

NATURAL LAW:  
PERSONS ARE UNITED THROUGH ENDS  
SEVEN DIFFERENT RELATIONS BETWEEN PERSONS  
AND ENDS AND THEIR RELATION TO NATURAL LAW  
AND COMMUNITY OF PERSONS

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One of the most important classical and evident distinctions ever made in the history of philosophy is Aristotle's distinction between the four causes of which the last one, final causality, is the first in importance and the last to be realized<sup>1</sup>. If we include it under the concept of "cause," we might better use expressions such as "four grounds" or "four principles of being and becoming" (including the material of which something is made), in place of the term 'cause,' in order to do justice to the breadth of the Aristotelian concepts of *aitia* and *arché* as opposed to the narrowness of our modern concept of "cause" that is restricted to efficient causality. Aristotle means with 'cause' nothing more and nothing less than all those principles which are decisive for the being and the becoming of a thing, either as its constitutive principles such as matter and form, or as causes, reasons or purposes of its coming to be. He makes the tremendous discovery of four fundamentally different causes of being and becoming: a) the formal cause or essence (whatness) of things (*ousia, morphé*), b) the material cause out of which or *in which* change occurs or form is received (the *ex hou*), c) the *efficient cause*, the *dia hou* through the power of which becoming and passing away are effected or a being is, and d) the *final cause*, the *hou heneka*, for the sake of which some-

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<sup>1</sup> ARISTOTLE, *Metaphysics* I, 3; *Id.*, *Physics*, II, 3.

thing is or is done<sup>2</sup>. That for the sake of which all other causes operate, which ultimately coincides with the good, is the cause to which Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas assign the highest importance. Now, while also the efficient cause and the formal cause are deeply connected with persons<sup>3</sup>, no other cause is so intimately connected with persons as the final cause. With Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas, countless other thinkers also recognized very clearly the essential relationship between finality and an intelligent mind, i.e. the relation between finality and personhood<sup>4</sup>. Nonetheless, this connection does not seem to have been treated as completely as would be desirable. In the following, I will try to elaborate seven distinct senses of “end” and of the relations between human action and ends, one of which is purely negative and falsely included under the term “end.” We will be paying especial attention to the ways in which these ends are related to what we may call “natural law” and to the union between persons.

#### I. THE PERSON AS THE ONLY BEING THAT CAN KNOW FINAL CAUSES AND THEREFORE ALONE CAN BE THE INTELLIGIBLE AND FREE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF FINAL CAUSALITY IN CONTINGENT BEINGS

Aristotle conceives of final causality as something that does not require itself an efficient cause to make things work for an end, although his example of the production of a bronze statue through a sculptor suggests precisely this<sup>5</sup>. But a final cause can never operate on its own but needs an efficient

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<sup>2</sup> Plato and later thinkers added the *exemplary cause* as a fifth cause, while others subordinated the paradigm as cause to the category of a (transcendent) formal cause.

<sup>3</sup> See on this: G. REALE, *The Concept of First Philosophy and the Unity of Metaphysics of Aristotle* (Albany 1980) 23 ff., where one finds a brief but clear summary presentation of this theme in Aristotelian metaphysics. See also: J. SEIFERT, *Essere e persona. Verso una fondazione fenomenologica di una metafisica classica e personalistica* (Milano 1989) ch. 9.

<sup>4</sup> Already the example of the sculptor in ARISTOTLE indicates that the primary forms of efficient and final causality is found only through persons. See also Thomas Aquinas.

