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AQUINAS ON SHAME, VIRTUE, AND THE VIRTUOUS PERSON

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Shame is a true Christian virtue, and also a human virtue. . . . Being ashamed of oneself is a virtue of the humble, of the man or woman who is humble.[1]
Pope Francis, *Encountering Truth*

SOME SCHOLARS within the Aristotelian tradition, notably C. C. Raymond and K. Kristjánsson, have recently questioned the Stagirite's denials that shame (*aidōs*) can be a moral virtue in the proper sense of the term and that a virtuous person needs a sense of shame in addition to other moral virtues.[2] Aristotle famously claims that, although shame is the mean between bashfulness and shamelessness, shame is "more like a feeling than a state of character" and that "one is ashamed of what is voluntary, but the virtuous person will never voluntarily do base things."[3] Raymond and Kristjánsson argue that Aristotle has overlooked two interrelated distinctions: first, the distinction between an episodic or occurrent *feeling of shame* and a durable emotional disposition of a *sense of shame*, and second, the distinction between retrospective shame (which follows upon base actions) and prospective shame (which inhibits base actions).[4] Even if it be conceded that virtuous

[1] Pope Francis, *Encountering Truth* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2015), 43.

[2] C. C. Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, vol. 53, ed. E. Caston (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 111-61; K. Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 87-101.

[3] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1128b10-11, 28-29 (trans. T. Irwin [Indianapolis: Hackett, 1999]).

[4] Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," 115 and 131ff.; cf. K. Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 92 and 96ff. By "emotional disposition" these authors refer to

persons might not need to draw upon retrospective shame, according to Kristjánsson, they will still need proper dispositional shame or prospective shame as "a deterrent voice to warn them against potentially base future courses of action." If not, Aristotle would be committed to a conception of a saintly or morally infallible virtuous person.[5] For his part, Raymond contends that, if Aristotle admits that honor and social standing constitute external goods and that virtuous persons are not indifferent to what people think of them (to such a degree that avoiding disrepute can be the goal of action), "it seems that Aristotle should allow that *aidōs* can be a 'prohairetic' mean as well," that is to say, a virtue, since "knowing when, how, and to what extent to care about the opinion of others will require practical wisdom."[6]

This article addresses these interpretations by exploring the thought of St. Thomas Aquinas,[7] given that in his treat-

an "emotional tendency" or "emotional proneness" that disposes someone to feel a given emotion "at the right times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end and in the right way" (cf. *Nic. Ethic.* 1106b17-35).

[5] Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 97. He admits that by advocating that a proper dispositional shame be understood as a full-fledged virtue he departs from the orthodox Aristotelian tradition.

[6] Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," 158-59.

[7] For a fuller treatment on Aquinas's account of shame, see H. Dwi Kristanto, *The Praiseworthy Passion of Shame: An Historical and Philosophical Elucidation of Aquinas's Thought on the Nature and Role of Shame in the Moral Life* (Rome: Gregorian and Biblical Press, 2019). The book examines shame as a praiseworthy passion: its nature, its role in the moral life, its connection with moral growth, conscience, social rank, gender, and violence. This article focuses more on arguing why shame is, for Aquinas, not a genuine moral virtue and why, in order to be virtuous, the passion of shame needs to be sustained by humility and magnanimity. There have been very few significant treatments of Aquinas's concept of shame, a notable exception being A. Guindon, "La 'crainte honteuse' selon Thomas d'Aquin," *Revue thomiste* 69 (1969): 589-623. Guindon limits himself to a lexicographic analysis of some shame-related words in Aquinas's works. Other articles offer merely a concise and general presentation of Aquinas's views on shame, since they deal with the topic of shame in the context of providing a panoramic account of the history of emotions in the Middle Ages. Generally, they compare Aquinas's idea of shame with those of St. Augustine and Richard of St. Victor. See J. Müller, "Scham und menschlichen Natur bei Augustinus und Thomas von Aquin," in *Zur Kulturgeschichte der Scham*, ed. M. Bauks and M. Meyer (Hamburg: Meiner, 2011), 55-72; S. Knuuttila, "The Emotion of Shame in Medieval Philosophy," *Spazio filosofico* 5 (2012): 243-49; S. Vecchio, "La honte el la faute: La réflexion sur la verecundia dans la littérature théologique des XIIe et XIIIe siècles," in *Shame between Punishment and Penance : The Social Usage of Shame in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times*, ed. B. Sere and J. Wettlaufer (Florence: Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2013), 105-21;

