasure. A will that is inclined toward the good takes pleasure in good, and a will inclined toward evil takes pleasure in evil. When it comes to the movements of the sensitive appetite, the object of the appetite does not clearly indicate the goodness of the passion in the way that the object of the will indicates the goodness of the will's inclination. Aquinas uses the example of desiring food. Simply desiring food, as long as the food is good food, would be a morally acceptable passion if there were nothing else to consider. However, as Aquinas points out, the way in which the food is desired makes a moral difference: “the will of the good man takes pleasure in them [food] in accordance with reason, to which the will of the evil man gives no heed” (ST I-II.34.4). Thus, in a situation in which the object of the sensitive appetite and the will is the same (food), the inclination of the will,

⁴ Loughlin, “A Response to Five Critiques,” 156.

which as the intellectual appetite incorporates the person's cognitive powers, determines whether the passion is good or misguided.

While Aquinas posits the moral neutrality of passions considered without reference to their objects, in actuality passions always do have objects. Because the appetitive responses to those objects are either in line with reason or not, Robert C. Roberts argues that Aquinas's definition of emotions is such that they are intrinsically rational or irrational:

an emotion is good if it 'reflects' or 'represents' the true value of its object, and bad to the extent that it distorts or contradicts the object's value.... The 'appetite' is in itself normatively rational or irrational, and thus good or bad, simply because as an appetitive movement it takes its object to be good, and as a matter of fact its object *is* good or bad; and the perception is in itself rational or irrational, and thus good or bad, simply because its object is or is not as the perception represents it.⁵

Roberts contends that the passion is intrinsically rational or irrational, and so good or evil, as a result both of the apprehension that moves the appetite and of the object apprehended. The apprehension's level of rationality is directly related to the "true" value of the object that it perceives.

This interpretation of Aquinas aligns him with what the contemporary language of moral philosophy would categorize as moral realism⁶ and cognitivism⁷ (although this

⁵ Robert C. Roberts, "Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of Emotions," *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1992): 300.

⁶ For an overview of moral realism, see Geoff Sayre-McCord, "Moral Realism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed November 14, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/moral-realism/>. For an account that traces how this theory is interpreted in Scottish philosophy, see Knud Haakonssen, "Natural Law and Moral Realism: The Civic Humanist Synthesis in Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull," in *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁷ "Moral realists are cognitivists insofar as they think moral statements are apt for robust truth and falsity and that many of them are in fact true" (Mark van Roojen, "Moral

designation does not mean that Aquinas's emotional theory is strictly cognitivist). That is, Aquinas holds that the moral value of objects resides in the objects themselves rather than in the value people impute to the objects. Because the appetite is a passive power, it is moved by the apprehension's presentation of the object. Therefore, it seems that the appetite can be considered rational or irrational in a given instance insofar as it accurately assesses the qualities inherent in an object it apprehends. For instance, if fear arises in the face of an object that the person perceives to be dangerous, then the fear is rational to the degree that the object actually is dangerous and is perceived to be so by the apprehensive powers. However, the generic passion "fear" is neither good nor evil, rational nor irrational.

On this view, an emotion is elicited through the two-step progression from object to apprehension and from apprehension to appetite. The apprehension is susceptible to error, and it is also sometimes shaped by assumptions of which the person is not yet conscious. For example, fear can arise as the result of an incorrectly perceived object that is not actually dangerous. In such a case, it is the perception that is mistaken, and the passion it elicits is rational with respect to the apprehension but not with respect to the actual object. It is also possible that the apprehension perceives an object in a way that is contrary to the conscious reasoning of the person. The case of Huck Finn (discussed in chapter one) is such an instance. Huck's reason told him that turning Jim in to the slave catchers was right and good, but he could not will himself to do it. His thinking had changed without his being aware of it, and he was acting on good moral reasons that were

Cognitivism vs. Non-Cognitivism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), ed. Edward N. Zalta, accessed November 14, 2014, <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/moral-cognitivism>.

below the conscious level. Additionally, apprehension can be mistaken, and it can be based on non-conscious reasons, as when it elicits surprising emotions and actions. For example, a person who claims to view all people as equal might harbor subconscious racial prejudice that results in her responding to people of the group against which she is prejudiced in ways she would not have predicted. Finally, a person can experience spontaneous passions and emotions that are contrary to the person's reason, both conscious and unconscious.

While Aquinas denies that passions have a moral quality *per se*, he maintains that their presence can aid or hinder the morality of the actions with which they are associated. He argues that some passions and emotions increase the moral goodness of an action and are part of what makes the action virtuous. But he also recognizes the negative influence emotions can have on a person's decisions and actions, and so he makes the case that some passions decrease the moral goodness of an action. Aquinas distinguishes beneficial from disadvantageous passions according to whether they precede or succeed reason. Antecedent passions, which arise prior to reason, hinder moral goodness; consequent passions follow on reason and can increase moral goodness, provided the person is reasoning well and the passion is in agreement with that reasoning.

Antecedent passions diminish the goodness of an act because they precede reason and so "obscure the judgment of reason" (ST I-II.24.3, ad 1).⁸ Recognizing that these passions might arise spontaneously, Aquinas explains: "Moreover it happens sometimes that the movement of the sensitive appetite is aroused suddenly in consequence of an apprehension of the imagination of sense. And then such movement occurs without the

⁸ Aquinas also explains this in *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q.26.7, p. 284.

command of reason: although reason could have prevented it, had it foreseen” (ST I-II.17.7). Richard Mansfield contends that antecedent passions diminish the moral goodness of an action, but not because they are necessarily bad or influencing the person to act in a way that is morally evil. Rather, he suggests that “Aquinas believed antecedent passion necessarily hinders practical reason and therefore diminishes the moral quality of the subsequent act.”⁹ Specifically, Mansfield explains that Aquinas is thinking of actions that follow from the passion as their “*per se* principle,” in such a way that the passion is influencing reason rather than being influenced by reason.¹⁰ According to Aquinas, reason and will are needed for an act to be voluntary, and voluntariness is necessary for an act to be morally good or bad. But antecedent passion precedes reason, and because of this, antecedent passion diminishes the voluntariness and, therefore, the moral goodness or badness of an act.¹¹ At the same time, Mansfield notes¹² that Aquinas acknowledges that the antecedent passions that arise in a temperate person are less intense than those in a continent or vicious person.¹³ Aquinas distinguishes temperance from continence by stating that a temperate person’s passions are in accord with her reason, and she does not need to resist them, while a continent person succeeds in resisting disordered passions (ST II-II.155.4). The degree to which a person has cultivated her passions will determine the intensity of her antecedent passions, and this variation underscores the cumulative

⁹ Richard Mansfield, “Antecedent Passion and the Moral Quality of Human Acts According to St. Thomas,” in *Virtues and Virtue Theories*, ed. Michael Baur (Washington, DC: National Office of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the Catholic University of America, 1998), 221.

¹⁰ Mansfield, “Antecedent Passion,” 222.

¹¹ Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q. 26.7, pp. 284-285. See also Mansfield, “Antecedent Passion,” 226.

¹² Mansfield, “Antecedent Passion,” 229.

¹³ Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q. 26.8, p. 289.

effect of reason and passion on one another. The person whose passions are operating in cooperation with her reason is the one who will be less disrupted by antecedent passions.

When considering children's moral accountability, it is important to remember that antecedent passions diminish the voluntariness of an act. It is arguable that children's actions are often motivated by antecedent passions because children do not have developed rational powers, nor have they had time to shape their passions and to gain the experience that will allow them to determine the right course of action in a given instance. A person's actions that stem from antecedent passions are less voluntary than actions that are motivated by emotions that have been formed by reason and will. Because antecedent passions will likely influence more actions in children than in adults, the voluntariness of children's actions is more frequently diminished than it is in more mature persons. This is one reason we do not hold children accountable for their morally blameworthy actions in the way that we would adults. The consequences that children's immoral actions have on others are not diminished, but the children who commit them are not responsible for their actions in the way that an adult would be.

Antecedent passions can serve a constructive function as well, argue some scholars. Philosopher Judith Barad shows that moderate antecedent passions can aid reason by encouraging the person to reflect on the causes of the passion.¹⁴ For instance, if a person reacts with a particular passion to an object (which could be a situation), she can later think about why the object elicited that specific passion and come to understand how she is approaching the object such that her passions arise as they do. If the passion frustrates rather than fosters virtue, the person can then attempt to change the way she

¹⁴ Judith Barad, "Aquinas on the Role of Emotion in Moral Judgment and Activity," *The Thomist* 55 (1991): 408.

approaches the object such that the passion does not arise in that way again. Thomas Ryan draws on Barad's work and notes that reflecting on one's emotions requires a level of awareness of the emotion,¹⁵ which not everyone has. He argues further that "negative" emotions, such as anger, sadness, and shame, are "necessary, in their moderate form, as responses and virtues, to foster and reflect moral development."¹⁶ Noticing that the emotions have arisen and thinking about why one is experiencing them in these particular circumstances gives a person insight into her moral response to the situation. This is not to say that all antecedent passions require intense reflection. Aquinas himself acknowledges that occasionally antecedent passions arise that do not correspond to a person's character, although this happens less frequently in a virtuous person. However, Barad's point that antecedent passions can serve a constructive function in a person's moral life is helpful when considering children's emotions and moral growth.

This claim that antecedent passions encourage self-analysis suggests that children's moral development will include reflection on their emotional lives. It is important not only to teach children to shape and moderate their emotions, but also to reflect on what their emotional responses mean. At first, adults will likely play a major role in teaching children to reflect by communicating the appropriateness and implications of the child's emotional responses as they occur. Adults may also guide children in this process of emotional reflection through exploring stories or narratives. The ways characters respond to one another, to situations, and to other objects can be

¹⁵ Thomas F. Ryan, "Positive and Negative Emotions in Aquinas: Retrieving a Distorted Tradition," *Australasian Catholic Record* 78 no. 2 (Apr. 2001): 147.

¹⁶ Ryan, "Positive and Negative Emotions," 151.

illustrative for the child regarding what emotions mean about a person's thoughts and values.

At the same time, as children's intellectual powers develop and are formed, those powers influence the kinds of emotions that the children experience, specifically the consequent passions, which follow on the choice of the will. Aquinas maintains that an action that includes the desire to accomplish it has a greater level of goodness than an action that lacks emotional motivation (ST I-II.24.3). A passion that follows an act of will (of voluntariness) increases the praiseworthiness of a good act because it "is a sign of the greatness of the will."¹⁷ For this reason, consequent passions are present in the virtuous person.¹⁸ According to Aquinas, a consequent passion can mean one of two things. Either the person's will is so moved that the sensitive appetite (the passions) follow suit, or the person deliberately chooses to bring up a passion that will help her engage more quickly in a moral action (ST I-II.24.3, ad 1). Cates explains that some "emotions can affect the will by making it easier and more pleasant for the will to carry out certain of its operations.... Certain virtuous passions provide this sort of help primarily because they cause changes in the body that help the person literally to move—and to move more energetically—as needed to meet the challenges of the situation."¹⁹ Whether they are chosen or result from an overflow of the will, on Aquinas's view, cooperative consequent passions increase the moral goodness of the act (ST I-II.24.3, ad 1).²⁰ Whereas an antecedent passion "forestalls the judgment of reason," a consequent passion, "when it

¹⁷ Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q 26.7, answer to difficulty 1, p. 285.

¹⁸ Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q 26.7, answer to difficulty 6, p. 285.

¹⁹ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 235.

²⁰ See also Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q.26.7, p. 284.

follows that judgment, as through being commanded by reason, it helps towards the execution of reason's command" (ST I-II.59.2, ad 3).

The discussion of antecedent and consequent passions requires us to think again about the cumulative effect of the different apprehensive and appetitive moments on one another. It is consistent with experience that people occasionally have spontaneous emotions that surprise them, and it seems likely that these are less intense in people who are more virtuous.²¹ This is because the virtuous person has integrated her reason and passions so that the passions that arise spontaneously are, for the most part, stemming from a soul in which reason has already informed passion and the kinds of passions that will arise. Theologian William Mattison underscores this point by suggesting that the antecedent and consequent passions that Aquinas discusses might not have to be considered as discrete moments of a person's life. That is, the antecedent passion is not necessarily devoid of habituation and so of the possibility of deliberated reason earlier in a person's life.²² It is possible for antecedent passions to arise independently of reason, since the passions have something of their own,²³ but they do not inevitably arise spontaneously and without reason. Mattison's position indicates that the distinction between antecedence and consequence is more logical than temporal.²⁴

In a stand decidedly in favor of the passions, Hayden Ramsay argues that reason must take the blame when emotions lead a person morally astray. On his read, Aquinas

²¹ The Stoic Seneca also held that "first movements cannot be overcome by reason, 'though perhaps familiarity and constant attention may weaken them'" (Knuuttila, *Emotions*, 66). That is, the initial impulses, which the Stoics did not count as emotion, are "incurable," but the emotions they lead to can be overcome.

²² Mattison, "Examining the Role of the Emotions," 289.

²³ Mattison, "Examining the Role of the Emotions," 290.

²⁴ Mattison, "Examining the Role of the Emotions," 288.

says that when the passions are incorrectly inclined, it is because the reason that is engaged in apprehending the objects toward which they are inclined “has been inadequately trained.”²⁵ Virtue, on the other hand, is the “proper ordering of the emotions” such that our emotions incline us toward what is truly good.²⁶ Ramsay argues that emotional integrity and rightly ordered emotions, which allow the person properly to enjoy the objects of her natural inclinations, are necessary for good and satisfying living. He writes that the “objects of natural inclinations are more than mere means to satisfactions but rather the sources of their real loves and joys, hopes and anxieties.”²⁷ In other words, the person whose emotions have been well formed will realize that the objects toward which she is naturally inclined in an appropriate way are also the particulars through which she experiences universal good. Further, Ramsay argues that, for Aquinas, “the natural law requires and includes emotional integrity, and is not simply the passionless willing of intelligible goods; morality is for human beings not computers.”²⁸ Human beings are created with passions and emotions, and these must be brought into accord with what is good and right so that the person is able to live with integrity. Ramsay’s position is that, provided our emotions are in line with the natural order,²⁹ we will find “genuine emotional satisfaction” in the objects of our natural inclinations because we will recognize them “as goods” rather than simply as sources for fulfilling our desires.³⁰ Ramsay’s explanation of Aquinas’s position is focused on the proper integration of emotions with the person’s reason such that her desires are for what

²⁵ Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 127.