<sup>5</sup> Unlike Plato, Aristotle seems to conceive of final causality as some cause that can act on its own; thus God would not, as in Plato, be himself an efficient cause of the world and order other efficient causes towards their ends but Aristotle's unmoved mover causes the movement of the world only *hos eromenos* (like the beloved, as the final cause). On this matter Plato seems to be both a more adequate philosopher of final causality in its relation to intelligent efficient causality. Final causality, at least as it acts in the contingent world, Plato notes in the *Timaeus*, presupposes efficient causes for any ends to be realized. See G. REALE, *Verso una nuova interpretazione di Platone* (Milano 201997); *ID.*, *Zu einer neuen Interpretation Platons. Eine Auslegung der*

cause to be realized; and, in the last analysis, not just any efficient cause can explain final causality but only the deepest kind of a personal and intelligent efficient cause that understands values and goods and therefore acts for their sake. Even inasmuch as final causality also *exists* and is *operative* in non-intelligent beings such as plants and animals, it *presupposes* a person as the only ultimately adequate source of final causality. Exclusively an intelligent mind, a person, can bring final causality in contingent things into being by ordering their operations intelligently to their appropriate ends. In other words, in the last analysis only an intelligent mind, only a person can per se act for the sake of ends and purposes and therefore only a person and intelligent designer can order and subordinate efficient causes and means in the material universe and in the world of irrational living beings to work towards ends. Therefore, Thomas Aquinas has recognized it to be evident that only intelligent design by an intellect who *understands* ends and who *wills* the means to serve the intended ends, can possibly explain our contingent world that is permeated by finality, which is particularly evident in living things where no nerve, blood-vessel or organ can be described meaningfully without consideration of the ends they serve. In living beings we encounter not only external ends as in the case of bronze to which the artist gives a form and assigns from the outside its end in making a statue for the sake of serving for worship, but living things possess their own ends within themselves, carrying their *telos* to perfection according to an inherent plan found in each living organism. But this *possession of finality within itself (entelechy)* in irrational organisms likewise presupposes an intelligent designer to put this meaningful plan into living things, to *make them entelechies*. The *quinta via* of Thomas Aquinas to prove the existence of God, through the meaning and final causality in the world, is entirely built on this relation between persons and finality: only a person can know, intend and institute final causality and entelechy in irrational beings; therefore wherever non-intelligent contingent beings have a meaningful nature or act for a purpose, this can only be due to a personal intellect as the intelligent *causa efficiens*, through the mediation of whose understanding and will alone final causality can be made to be a cause in non-intelligent things. Hence Thomas Aquinas regards it as philosophically absolutely evident that what evolutionists in the whole world today regard as possible is plain non-sense: that the finality in nature could be explained through non-

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*Metaphysik der großen Dialoge im Lichte der "ungeschriebenen Lehren"* (Paderborn 1993). See PLATO, *Timaios*, and the treatment of the Demiurge in REALE, *Verso una nuova interpretazione di Platone*; *Id.*, *Zu einer neuen Interpretation Platons*.

intelligent causes, big bangs, purely material efficient causes and laws without intelligent giver of such alleged (and in fact non-existing) “laws” as “the survival of the fittest” and “natural selection.” Thomas Aquinas sees it as an evident truth that irrational beings can only act for ends if they are created and ordered by intelligent beings: “Hence it is plain (evident) that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end.”<sup>6</sup>

But although the person alone can know final causes and ends, and therefore can be the only efficient *cause* of final causality as its designer and “realizer,” the objective relation of finality, final causality itself, once persons brought it forth, can exist quite independently of persons in nature, in organisms, or even in man-made machines and technological products of human engineering, where we find innumerable cases of means and ends<sup>7</sup>.

While the presence of final causality in nature, which exceeds all human understanding, requires a superhuman, divine Creator to create beauty and meaning, and to order means towards ends, in the world of culture and technology also man can order means to ends and build objective works or machines which serve purposes.

In their understanding ends and using means to achieve them human persons are not only united through the fact that they share *the same rational nature* that enables them to understand and make final causality to operate in irrational things, but in work, art, or performances of works of art, etc., human persons are also united because many machines, industrial plants and works of craftsmanship or art cannot be created or performed except when *several* human persons *jointly*, as in an orchestra, work towards the creation of works permeated by final causality.

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<sup>6</sup> THOMAS AQUINAS, *Summa Theologiae* FP Q 2 A 3 Body: “The fifth way is taken from the governance of the world. We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless it be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God.”

<sup>7</sup> See Thomas Aquinas.