ment of shame, especially in "De verecundia" (*STh* II-II, q. 144, aa. 1-4), he draws substantially on Aristotle's ideas about shame in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* (2.7.1108a31-36; 4.9.1128b10-35) and the *Rhetoric* (2.6.1383b11-1385a15). I shall argue in section I that since, unlike Aristotle, Aquinas does not conceive of persons with acquired virtues as morally infallible, he does not preclude the experience of (both retrospective and prospective) shame in the virtuous person's moral life. Indeed, in keeping with the Philosopher, Aquinas holds that shame is best understood as a passion of the soul (or an emotion), and yet he also claims, as I shall expound in section II, that shame's concurrence is necessary for the virtue of temperance, for shame is an integral part of this cardinal virtue. Felt in an appropriate degree with respect to a truly disgraceful action (be it one already done or one yet to be done), shame is morally praiseworthy and, as such, can be called a virtue in the loosest sense of the term.[8] Aquinas retains the idea, however, that shame is properly speaking not a moral virtue because it falls short of the perfect notion (*ratio*) of a virtue as a habit that operates from choice (*habitus electivus*) and as a habit that produces good actions (*habitus operativus*). Since, furthermore, the person who experiences shame naturally tends to shrink and to hide from others, to the extent that sometimes shame even "sends the person into despair,"[9] in section III of this paper I shall extend Aquinas's argument by suggesting that, for shame not only to be praiseworthy but also to produce a beneficial outcome in the person, it must be accompanied by the paired virtues of humility and magnanimity. In suggesting this, I go beyond what Aquinas

C. Casagrande and S. Vecchio, "La vergogna tra passione e virtù," in *Passioni dell'anima: Teorie e usi degli affetti nella cultura medievale*, ed. idem (Florence: Sismel-Ed. del Galluzzo, 2015), 263-81. Another article by T. Ryan ("Aquinas on Shame: A Contemporary Interchange," in *Aquinas, Education and the East*, ed. T. B. Mooney and M. Nowacki [Dordrecht: Springer, 2013]) focuses on demonstrating the relevance of Aquinas's ideas of shame for the contemporary practice of moral education. For this purpose, Ryan compares Aquinas's idea of shame as a moral emotion with that of E. Probyn (E. Probyn, *Blush: Faces of Shame* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005]).

[8] See *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1.

[9] *Super I Cor.*, c. 4, lect. 3.

explicitly says, though the idea is latent in his biblical commentaries.

I. Aquinas on Shame As Fear of Disgrace

Aquinas understands shame (*verecundia*, *erubescentia*, *pudor*, or *confusio*)[10] as one of the species of the passion of fear. Shame is the fear of disgrace (*timor turpitudinis*) and, more precisely, of disgrace that damages one in the opinion of others (*turpitudo laedens opinionem*).[11] Thus, Aquinas follows Aristotle closely in conceiving of shame as essentially fear of disrepute or of dishonor (*timor ingloriationis*). What is at stake in shame is one's reputation; when one feels ashamed, one is afraid that one's worth in the eyes of others is significantly diminished, as when, for example, one becomes an object of ridicule or derision.[12]

The passion of fear, according to Aquinas, is a movement of the sensory appetite away from a future possible evil that is imminent and difficult to avoid. The sensory appetite is the power of the soul that moves animate beings toward or away from any objects apprehended—through sensory perception, imagination, and, in human beings, also through intellective cognition—under the intention of good or evil. While the movement of the sensory appetite constitutes the formal element of a passion, the bodily change that accompanies and is proportional to such a movement makes up the material element of the passion. In fear, the material element consists in a certain contraction in the appetite: "the heat and vital spirits abandon the heart instead of concentrating around it," with the result that one who is afraid becomes pale, trembling, and speechless and is inclined to run away.[13]

[10] For an extended study of these terms, see Kristanto, *Praiseworthy Passion of Shame*, 81-156. Notwithstanding some differences in nuance, all these words share a common feature of denoting the fear of disgrace (*timor de turpi*).

[11] *STh* I-II, q. 41, a. 4.