²⁶ Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 129.

²⁷ Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 128-129.

²⁸ Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 129.

²⁹ Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 120.

³⁰ Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 130.

is truly good. Other scholars explain this concept using Aquinas's understanding of connaturality.

Connaturality

In Aquinas's thought, connaturality is the condition of a person's having her passions and desires in tune with her reason such that she automatically desires that which she would determine to be good if she reflected on it. Attaining connaturality in one's emotions aids the acquisition of virtue, and it is a state toward which children's moral education can guide them. Connaturality is one of the topics that Aquinas does not treat systematically, according to philosopher Taki Suto.³¹ However, combing through Aquinas's work, Suto finds some consistency in Aquinas's discussion of it. First, connaturality is acquired, not innate,³² which means it is something that we learn over time, and that can potentially increase in us over time. Second, to attain connaturality is to become like that which we understand.³³ For example, a person who invests her time in music will become more musical.³⁴ Finally, there are instances when responding based on connaturality is preferable to reasoned responses. These are situations that require quick responses. Suto uses the example of a person who sees a drowning child. Valuable time will be wasted if the person stops to ponder, reason, or deliberate about whether it is

³¹ Taki Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas," *The Review of Metaphysics* 58, no. 1 (2004): 65.

³² Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge," 68.

³³ Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge," 71.

³⁴ Suto, "Virtue and Knowledge," 72.

a good thing to try to save the child. It is better if the person has the connatural response of helping another person in need and moves instantly to save the child.³⁵

According to Ryan, connaturality is achieved when “a person is changed such that the orientation or habitual disposition to what is good becomes connatural or second nature.”³⁶ Such connaturality leads to virtue. Virtue is not the condition of the reason continuing to rule the emotions, but rather of the emotions being “‘in tune with’ right reason.... Feeling, thinking, willing resonate with each other that this particular response is ‘right.’”³⁷ Martin Rhonheimer goes further and makes the case that integrated, rightly ordered emotions lead to the person’s having a connaturality with good such that with her whole being she knows, desires, and seeks the good. Without the passions being part of that process, her appetite would not be engaged, and she would not seek the good in the same way.³⁸ Ryan’s and Rhonheimer’s analyses underscore that emotions are at their best in a relationship with intellect and will such that all three are in agreement with one another.³⁹ These positions corroborate the case made above that virtue requires the integration of feeling, thinking, and willing in a fitting, natural, and resonant way. Distinguishing among them is necessary if a person is to reflect on and cultivate her emotions, but then thinking, feeling, and willing must come to the point where they are reintegrated in order to qualify as virtue.

³⁵ Suto, “Virtue and Knowledge,” 75.

³⁶ Thomas Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas,” *Theological Studies* 66, no. 1 (2005): 57, citing ST I-II.32.6; 27.1, where Aquinas discusses “good as the cause of pleasure and love.”

³⁷ Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge,” 58.

³⁸ Martin Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 171.

³⁹ Ryan, “Revisiting Affective Knowledge,” 59.

It seems plausible to say that the unity of the passions with nascent reason in childhood is something that should perdure in a revised way in adults. Children must be taught what is good and right, with the hope that their emotions will eventually come into line with what they are taught. In this way, what their reason understands to be good will reflect true goodness, and their emotions will be inclined to that good. Achieving connaturality takes time. Psychologist Frank Moncher states that children must learn by example from the significant adults in their lives. They must first practice what is right because it is what they are supposed to do, and then hopefully as they mature, they will want to do what is right. Moncher argues, “It is the repetition of the interior acts, of intelligent mastery over one’s self, that will contribute directly to the formation of virtue. In contrast, the repetition of exterior acts can produce habits, but will not necessarily lead to virtue.”⁴⁰ Emotions have tremendous significance for the person’s morality and moral development. When emotions are not integrated with well-formed reason, they can lead to vice. But emotions that move the person toward connaturality with goodness make acquiring virtue possible.

Acquired Virtue

According to Aquinas, the perfect and adequate definition of virtue is as follows: “Virtue is a good [habit]⁴¹ of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us” (ST I-II.55.4). The phrase “which

⁴⁰ Frank J. Moncher, “A Psychotherapy of Virtue: Reflections on St. Thomas Aquinas’ Theology of Moral Virtue,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 20, no. 4 (2001): 336.

⁴¹ Aquinas begins the article by defining virtue as a “good quality of the mind,” but later in the article, he clarifies that the word “habit” is a more “suitable” term than “quality” for this definition (ST I-II.55.4).

God works in us, without us” refers only to infused virtues, but Aquinas notes that when that phrase is omitted, the definition encompasses both infused and acquired virtues. In this dissertation, I am more concerned with acquired than infused virtues because acquired virtues can be the subject of moral education and a person can work to attain them, but God bestows infused virtues on human beings.⁴² Because virtues are habits, I begin this section by discussing Aquinas’s understanding of habit, and I then move to how the acquired virtues require and shape emotions.

Habits

The role that Aquinas attributes to habit in virtue formation and in emotion is central to reflecting on how his thought can be extended to children and their moral agency. A habit, according to Aquinas, “is a disposition of a subject which is in a state of potentiality either to form or to operation” (ST I-II.50.1). In terms of moral action and virtue, a habit is not the action or the state of emotional arousal; it is the potential and tendency to act a certain way or to feel a certain way, and it is a stable propensity that is difficult to change (ST I-II.49.2, ad 3). In order for a human tendency to qualify as a habit for Aquinas, the person with the habit must “be distinct from that to which it is disposed...as potentiality is to act.” In other words, the habit is not definitive of the person. Being passionate is how human beings are created; habits are learned. This distinction is underscored by the qualification that a habit’s potentiality must be able to be actualized in more than one way, and in the course of the actualization, there must be a

⁴² According to Aquinas, infused virtues strengthen an already existing habit rather than creating a new habit, as acquired virtues do (ST I-II.51.4 ad 3). I address the infused virtues in more depth later in this chapter.

number of things occurring, which are able to be “adjusted” (ST I-II.49.4). Further, a habit must be able to respond to reason, but being guided by or disposed to reason does not guarantee that the habits are leading the person toward the good.

Jean Porter demonstrates the importance of habits in Aquinas’s thought. On Porter’s read of Aquinas, a habit is “a stable disposition of the intellect, will, or passions inclining the person to act in one kind of way rather than another. Such dispositions are necessary if we are to be capable of action at all; for example, the child’s innate capacities for speech must be developed through the *habitus* of a particular language before the child can actually talk.”⁴³ In the same way, the child’s innate capacities for reason and relationships must be developed in order for her whole self to become inclined toward right action and virtue. Porter argues that for Aquinas, intellect, will, and passions are “interdependent and can only be analyzed in conjunction with one another.”⁴⁴

Although the powers are separable for the purposes of discussion, they are integrated in the person as a whole. Ideally, the passions and the intellect work in collaboration, moving the person toward true good and her own perfection as a human being,⁴⁵ but in practice, passions form before the intellect “has the maturity to bring a comprehensive conception of the human good to bear on her judgments about particulars.”⁴⁶ Having an undeveloped intellect thus leaves a person susceptible to forming bad emotional habits.

Because children have undeveloped intellect, and because human beings lack the instinctive tendencies in our passions that animals have, we need to be taught the good

⁴³ Jean Porter, “Virtues and Vices,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 266.

⁴⁴ Jean Porter, “The Unity of the Virtues and the Ambiguity of Goodness: A Reappraisal of Aquinas’s Theory of the Virtues,” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 21, no. 1 (1993): 147.

⁴⁵ Porter, “The Unity of the Virtues,” 148.

⁴⁶ Porter, “The Unity of the Virtues,” 150.

toward which our passions should be directed, both for our own proper development and for the sake of those with whom we interact.⁴⁷ Porter proposes that this occurs in children by way of “very simple precepts, example, and story” which give children the basis for learning how to act in ways that conform to the moral codes of their society, and that these early behaviors become the foundations for acquired virtues. The child first learns what Porter refers to as the “paradigms of virtue,”⁴⁸ through which she is taught the right courses of action in particular situations. This formation may occur either by imitation (as when a child acts out something she has learned from a narrative) or coercion (as when she is required to behave in a particular way by the adults around her). Either method of induction involves both intellect and emotion.

By being forced to act in certain ways, and experiencing the responses of others to her actions, the child comes to think and to feel in ways that correspond to those actions. In this way, the raw materials of organic desire and aversion, which are the basic stuff of the psyche, are shaped in one direction rather than another, in such a way, that is, that the child gradually comes to want to practice self-restraint, persistence, and courage, and to see the world and the situations that face her accordingly.⁴⁹

Porter explains that from this basis the child learns to apply those good behaviors to other similar situations.⁵⁰ The child then needs to learn prudence, the virtue that involves being able to apply the general concepts of goodness to the particular and unusual situations in which she might find herself.⁵¹ Eventually, the child is able to bring these virtues to bear on her own goals that she has established based on her own assessment of the good in her

⁴⁷ Porter, “The Unity of the Virtues,” 152-153.

⁴⁸ Jean Porter, *Moral Action and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 174.

⁴⁹ Porter, *Moral Action*, 175.

⁵⁰ Porter, *Moral Action*, 175.

⁵¹ Porter, “The Unity of the Virtues,” 153.

particular circumstances.⁵² Thus, the child's progression toward the acquisition of virtue, according to Porter's reading of Aquinas, begins with external forces (such as caregivers) determining for the child both the goals toward which her behavior should be moving as well as which behaviors she should perform, and it reaches completion when the person is able to establish her own goals and choose actions that will foster the achievement of those goals. According to Porter, a person develops from being told what to do and why, to making these determinations on her own based on her ability to understand, to exercise prudence, and to engage her emotions. There is no guarantee that a person will progress toward virtue, however, because people acquire bad habits as well as good ones.

Aquinas distinguishes good habits and evil habits based on whether they are in accord with reason and human nature. He thinks a habit is good, if it "disposes to an act suitable to the agent's nature," and "an evil habit is one which disposes to an act unsuitable to nature. Thus, acts of virtue are suitable to human nature, since they are according to reason, whereas acts of vice are discordant from human nature, since they are against reason" (ST I-II.54.3). The powers of the soul, insofar as they are subject to reason, are also subject to the formation of habits. Exterior sensitive apprehension is not subject to reason and so not subject to habit (eyes see without habit because it is their nature to see); but interior sense apprehensions such as "memory, thought or imagination" can be subject to habit (ST I-II.50.3, ad 3). The sensitive appetites, because they have "an inborn aptitude to be moved by the rational appetite" (ST I-II.50.3, ad 3), are also susceptible to habit formation, "by which they are well or ill disposed in regard to something" (ST I-II.50.3). Finally, the will is also subject to habits. Aquinas explains

⁵² Porter, *Moral Action*, 177.

that “every power which may be variously directed to act, needs a habit whereby it is well disposed to its act. Now since the will is a rational power, it may be variously directed to act. And therefore in the will we must admit the presence of a habit whereby it is well disposed to its act” (ST I-II.50.5). Further, because habits are subject to reason and are capable of being changed (although altering them is difficult), their operation depends on the will. The will can act on a given habit, but it can also choose to act contrary to a habit or not to act on the habit at all (ST I-II.52.3).

Choice with respect to habit extends to the formation of habits and not only to their execution. A person forms a habit by repeating particular actions. Clearly, whenever possible, a person should use her reason to judge which kinds of habits are good, and then work to form those habits. But whether the person has consciously chosen the habit or not, a habit can be increased either by repeatedly engaging in the habitual action or by engaging in an act that surpasses the “intensity” of the habit (ST I-II.52.3). Intensity can be interpreted in a number of ways, and Aquinas does not specify what he means by the term. It is possible that intensity could refer to duration, such as the habit of reading for a longer period of time each day; it could refer to level of difficulty, as when an athlete increases her training; it could refer to quantity, as when a person’s coffee-drinking habit increases from two to six cups per day. But it also seems plausible to interpret this concept so that we can speak of emotional intensity. For instance, the habit of responding with patience is more difficult but also becomes more ingrained when the situation is stressful. Another example might be a child who is forming the habit of sharing by repeatedly sharing her own toys with other children and by having other children share their toys with her. Half-hearted sharing will reinforce the habit over time, but sharing

when the child finds the situation emotionally intense, perhaps either when it is difficult to share or when she feels particular love toward the child with whom she is sharing, will likely increase in her the habit of sharing.

Just as habits can be reinforced and grow, so too can they be diminished. Because habits are subject to reason, a person's judgment may influence her habit formation for good or for ill. Aquinas writes that "a habit either of virtue or of vice, may be corrupted by a judgment of reason, whenever its motion is contrary to such vice or virtue, whether through ignorance, passion or deliberate choice" (ST I-II.53.1). Vicious habits can thus be "corrupted" and diminished, but virtuous habits can as well. Therefore, a person who has formed virtuous habits is still susceptible to corruption and the loss or decrease of those habits. A habit may also fade away if a person ceases to perform the acts that established the habit in the first place (ST I-II.53.3). A simple example of this might be a child who is in the habit of sucking her thumb and then injures the thumb such that sucking it is either painful or impossible. If the injury lasts long enough, the child will often not go back to sucking that thumb; the habit is broken.

Breaking habits is difficult, and Aquinas suggests that one reason for this is that a person's dispositions can affect her will such that something seems good or bad even though it might not really be good or bad. Her dispositions and habits can affect her will (and thus her choices) in terms of how she perceives her habitual actions, and she can be inclined to continue a vicious habit because it seems to be good. However, Aquinas does not think people are inevitably subject to their habits. Rather, "the will is not moved of necessity because it has the power to remove this disposition so that the thing does not seem so to him; for example when a man calms his wrath so as not to judge something in

anger. Passion however is more easily removed than habit.”⁵³ By changing the way one thinks about something or the way one perceives an object, it is possible to change one’s habits with regard to that object.