II. ONLY THE PERSON, IN FREE ACTS, IN AN *ACTUS HUMANUS*, CAN HAVE AN END IN AN ENTIRELY NEW SENSE – NAMELY AS INTENDED BY ACTION  
(*FINIS OPERIS* AND *FINIS OPERANTIS*)

Completely new is a finality that is not only solely consciously known and created by persons but that is intrinsically connected with a free human action. At least two kinds of ends are in such a way related to those free actions (in the strict sense of the term) that aim at realizing states of affairs outside the person. (Such actions constitute one of several spheres of human acts).

“Ends” in the second sense, then, refer only to personal actions in the strict sense, that is to that important class of human acts that aim at realizing states of affairs outside the subject<sup>8</sup>. *Finis* here is the object that is intended in a conscious and free act, but not as it can then, after human acting, also exist as part of the real extra-personal world, for example as the finality that operates in a machine. Rather, end in this second sense is that which is essentially intended by the free act. It is the object and state of affairs whose realization is freely willed by the agent in his doing or making. End here means exclusively a state of affairs or object as intended by the person: this second sense of end, then, is the end of a free act itself and not to be identified with any effect this act can have in the outside world but only with the object of the action under the aspect of it being intended by a person. *Qua* end of the free conscious act itself it is through a world different from a mere objective end and final causality as free agents can produce it outside themselves, for example in artworks or in technological products of human creativity.

Moreover, for the second relation between persons and ends it is not sufficient to state that the end is the object of a conscious act: for as object of knowledge it is not a *finis* yet, but it becomes so in the strict sense only when the free agent intends it as the object of his action and only insofar as the person in her volitional act intends it. Within this basic second sense of the *finis* of the *actus humanus* we can again make a distinction, following an ingenious insight of Thomas Aquinas: the distinction between the *finis operis* and the *finis operantis*.

a) The notion of the *finis operis* refers to the intended objective of a free action that determines the essence of the action as a speaking truth or as lying, as stealing, murdering, almsgiving, etc. The *finis operis* refers then to that aim that is inscribed in the intentional structure of the free act and its relation to its end that is at the same time its intentional object. This *finis ope-*

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<sup>8</sup> In German, we can call these actions “*transeunte Akte*”.

*ris* is directly aimed at by the agent and is objectively inseparable from the kind of action we are dealing with.

But this rootedness in, and inseparability from, a given free action does not mean that the *finis operis* would not be an end in the sense of a consciously and freely intended object of the free act. On the contrary, the *finis operis* is the first consciously intended end of the action. That there are such objective ends, *finis operum*, that are inseparable from the nature of the respective action, in other words such ends that cannot be divorced from the given personal act, is of extreme importance for ethics and natural law. There could be no intrinsically evil external actions, wrong acts that cannot be made right by good intentions<sup>9</sup>, if it were not for such objective ends inscribed in the essence of an action as a conscious and freely intending act, i.e., if there were not ends that no one who performs the action consciously and intelligently can fail to intend.

a.1. The *finis operis* is in many ways a principle of unity among men: That bad essential ends of human actions exist and that actions aiming at them never ought to be performed is a condition of authentic human community:

If any action could be justified by further ends, and if therefore murder, torture, rape, adultery, blasphemy, etc. could licitly be performed by human persons, no authentic human community could exist;

a.2. Often achieving of the ends of human actions is only possible (in manual labor communities and teamwork of any kind, in medical actions, in cultural activities, etc.) through a conscious "working together"; no ship could be built, no house constructed, no enterprise run, if not several persons could share in the realization of the same *finis operis*, knowing also of each others' actions geared to the same ends.

b) Quite different is the end of an action that Thomas Aquinas describes as *finis operantis*. This refers to what the person pursues and intends in a way extrinsic to the essence of her action; different agents who perform the same action can have quite different subjective personal ends: while saving a drowning man is so essentially connected with the act that it constitutes the act *qua* such and nobody who performs the act consciously and freely can fail to intend this *finis operis*, the subjective ends of the agents are more loosely connected with a given action. Whereas therefore the *finis operis* is the first and fixed intended end of a given human action, the term *finis operantis* normally refers to another type of ends of an action, namely to ends which an agent can will or not will while carrying out the same action. The *finis operan-*

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<sup>9</sup> That there are such acts is the most essential thesis of *Veritatis Splendor*.