[12] See *STh* II-II, q. 75, a. 1

[13] *STh* I-II, q. 44, a. 1, ad 1 and ad 2. English translations of quotations from the *Summa theologiae* come from the translation by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Bros., 1948; rev. and repr. by The Aquinas Institute, 2012). However, whereas the revised version of this translation translates *verecundia* as "shamefacedness" (archaic), I prefer to follow the Blackfriars edition (*Summa Theologiae*, vol. 43 [2a2ae, qq. 141-154], trans. Thomas Gilby, O.P. [New

(*secundum quid*).[42] Indeed, acquired virtuous habits incline a person to acting rightly, insofar as they give him a right judgment about the end. The inclination of the moral virtues, however, is not without choice.[43] A virtuous habit does not produce virtuous actions automatically, because "it is *not* necessary to use a habit, since it is subject to the will of the person who has that habit."[44] Aquinas stresses that a habit is "something we use when we will,"[45] and, hence, "one who has a habit may fail to use it or may act contrary to it."[46] In his revelation-informed anthropology, postlapsarian human nature is deeply marked by *fomes peccati*, that is, the corruption of the sensory appetite, which inclines the sensory appetite to what is contrary to reason and "which is never completely destroyed in this life."[47] Consequently, "those with a virtuous habit sometimes act against the inclination of their own habit, because something appears otherwise to them according to some standard, for instance, through passion or some allurement."[48] Thus, compared to Aristotle, Aquinas is more realistic in stating that "acquired virtue does cause us to avoid sin—not in every case, but for the most part."[49] If persons with acquired virtuous habits are morally fallible, inasmuch as they may sometimes backslide and commit (or desire to commit) a sinful action they know they ought not to, then it is legitimate to assume that at times they may experience shame due not only to the disgrace that is according to opinion but also to the disgrace that is according to truth.[50]

[42] *STh* II-II, q. 161, a. 1, ad 4; cf. *De Verit.*, q. 24, a. 9, ad 4.

[43] *STh* I-II, q. 58, a. 4, ad 1: "Sed inclinatio virtutis moralis est cum electione".

[44] *STh* I-II, q. 78, a. 2; see also q. 71, a. 4: "habitus in anima non ex necessitate producit suam operationem, sed homo utitur eo cum voluerit."

[45] *STh* I-II, q. 78, a. 2: "habitus definitur esse quo quis utitur cum voluerit"; see *De Virtut.*, a. 1.

[46] *STh* I-II, q. 52, a. 3.

[47] *STh* I-II, q. 74, a. 3, ad 2; *STh* III q. 27, a. 3.

[48] *De Caritate*, a. 12. The English translation is that of J. Hause and C. E. Murphy, *Disputed Questions on Virtue* (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 2010).

[49] *De Virtut.*, a. 9, ad 5; Cf. a. 10, ad 14.

[50] In his commentary to *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, Cardinal Cajetan alludes to this possibility.

II. Shame: Not a Virtue Proper but an Integral Part of Temperance[51]

To say that shame is in the virtuous person, however, does not amount to affirming that shame is a virtue. For Aquinas, shame is in the virtuous person as an integral part of temperance, but not as a species of virtue or as a secondary virtue annexed to temperance. Before considering this point, let us first look at several reasons why Aquinas, similar to Aristotle, refuses to grant to shame the status of a full-fledged virtue.

A) Why Shame Is Not a Virtue Proper

In the first place, as stated earlier, for Aquinas, as for Aristotle, shame is more a passion than a habit (*habitus*), since it involves bodily change. There is an ontological difference between a passion and a habit. A passion belongs to the metaphysical category of movement (*motus*), whereas a habit belongs to the category of quality (*qualitas*). A passion is a transitory movement of the sensory appetite of those composite beings made of soul and body, in response to their evaluative apprehension of an object. A passion is thus a passivity, something that nonhuman and human animals occasionally suffer (*pati*). By contrast, a habit, to which genus belong the moral virtues, is a quality long-lasting or hard to change. It is a stable disposition whereby the possessor is well- or ill-disposed to feel and to act in a certain way. A habit is not a passivity but a principle of action. Aquinas says, "a moral virtue is not a movement, but rather a principle of the movement of the appetite, being a kind of habit."[52]

In the second place, but in relation to the first, shame is not a virtue because it is not an *elective* habit. Some critics of the Aristotelian account of shame have objected that, while the first argument above applies well to retrospective shame or to the occurrent *feeling of shame*, it does not seem to apply

[51] For a fuller treatment on Aquinas's idea of shame as an integral part of temperance, see Kristanto, *Praiseworthy Passion of Shame*, 235-57. Several arguments why shame is, for Aquinas, not a moral virtue can also be found scattered in different parts of the book (pp. 85-85, 88, 188-214, 247). Here I attempt to bring those arguments together in a more concise and systematic way.