One would hope that the habits a person develops while learning to determine her own goals are good habits. If a person does develop bad emotional habits because of a flaw in her apprehension, she can work to change the emotion by altering her perceptions and thoughts. Just as the habits of virtue form through repetition, bad habits also form through repetition. A bad emotional habit that is based on irrational interpretations of reality can be changed by adjusting the person’s habit of thinking, suggests Claudia Eisen Murphy. By amending the evaluations that are present in the arousal of the emotion, a person can eventually change the emotional habit. Murphy explains, “by systematically recasting the situation every time I evaluate it irrationally, I might be able to acquire a new habit of evaluating the situation properly.”⁵⁴ Because emotions can be affected by reason and by reasoned judgments, at least to some extent, the passions can also sometimes be changed through changing the habit of thinking that corresponds to the emotional response. As children learn to evaluate the world around them, adults can attempt to guide them toward habits of thought that foster good emotional habits and lead to the formation of virtue.

This process is not always successful, and Harak’s research confirms the difficulty of removing habits, particularly those that are formed in children and that involve their whole person, body and soul. In his discussion of children who have been

⁵³ Thomas Aquinas, *On Evil*, trans. Richard Regan, ed. Brian Davies (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), Q VI, p. 243.

⁵⁴ Murphy, “Aquinas on Our Responsibility,” 193.

abused, he traces a connection between experiences that occur early in life and habits that the person exhibits later. In this account, as in his book on virtue, Harak emphasizes the physical component of human experience. He argues that “habits of the soul are caused by our capacity to be moved by another.... The soul is affected through embodiment, and learns mainly through touch. Habits are in the body, but principally in the soul. These habits of the soul and body are acquired by repeated acts, through the agency of another, and mainly through touch.”⁵⁵ Because we are “vulnerable to being moved by another”⁵⁶ through our bodies, and because “the human being has a unique ability, in both her body and her soul, to carry pain through time,”⁵⁷ abuse can have long-lasting and devastating effects on a child.⁵⁸ Harak’s point is salient not only in terms of thinking about the importance of ensuring that all children have proper care, but also because the child’s sensitivity to touch and early physical contact can mean that good and loving touch has lasting positive effects for the child. Caregivers might be able to use touch and habit formation to nurture a child so that her emotions lead her to want to do what is good and right, thus helping her to acquire virtues.

Emotions and Virtue

In order for a habit to be constitutive of a virtue in Aquinas’s system, the habit must refer to an act (not a state of being) (ST I-II.55.2). The habit must also be good; an evil habit cannot be a virtue (ST I-II.55.4). Stephen Pope summarizes Aquinas’s

⁵⁵ G. S. Harak, “Child Abuse and Embodiment from a Thomistic Perspective,” *Modern Theology* 11, no. 3 (1995): 327.

⁵⁶ Harak, “Child Abuse and Embodiment,” 327.

⁵⁷ Harak, “Child Abuse and Embodiment,” 328, citing ST I-II.35.1.

⁵⁸ It is arguable that the habit of violating another person through abuse also has detrimental effects on the abuser.

distinction between good and bad habits as follows: “‘Virtues’ are simply stable dispositions to act in ways that are good; ‘vices’ are stable dispositions to act in ways that are bad.”⁵⁹ Aquinas’s theory of virtue is extensive, and to do it justice would take us well beyond the scope of this project. Therefore, I will pay particular attention to the acquired moral virtues, and specifically to how the emotions can contribute to acquired virtue.

Before we explore the emotions’ role in acquired virtue, I would like to touch on the infused virtues briefly for two reasons. First, some scholars argue that the infused virtues are an equalizer in Aquinas’s system that can allow all people to pursue and attain the ultimate end of life with God,⁶⁰ regardless of their abilities, intellectual or otherwise. Second, the infused virtues are worked in humans by God without any action on the part of the human being, and this can raise concerns about human agency that we must put to rest.

The infused virtues are habits that God places in human beings to allow humans to attain our ultimate end. In Aquinas’s system, humans are natural beings, and human powers do not allow us to move beyond what is natural to us. However, we are created for a *telos* that is supernatural—the vision of God (ST I-II.5.5). In order for us to be able to attain our supernatural end, God infuses us with supernatural qualities that elevate us beyond our human nature. These are the infused virtues (ST I-II.51.4), which “God works

⁵⁹ Stephen J. Pope, “Overview of the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas,” in *The Ethics of Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 34, citing ST I-II.54.3.

⁶⁰ Bauerschmidt argues that Aquinas’s theory of the virtues is unified in the end toward which the virtues are directed (the *telos* of human happiness), and that Aquinas is less concerned with how the “various gifts, beatitudes and virtues” are unified in the person herself (Frederick C. Bauerschmidt, “Thomas Aquinas: The Unity of the Virtues and the Journeying Self,” in *Unsettling Arguments: A Festschrift on the Occasion of Stanley Hauerwas’s 70th Birthday*, ed. Charles Pinches, Kelly S. Johnson, and Charles M. Collier [Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010], 34-35).

in us, without us” (ST I-II.55.4). Jean Porter argues that the infused virtues allow Aquinas to maintain the Christian idea of the equality of all people, even in the face of distinctly divergent capabilities and life circumstances.⁶¹ The infused virtues are not directed toward good living in this world but toward the supernatural *telos* of the vision of God in the next. Porter demonstrates that this distinction between the end toward which infused virtues are directed and the goal of good living in this world allows Aquinas to explain the presence of infused virtue in people who also exhibit “contrary habits, that is, vices, which render their [infused cardinal virtues] operation difficult and unpleasant.”⁶² Thus, not only do the infused virtues make it possible for those people on whom God bestows them to attain their supernatural *telos*, but infused virtues also allow us to explain the admixture of saintly and sinful tendencies in the same person.

The second issue with infused virtue that it is important to clarify is that defining infused virtue as a habit that “God works in us, without us” might seem to imply that the person on whom God bestows these loses the ability to act as an agent. Cates notes that the infused virtues can affect the exercise of moral agency by causing the person either to intend a different (proximate) end than they might otherwise have, or to arrive at different means for achieving their end. Even if the person engages in the same actions that she would have without the infused virtue, the actions will have different meaning for her because of the infused virtue.⁶³ However, as I showed in chapter one, the view of moral

⁶¹ Jean Porter, “The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the *Summa theologiae*,” *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992): 23. Aquinas notes that just because God can infuse virtues into all people does not mean that God does, in fact, bestow the infused virtues on everyone (ST I-II.51.4).

⁶² Porter, “The Subversion of Virtue,” 32, citing ST I-II.65.3, ad 2. Herdt makes a similar point (Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 89).

⁶³ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 39-41.

agency that stems from Aquinas's thought is non-competitive, meaning that even when a person has received the grace of infused virtue, she maintains her agency. Porter explains, "the ends of the acquired virtues, namely, the overall well-being of the organism and the community, is thus transformed by the infused virtue, rather than being obviated or undermined by it; again, grace perfects, rather than destroys nature."⁶⁴ Persons who receive infused virtues retain the ability to act on their own volition. They are transformed, not coerced, by this grace.

The passions are cultivated not through infused virtue, but through the habituation of acquired moral virtues,⁶⁵ to which we now turn our attention. The human appetite needs to be formed and shaped by reason and to follow reason's lead in order for its moral habits to be virtuous (ST I-II.58.2). Aquinas states, "habits of moral virtue are caused in the appetitive powers, according as they are moved by the reason" (ST I-II.51.2). Moral virtue requires prudence and understanding (which are intellectual virtues) in order to determine the correct and virtuous courses of action in given situations, to choose those actions, and to incline the appetite toward those actions (ST I-II.58.4). Prudence and understanding develop over time and involve maturity, reason, and experience, all of which are still in the early formative stages in children. This is not to say that children cannot be on the path toward moral virtue, or that their actions, choices, and early understandings of the world are not part of their morality. Indeed, a child's early experiences are the foundation for her later understanding and prudence. At the same time, the nascent level of reason and experience in the child indicates that the child

⁶⁴ Porter, "Virtues and Vices," 270.

⁶⁵ Herdt, *Putting on Virtue*, 87.

will also have less-than-fully-developed prudence and understanding, and it reinforces the argument for not holding children accountable as adults.

Another reason for children's lesser degree of accountability is that, although the moral virtues shape the passions, Aquinas maintains the primacy of reason and says that we do not merit by our passions, except indirectly. The passions are subject to habit, and so to virtue, insofar as they participate in reason. Considered in and of themselves, the irascible and concupiscible powers cannot be subjects of virtue (ST I-II.56.4). According to Aquinas, virtue also depends on the will (ST I-II.20.1), and he holds that the will and the passions are intimately connected. Therefore, in Aquinas's theory, reason, will, and sense appetite are all integrated in the person who acquires virtue.

We saw above that the passions, to the degree that they are in accord with reason, allow the person to take pleasure through her intellectual appetite in sensible goods such as food (see ST I-II.34.4). The relationship between will and passion works in the opposite direction as well. Aquinas maintains that "the movement of virtue, which consists in a perfect act of will, cannot be had without any passion, not because the act of will depends upon the passion, but because in a nature subject to passion a passion necessarily follows upon a perfect act of will."⁶⁶ This movement seems to refer to the overflow of the will into the passions. The intellectual appetite is moved such that the sensitive appetite is also moved because, as Aquinas says, humans are by nature "subject to passion."⁶⁷ Further, passion can be said to be an effect of virtue (ST I-II.60.2), because

⁶⁶ Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q 26.7, answer to difficulty 2, p. 285.

⁶⁷ Mattison insists that for Aquinas, passion is necessary for virtuous action to be perfect (Mattison, "Examining the Role of the Emotions," 289).

“every virtuous man rejoices in acts of virtue, and sorrows for the contrary” (ST I-II.59.4, ad 1).

For Aquinas, passions are meritorious only indirectly, and their merit is proportional to how they correspond to the will. This indirect merit can happen in three ways.⁶⁸ First, if the will wills a passion, or if the will loves a passion, then that willing or loving can be meritorious. The passion itself is not meritorious, but the passion is the object of the will’s loving or willing, and the will’s action is meritorious. Second, if the passion elicits an act of the will, and if that act of the will is meritorious, then the passion is indirectly meritorious as the principle of the will. In these cases, the will either consents to a good passion or resists an evil passion. The passion’s eliciting an act of the will raises the issue of antecedent passions and passions that lead the will astray. Given Aquinas’s position on antecedent passions, it is likely that the passions he refers to here arise as a result of a reasoned perception of something and that the will then consents to or resists the passions. The third way a passion can be indirectly meritorious is by overflow from the will (intellectual appetite) into the sensitive appetite. Aquinas’s example of this is a person whose will hates sin, and so when the person sins, her sensitive appetite feels shame as a result; the shame is indirectly meritorious.

At the same time, Aquinas’s position is that for an action to be truly virtuous, it is not enough that the person’s intellect dictate the action; the appetitive powers (that is, both the will and the passions) must concur with reason such that the person also wants to perform the good act. “Accordingly for a man to do a good deed, it is requisite not only that his reason be well disposed by means of a habit of intellectual virtue; but also that his

⁶⁸ All references in this paragraph are to: Aquinas, *On Truth*, vol. 3, Q 26.6, pp. 276-277.

appetite be well disposed by means of a habit of moral virtue” (ST I-II.58.2). That which perfects a person’s appetite is a moral virtue (ST I-II.58.3). Lombardo’s explanation of virtue is helpful for emphasizing the ongoing and accretive process of acquiring virtue. He writes, “the category of virtue is a way to describe what happens when choices become embedded in our personality, so that we become actively disposed toward future acts of goodness, that is, toward acts consonant with authentic human flourishing and psychological health.” This embeddedness is not the exclusive domain of reason; for an action to be a complete moral action, the appetite must be engaged as well.⁶⁹

Because acquired virtues are habits, they are formed by repeating the virtuous act until it becomes habitual (ST I-II.51.3). In order for an action to be virtuous, it must be a good action (based on understanding), it must be appropriate to the situation (which prudence will determine), and it must be something that the agent wants to do (meaning the appetites are in accord with it). If a virtue is acquired through habitual engagement in the virtuous act, how does a person begin to acquire a virtue she does not already have? How does she bring her appetites into agreement with her reason such that she wants to perform the virtuous action if she does not already have the virtue? This question is particularly important for thinking about children, who begin without any acquired virtues and must develop all the acquired virtues they are to have. Because virtue is a habit, it seems that the way a person might work to acquire a virtue is by willing herself to perform the good action even when her emotions do not want to, and over time, her repeated action will create a habit. Ideally, as she works to form the habit, her emotions will come to desire that which her reason and will determine to be good. This method of

⁶⁹ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 242.

forming a virtuous habit begs the question of whether the performance of actions that are good but that the agent does not want to do runs the risk of being disingenuous. Herdt takes up this issue by addressing hypocrisy in terms of acting in a way that gives the impression that a person has a specific virtue when in fact she does not have that virtue. On Herdt's read, Aquinas's view of these situations falls on the side of generosity.⁷⁰ Aquinas's assessment is that it is acceptable to perform actions without the concomitant appetite (and so virtue) if one is under obligation because of a vow to do so, or if one is attempting to acquire the virtue in question through repetition of action that results in habit (ST II-II.111).

This generosity in terms of good actions that are not fully virtuous makes sense when we think about how people need to behave for a moral community to function. Waiting until people possess genuine virtue before we ask them to comport themselves in line with the virtues would be detrimental to the group as a whole and to its members. We sometimes need people to act in ways that are not natural for them as they acquire virtues. For instance, moderating one's behavior when angry is often beneficial to others, and one should learn to do this even before one's anger itself is moderated (if it is immoderate). Through repeatedly performing good actions, we hope to move toward virtue by eventually wanting to perform them. At the same time, if all our actions are only done from a sense of duty or because our reason requires it without the cooperation and support of the emotions, then we will be functioning more like robots than humans. We will be obeying commands rather than acting as persons who strive for integration. The same holds true for children, and a child who is being taught to behave in ways that

⁷⁰ Herdt, *Putting On Virtue*, 81-82.

assist her in becoming virtuous will be encouraged to perform good actions even when she does not want to. Eventually, she will become accustomed to the moral codes she is being taught and, if all goes well, her appetites will follow suit, and she will want to engage in virtuous actions. The habit she has acquired will be a virtue.