*tium*, inasmuch as they are distinct from the *finis operis*, can be many and it quite easily occurs that of two agents who perform the same kind of action and hence want to realize the same *finis operis*, for example saving a patient's life who has a life-threatening condition, both have quite a different *finis operantis*; one of them may intend to become famous and rich by performing complicated surgery in his life-saving act, the other may intend the patient's well-being or want to fulfill God's commandment.

Saying all this does not at all imply that all those subjective ends and motives that are not constitutive of a given action would therefore only be loosely connected with a moral action; on the contrary.

Therefore we have to make a further distinction, identifying two kind of *finis operantium*: Some of them belong essentially to the act in the sense that, while it is possible to perform the act without intending them, not to intend them deprives the act of its authentic moral character or value. All the indispensable motives for the presence of the moral goodness of an act belong here<sup>10</sup>. Thus while subjective ends of the agent (the *finis operantium*) include all kinds of purposes and reasons to act that do not pertain to the immediate object which the person seeks to realize through her action, some of them are nonetheless decisive for the morally good or bad quality of an act. These *finis operantis* that are indispensable for the moral goodness itself or for a higher moral value or greater moral evilness of the same action differ sharply from many other ends included in the notion *finis operantis* which do not affect, at least not in a major way, the moral quality of the action. Unlike the *finis operis* that exists only in actions in the strict sense (that aim at realizing states of affairs outside themselves), the *finis operantium* encompass all reasons and motives of free actions, both those which are essential for the moral value of the act and those which are inessential. Therefore the *finis operantis* is not restricted to human actions in the narrower sense: it is constitutive for all free acts including other spheres of free human acts to which the concept of the *finis operis* has no application, such as virtues, vices, fundamental attitudes, etc.

The *finis operantis*, the fundamental attitudes of persons, the love and kindness from which they act, their virtues of patience, mercy, humility or charity that inspire their actions are likewise of fundamental importance for human community; they constitute the deepest bond between persons in action as well as beyond human action. The responses to authentic values and love of other persons that cannot be reduced to deeds, constitute the

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<sup>10</sup> See J. SEIFERT, *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung?* (Salzburg 1976).

most significant source of intersubjective unity and community; if human acts and the *fines operantis* are good, they are a central unifying force (*virtus univiva*) among persons<sup>11</sup>.

### III. THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN FIRST AND SECOND INTENTION OF AN ACT, OR TWO KINDS OF ENDS WITHIN THE *FINIS OPERIS* AND THE *FINIS OPERANTIS*

In the sphere of human actions we encounter another distinction between first and second intention of human acts. For example, persons may clean hospital floors primarily because this creates a healthy environment for patients but secondarily because it is an aesthetically nice and human thing to live in a clean rather than a dirty building or room; they may have the further purpose and intention of earning money for their family. First and second intentions refer to different kinds of *finis operis* or of *finis operantis* (such as creating an aesthetically nice or a healthy environment for persons, or making money). Upon closer consideration, second end or intention may refer to one of three different things:

a) It may refer to intentions to realize *further* ends for which the immediate *finis operis* is a means and cause or a condition: the most immediate end of the action differs from secondary, later, consecutively or indirectly realized ends. For example, the action of cleaning a hospital has a purpose outside its *immediate finis operis*, because, as a useful action, it serves further goods outside its immediate *finis* (the cleanness of the building), for example health.

b) "First or second" intentions may also refer to intentions that will be realized later in a temporal sense: to those states of affairs that will be realized later in time *through* the effects of realizing the immediate (first) intention; for example, the effects of cleaning on the health of patients will occur much later in time than the cleanness.

c) "Second intention" may refer as well to intentions and *intended effects* of an action that are only "secondary" in accordance with a hierarchy of values. Different kinds or degrees of intending them can correspond to objective hierarchies or follow mere subjective priorities of very different kinds. We may intend different objects realized through our action in a primary or secondary