[52] *STh* I-II, q. 59, a. 1.

to prospective shame or to what they call the "emotional disposition" of the *sense of shame*, because this latter implies that its possessor is disposed to feel shame in an appropriate way.[53] Aquinas himself never really speaks of shame as a disposition. The notion of disposition in his understanding, moreover, is different from that of habit. Habit is a perfect quality, which is not easily lost, whereas disposition is an imperfect quality, and can be easily lost. He says metaphorically, "a disposition becomes a habit, just as a boy becomes a man."[54] Even if it is granted that a sense of shame implies some disposition, Aquinas would argue that it still lacks another important requisite to count as a full-fledged virtue: it does not operate from deliberate choice. He admits that an appropriately felt shame observes the rational mean and thus fulfills one important requisite included in the definition of virtue. Yet he further argues that "observing the mean is not sufficient for the notion of virtue, but it is requisite, in addition to this, that it be an elective habit, that is to say, operating from choice [*ex electione operans*]."[55] For Aquinas, the arousal of shame is impulsive; it does not *directly* proceed from judgment of reason and choice: "shame's movement does not result from choice but from an impulse of passion."[56] Shame is not something one typically feels at will or by design; it occurs instantaneously, without one's anticipatory consent.

We recall that a moral virtue is a habit that from its very nature is related to the will, inasmuch as "a habit is that which one uses when one wills."[57] The movement of shame, by contrast, may occur against one's will, even when one knows well that one need not feel it. Aquinas gives an example of a religious mendicant who feels shame when he must go begging under the vow of poverty.[58] Though the mendicant knows that he is actually doing a virtuous action (i.e., begging because of a spiritual motive) and desires not to feel shame, nonetheless, since in public opinion begging is deemed

[53] See Kristjánsson, *Virtuous Emotions*, 96-97; Raymond, "Shame and Virtue in Aristotle," 115.

[54] *STh* I-II, q. 49, a. 2.

[55] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 1.

[56] Ibid.

[57] *STh* I-II, q. 50, a. 5.

[58] *Contra Impug.*, p. 2, c. 6, ad 22.

B) Shame as an Integral Part of Temperance

Acquired temperance is a cardinal virtue that enables a person to control properly or to moderate his concupiscible appetite in general and his desire for the bodily pleasures regarding food, drink, and sex—the "pleasures of touch"—in particular. Temperance directs and orders one's pursuit and enjoyment of bodily pleasures so that these latter become well-ordered, in the sense of becoming consonant with the good of reason. The desires for food, drink, and sex are common to human and nonhuman animals. Temperance, however, renders human beings capable of living such bodily desires in a distinctively human way, that is, in accordance with their dignity as rational beings. This means that a temperate man desires food and drink of a reasonable quantity and quality—that is, necessary for the preservation of his well-being, and becoming to his given circumstances. He also desires to have sexual relations only with his wife and only on appropriate occasions. His well-ordered bodily desires and pleasures reflect the dignity of rational animality. In temperance, for Aquinas, the beauty and honorability (*honestas*) proper to men as rational animals shine more brightly.

The vice of intemperance, by contrast, denotes a bad habit of indulging the desire for bodily pleasures in an excessive or unproportioned way, that is, more than as is necessary and becoming. Consequently, whereas beauty and honorability are attributes most appropriate for temperance, disgrace and shamefulness are attributes most appropriate for intemperance. This is, according to Aquinas, for two reasons. First, intemperance is "most repugnant to human excellence, since it is about pleasures common to us and the lower animals."[89] Second, intemperance is "most repugnant to man's clarity or beauty, inasmuch as the pleasures which are the matter of intemperance dim the light of reason from which all the splendor and beauty of virtue arises; wherefore these pleasures are described as being most slavish."[90] Thus, whereas temperance, which consists in a certain moderate and fitting proportion, "more than any other virtue lays claim to

[89] *STh* II-II, q. 142, a. 4.
[90] Ibid. (translation slightly modified)

a certain comeliness [*decorum*], the vices of intemperance excel others in disgrace [*turpitudinem*]."[91]