Theologian Lee Yearley raises the question of whether all habits of virtue require the same level of emotional involvement. His assessment is that some virtues depend more on the action that results from them than on the emotional component. He names justice as one such virtue, and he argues that a person who performs a just action is still acting with justice even though her emotions might not be properly engaged. He acknowledges that for Aquinas, the just act is diminished without the passional involvement, but Yearley holds that the act is the most important component of the virtue.⁷¹ Other virtues depend entirely on whether the emotion is present or not, and one example is courage. It is not possible to have the virtue of courage without the concomitant emotions.⁷² Yearley makes a valid point that the level of emotional involvement might vary from one virtue to another, but Aquinas's account seems to require passions or emotions to be at least amenable to, if not overtly motivating, an action in order for the action to be virtuous. However, Yearley's argument does address

⁷¹ Yearley, "Aquinas and Mencius," 82. Harak takes a different read on justice, and he makes the case that the virtue of justice exhibited by a commitment to non-violence requires the passion of anger in order to be a virtue. Non-violence draws on a proper passion of anger (Harak, *Virtuous Passions*, 133) within a community that can support and encourage the person in her non-violence (133, 136-137). A "willingness to encounter and undergo physical suffering, is the primary passion for the virtue of non-violence" (130). Harak explains that his definition of non-violence is not pacifism. It involves anger, the power to punish, and the decision not to do so (134). To attempt to act justly without this emotional dimension is not to act with the virtue of justice, according to Harak.

⁷² Yearley, "Aquinas and Mencius," 82.

the question of how we would prefer that people act prior to their acquiring a given virtue. In the case of justice, it seems beneficial to society that people act with justice even when they do not want to, although the ideal would be that they both desire and act with justice.

In addition to being an integral part of virtue, emotions can foster the practice of virtue through motivating a person's returning to virtuous behavior when she has lapsed from the habit of virtuous action. Peter Sedgwick makes the case that fear⁷³ can diminish voluntariness, but he also argues that it can serve a positive function. He writes,

Aquinas sees two ways in which human beings are led to practise virtue once they have begun to stray off the straight and narrow. First, they are restrained from doing evil by fear, but only after they have failed to be moved easily by words; second, they are led 'by force of custom to do voluntarily what once they did only from fear and thus to practise virtue'. Fear comes close to making an action involuntary, because the will is free when it can direct itself without compulsion from outside itself... but action through fear does not remove the causality of the will.⁷⁴

In this way, a passion comes close to coercing a person to act in ways that their will might still resist. And as the person acts in the ways they are supposed to, they come to want to act in those ways and to increase their virtuous behavior. They choose to develop emotions that will foster virtue.

Choosing Emotions

Emotions and passions sometimes arise unbidden, but their connection to the intellect in Aquinas's system suggests that they are subject to a level of choice and control on the part of the person experiencing them. This amenability to the influence of

⁷³ Cates discusses fear of hell as a religious emotion that can result in moral motivation (Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 218-220).

⁷⁴ Peter H. Sedgwick, "The Compulsion to be Good: Aquinas on the Formation of Human Character," *Theology* 91, no. 741 (1988): 197.

reason and thought is, as we have seen, one of the reasons emotions are moral. Peter King summarizes the significance of the passions for morality as follows: The passions “can be affected by reasons and beliefs. Their cognitive penetrability will turn out to be fundamental to Aquinas’s moral and theological psychology, since this allows people to perfect themselves through the virtues.”⁷⁵ As we saw above, the passions are (indirectly) meritorious in relation to the will, which is the power of choosing in the human soul. When emotions are properly in accord with reason, they do provide the necessary integration of the person’s thinking, feeling, and willing that is needed for virtue.

Aquinas’s account of prudence provides one example of the way this internal integration fosters virtue. Prudence is necessary for a person to live a good life, and it is required for virtue. In other words, prudence helps the person to desire that which is good and to act in ways that accomplish good, and it incorporates both reason and appetite. Prudence is the intellectual habit (virtue) that involves reason in making good choices and decisions, and it is necessary in order for a person to choose well consistently (ST I-II.57.5). The virtue of prudence, “which is right reason about things to be done,” also requires an appetite that is directed toward good ends (ST I-II.57.4). Traina explains that “prudence properly understood not merely makes wise decisions about the pursuit of goods but also—by engaging the appetite, especially the will—harnesses desire and yields action.”⁷⁶ Both the intellectual and sensitive appetites can be involved in prudence. A rightly directed will takes pleasure in reasonable engagements with sensible goods that the sensitive appetite enjoys. When prudence is present, the person’s decisions and

⁷⁵ King, “Aquinas on the Passions,” 131.

⁷⁶ Cristina L. H. Traina, “Thomas and the Natural Law,” in *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law: The End of the Anathemas* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999), 65.

choices of action follow reason's determination of what is best in a given situation, and they take pleasure in the good. Further, the passions can arise as a result of the will, and can take pleasure in that which the will finds good through overflow. Lombardo offers a summary of the integration of thinking, feeling, and willing in a virtuous person. He writes, "virtuous passions may well respond to abstract ideals, either by being shaped by rational considerations or by sharing by overflow in the affections of the will. Similarly, the affections of the will may rejoice or sorrow virtuously in sense objects."⁷⁷ The will and the passions do not contribute to a given virtue by separating themselves from each other, but by being in tune with one another and with reason.

The intimate connection between the will and the passions extends beyond their desiring the same objects. Because the will is the power involved in choosing, a person can engage it to make decisions regarding whether and how to act when she experiences an emotion. Aquinas makes the case that it is also possible to make choices about one's emotions themselves. This is part of what it is to be responsible for one's emotions and one's emotional life,⁷⁸ and to be responsible for the actions that follow on the emotions, or that the emotions motivate. Both Mattison and Yearley⁷⁹ draw on Aquinas as they discuss the methods people can use to alter their emotions. Using the example of anger, Mattison outlines how a person can reshape an immoderate emotion. First the person works toward continence, or recognizing that the passion is inordinate and checking

⁷⁷ Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire*, 17, n. 61.

⁷⁸ Murphy argues that in order for us to be responsible for a passion, it must result from a free judgment, which means that it is sensitive to deliberation even if it is not actually deliberated: "Thus, it is a sufficient condition for responsibility for our appetitive states that they be caused *per se* by free judgments, judgments that are the result of or could have been modified by deliberation" (Murphy, "Aquinas on Our Responsibility," 188).

⁷⁹ Yearley includes Mencius in his analysis (Yearley, "Mencius and Aquinas," 103).

herself from acting on it.⁸⁰ Next, the person makes the effort to shape the passion itself, which involves more than stopping herself from acting on the passion. It involves trying not to feel the inordinate passion when it does start to arise.⁸¹ Finally, the person attempts to prevent the inordinate version of the passion from being aroused at all.⁸² Yearley describes the relationship between reason and passion at each of the three stages. He calls the first stage self-cultivation, when a person's reason and emotions are in conflict. Second, the person begins acting virtuously, but she is not yet truly virtuous because "errant emotions still are evident and powerful, even though they are under control." Finally, the person reaches the stage of true virtue in which there is no longer any conflict between her reason and her emotions.⁸³

Cates also argues that people have the power to observe and to a degree determine their emotions. This happens in several ways. Prior to the onset of a given emotion, the intellect and the sensory powers mutually influence one another through the involvement of reason in sensory powers, and through the sensory powers' contributions to reason that were discussed in chapter three. The intellect is also capable of persuading the emotions, and it is ethically important for people to see this and allow the intellect to work on their less virtuous emotions. As an emotion arises, our wills may choose to consent to the emotion or not. In consenting to an emotion, we apprehend it as suitable, and this is a form of intellectual love.⁸⁴ We can also use our wills to distract us from emotions that are not good for us by focusing on something else. Thus, the intellect and will can influence

⁸⁰ William C. Mattison, "Virtuous Anger? From Questions of Vindictio to the Habituation of Emotion," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 24, no. 1 (2004): 172.

⁸¹ Mattison, "Virtuous Anger?" 173.

⁸² Mattison, "Virtuous Anger?" 174.

⁸³ Yearley, "Mencius and Aquinas," 103.

⁸⁴ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 227.

emotions before they arise, as they arise, and after they have arisen by attempting to reform them.⁸⁵ Reflecting on emotions is, therefore, not an exact science, but it is important for moral growth and integrity. Cates cautions, “once we feel a particular passion, it is likely to skew (for better or for worse) our reflections about whether or not the passion itself is appropriate.”⁸⁶ Taking this insight seriously allows us to see how the moral community can serve a critical function at this point. When our own emotions skew our assessment, other people, who are not embroiled in the same emotion, can provide us with a perspective that helps to check our emotion-based assessment against reality. Giving children this kind of feedback can help them learn that their emotional responses to reality are not the only ways of perceiving and interpreting the situations and circumstances in which they find themselves. Doing so teaches them that reflecting on their emotions is necessary for achieving emotional integration.

Our ability to control our emotions means that we can (to some extent) determine what emotions we experience at a given time, as well as which emotions will influence our formation over time. To a degree, we choose the emotions that we consistently experience, and these become part of who we are and how we interact with our surroundings. For this reason, Cates encourages conscious deliberation about “what sorts of things we ought to look for and focus on as significant in situations of moral import. We can choose over time to become persons whose passions are partly composed of realistic beliefs and perceptions that are informed by well-deliberated desires for the humanly good.”⁸⁷ As adults, we can sometimes deliberate about what sorts of things we

⁸⁵ Cates, *Aquinas on the Emotions*, 229.

⁸⁶ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 27.

⁸⁷ Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 27-28.

believe and into what sorts of formative experiences we choose to place ourselves. What does this advice mean with respect to children? Children do not have this level of control over their lives, and their emotional makeup is formed in situations they do not choose, situations that are to a large degree regulated by others. Their emotional development, particularly prior to the onset of the ability to engage in rational deliberation, will likely tend to follow the pattern of the dawning experiences Arpaly posits (see chapter one). For everyone, but especially for children, experience guides what we think and what we believe in ways that are sometimes not yet conscious or chosen. Ideally, by being exposed to good examples and by others' responses to their actions, children learn to see situations in ways that are realistic and that lead them to be people who want to be virtuous.

In summary, according to Aquinas, a truly virtuous person will have integrated reason and emotion so that they are not at odds with one another, and so her emotion is guided by reason. Virtue requires that a person knows what she is doing, that the action is good, and that she chooses to do it. The basis in reason is what makes the emotion and the resulting action something for which the person is responsible. Emotion's relationship to reason also makes a person responsible, to some extent, for how and whether she acquires the virtues. For this reason, discussions of virtue involve the person being accountable for her actions and, at least in part, for her acquisition of the virtues. The virtuous person is able to incorporate her emotions and reason into choosing the right course of action. By these standards, children are often not exercising a Thomistic conception of virtue. They are, however, working and living and learning toward it. And as they move toward virtue, they will engage in actions that are moral, even if not yet

fully virtuous. Although Aquinas denies that children have reason, he would not deny that they have passion since even animals experience passion.⁸⁸ Further, appetite drives us to engage with the world and to come to know our surroundings and determine not only what the objects we encounter are, but also what they mean for us. Because the emotions play a role in the moral life, they are part of what it means to be a moral agent.

In the next section, I argue that children should be understood to be moral agents because their actions have moral import, and because their emotions are engaged in and being formed by the actions they perform. Their emotions and actions respond to the good as they perceive it in their stage of life, but their worldview is not yet shaped by reason to the degree that it will be when they are older, and so their actions are not yet something for which they are or should be held to an adult level of accountability.

Children's Moral Agency

My argument for considering children to be moral agents is based on their emotions, through which they engage and respond to the people, objects, and situations they experience. Aquinas's distinction between emotion and cognition provides a system within which to think about the human experience of emotion that maintains its relationship to cognition. As we have seen, emotion attunes people's awareness to the morality of different situations and motivates their behavior. This is true of children as well as adults. At the same time, children are largely dependent on others, which raises the question of how their agency functions within this dependency. In the first part of this

⁸⁸ Animals experience passion because they have sensitive appetites (ST I.78.1, ST I-II.22.3). Because animals lack intellectual powers, they do not have the kind of emotion that is influenced by reason.

section, I make the case that desire for goods is a moral motivator, and that the goods infants and children desire are in fact sometimes moral goods. In the final part of this section, I attempt to articulate the ways moral communities, action, and interaction foster and constitute moral agency in a child.

Desire and Dependency

The goods that people desire often serve as reasons and motivations for their actions. This is the argument advanced by Nomy Arpaly and Timothy Schroeder in their book of moral psychology, *In Praise of Desire*.⁸⁹ In some ways, their theory concurs with Aquinas's system, notably in that both require thought and emotion for virtue. Arpaly and Schroeder name their theory "Spare Conativism," which is the notion that people act for desires, where desires are understood to be intrinsic desires for the right things based on right concepts.⁹⁰ Arpaly and Schroeder contend that a person has virtue when she has good will,⁹¹ and they understand good will to be "desiring the right or good (via the right concepts)."⁹² What the right or good actually is, Arpaly and Schroeder leave to normative moral ethics to determine, and they do not define the right or the good themselves.⁹³ Rather, they focus on the desires people experience and discuss different types of desiring. There are instrumental desires that are desires for something because of how it benefits me. These, they argue, can become intrinsic desires, which are desires for what

⁸⁹ Nomy Arpaly and Timothy Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 1.

⁹⁰ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 5.

⁹¹ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 202.

⁹² Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 159.

⁹³ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 15.

the object is itself.⁹⁴ An example of this might be a child who desires the praise she receives for being kind to a playmate, but later comes to enjoy the friend's company and to want to be kind because she likes the friend. Arpaly and Schroeder argue that a "reward system" functions within intrinsic desire: "to have an intrinsic desire regarding it being the case that P is to constitute P as a reward or punishment."⁹⁵ Arpaly and Schroeder give an example of children learning to cooperate. When children get positive attention (reward) when everyone is cooperative, they come to constitute cooperation itself as reward.⁹⁶

Arpaly's and Schroeder's theory of desire and action is somewhat compatible with Aquinas's theory of emotion. Arpaly and Schroeder make the case that people desire that which they consider to be a reward, and this corresponds to the middle portion of the appetitive movement described by Aquinas—from love to desire to joy in possession (or from hate to aversion to sorrow). In both theories, desiring the object is based on an apprehension of the object as good, or as something that will benefit the person, or as something that will be pleasant.

Another striking point of connection between Aquinas and Arpaly's and Schroeder's theory is the central role of the intellectual powers in motivation. Arpaly and Schroeder contend that people are motivated by intrinsic desires, which they define as being based on the right concepts, and right concepts are formed by the intellect. That is, Arpaly and Schroeder are not arguing that human moral behavior should be motivated by whims and base-level passions. Rather, the desires should be for objects that are good. A

⁹⁴ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 101-102.

⁹⁵ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 127.