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<sup>11</sup> See on this D. VON HILDEBRAND, *Das Wesen der Liebe* (Gesammelte Werke III; Regensburg 1971) ch. 1; 6-7. See *ID.*, *Metaphysik der Gemeinschaft. Untersuchungen über Wesen und Wert der Gemeinschaft* (Gesammelte Werke IV; Regensburg 1975).



way within a *hierarchical structure* of intentions directed at these ends: such as intending *primarily the health of patients by cleaning the hospital rooms, not the cleanliness or aesthetic value as direct and immediate finis operis, because health is a higher value.* (A primary or secondary intention in this sense is often the reverse of the causal sense of first and second intention).

Thus a person may intend the well-being of patients but his primary intention may be to act for the love of God. This does not lead to a reduction of the love of neighbour or to a reducing him to a means of the love of God. On the contrary, if the primary intention and end in this sense is the highest, absolute Good, also the union among human person grows.

The teaching on the *glorificatio Dei* as the *primarius finis ultimus*, and of the blessedness of the subject as the second ultimate end (*secundarius finis ultimus*) refer to primary and secondary end in this hierarchical intrinsic and consequent action-related sense: the objective priorities of values should be reflected in the priorities we set for our intentions and actions. Here “first end” means the primary value, meaning and reason for an act, “first intention” means the first ground and priority set in our action.

#### IV. SUPERABUNDANT ENDS AS DISTINCT FROM DIRECTLY INTENDED ONES

In the sphere of human actions but also in all other human acts, we encounter another important distinction between directly intended and *superabundant ends*. Superabundant are those ends that are not directly intended but flow forth from the intended ones. This adds something to the notion of end far beyond the idea of a “second intention” The decisive point about this superabundant finality is that it flows from an act that *possesses already an intrinsic and primary meaning and end*, which is quite independent from this *superabundant end*. Above all, this primary and inherent meaning or end of an act forbids us to regard it as a mere *means* towards the realization of the superabundant end<sup>12</sup>; the superabundant end often is not even directly or not even consciously intended at all but flows from a certain “forgetting it”; it is more the fruit of acts or actions, rather than their aim. And yet it remains so

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<sup>12</sup> This is crucial to understand the relation between morality, love to happiness, and also to understand the difference between “Sinn” (meaning) and “end” of marriage. See on this: D. VON HILDEBRAND, *Die Ehe* (München 1929); *Id.*, *Die Enzyklika “Humanae Vitae” - ein Zeichen des Widerspruchs* (Regensburg 1968).

meaningfully and essentially related to human acts that it can and must be seen to be related to them as an end. In some sense we might apply to this case also the mentioned scholastic distinction between first and second intention, although the point of superabundant finality is different by referring to things which are not directly intended at all, neither as objects of a first nor of a second *intention*; they flow from acts that are performed for other reasons. We may apply this distinction above all to happiness in relation to morally good acts and to love. The happiness that flows from loving a person will be destroyed if I intend it as an end towards which my love would be a means. I will only be happy if I forget myself and respond to the other person *propter seipsam*<sup>13</sup>. In a similar manner, the conjugal act has a meaning of expressing and fulfilling mutual love and not just a function as means of procreation<sup>14</sup>. All of this is not to deny that it is possible to be in some secondary way also *motivated* by superabundant ends<sup>15</sup>. To recognize such superabundant ends and not to consider love of the other persons as means towards happiness is a condition of a deeper unity among persons, a unity of a *communio personarum* that requires the sincere mutual loving gift of self<sup>16</sup>.

V. THAT WHICH FLOWS FROM AN ACT AS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES  
(*PRAETER INTENTIONEM*) WHICH HAS A PURELY NEGATIVE RELATION TO  
PERSONAL ENDS OF ACTIONS: IT IS NO END

We must avoid a widespread confusion in discussions of ethics between objects of second intentions and *unintended* consequences of acts, by sharply distinguishing between the object of primary and secondary intentions and the case where an effect is NOT intended at all, and hence no end of the act, but lies, as Thomas Aquinas says in the context of his discussing and introducing the *principle of double effect, praeter intentionem*<sup>17</sup>. know of an *unin-*

<sup>13</sup> See T. STYCZEN-A. SZOSTEK-K. WOJTYLA, *Der Streit um den Menschen. Personaler Anspruch des Sittlichen* (Kevelaer 1979).