Shame (*verecundia*) together with a sense of honor (*honestas*) constitute, according to Aquinas, the integral parts of temperance. An integral part of a cardinal virtue is distinguished from its subjective parts (i.e., various species of virtues, distinct from one another according to their specific objects but not from the cardinal virtue which is present in each species according to its entire essence and operative power) and from its potential parts (i.e., other virtues connected with the cardinal virtue but that are directed to secondary acts or matters, without having the whole power of the principal virtue). The integral parts of a virtue are the conditions whose concurrence is necessary for the perfect act of the virtue: "integral parts are those by which the perfection of the whole is integrated."[92] It should be underlined, however, that "properly speaking, these integral parts are themselves *not virtues*, but only conditions for the virtue that integrates them."[93] Integral parts, according to Aquinas, belong to the constitution of the whole, as wall, roof, and foundation are constitutive parts of the whole building of a house. Yet, he says, "the integral whole is not present in every single part, neither according to its essence nor according to its power; as the whole [essence of the] house is not in its walls, so the whole virtue is not [in its parts]; and consequently, the integral whole is in no way predicated of its parts."[94] Hence, "house" is not predicated of a wall, since the essence of a house is not contained in a wall.

Shame and a sense of honor are components of the cardinal virtue of temperance, in the sense that the concurrence of both is necessary for the realization of temperance, just as the presence of wall, roof, and foundation is necessary for the construction of a house. Aquinas says that through shame "one recoils from the disgrace that is contrary to temperance," while through a sense of honor "one loves the beauty of temperance."[95] On the one hand, the sense of honor

[91] *STh* II-II, q. 143, a. 1.
[92] *STh* III, q. 90, a. 3, s.c.
[93] III *Sent*., d. 33, q. 3, a. 1, qcla. 1.
[94] Ibid., ad 1.
[95] *STh* II-II, q. 143, a. 1.

as the affection for being worthy of honor in a more positive fashion inspires one to deal with one's desire for food, drink, and sex in a decent or becoming manner. On the other hand, shame as fear of disgrace or dishonor in a more negative fashion prompts one to distance oneself from indulging one's desire for the pleasures of touch in an indecent or unbecoming manner. A person with a sense of honor has a vivid consciousness of his dignity as a rational being and aspires to conduct himself in a way that corresponds to his dignity, namely, in a way that is "well-proportioned to the spiritual clarity of reason."[96] A person with a sense of shame remains vigilant not to overstep the boundary of what is decent or becoming with regard to his pursuit and enjoyment of bodily pleasures, in order not to fall into disgrace or dishonor. In this respect, Aquinas contends that "a sense of shame fosters a sense of honor by removing that which is contrary to the latter, but not so as to attain the perfection of the sense of honor."[97]

Thus, by inspiring one with the horror of whatever is disgraceful, a prospective sense of shame is helpful in motivating one to temper one's concupiscible appetite, especially the desire for the pleasure of touch. Constituting an integral part of temperance, though, does not mean that shame enters into the essence of temperance, for temperance is more than a mere sense of shame. Drawing on St. Ambrose, Aquinas states that, filling one with the fear of dishonorableness, "shame lays the first foundation of temperance."[98] A sense of shame, which arises as an impulse of feeling rather than as an act of freedom, is only a prelude to temperance: "shame is a part of temperance, not as though it entered into its essence, but as disposing to it."[99] A temperate person will still need to make a deliberate choice as to whether following the impulse of his sense of shame is right or not, for such an impulse at times can be misleading. As the example of the religious mendicant above indicates, it can happen that an action one has judged to be right (or

[96] *STh* II-II, q. 145, a. 2.

[97] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 1, ad 3.

[98] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 4, ad 4. Aquinas refers to Ambrose's *De officiis ministrorum* 1.211.

[99] Ibid.

temperate, just, courageous, etc.) sometimes appears disgraceful to others, to such an extent that in order to be able to perform the action, one needs first to overcome the assault of the natural feeling of shame. Shame alone, being an impulsive passion, will not produce good works unless it is accompanied by the necessary virtues.