⁹⁶ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 133.

person's reason plays a role in determining what is good, and it helps to shape desires and so actions. However, this reason need not be either conscious or deliberate.⁹⁷ Recall Arpaly's consideration of Huck Finn that I discussed in chapter one. Huck's desires to protect Jim from the slave catchers motivated his action not to disclose Jim's location. At the same time, his desires were not based on conscious deliberation. Rather, they were the result of a "dawning" experience that emerged from the time he had spent with Jim and his as-yet unarticulated understanding of Jim as a human being who deserved freedom. This example further corroborates the view of the role of emotion in moral agency. Huck's moral action when faced with the decision of whether to turn Jim into the slave catchers stemmed from his emotions that had been shaped by his experience, but his reason was also involved even though it was not conscious. Just as Aquinas's account demonstrates that people come to learn universal concepts ("chair") from experiences with concrete instances (seeing many chairs) through their intellectual apprehension abstracting the concept from the concrete (ST I.79.3), it is possible that the same process can occur in a person who has repeated experiences of another person. As Huck came to know Jim, Huck's intellectual apprehension abstracted characteristics of Jim and correlated them with concepts of human beings that were already present in Huck's intellect. It is possible that Huck's intellect knew that Jim fit the concept of human being equal to other humans, although his consciousness retained the category of "slave" for Jim. It seems plausible, then, that Huck's reason was involved, although not in a conscious or deliberate way. And this unconscious "dawning" experience shaped his desires and emotions such that he was motivated to act as he did.

⁹⁷ Arpaly and Schroeder, *In Praise of Desire*, 21.

Jean Porter offers a description of the way a virtuous person's thoughts and desires are integrated in Aquinas's theory that corresponds to what Arpaly and Schroeder propose. Porter maintains that the person who is virtuous not only has a desire to perform good actions, but she also has a desire for the good itself, "both in general terms, and in terms of her admiration and desire for the fitting, the noble, the decent, the praiseworthy, as these ideals have been inculcated in her by her upbringing. These desires, in turn, set the orientation of the whole person, her mind as well as her passions and her will."⁹⁸ Desires for the good allow the virtuous person to see the good,⁹⁹ to notice moral situations, and they influence how she reasons about the good and the moral,¹⁰⁰ and how she chooses to engage in moral actions.

Desire is a powerful motivator, and the objects of desires are goods that we can evaluate ethically. In his book, *Dependent Rational Animals*, Alasdair MacIntyre makes a case (partly building on Thomas Aquinas) for virtue within human dependency, which applies not only to children, but to people at all stages of life who find themselves vulnerable and dependent on others.¹⁰¹ His argument can be extended to considerations of what it means to be a moral agent who desires the good within a community of mutually

⁹⁸ Porter, *Moral Action*, 153-154.

⁹⁹ Rhonheimer reads Aquinas as saying that "What is decisive is not that one always acts *on the basis of* a judgment of reason, but that one acts according to the order of reason" (Rhonheimer, *The Perspective of Morality*, 174, emphasis in original).

¹⁰⁰ Porter, *Moral Action*, 154.

¹⁰¹ MacIntyre mentions that moral philosophy does not generally address human vulnerability and the resulting dependence on other people. In the history of philosophy, "when the ill, the injured and the otherwise disabled *are* presented in the pages of moral philosophy books, it is almost always exclusively as possible subjects of benevolence by moral agents who are themselves presented as though they were continuously rational, healthy and untroubled. So we are invited, when we do think of disability, to think of 'the disabled' as 'them,' as other than 'us,' as a separate class, not as ourselves as we have been, sometimes are now and may well be in the future" (MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 2).

dependent human beings. Specifically, I find his thoughts useful for advancing the notion of children as moral agents based on their desire for and seeking of the good within the social relationships in which they find themselves.

MacIntyre's argument contains three main points that relate to our consideration of children's moral agency. First, he makes a case for the importance of acknowledging and addressing the physical nature of what it means to be human.¹⁰² In the text, he treats in some detail the characteristics humans and intelligent non-human animals share, in large part because of our common physicality.¹⁰³ Second, that humans are bodily beings means that we are vulnerable to ailments and afflictions, and MacIntyre argues that it is morally important to acknowledge this vulnerability and dependence on others and to develop "virtues of acknowledged dependence" (8). Virtues of acknowledged dependence are those qualities that foster our participation in relationships of giving and receiving with other (also dependent) people (120), such that we share in those "goods that can only be mine insofar as they are also those of others, that are genuinely common goods" (119). Finally, we must also work to overcome our reliance on others for determining what is good such that we become independent practical reasoners (105). Both sets of virtues are attained within the context of social relationships. Indeed, without the relationships, we will not acquire the virtues either of dependence or of independence (9). Thus, human beings—including children—are interdependent and interrelational, and we develop our virtues within the context of and through our relationships.

MacIntyre distinguishes four categories of "good" that contribute to human flourishing and development. The first goods are "the pleasures attained in the

¹⁰² MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 8.

¹⁰³ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, especially 11-61 (chapters 2-6).

satisfaction of...felt wants” (68); second are goods that serve as a means to other ends; third are goods that are worth pursuing for their own sake within a given social role (for example the skills of fishing for members of a fishing crew) (66); and finally are those goods that are universally beneficial to humans as human beings for their flourishing (67). We all begin as infants with desires for those things we need to survive, for comfort, and for things that will allow us to flourish and develop our potential. Our desires at this stage center around our bodily needs, “for milk and the breast, for warmth and security, for freedom from this or that discomfort or pain, for sleep” (68). Although we continue to experience desires related to physical wants throughout our lives, MacIntyre argues that children learn that there are goods beyond their immediate needs, and that there are different sorts of goods than bodily wants (68). Children learn that sometimes another course of action rather than the one that immediately satisfies our desire is best or good in a given set of circumstances (69). At this stage they still depend on adults to tell them what is good. Being able to evaluate which good is best to pursue in a given instance involves learning to separate ourselves from our desires so that we can determine whether what we want right now is really the best course of action, or even a good one (70).¹⁰⁴ Then, eventually, human beings learn to move beyond what the authoritative voices from our childhood say is good for us, to ourselves determining what that good is (71).

This progression that MacIntyre outlines is similar to that presented by Porter above.¹⁰⁵ The person moves from being told what to do and why, to being an independent practical reasoner who herself determines the good and the course of action that will best

¹⁰⁴ This is the developmental achievement of separating thinking and feeling that Hobson highlights, as discussed in chapter two (Hobson, “Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism,” 447).

¹⁰⁵ Porter, *Moral Action*, 177.

achieve that good. All of this, on MacIntyre's read, occurs in the context of relationships, without which we could not become independent practical reasoners (82). A person gains the skills, knowledge, and tools for independent reasoning from the relationships of dependence she experiences in her childhood (84).¹⁰⁶ Further, no one can continue functioning as an independent practical reasoner without the support of community. This kind of independence is something we depend on others to help us maintain (96).

Once a person learns to reason independently, she must still bring her desires into agreement with her judgments. The goal is to desire something because it is good and not only because it satisfies her wants (87).¹⁰⁷ MacIntyre argues that the virtues are crucial to this development: "What are the qualities that a child must develop, first to redirect and transform her or his desires, and subsequently to direct them consistently towards the goods of the different stages of her or his life? They are the intellectual and moral virtues" (87). The ability to detach ourselves from our desires and assess them in terms of the good is "in key part an extended initiation into those habits that are the virtues" (88). A person has acquired a given virtue when she desires that which she also evaluates as good.

¹⁰⁶ Mary Doyle Roche argues that children's vulnerability and interdependence shows that virtue is acquired through relationships (Mary M. Doyle Roche, "Children, Virtue Ethics, and Consumer Culture," in *Virtue and the Moral Life: Theological and Philosophical Perspectives*, ed. William Werpehowski and Kathryn Getek Soltis [Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014], 77). She extends relationality into the fundamental questions of virtue ethics, which ask: "who am I" (both in terms of weakness and *imago dei*); "who do I want to become"; and "how *and with whom* will I get there" (83)?

¹⁰⁷ Recall that Ramsay makes a similar claim that we must learn that the objects of our emotions are goods and not just means for fulfilling our desires, and then we will find "genuine emotional satisfaction" in them (Ramsay, *Beyond Virtue*, 130).

MacIntyre's argument follows Aquinas's system of thought with respect to separating evaluative and appetitive functions.¹⁰⁸ MacIntyre also offers a clear explication of why it is important to think about virtues in terms of what he calls desire for good. As is true in Aquinas's analysis, virtue for MacIntyre involves bringing the desires into agreement with the person's best understanding of the good. Both systems also contain a broad-spectrum vision of good that encompasses physical goods (food) and more abstract goods (love). Aquinas's system focuses on whether the emotion is rightly directed toward good and away from evil. His understanding of emotional involvement in the virtues extends beyond desire to include emotions that are not desires, such as love and joy, which acknowledge and take pleasure in the goodness that is present. However, as we saw in Arpaly's and Schroeder's argument above, it is plausible that desire is the driving force behind a lot of action. Thus, even emotions—such as love—that are not desires can motivate desires.¹⁰⁹ For example, if I love someone, that love will likely lead to desires to do things that are beneficial for that person. MacIntyre shifts the emphasis away from the desire to the good itself, and he argues that our evaluations must center on the good that is desired and whether it is best in a given instance, not on the desire *per se*.¹¹⁰ While desire may motivate action and serve as a resource for claiming that children have moral agency, it is important to cultivate in children desires for what is truly good or best in a given instance if they are to grow in virtue. Simply desiring that which appeals at a particular moment might be a way that very young children and infants seek the

¹⁰⁸ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, xi.

¹⁰⁹ Recall that Miner explains that passions cause other passions in a fairly predictable manner (Miner, *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions*, 82-87).

¹¹⁰ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 70.

good, but they must learn to assess the goods they are desiring and bring their desires into accord with their best perceptions of the good.

MacIntyre's position demonstrates that mutual dependence is a thread that interrelates human beings in community with one another. But who are the agents within this community? Are the independent practical reasoners the primary agents who act on behalf of those who are dependent on them within the network of interdependence? It makes sense that those people who have achieved the ability to engage in independent practical reasoning have a greater responsibility than those who are more dependent, but it is possible that those who are dependent are also agents. MacIntyre's assessment that infants and young children are motivated by the desire to satisfy physical wants¹¹¹ helps advance the case that children are acting in moral ways, although they may not yet be able to judge the best good in a given instance. Because of this, it is plausible to claim that children are acting on their desire for the good as they perceive it (including sensitive appetitive desires based on sensible objects), and as a result, their actions are moral and stem from their own agency. Children—as well as those who are temporarily or permanently disabled—are agents to the extent that they are able to engage in actions that are of moral import and that are somewhat formative of them, and these are chiefly motivated by the desire for good, as they understand it at their stage of life.

Children's desires for the good are part of their passional and emotional makeup. Just as Aquinas does not believe that passions must be overcome, neither does MacIntyre. MacIntyre thinks emotions must be shaped so that they are not self-centered and focused

¹¹¹ MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 68.

only on the present, but this takes time and is what it means to become virtuous.¹¹² Emotions and desires at all levels of maturity can serve as moral motivators. It is arguable that children are already acting as moral agents in the world through their desires for the good. If children did not act on their physical needs and wants, those wants and needs might go unfulfilled, and the children might not develop as they should. This is particularly true of wants such as hunger and the desire to be held. Children who lack adequate nutrition and affection can succumb to failure to thrive,¹¹³ and some of them do not survive. These goods are real and are necessary to their life and well-being, and without them, children will not be able to develop their potential.¹¹⁴ Children are not machines that need to be recharged occasionally, but fully human beings who call on other human beings to interact with them in meeting their needs. Through these interactions, a child learns about how human relationships function, and she makes a moral call to those around her to meet her needs.¹¹⁵ For this reason it is arguable that a child's desires for her physical needs to be met are in fact desires for goods that are unqualifiedly necessary at that stage of her development, and that her expression of those desires is an exercise of her moral agency.

In the next section, I strive to highlight the ways in which experience and community function to shape children's emotions, and so their agency. The interactions

¹¹² MacIntyre, *Dependent Rational Animals*, 88.

¹¹³ "Failure to Thrive," Johns Hopkins Children's Center, accessed September 11, 2014, <http://www.hopkinschildrens.org/Failure-to-Thrive.aspx>.

¹¹⁴ This is reminiscent of Jensen's discussion of the sin of rejection that I mentioned in chapter one. See Jensen, *Graced Vulnerability*, 93.

¹¹⁵ Carol Gilligan discusses the ethic of responsibility and care at length and argues that it is an essential part of moral maturity. See Carol Gilligan, *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 164-165.

between the child and her community are mutually formative, and the child's emotions will contribute to her interpretation of what she is being taught morally. In addition, the mutual, gradually-building influence of appetite and apprehension on one another means that the child's experiences will accrue to help form her perceptions of and evaluations of the goods that she encounters. At the end of the section, I draw on a fictional narrative about a child developing compassion to illustrate the ways emotions and experiences compound in moral formation.

Interaction, Action, and Moral Agency

As I discussed in chapter one, the interactive theory in sociology maintains that human beings, as part of a community, both influence and are influenced by the other members of the community, and in contributing to the community, an individual is an agent. The formation occurs in both directions simultaneously. If we think about children in a moral community in terms of interaction, it seems evident that the community forms the children, but we also see that children elicit moral responses from others. Their needs make a claim on the caregivers in their midst to respond to and fulfill those physical needs. I would argue that the caregiver's response is moral because it contributes to the survival and flourishing of the infant or child and is also reflective and formative of the kind of person the caregiver is. The interactive theory, taken in conjunction with the importance of experience in moral formation, leads to the possibility that the responses of caregivers to children's needs and wants will result in "dawning" experiences for the children regarding their own value as well as how other people should be treated.

Recall that children are not considered moral agents or capable of acquired virtue by Thomistic standards because they have undeveloped rational powers. Ironically, this is also where I think that Aquinas's theory can provide resources for claiming that children are already engaged in moral activity as agents. The appetitive and apprehensive powers are mutually influential, as we have seen. Because of this, it is plausible to claim that some of the actions children engage in qualify as moral actions, and that children should be considered moral agents even with inchoate rational powers.