<sup>14</sup> See on this VON HILDEBRAND, *Die Enzyklika "Humanae Vitae"*; see also his *Die Ehe*.

<sup>15</sup> See on this J. SEIFERT, *Was ist und was motiviert eine sittliche Handlung?* (Salzburg 1976).

<sup>16</sup> See K. WOJTYLA, *Love and Responsibility* (San Francisco 1993); see also GIOVANNI PAOLO II, *Uomo e donna lo creò* (Città del Vaticano 1987). See likewise VON HILDEBRAND, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, chs. 1-2; 8-10.

<sup>17</sup> Of course, unintended consequences outside or against our intentions also differ totally from superabundant ends.

*tended effect* of my act is very different from the case where something is intended in a secondary intention and hence some end of my act. For example, if I administer to a woman a potent tablet against her threatening heart failure, knowing that this drug might have negative effects on her unborn baby, these can be wholly outside (and even *against*) my intentions. That such negative effects be *praeter intentionem* is even the *very condition of my act being morally legitimate* and thus also part of natural law and hence also a condition of an authentic love and community among persons.

VI. 'END' AS THE REASON AND VALUE FOR THE SAKE OF WHICH  
THE *FINIS OPERIS* OR *FINIS OPERANTIS* ARE INTENDED  
AND THE DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF IMPORTANCE

Thus far, in discussing the *finis operis*, we have identified the end with the object the agent intends to realize: we have said that the *finis operis* of a life-rescuing operation is saving a human life; the *finis operis* of murder is *killing consciously and intentionally an innocent person*. But now we turn to a completely different sense of "end", namely not to the state of affairs, whose realization through the action is intended, but to the reason *why it is intended*. In other words, the 'end' now means the reason or the why the agent acts and realizes whatever he realizes or intends to realize. For we have not only to ask *what someone does* in his acts but also *why* he acts. It is characteristic for this kind of end that it is not any more restricted to, though *also* found in, human actions that intend the realization of states of affairs outside the act. Considered in this way, the *end* of the human action does not simply coincide with the what of its object but refers to the *importance of the object which constitutes the reason why we act*, and thus refers more to the root of both the *finis operis* and the *finis operantis*, to the kind of importance of achieving the end, to the good, value, or pleasure, for the sake of which we act. This 'end' can fall into very different general classes or kinds of importance<sup>18</sup>:

a) This "end" can lie, generally speaking, in a mere subjective importance of the act such as when a person wishes to eat chocolate in order to satisfy his appetite and derive pleasure from it.

b) He may also act to derive a fulfilment of appetites that refer to indispensable things such as quenching his thirst or hunger which is not only desired for the pleasure of eating and drinking but also as something on which our life and all other earthly goods for us depend. If the pleasure is

<sup>18</sup> See on this D. VON HILDEBRAND, *Ethics* (Chicago <sup>2</sup>1978) chs. 1-7; 17-18.

and all other earthly goods for us depend. If the pleasure is legitimate or if the appetites are connected with the bodily and psychic structure of man, their fulfilment entails an *objective good FOR the agent*. Fulfilling these appetites constitutes one class of *indispensable* objective goods for the person, while many other objective goods *for the person* are either not at all based on the fulfilment of such *basic* appetites, or not even limited to the fulfilment of an “appetite” that arises in us before we know its object. For example, such gifts as happiness, love, friendship, or the participation in objects endowed with intrinsic value, are high goods *for us* but their role is not reduced to quench some appetites for friendship<sup>19</sup>.

b.1. Here again, the act is profoundly different if we wish to realize only our own happiness, self-fulfilment and objective good,

b.2. or the objective goods *for another person*, and *for his or her own sake*, as in the *intentio benevolentiae* of love<sup>20</sup>.