III. Shame, Humility, and Magnanimity

Like any other passion, shame can be good or bad depending on whether it regards the right object, whether it is felt in the right ways, and whether it ultimately leads to good acts. Aquinas, often quoting Sirach 4:21, says that there is shame that leads to glory and grace, but that there also is shame that leads to sin.[100] Shame leads to sin when it drives one to hide rather than either to confess one's fault or to confront its evil consequences, if any, for others. Shame is likewise bad when it leads one to servile conformity for the sake of appeasing certain others, for this means that shame leads one into the sins of dissimulation and hypocrisy, which are opposed to the virtue of truthfulness whereby one presents oneself to be what one is. Shame is not laudable when it sends one into despair or into violent rage. Contrariwise, shame is good when it leads one in a prospective manner to shun sinful actions, or when in a retrospective manner it leads one to repentance. Feeling ashamed for the sin done, according to Aquinas, can become the beginning of a life reform (*principium emendationis vitae*).[101]

Although opprobrium or reproach that triggers shame is "properly due to sin alone," Aquinas notes, "nevertheless, at least in human opinion, it regards any kind of defect."[102] In shame one's defect or shortcoming is revealed both to oneself and to others, which revelation can diminish both one's self-respect and the respect of others. Consequently, the ashamed person typically has no courage to appear and to speak before others; he tends to cast down his eyes as though not daring to

[100] See *In Ps* 24, n. 3; *In Ps* 34, n. 17; *In Ps* 39, n. 7; *In Matt*., c. 18, lect. 2; *Super I Cor*., c. 4, lect. 3.

[101] *In Ps*. 6, n. 7.

[102] *STh* II-II, q. 144, a. 2, ad 2.

be due to his humility-informed magnanimity. Magnanimity renders someone capable of performing a virtuous action even if such an action looks disgraceful in the eyes of others. The magnanimous man does take care of his good name. Yet he does great acts of virtue not for the sake of human glory, as he does not take empty pleasure in human praise. Insofar as he strives more to be *honorable* than to be *honored*, and cares more for truth than for opinion, he is able to despise any honor or disgrace that he does not actually deserve. Informed by humility, the magnanimous man is not ashamed of shame, including shame due to disgrace according to truth; he is liable to shame where there is adequate reason to feel it. Instead of paralyzing him, shame can motivate him to improve by amending the defective aspect of his self.

CONCLUSION

Unlike some Aristotelian scholars mentioned in the introduction, therefore, Aquinas does not see why the Stagirite should have recognized shame, particularly in its prospective form of a sense of shame, as a genuine moral virtue. There is no question, *pace* Raymond, that one's good name or reputation is an external good that renders an individual more trustworthy and thus guarantees him more success in his social life. Indeed, by doing virtuous acts, a virtuous person desires not only to be good but also to be reputed as good. It is in his interest to avoid anything that would bring him disrepute. Nevertheless, good reputation is not the ultimate good, and above a good reputation there are other still more valuable goods. In Aquinas's perspective, if one shuns doing what is morally more valuable only in order to avoid disrepute, then one must either be imperfect with regard to his virtuous habits—perhaps he is a young moral learner who relies heavily on his sense of shame—or be lacking in humility-informed magnanimity. Shaped by the paired virtues of humility and magnanimity, truly virtuous

Ethics of Aquinas, ed. S. J. Pope (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2002), 232-43. In the case of shame that generates despair, the theological virtue of hope can have a significant role to play. The theological virtue of hope enables the ashamed person not to lose sight of the goal of perfect happiness and not to give up the arduous journey of reforming or reinventing one's defective self but to lean on God as the savior and friend who will help him to complete that journey.

persons are able to transcend the passion of shame and to forgo their good reputation in order to attain some higher goods (e.g., a spiritual good).

Thus, rather than relying on a sense of shame, truly virtuous persons should rely on their rational judgment and deliberate choice. This is not to say that, in Aquinas's account, retrospective shame or a prospective sense of shame play no role at all in the virtuous man's life. Since virtuous persons are not morally infallible, they might appropriately feel retrospective shame when they lapse into base actions. Additionally, inasmuch as virtuous persons are mindful of their dignity and honorability, a prospective sense of shame continues to inspire them to act temperately. On this point, Kristjánsson, who criticizes Aristotle for having undervalued the role of a sense of shame in virtuous persons, would happily agree with Aquinas. That notwithstanding, for Aquinas the temperate person cannot simply follow his sense of shame either, for at times the sense of shame can be misleading. The temperate person still needs to deliberate whether his sense of shame is rationally justifiable or not. Hence, although shame can be virtuous, that is, morally praiseworthy, especially in the humble and magnanimous person, it still falls short of the perfect notion of a moral virtue because of the very fact that it does not operate from choice and needs to be sustained by other virtues in order to produce a beneficial outcome.