The cumulative effect of apprehension on appetite, and of appetite on the person's perception of the objects she apprehends, arguably begins long before the human being has developed the ability to reason consciously. Acting for reasons and being able to reason are not synonymous. People act for reasons, even for moral reasons, without conscious knowledge or deliberation as to why they are doing so. The desire for physical goods is one example of this; children act on their desires for food (a vital good) without reasoning about it. Further, Arpaly's work that I discussed in chapter one points to this distinction between conscious reasoning and acting for reasons that have become part of one's thinking as a result of "dawning" experiences. A dawning experience can change the way a person responds to situations, although the person might not yet be aware of what caused the change. The experiences also change the person's emotions such that she notices moral situations differently and responds to them in ways that correspond to her new experience and her emotions surrounding it.

In teaching children morality, it is important to guide them such that their emotions come to cooperate with and foster their good behavior. It is possible that the responses of the community surrounding them can incline children toward good actions.

It is also possible that children can be guided in a way that is akin to the despotic rule of reason over emotions that Aquinas cautions against. For instance, a parent can rule a child by force, coercing her to do what the parent thinks she should, and sometimes, this is necessary (this is particularly evident in cases involving safety).¹¹⁶ But if this is the way that the child is always treated, her agency will be undermined, and she will not learn to bring her own desires into line with the moral codes and norms of her community and to notice, discern, and act in accord with the good in moral situations.

A child needs a functioning moral community if she is to learn to negotiate relationships with other people and to understand and follow the moral codes of that community. Instances where the moral codes are lacking or where they are regularly broken present children with difficulties for understanding that these norms exist or should be followed, argues theologian Perry Downs.¹¹⁷ In the context of considering how to reintegrate street children into communities, Downs argues that the presence of adult guidance and nurturing and the experience of having ethical norms modeled for them are necessary components of children's moral development.¹¹⁸ Community can also serve to strengthen a person's resolve and ability to perform a morally right action when that

¹¹⁶ Williams makes the point that in Aquinas's theory, the will cannot be subject to necessity of coercion in a way similar to an external agent forcing it to act. "Instead, he [Aquinas] argues that it is conceptually impossible for the will to be subject to necessity of coercion, because something that is coerced is moved in a way that is entirely against its natural inclination; since the will is itself an inclination, it is impossible for it to will something unless there is in the will some inclination to that very thing" (Thomas Williams, "Human Freedom and Agency," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, ed. Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump [New York: Oxford University Press, 2012], 205-206). In this way, the person's despotic rule of her emotions that include the will and the caregiver's coercion are not exact parallels.

¹¹⁷ Perry G. Downs, "Promoting Moral Growth and Development," in *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, ed. Phyllis Kilbourn (Monrovia, CA: Marc, 1997), 68.

¹¹⁸ Downs, "Promoting Moral Growth," 68.

action is difficult to do. Particularly in situations where people around them are counteracting the moral codes, children can experience difficulty doing what they know and feel to be right. Downs contends, “the strength to act on convictions independently will be very weak in abused and victimized people. Strength to act on what they know is right comes more easily in a group than in individuals.”¹¹⁹ His insight emphasizes the importance of community not only for the inculcation of moral norms and for teaching the child to do what is right, but also for giving the child the support and moral strength to act on those budding convictions.

To illustrate the ways in which experiences, communities, and emotions influence moral growth, I draw on the story surrounding Julie Trelling’s relationship with Aggie Kiplin in Irene Hunt’s Newbery-Award winning young adult novel *Up a Road Slowly*.¹²⁰ The narrative is told in first person as a reminiscence by the main character, Julie. In the story, Julie lives with her strict and morally conscientious Aunt Cordelia, who is also the school teacher at the local one-room country school that Julie attends. Aggie is a mentally delayed child whose family lives in poverty, and whom Julie finds “repulsive” due to Aggie’s unpleasant odor resulting from lack of cleanliness, as well as to Aggie’s tendency to say inappropriate things (24). Julie and the other children do not wish to include Aggie in their lunchtime activities; however, Aunt Cordelia requires that Aggie be included (25). Julie is not yet ready to include Aggie, and Julie contrives a plan whereby Aggie is told she (Aggie) is the queen and that everyone else is her subject. Aggie must sit alone in the center of a circle of children who all have their backs to her. That way, no one has to sit with or look at Aggie (25-26).

¹¹⁹ Downs, “Promoting Moral Growth,” 69.

¹²⁰ Irene Hunt, *Up a Road Slowly* (Chicago, IL: Follett Publishing Company, 1966).

When Julie's twelfth birthday is approaching, Aunt Cordelia agrees that she may have a party to celebrate (50). Julie insists that she will invite all the girls in school with the exception of Aggie, which Aunt Cordelia refuses to accept. Julie is allowed to decide for herself whether she will have a party that includes Aggie, or cancel the celebration (51). She cancels the party (52). Her aunt bakes and brings cakes to school for all the students on Julie's birthday, but Julie the narrator remembers, "compassion was not yet aroused within me" (53), and when Aggie insists that she will sit with Julie to eat the cake, Julie tells her, "Don't you dare follow me, Aggie; don't you dare come near me" (54).

A few months later, towards the end of a very hot summer, the community learns that Aggie has fallen ill with a fever. She had cut her foot and received no medical treatment or sanitation for it, and the infection made her very ill (54). On a particularly hot day, Julie's school friend Carlotta invites her to go for a buggy ride (56). Aunt Cordelia permits Julie to go but requests that she stop at the Kiplins' house to visit Aggie and to bring some flowers Cordelia has cut from the garden (57). When Julie and Carlotta reluctantly reach the Kiplin residence, Carlotta refuses to go inside, so Julie enters alone (59). She is appalled by the deplorable condition of Aggie's home and by the lack of care Aggie has received. She sees that Aggie is delirious with fever (59), and Julie finds herself experiencing a new set of emotions regarding Aggie. She feels awe and uncertainty in the face of Aggie's serious illness, and she longs to return Aggie to her healthy, if repulsive, self (60). Because Aggie is not conscious, Julie apologizes to Mrs. Kiplin for her unkindness toward Aggie over the years, but Mrs. Kiplin looks at her with hatred and does not accept the apology (60).

When Julie leaves the Kiplin house and returns to Carlotta and the waiting buggy, Carlotta is ready to continue their pleasant ride, but Julie's experience leaves her wanting to go home (61). Carlotta refuses to take her home, so Julie leaves the buggy and starts walking the two miles back to Aunt Cordelia's house. A friend sees her and gives her a ride on the handlebars of his bicycle when she explains what happened. Aunt Cordelia seems to understand that Julie was moved by the experience, although she does not say so. The next morning they hear the news that Aggie has died (62).

Two themes stand out in this vignette that have relevance for the current project. The first is the prominence of emotion as a motivator for the children in the story. Julie's emotions are pronounced throughout this selection, and because the novel is written from her perspective, we are made privy to Julie's emotions. It is interesting to speculate on the emotions of some of the other characters, but Julie's are the only ones that are articulated, and that from the perspective of an adult remembering her childhood. Nevertheless, the emotional shift Julie experiences in her dealings with Aggie is also a moral journey. The second theme is the impact the relationships of community have on the children's emotions and behavior.

Three moments in this story particularly illustrate the distinctive experience of children acting as moral agents and of the influence their emotions and other people can have on them. The first is Julie's initial response of revulsion to Aggie. Aggie's lack of hygiene results in an unpleasant smell.¹²¹ To use Aquinas's language, Julie's sensitive

¹²¹ Aggie suffers from both material poverty and from the poverty of tenuous connections that Couture distinguishes in chapter one (*Couture, Seeing Children, 25-35*). Much could be said about the moral import of the conditions in which a child like Aggie grows up, but for the purposes of considering moral agency and moral growth, I would like to focus on the character of Julie.

apprehension detects the odor, and her sensitive appetite is moved toward being repelled by the odor, and so by Aggie. I do not mean to suggest that olfactory experience is the exclusive reason for the children's consistent rejection,¹²² but it does play a role in how Julie and the other children feel about Aggie. Their emotions are shaped in part by their sensitive apprehensions of the child. In some ways, the object of their emotions—Aggie—is reduced to their sensitive apprehension of her, which moves their sensitive appetites. However, the sensitive parts of their souls are not operating in isolation from their intellects, and the children have in their intellects an idea of what a child should be based on their experiences of children who are well cared for. Aggie does not fit their abstraction of what an acceptable child is, and this also helps to shape their emotional response. Julie's actions at this point in the story are shaped by emotional impulses that have not yet been integrated with and informed by reason. She justifies her rejection of Aggie to herself, although it means that she loses her birthday party. Hearing that Aggie is ill does not seem to alter Julie's feelings toward Aggie. Julie does not wish Aggie evil, but Julie does not yet have the emotional maturity that would allow her to want to do anything kind for Aggie.

The second moment that is fruitful to consider is Aunt Cordelia's insistence that Julie bring flowers to Aggie. This is an adult's attempt to alter a child's emotional response through experience. Aunt Cordelia knows that talking with Julie and trying to reason with Julie about the plight of a child like Aggie will prove useless; Julie has been unresponsive to Cordelia's attempts to explain Aggie's situation to Julie (51) and to her

¹²² Other factors contribute to the rejection, including the children determining who warrants membership in their group and Aggie's vulnerability evidenced by her openness to and obvious desire to befriend Julie.

insistence that Julie include Aggie. Julie needs to see and experience for herself why Aggie is the way she is. In the story, Aunt Cordelia is able to treat Aggie with patience and compassion. Cordelia demonstrates what appears to be virtue because her emotions are moved by Aggie's predicament, even as she sees and smells the same things that repulse Julie.

Aunt Cordelia is an authoritative voice in the story, and Julie does not resist her instruction to Julie to bring the flowers to Aggie. However, Carlotta does not feel compelled to follow the suggestion. In a way, Aunt Cordelia functions as reason in the story, and Julie represents the emotion that is amenable to reason's command. Carlotta's response can be seen as the "something of their own" of the passions that makes them able to resist reason's command. The emotional conditions of Julie and Carlotta following Julie's visit to the Kiplins' home reflect and result from their willingness to cooperate with the instructions that would lead them away from cruelty and rejection of another human being and incline them toward compassion. Julie encounters Aggie's sickness and poverty and experiences hatred from Aggie's mother. Following these experiences, her emotional state is so altered that she cannot continue to enjoy a buggy ride in the country. Carlotta refuses to visit Aggie, and so she is unmoved and remains in the same emotional state that both she and Julie were in prior to stopping at the Kiplins'.

Lest we think that Julie's transformation is immediate, the third salient moment in the story involves an exchange with her Uncle Haskell that points to the gradual alteration that entrenched but misguided emotions undergo on their path to aiding virtue. Following Aggie's funeral, Julie is feeling guilty about how she treated Aggie and seeks out her uncle. Julie knows that he is right when he tells her, "You know very well that if

this Kiplin girl could approach you again, as moronic and distasteful as she was a month ago, that you'd feel the same revulsion for her. You couldn't help it'" (65). Although her understanding and judgment of the situation and of Aggie have changed, her emotional response has not yet caught up. Aquinas's distinction between emotion and cognition is useful in explaining this phenomenon. Julie needs to continue growing in virtue before she will reach the maturity that allows her to express compassion even in the face of distasteful, unpleasant people, and in the midst of the pressure from the group of children to reject Aggie. Uncle Haskell knows this, and the following day, he tells Julie, "'Guilt feelings will do nothing for either you or the Kiplin child. But your compassion as you grow into womanhood may well become immortality for the girl you call 'Aggie'" (67). Julie's experience, her emotions of guilt, and her budding sympathy are the beginnings of the virtue of compassion developing in her.

As Julie experiences these events and feelings, she is a moral agent. Her rejection of Aggie involves a series of moral actions that hurt Aggie. Her decision to obey Aunt Cordelia and enter the Kiplin house is a moral action that changes her, although it brings no comfort to Mrs. Kiplin, and Aggie is unaware of Julie's presence. Julie's decision to end her buggy ride, to allow the emotions of the experience to become part of her rather than pushing them aside, is a moral action, and one in which Carlotta is not willing to participate.

The events in the story are also replete with the interaction that is part of being in a moral community. The children in the school are a small community that makes the decision to reject a child who does not fit in. The buggy ride with Carlotta is an interaction that pressures Julie not to visit Aggie and that does not adapt to accommodate

how she feels after the visit. Mrs. Kiplin's overt rejection of Julie and Aggie's inability to interact both make an impression on Julie and affect her emotions and how she thinks about herself and her past actions. Upon her return home, Aunt Cordelia provides a place of quiet support in which Julie can begin to process the experience (62). Julie's interaction with Uncle Haskell gives her an idea of how she can grow from her experience rather than be consumed by unproductive guilt.¹²³ The people she encounters in this story all have an impact on her emotions, for better or worse, and her response to them involves her moral agency.

Julie's story exemplifies the way in which emotion is involved in the moral life. Her desires for what she perceives to be good motivate her actions. But her willingness to learn that there are goods that might take precedence over the immediate goods on which she has been focused (Aggie's well-being is of greater significance than an enjoyable buggy ride) makes it possible for her to develop emotionally in a way that will foster virtue. Her emotions guide her actions when she is younger, and she has some control over how they continue to exert influence and to be formed by her reason and her evaluations of what is good as she grows.

Children are able to engage in moral actions of which they are the agents, and Aquinas's understanding of emotion and virtue provides tools for reflecting on this. Children's emotions and their desires for what they perceive to be good motivate their actions, even at a basic level such as the desire to satisfy their physical wants. As children mature and their reason develops, their discernment of the best good in a given instance

¹²³ Recall that Ryan maintains the possibility of growing morally by reflecting on the "negative" emotions, which could include guilt (Ryan, "Positive and Negative Emotions," 151).

will also mature. Accordingly, children's responsibility for their judgment of what is good, for the actions they choose, and for the consequences of those actions increases because they are able to reason and understand the moral import of what they choose to do. Aquinas's distinction between appetite and apprehension, which also maintains their mutual and cumulative influence, is a constructive resource for thinking about how children already possess agency even as they develop in virtue. Children will begin to acquire virtue as they learn to discern the good, and as their emotions come to concur with that which they understand to be good, and this growth stems from their early appetitive inclinations and responses.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has operated on the premise of a Christian theological anthropology that holds children to be fully human and in the image of God. Because of their full humanity, children are already in relationship with God and with other people; they encounter and must learn to contend with the good and the evil in the world. As they engage in relationships and navigate situations, and as they express their desires for what they perceive to be the good, they are acting as moral agents. Children's agency occurs within the context of their vulnerability and dependence, and they live their agency by interacting with the people with whom they are in relationships and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Much of their engagement with and understanding of the world occurs through emotions that they experience as a result of their relationships and circumstances. These emotions reflect the values the children have and can serve as moral motivation in their actions and responses to the people and situations they encounter.