The intrinsic and objective value of an object of human acts is the highest reason for human acts, and it is here mainly, and in part also in the sphere of objective goods *for the person*, that we find the deepest reasons and “ends” of human acts, when the *ratio actus* is the intrinsic value of its object and of the act. In this case, the inner value of the object of an act or of the act itself justifies it. When we respond to a person simply because she is good and because she deserves affirmation, admiration, veneration, or love, our *finis is the intrinsic value of a being and that being endowed with value itself*. End in this sense is in no way restricted to personal actions that aim at the realization of states of affairs outside themselves but refers both to the ultimate and intrinsic value and meaning of an act and to its object inasmuch as it motivates the act and provides the *ratio actus*. In his sense the *object and finis of the act of love of God* lies in *the inner worthiness of the object to be loved: the principle persona est amanda propter seipsam*. This type of final cause (end) and the *adequatio* and *due-relation* on which it is based surpasses any notion of final causality understood as ends in relation to means, and also the entire sphere of “transeunt” human actions. For this “end” of our act is not to be realized by us but pre-exists our free act; even less is this end of an act of value response to the intrinsic preciousness of a being in any way a mere means or instrument to realize our happiness, but we intend to give the just and good, the Holy or God Himself the adequate and *true value* response

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<sup>19</sup> See on this D. von Hildebrand.

<sup>20</sup> See the profound analysis of this in VON HILDEBRAND, *Das Wesen der Liebe*, ch. 7.

*deserved by the object of our act in virtue of its intrinsic preciousness.* This leads us to a seventh sense of end.

### 7. The end of the “*finis sine fine*”

All of our considerations lead us to a seventh comprehensive and ultimate sense of end that adds to the other meanings of ends that of their supreme fulfilment and final role at the very end of all earthly existence – and beyond. We encounter the previously made distinctions on this level in their ultimate form. Here we encounter again, on its supreme metaphysical level, the distinction between first and second intention in the hierarchical sense. Happiness as the second *finis primarius ultimus* is not only second in importance, it is also second in that it can only partly be aimed AT directly. It is a superabundant end, an end that comes as gift to a person who primarily serves the *finis primarius ultimus* and who gives God the praise due to him.

This sense of end is also fully compatible with the *contemplative life and completely breaks with Aristotle’s idea that the contemplative life is only a cognitive intellectual life of knowledge and vision, while the ethical sphere would be restricted to praxis.* This highest end of our will and love is, compared to the sphere of actions that seek realization of state of affairs outside the action itself, entirely contemplative and free of ends to be achieved by practical life. Plato and Aristotle recognized the superiority of the contemplative over the practical life, and Aristotle analyzed the various moments of contemplation that make it the highest form of life, including its freedom from the tension between the act and the need to realize something beyond itself; but he failed to see that contemplation is not a pure matter of the intellect but includes also the faculties of the will and of the heart in their highest perfection. The Augustinian formulation about this transcendent ultimate end of the human person: “*Ibi vacabimus et videbimus, videbimus et amabimus, amabimus et laudabimus. Ecce quod erit in fine sine fine. Nam quis alius noster est finis nisi pervenire ad regnum, cuius nullus est finis?*”<sup>21</sup> speaks of this end beyond all ends and of such a contemplative life in which intellect, will and heart will live a life of perfect contemplation. Not only an end without end will then arrive but also an end without further aims of action to be realized. The ends to be realized outside our acts in the world will disappear in perfect contemplative life but the ends in the sixth sense of the value and reason and *raison d’être* of our virtues, *superactual acts of will and of our love* will be

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<sup>21</sup> AUGUSTINUS, *De civitate Dei*, I. 22, 30,5.

fulfilled. Therefore, it is this sense of “end,” that is no longer restricted to action but stands at the end and culmination of all moral life in eternity, that is the highest and ultimate end and also the end that will overcome all divisions between persons and constitute the supreme bond of unity between them. Anselm von Canterbury expressed all of this and the loving self-transcendence that is a condition of this “end beyond end” in the following magnificent lines with which I wish to conclude and which in some sense complete and summarize all the thoughts expressed in this paper, speaking of this *finis sine fine*:

“But what, or how great, is the joy, where such and so great is the good! Heart of man, needy heart, heart acquainted with sorrows, nay, overwhelmed with sorrows, how greatly wouldst thou rejoice, if thou didst abound in all these things! Ask thy inmost mind whether it could contain its joy over so great a blessedness of its own.