Many contemporary theological and philosophical considerations of emotions recognize emotions as central to moral formation in children. This is due to the cognitive dimension of emotion that allows it to be something on which people can reflect and that they control, at least to some extent. However, strictly cognitive theories of emotion define emotion as constituted by propositional thought in a way that excludes children's

having emotions. This exclusion extends to considerations of children as moral agents in ethics more generally, and when children do appear in theological ethical discourse, it is usually as objects of ethical responses by adults. Taking seriously the full humanity and engagement with reality that theological anthropology claims for children suggests that children should be considered ethically in ways that go beyond their being the objects of other people's ethical actions and that places them in the position of being moral agents as well.

Aquinas's theory of emotions provides a system in which to consider children as moral agents whose emotions impact their actions and morality without requiring a level of cognitive development that young children have not yet achieved. He relates intellect and passion in a way that maintains their distinction and at the same time emphasizes their mutual influence. The cumulative effect of reason and passion on one another results in the rich and complex emotions of more mature human beings. However, Aquinas's placement of the passions within the sensitive appetite and the relationship he draws between the sensitive and intellective parts of the soul implies that even some of the passions that infants experience can be considered emotions because they reflect the child's perception of and desire for the good, and because they inform the child's intellect both in the moment during which the child experiences them and over time as resources on which the child will draw in her decision making and interactions.

Through these interactions, emotions function in the child's moral agency as reasons for actions and as moral motivators. Aquinas's insistence that a good action requires an emotional engagement in order to be virtuous supports the idea that emotions are central to moral motivation and action. The emotional experience of desiring the good

drives much of people's action. Even early desires for physical comfort and for care can be forms of emotional motivation, and acting on those desires can be considered engaging with the world as an agent. This is because acting on desires for goods qualifies as acting for reasons, and those reasons do not need to be either conscious or articulated to function as reasons and motivation for moral action. At the same time, because emotion plays a central role in the moral life, it will be important for further research to investigate the implications for moral agency and accountability that follow when a person's emotions do not develop in a way that we would recognize as normal.

Whether the reasons for one's actions are conscious and articulated or not, helping children develop good reasons for actions and good moral awareness is vital to their moral formation. Because human beings have rational potential, children must be taught to think about and reflect on their emotions and the actions that stem from those emotions. They should also be taught how to discern the best good from among competing goods, as well as the best course of action in a given situation. Because human beings are relational and interdependent, children must learn to understand the consequences of their actions both for themselves and for others, and to seek the best good for all concerned. Further, as we think about children and the role emotions play in their motivation to act and in their moral formation, it is important to remember that their needs and wants must be addressed in ways that guide them toward wanting that which is good. Adults can help to foster this kind of emotional resonance with the good by attending to the needs of children through nurture and care for their needs, and through cultivating a sense of empathy for others. Learning to distinguish between what the child really does need and what she wants might constitute part of this education. So too can

learning that others have legitimate needs and wants that must be taken into account when fulfilling one's own needs and wants. Still, the child is her own person, and as influential as education, examples, and experiences may be, the child herself plays a part in deciding whether and how to incorporate and act on the lessons she has been taught.

The hope is that children will take to heart the morally good lessons and examples to which they are exposed. However, if they do not, that does not preclude them from agency. Making bad choices and acting for selfish reasons does not mean that a person is not being an agent. Adults also perform morally bad actions. The difference between a child's bad action and an adult's is that the adult is morally and legally culpable for what she does, while the child is not held accountable in the same ways. It seems appropriate when dealing with children to give less attention to punishing and more attention to teaching and redirecting the child's thinking and emotions in order to encourage moral emotions (and thinking) that motivate morally good actions. When a person has reached a level of cognitive maturity, has been exposed to the moral codes of her community, and has experienced situations of moral import, she is likely to be expected to know what is good and to act accordingly. Teaching children and helping them to develop good emotional and moral habits will aid them in reaching the maturity to be accountable.

Because children are still learning and being shaped and guided by their experiences, how they respond to the circumstances and relationships they encounter will form who they are in those moments and who they become as they grow into adulthood. But they usually do not control their own circumstances, and this dependence and vulnerability that is the context for their moral formation has implications for thinking about adults such as Mrs. Kiplin in the narrative I recounted in chapter four. Mrs. Kiplin

is presented as a mean, unforgiving woman who does not take good care of her child. But if we take seriously the formative influences of childhood, we must look at such a person with an eye to what her life has been up to that point. How was she raised? Under what circumstances did her character form? This is not meant to excuse or exonerate her from her neglect of Aggie. Aggie experiences the sin of rejection, some of it from her own mother, and Aggie dies in filth and discomfort as a result. But our view of Mrs. Kiplin might be nuanced if we knew the story of her own childhood. If it is true that each person's childhood perdures in her life, then this includes the childhoods replete with neglect, abuse, and violence. These children might grow into adults who have been deprived of the formative experiences that would have guided them towards virtue and a moral life. More research needs to be done to investigate how to respond ethically to adults whose childhoods lacked the positive formation of a good moral community, and whose actions as adults are contrary to the good.

It is important to remember that children are not a static demographic. Each person spends only a limited amount of time in childhood and then takes on the responsibility of being an adult. Each adult was once a child, and the experiences of the early years—both the good and the bad—remain with the person throughout her life. Children are already fully part of the human family, and adults all retain aspects of their lives as children. When thinking about children in moral theological terms, then, we must remember that they are already experiencing the world around them in terms of emotions, and that these emotions impact their actions and responses. The person each child is today—appetitive, intellectual, interrelational, vulnerable, dependent, developing, and so

on—influences the world around her and is part of who she (and that world) will be in the future, a future in which Christians dare to hope.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Robert Merrihew. *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.
- Anderson, Herbert and Susan B. W. Johnson. *Regarding Children: A New Respect for Childhood and Families*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994.
- Anderson, Karen L. *Thinking About Sociology: A Critical Introduction*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Anderson, Sheryl. "Maturity, Delinquency and Rebellion." In *Children of God: Towards a Theology of Childhood*, edited by Angela Shier-Jones, 111-132. Peterborough, Great Britain: Epworth, 2007.
- Aquinas, Thomas. *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians*. Translated by Matthew L. Lamb. Aquinas Scripture Series, Vol. 2. Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1966.
- . *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*. Translated by F.R. Larcher. Aquinas Scripture Series, Vol. 1. Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1966.
- . *Commentary on Saint Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians and the Letter to the Philippians*. Translated by F.R. Larcher and Michael Duffy. Aquinas Scripture Series, Vol. 3. Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1969.
- . *Commentary on the Gospel of St. John*. Translated by James A. Weisheipl and Fabian R. Larcher. Aquinas Scripture Series, Vol. 4. Albany, NY: Magi Books, Inc., 1980.
- . *The Disputed Questions on Truth*. Translated by Robert W. Mulligan. Vol. 1. Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1952.
- . *The Disputed Questions on Truth*. Translated by Robert W. Schmidt. Vol. 3. Chicago, IL: Henry Regnery Company, 1954.
- . *On Evil*. Translated by Richard Regan. Edited by Brian Davies. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- . *Summa Contra Gentiles: Book Three: Providence*. Part II. Translated by Vernon J. Bourke. Garden City, NY: Hanover House, 1956.

- . *Summa Theologica*. Translated by Fathers of the English Dominican Province. London: Burns, Oates, & Washburne, Ltd., 1920. Online edition 2008 by Kevin Knight. Accessed October 27, 2014. <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/>.
- Arpaly, Nomy. *Unprincipled Virtue: An Inquiry into Moral Agency*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- Arpaly, Nomy and Timothy Schroeder. *In Praise of Desire*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2014.
- Barad, Judith. "Aquinas on the Role of Emotion in Moral Judgment and Activity." *The Thomist* 55 (1991): 397-413.
- Barnes, Cory Ladd. "Thomas Aquinas on the Body and Bodily Passions." In *The Embrace of Eros: Bodies, Desires, and Sexuality in Christianity*, edited by Margaret D. Kamitsuka, 83-97. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010.
- Bauerschmidt, Frederick C. "Thomas Aquinas: The Unity of the Virtues and the Journeying Self." In *Unsettling Arguments: A Festschrift on the Occasion of Stanley Hauerwas's 70th Birthday*, edited by Charles Pinches, Kelly S. Johnson, and Charles M. Collier, 25-41. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2010.
- Bennett, Jonathan. "The Conscience of Huckleberry Finn." *Philosophy* 49 (1974): 123-134.
- Berryman, Jerome W. *Children and the Theologians: Clearing the Way for Grace*. New York: Morehouse Publishing, 2009.
- Beste, Jennifer. "Children Speak: Catholic Second Graders' Agency and Experiences in the Sacrament of Reconciliation." *Sociology of Religion* 72, no. 3 (2011): 327-350.
- Bunge, Marcia J. "Beyond Children as Agents or Victims: Reexamining Children's Paradoxical Strengths and Vulnerabilities with Resources from Christian Theologies of Childhood and Child Theologies." In *The Given Child: The Religions' Contribution to Children's Citizenship*, edited by Trygve Wyller and Usha S. Nayar, 27-50. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007.
- . "The Child, Religion, and the Academy: Developing Robust Theological and Religious Understandings of Children and Childhood." *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (2006): 549-579.
- Cates, Diana Fritz. *Aquinas on the Emotions: A Religious-Ethical Inquiry*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2009.
- . *Choosing to Feel: Virtue, Friendship, and Compassion for Friends*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.

- . “Conceiving Emotions: Martha Nussbaum’s *Upheavals of Thought*.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 31, no. 2 (2003): 325-341.
- Cavell, Marcia. “Valuing Emotions.” In *Becoming a Subject: Reflections in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*, 125-137. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- Cloutier, David. “How Does the Wind Blow and the Fire Burn? The Holy Spirit and Moral Agency.” *The Josephinum Journal of Theology* 12, no. 1 (2005): 87-109.
- Coles, Robert. *The Moral Intelligence of Children*. New York: Random House, 1997.
- . *The Moral Life of Children*. Boston, MA: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986.
- Couture, Pamela D. *Seeing Children, Seeing God: A Practical Theology of Children and Poverty*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000.
- Damm, Lisa. “Emotions and Moral Agency.” *Philosophical Explorations* 13, no. 3 (2010): 275-292.
- Davies, Brian. *The Thought of Thomas Aquinas*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1992.
- Deigh, John. “Concepts of Emotions in Modern Philosophy and Psychology.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, edited by Peter Goldie, 17-40. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- DeSousa, Ronald. *Emotional Truth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- . “Self-Deceptive Emotions.” In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 283-297. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980.
- DeVries, Dawn. “Toward a Theology of Childhood.” *Interpretation* 55, no. 2 (2001): 161-173.
- DeYoung, Rebecca Konyndyk. “Aquinas’s Virtues of Acknowledged Dependence: A New Measure of Greatness.” *Faith and Philosophy* 21, no. 2 (2004): 214-227.
- Dixon, Thomas. *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003.
- . “Revolting Passions.” *Modern Theology* 27, no. 2 (2011): 298-312.
- Döring, Sabine A. “Why Be Emotional?” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, edited by Peter Goldie, 283-301. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.

- Downs, Perry G. "Promoting Moral Growth and Development." In *Street Children: A Guide to Effective Ministry*, edited by Phyllis Kilbourn, 66-79. Monrovia, CA: Marc, 1997.
- Everist, Norma Cook. "Who is the Child? Whose is the Child? A Theology of Children." In *The Ministry of Children's Education: Foundations, Contexts, and Practices*, edited by Barbara S. Wilson, Mark Gardner and James Satter, 63-99. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004.
- "Failure to Thrive." Johns Hopkins Children's Center. Accessed September 11, 2014. <http://www.hopkinschildrens.org/Failure-to-Thrive.aspx>.
- Ferry, Leonard. "Passionalist or Rationalist? The Emotions in Aquinas' Moral Theology." *New Blackfriars* 93 (May 2012): 292-308.
- . "Troubling Business: The Emotions in Aquinas' Philosophical Psychology." In *Bringing the Passions Back In: The Emotions in Political Philosophy*, edited by Rebecca Kingston, 78-107. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2008.
- Fivush, Robyn. "Parent-Child Reminiscing: Creating Best Love through Sharing Stories." In *The Best Love of the Child: Being Loved and Being Taught to Love as the First Human Right*, edited by Timothy P. Jackson. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.
- Floyd, Shawn D. "Aquinas on Emotion: A Response to Some Recent Interpretations." *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1998): 161-175.
- Frankel, Sam. *Children, Morality and Society*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012.
- Gereboff, Joel, Keith Green, Diana Fritz Cates, and Maria Heim. "The Nature of the Beast: Hatred in Cross-Traditional Religious and Philosophical Perspective." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 29, no. 2 (2009): 175-205.
- Gilligan, Carol. *In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- Goldie, Peter. *The Emotions: A Philosophical Exploration*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000.
- . "Intellectual Emotions and Religious Emotions." In *Faith, Rationality and the Passions*, edited by Sarah Coakley, 241-249. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd., 2012.
- Greenspan, Patricia S. "A Case of Mixed Feelings: Ambivalence and the Logic of Emotion." In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 223-250. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980.

- . *Emotions and Reasons: An Inquiry into Emotional Justification*. New York: Routledge, 1988.
- . “Learning Emotions and Ethics.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, edited by Peter Goldie, 539-559. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Gudorf, Christine E. “Gendered Identity Formation and Moral Theology.” In *Applied Ethics in a World Church: The Padua Conference*, edited by Linda Hogan, 109-116. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2008.
- . “Rights of Children.” In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, edited by Judith A. Dwyer, 143-148. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994.
- Guider, Margaret Eletta. “Living in the Shadow of the Manger: Mission, Ecumenism, and the State of the World’s Children.” Center for Christian Ethics at Baylor University (2003): 20-28. Accessed December 11, 2013, <http://www.baylor.edu/christianethics/ChildrenarticleGuider.pdf>.
- Haakonssen, Knud. “Natural Law and Moral Realism: The Civic Humanist Synthesis in Francis Hutcheson and George Turnbull.” In *Natural Law and Moral Philosophy: From Grotius to the Scottish Enlightenment*, 63-99. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- Harak, G. S. “Child Abuse and Embodiment from a Thomistic Perspective.” *Modern Theology* 11, no. 3 (1995): 315-340.
- . *Virtuous Passions: The Formation of Christian Character*. New York: Paulist Press, 1993.
- Helm, Bennett W. “Emotions and Motivation: Reconsidering Neo-Jamesian Accounts.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, edited by Peter Goldie, 303-323. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- . “The Significance of Emotions.” *American Philosophical Quarterly* 31, no.4 (1994): 319-331.
- Herd, Jennifer A. *Putting on Virtue: The Legacy of the Splendid Vices*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- Herzog, Kristin. *Children and Our Global Future: Theological and Social Challenges*. Cleveland, OH: The Pilgrim Press, 2005.
- Hesch, John B. “Fostering the Development of Compassion in Young Children.” *Pastoral Psychology* 41, no. 1 (1992): 31-37.

- Hinsdale, Mary Ann. “‘Infinite Openness to the Infinite’: Karl Rahner’s Contribution to Modern Catholic Thought on the Child.” In *The Child in Christian Thought*, edited by Marcia J. Bunge, 406-445. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.
- Hobson, Peter. *The Cradle of Thought: Exploring the Origins of Thinking*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- . “Emotion, Self-/Other-Awareness, and Autism: A Developmental Perspective.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, edited by Peter Goldie, 445-472. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Hunt, Irene. *Up a Road Slowly*. Chicago, IL: Follett Publishing Company, 1966.
- Jensen, David Hadley. *Graced Vulnerability: A Theology of Childhood*. Cleveland, OH: Pilgrim, 2005.
- Jordan, Mark D. “Aquinas’s Construction of a Moral Account of the Passions.” *Freiburger Zeitschrift Für Philosophie Und Theologie* 33, no. 1-2 (1986): 71-97.
- King, Peter. “Aquinas on the Passions.” In *Aquinas’s Moral Theory: Essays in Honor of Norman Kretzmann*, edited by Scott MacDonald and Eleonore Stump, 101-132. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999.
- . “Emotions.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 209-226. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Knuuttila, Simo. *Emotions in Ancient and Medieval Philosophy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.
- Le Pichon, Xavier. “The Sign of Contradiction.” In *The Paradox of Disability: Responses to Jean Vanier and L’Arche Communities from Theology and the Sciences*, edited by Hans S. Reinders, 94-100. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2010.
- Leget, Carlo. “Martha Nussbaum and Thomas Aquinas on the Emotions.” *Theological Studies* 64, no. 3 (2003): 558-581.
- Linder, Ellen W. “Children as Theologians.” In *Rethinking Childhood*, edited by Peter B. Pufall and Richard P. Unsworth, 54-68. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- Lippitt, John. “True Self-Love and True Self-Sacrifice.” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 66 (2009): 125-138.
- Lombardo, Nicholas E. *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion*. Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2011.

- Loughlin, Stephen Joseph. "A Response to Five Critiques of Aquinas's Doctrine of Passion." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1998.
- . "Similarities and Differences Between Human and Animal Emotion in Aquinas's Thought." *Thomist* 65, no. 1 (2001): 45-65.
- MacIntyre, Alasdair. *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.
- . *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues*. Chicago, IL: Open Court Publishing Company, 1999.
- . "Social Structures and Their Threats to Moral Agency." *Philosophy* 74, no. 289 (1999): 311-329.
- Mansfield, Richard. "Antecedent Passion and the Moral Quality of Human Acts According to St. Thomas." In *Virtues and Virtue Theories*, edited by Michael Baur, 221-231. Washington, DC: National Office of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, the Catholic University of America, 1998.
- Marty, Martin E. *The Mystery of the Child*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007.
- Mattison, William C., III. "Examining the Role of the Emotions in the Moral Life: Thomas Aquinas and Neuropsychology." In *Theology and the Social Sciences*, edited by Michael H. Barnes, 277-292. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001.
- . "Virtuous Anger? From Questions of Vindictio to the Habituation of Emotion." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 24, no. 1 (2004): 159-179.
- Meilaender, Gilbert. "The Examined Life Is Not Worth Living: Learning From Luther." In *The Theory and Practice of Virtue*, 100-126. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984.
- Mercer, Joyce Ann. *Welcoming Children: A Practical Theology of Childhood*. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005.
- Miller-McLemore, Bonnie. *Let the Children Come: Re-Imagining Childhood from a Christian Perspective*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2003.
- Miner, Robert C. *Thomas Aquinas on the Passions: A Study of "Summa Theologiae" 1a2ae 22-48*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Moffett, Patrick Sean. "Promoting Agency Among Children and Adolescents at the Margins." *The Journal of Pastoral Counseling* 30 (1995): 36-53.

- Moltmann, Jürgen. "Child and Childhood as Metaphors of Hope." *Theology Today* 56, no. 4 (2000): 592-603.
- Moncher, Frank J. "A Psychotherapy of Virtue: Reflections on St. Thomas Aquinas' Theology of Moral Virtue." *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 20, no. 4 (2001): 332-341.
- Mountain, Vivienne. "Four Links between Child Theology and Children's Spirituality." *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 16, no. 3 (2011): 261-269.
- Murphy, Claudia Eisen. "Aquinas on our Responsibility for our Emotions." *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 8, no. 2 (1999): 163-205.
- Nussbaum, Martha C. *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2013.
- . *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Osborne, Thomas M., Jr. "Practical Reasoning." In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 276-286. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Ott, Kate M. "Searching for an Ethic: Sexuality, Children, and Moral Agency." In *New Feminist Christianity: Many Voices, Many Views*, edited by Mary E. Hunt and Diann L. Neu. Woodstock, VT: Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010.
- Park, Andrew Sung. *The Wounded Heart of God: The Asian Concept of Han and the Christian Doctrine of Sin*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1993.
- Pearl, Michael and Debi. *To Train Up a Child*. No Greater Joy Ministries, Inc., 1994.
- Pope, Stephen J. "Overview of the Ethics of Thomas Aquinas." In *The Ethics of Aquinas*, edited by Stephen J. Pope, 30-53. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002.
- . "Sex, Marriage, and Family." In *Human Evolution and Christian Ethics*, 297-319. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007.
- Porter, Jean. *Moral Action and Christian Ethics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- . *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics*. Louisville, KY: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1990.

- . “The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the *Summa theologiae*.” *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992): 19-41.
- . “The Unity of the Virtues and the Ambiguity of Goodness: A Reappraisal of Aquinas’s Theory of the Virtues.” *Journal of Religious Ethics* 21, no. 1 (1993): 137-163.
- . “Virtues and Vices.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 265-275. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Prinz, Jesse J. *The Emotional Construction of Morals*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- . “The Moral Emotions.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy of Emotion*, edited by Peter Goldie, 519-538. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Pufall, Peter B. and Richard P. Unsworth. “Introduction: The Imperative and the Process for Rethinking Childhood.” In *Rethinking Childhood*, 1-21. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2004.
- Rahner, Karl. “Ideas for a Theology of Childhood.” In *Theological Investigations: Further Theology of the Spiritual Life 2*. Translated by David Bourke. Vol. 8, 33-50. New York: Herder and Herder, 1971.
- . “Original Sin.” In *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, edited by Karl Rahner, 1148-1155. New York: The Seabury Press, 1975.
- Ramsay, Hayden. *Beyond Virtue: Integrity and Morality*. New York: St Martin’s Press, 1997.
- Rhonheimer, Martin. *The Perspective of Morality: Philosophical Foundations of Thomistic Virtue Ethics*. Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2011.
- Roberts, Robert C. “Thomas Aquinas on the Morality of Emotions.” *History of Philosophy Quarterly* 9, no. 3 (1992): 287-305.
- Roche, Mary M. Doyle. “Children, Virtue Ethics, and Consumer Culture.” In *Virtue and the Moral Life: Theological and Philosophical Perspectives*, edited by William Werpehowski and Kathryn Getek Soltis, 77-93. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2014.
- Rorty, Amélie Oksenberg. “Enough Already with ‘Theories of the Emotions.’” In *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotions*, edited by Robert C. Solomon, 269-278. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

- . “Explaining Emotions.” In *Explaining Emotions*, edited by Amélie Oksenberg Rorty, 103-126. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980.
- Rosati, Connie S. “Moral Motivation.” In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Fall 2008 Edition, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Accessed December 12, 2013. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/moral-motivation/>.
- Ryan, Thomas F. “Positive and Negative Emotions in Aquinas: Retrieving a Distorted Tradition.” *Australasian Catholic Record* 78 no. 2 (Apr. 2001): 141-152.
- . “Revisiting Affective Knowledge and Connaturality in Aquinas.” *Theological Studies* 66, no. 1 (2005): 49-68.
- Sams, Janice. “The Ghetto Child and Moral Development.” *Religious Education* 70, no. 6 (1975): 636-648.
- Sayre-McCord, Geoff. “Moral Realism.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Summer 2011 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. Accessed November 14, 2014. <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/sum2011/entries/moral-realism/>.
- Scheindlin, Laurence. “Emotional Perception and Spiritual Development.” *International Journal of Children's Spirituality* 8, no. 2 (2003): 179-193.
- Scrutton, Anastasia. “Emotion in Augustine of Hippo and Thomas Aquinas: A Way Forward for the Im/passibility Debate?” *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 7, no. 2 (2005): 169-177.
- Sedgwick, Peter H. “The Compulsion to be Good: Aquinas on the Formation of Human Character.” *Theology* 91, no. 741 (1988): 194-201.
- Solomon, Robert C. *The Passions: Emotions and the Meaning of Life*. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 1993.
- . *True to Our Feelings: What Our Emotions Are Really Telling Us*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Sorabji, Richard. *Emotion and Peace of Mind: From Stoic Agitation to Christian Temptation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Spezio, Michael L. “The Neuroscience of Emotion and Reasoning in Social Contexts.” *Modern Theology* 27 no. 2 (2011): 339-356.
- Spiecker, Ben. “Habituation and Training in Early Moral Upbringing.” In *Virtue Ethics and Moral Education*, edited by David Carr and Jan Steutel, 217-230. New York: Routledge, 1999.

- Stump, Eleonore. "Aquinas's Account of Freedom: Intellect and Will." In *Aquinas's Summa Theologiae: Critical Essays*, edited by Brian Davies, 203-222. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006.
- Suto, Taki. "Virtue and Knowledge: Connatural Knowledge According to Thomas Aquinas." *The Review of Metaphysics* 58, no. 1 (2004): 61-79.
- Thatcher, Adrian. "Theology and Children: Towards a Theology of Childhood." *Transformation* 23, no. 4 (2006): 194-199.
- Tracy, David. *The Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism*. New York: Crossroad, 1981.
- Traina, Cristina L. H. "Children and Moral Agency." *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 29, no. 2 (2009): 19-37.
- . "Learning from the Tradition: The Religious Lives of Children." *New Theology Review* (August 2001): 17-25.
- . "A Person in the Making: Thomas Aquinas on Children and Childhood." In *The Child in Christian Thought*, edited by Marcia J. Bunge, 103-133. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001.
- . "Thomas and the Natural Law." Chap. 2 in *Feminist Ethics and Natural Law: The End of the Anathemas*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1999.
- Uffenheimer-Lippens, Elisabeth. "Rationalized Passions and Passionate Rationality: Thomas Aquinas on the Relation between Reason and the Passions." *The Review of Metaphysics* 56, no. 3 (2003): 525-558.
- Van der Ven, Johannes A. *Formation of the Moral Self*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998.
- Vandenbroeck, Michel and Maria Bouverne-de Bie. "Children's Agency and Educational Norms: A Tensed Negotiation." *Childhood* 13 (2006): 127-143.
- Van Roojen, Mark. "Moral Cognitivism vs. Non-Cognitivism." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2014 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta. Accessed November 14, 2014.
<http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2014/entries/moral-cognitivism>.
- Wall, John. "Animals and Innocents: Theological Reflections on the Meaning and Purpose of Child-Rearing." *Theology Today* 59, no. 4 (2003): 559-582.

- . “Childism and the Ethics of Responsibility.” In *Children’s Voices: Children’s Perspectives in Ethics, Theology and Religious Education*, edited by Annemie Dillen and Didier Pollefeyt, 237-265. Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2010.
- . “Childhood Studies, Hermeneutics, and Theological Ethics.” *Journal of Religion* 86, no. 4 (2006): 523-548.
- . *Ethics in Light of Childhood*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2010.
- . “Imagining Childism: How Childhood Should Transform Religious Ethics.” In *Children, Adults, and Shared Responsibilities: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Perspectives*, edited by Marcia J. Bunge, 135-151. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Weaver, Darlene Fozard. *The Acting Person and Christian Moral Life*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2011.
- . “Moral Agency, Sin, and Grace: Prospects for Christian Hope and Responsibility.” *Conversion, Covenant and Hope in the Human Future: New Frontiers in Jewish & Christian Thought International Conference*, Jerusalem, 2011.
- White, Kevin. “The Passions of the Soul (Ia IIae, Qq. 22-48).” In *The Ethics of Aquinas*, edited by Stephen J. Pope, 103-115. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002.
- . “Wanting Something for Someone: Aquinas on Complex Motions of Appetite.” *The Review of Metaphysics* 61, no. 1 (2007): 3-30.
- Whitmore, Todd (with Tobias L. Winright). “Children: An Undeveloped Theme in Catholic Teaching.” In *The Challenge of Global Stewardship: Roman Catholic Responses*, edited by Maura Anne Ryan and Todd Whitmore, 161-185. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997.
- Willett, Cynthia. “Collective Responsibility for Children in an Age of Orphans.” In *The Best Love of the Child: Being Loved and Being Taught to Love as the First Human Right*. Edited by Timothy P. Jackson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2011.
- Williams, Thomas. “Human Freedom and Agency.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Aquinas*, edited by Brian Davies and Eleonore Stump, 199-208. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.
- Yearley, Lee H. “Mencius and Aquinas’s Theories of Virtue.” In *Mencius and Aquinas: Theories of Virtue and Concepts of Courage*, 53-111. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1990.

Yust, Karen-Marie. *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.