Yet assuredly, if any other whom thou didst love altogether as thyself possessed the same blessedness, thy joy would be doubled, because thou wouldst rejoice not less for him than for thyself. But, if two, or three, or many more, had the same joy, thou wouldst rejoice as much for each one as for thyself, if thou didst love each as thyself. Hence, in that perfect love of innumerable blessed angels and sainted men, where none shall love another less than himself, every one shall rejoice for each of the others as for himself.

If, then, the heart of man will scarce contain his joy over his own so great good, how shall it contain so many and so great joys? And doubtless, seeing that every one loves another so far as he rejoices in the other’s good, and as, in that perfect felicity, each one should love God beyond compare, more than himself and all the others with him; so he will rejoice beyond reckoning in the felicity of God, more than in his own and that of all the others with him.

But if they shall so love God with all their heart, and all their mind, and all their soul, that still all the heart, and all the mind, and all the soul shall not suffice for the worthiness of this love; doubtless they will so rejoice with all their heart, and all their mind, and all their soul, that all the heart, and all the mind, and all the soul shall not suffice for the fullness of their joy<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> ANSELM VON CANTERBURY, *Proslogion* und *Ad Proslogion*, in: *S. Anselmi Opera Omnia* (Stuttgart-Bad-Cannstatt 1968) I, c. XXIV, 120 ff.: *Gaudium vero quale aut quantum est, ubi tale ac tantum bonum est? Cor humanum, cor indigens, cor expertum ærumnas immo obrutum ærumnis: quantum gauderes, si his omnibus abundares? Interroga intima tua, si capere possint gaudium suum de tanta beatitudine sua. Sed certe si quis alius, quem omnino sicut teipsum diligeres, eandem beatitudinem haberet, duplicaretur gaudium tuum, quia non minus gauderes*

**Resumen.**- El planteamiento del finalismo de en la vida del hombre es uno de los puntos más delicados en la filosofía actual. El autor analiza hasta siete sentidos distintos de finalidad y su fundamento; por ello puede destacar un valor personal en el mismo que permite además una profundización en su contenido real. La finalidad así percibida adquiere un valor trascendente abierto en su principio a Dios, acaba así en el "fin sin fin" que muestra una dinámica divina detrás de cualquier fin que el hombre perciba.

**Summary.**- *The finalist position in man's life is one of the most delicate points in current philosophy. The author analyzes up to seven different meanings of finality and its basis, and allows highlighting a personal value in the same one as well as deepening in its real content. Finality perceived in this way acquires a transcendent value opened up in its principle to God, finishing this way in the "end without end" that shows a divine dynamics behind any finality that man perceives.*

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*pro eo quam pro teipso. Si vero duo vel tres vel multo plures idipsum haberent, tantundem pro singulis quantum pro teipso gauderes, si singulos sicut teipsum amares. Ergo in illa perfecta caritate innumerabilium beatorum angelorum et hominum, ubi nullus minus diligit alium quam seipsum, non aliter gaudebit quisque pro singulis aliis quam pro seipso. Si ergo cor hominis de tanto suo bono vix capiet gaudium suum: quomodo capax erit tot et tantorum gaudiorum? Et utique quoniam quantum quisque diligit aliquem, tantum de bono eius gaudet: sicut in illa perfecta felicitate unusquisque plus amabit sine comparatione deum quam se et omnes alios secum, ita plus gaudebit absque existimatione de felicitate dei quam de sua et omnium aliorum secum. Sed si deum sic diligent toto corde, tota mente, tota anima, ut tamen totum cor, tota mens, tota anima non sufficiat dignitati dilectionis: profecto sic gaudebunt toto corde, tota mente, tota anima, ut totum cor, tota mens, tota anima non sufficiat plenitudini gaudii.*