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## Personal relations and moral residue

ELEONORE STUMP

### ABSTRACT

To what extent can one be saddled with responsibility or guilt as a result of actions committed not by oneself but by others with whom one has a familial or national connection or some other communal association? The issue of communal guilt has been extensively discussed, and there has been no shortage of writers willing to apply the notion of communal responsibility and guilt to Germany after the Holocaust. But the whole notion of communal guilt is deeply puzzling. How can evil actions cast a shadow over the future in this way to generate obligations or guilt on the part of those who did not in any way participate in those actions? In this article, I will focus on a question that is a smaller-scale analogue of the question of communal guilt, one which raises similar perplexities but in a more tractable way. I will concentrate on the restoration of relations with perpetrators of great evil in cases in which their whole-hearted repentance is not in doubt. Most of us feel a strong antipathy to the restoration of relations with such a perpetrator. What explains and supports that emotive reaction is the subject of this article, and its conclusions are suggestive of promising approaches to the question of communal guilt.

*Key words* Aquinas, communal guilt, forgiveness, Holocaust, repentance

## INTRODUCTION

In the terrible days in Hitler's bunker in Berlin, as the Nazi dream of a thousand-year reign was turning into a nightmare of defeat, Magda Goebbels, wife of Hitler's master propagandist Joseph Goebbels, killed all six of her children by Goebbels before committing suicide herself. Before she put her children to death, she told Traudl Junge, Hitler's secretary in the bunker, that 'she preferred for her children to die than for them to live in the disgrace of Germany that would be left'.<sup>1</sup> In a letter to her sister-in-law from her first marriage, Magda explained her resolution to kill the children in this way:

In the world coming [after the war] Joseph will be regarded as one of the greatest criminals Germany has ever produced. His children would have to hear that daily; people would torment them, despise and humiliate them. They would bear the burden of everything that he has done. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Magda's murder of her children is heart-rendingly horrible, and most of us would be inclined to reject her explanation for it as wholeheartedly as the dreadful action itself. And yet, unquestionably, life *was* hard for the surviving children of the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Martin Borman, Jr, the son of Hitler's factotum Martin Borman, was only 15 years old at the end of the war, not of an age to bear any personal guilt for the actions of his monstrous father; but in his adult years his heritage was a source of great pain to him. He was a member of a group of people who banded together to share their burden as children of Nazis. One member of that group, Thomas Heydrich, whose uncle was Reinhard Heydrich, Himmler's notorious second-in-command, and whose father was also in the German military, spoke for the rest of the group when he said of his own father:

[I]f he had stayed alive, it would have helped me very much: he would have shouldered the guilt I carried for twenty years. I would have been free. . . .<sup>3</sup>

We might suppose that the distress of these adult children of Nazis arose simply from the entirely unjust abhorrence that other people transferred to them from their fathers, and no doubt many did suffer from being marginalized by others. But, in fact, the worst of their psychic suffering stemmed much more from another source, namely, their own burden of guilt and their sense of the horror of their patrimony. In response to a question about his childless status, the son of the head of the Gestapo in Braunschweig said, 'Children? No, we have no children. How could we?'<sup>4</sup> The daughter of a general in the Einsatzgruppen responsible for the murder of Jews in Russia learned the truth about her father only in adulthood; and she said:

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... as of then I always wanted to punish, hurt myself; if I had this father, I told myself ... I must pay for it.<sup>5</sup>

The wife of Hans Frank's oldest son, Norman, said about her husband, 'His father ruined his life. He doesn't think he has a right to be happy after what his father did.'<sup>6</sup>

There is surely something perplexing about the distress of these and other Germans who had family members implicated in the Holocaust. We might suppose that they suffer from irrational guilt, which should be dealt with by a combination of good therapy and psychoactive drugs of the right sort. And yet a little reflection shows that the matter must be more complicated. Most of us also feel it was appropriate for Germany to pay reparations, even if the cost of those reparations fell on those who were children or not yet born at the time of the war. If it were the case that the children of Nazi perpetrators of the Holocaust were not in any way compromised by their heritage, it seems that, *a fortiori*, there was no obligation of reparation on the part of Germans who were not adults during the war or were born only after it.

The psychic suffering of the children of Nazi criminals and the widespread acceptance of the need for Germany to pay war reparations raise puzzling philosophical questions, most notably, the question of communal guilt. To what extent can one be saddled with responsibility or guilt as a result of actions committed not by oneself but by others with whom one has a familial or national connection or some other communal association? The issue of communal guilt has been extensively discussed.<sup>7</sup> It is a large, complicated issue, which has been a problem in Western philosophy at least since the time early Christian writers proposed that all humanity was somehow united in Adam and therefore shared in the guilt of Adam's original sin.<sup>8</sup> There has been no shortage of writers willing to apply the notion of communal responsibility and guilt to Germany after the Holocaust. For example, approving of a similar sentiment on the part of Karl Jaspers, A. Zvie Bar-On says of Germans, 'The guilt is collective and so is the punishment.'<sup>9</sup> But it is harder to feel the pull of this attitude when one remembers that the collective includes such people as Thomas Heydrich, who was 11 years old when the war ended. In what sense is a person such as Heydrich deserving of a share in collective punishment?

The mirror image of the notion of an inheritance of guilt or a collective responsibility for reparations is what is sometimes spoken of as an obligation to remember a great evil.<sup>10</sup> In what sense can those who did not participate in the Holocaust, who are altogether guiltless of it, who do not have so much as a communal bond with those who were guilty of it, have an obligation to remember it? We might suppose that some prudential good is served by remembering it, as suggested by the dictum that those who do not learn from

the past are condemned to repeat it. But why should there be a *moral obligation* on anybody's part to remember it?

Both the notion of communal guilt for the Holocaust and the notion of an obligation to remember it are deeply puzzling. How can evil actions cast a shadow over the future in this way to generate obligations or guilt on the part of those who did not in any way participate in those actions?

In this article, I will leave this large-scale question to one side for the sake of focusing instead on a little-league analogue of it which raises similar perplexities. If we can find some solution to the littler problem, it will shed some light on the larger problem of communal responsibility or guilt for past evil on the part of those who did not commit the evil. My chief concern here is only the smaller puzzle, but in the conclusion of this article I will say something briefly about its implications for the larger problem.

### A THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

To see this smaller puzzle, conduct a thought experiment. Suppose that Joseph Goebbels did not commit suicide after his wife killed their six children and herself; suppose instead that he chose to live and in fact survived till some time after the war. Suppose as well that immediately after the war something – never mind what – occurred which caused Goebbels to see himself as the rest of the world now sees him, as a moral monster, and that in consequence of that awful insight into himself, Goebbels had a genuine conversion of heart and repented all his earlier evil with passion. (I want to call attention to the fact that I am stipulating that the conversion and repentance were genuine and genuinely fervent, so as to ward off questions of a sort irrelevant to the issue of concern to me.) Suppose, too, that Goebbels was duly tried and given a punishment appropriate to his war crimes, though, for the sake of the thought experiment, let it also be the case that that punishment was delayed and not meted out to him for some period of time.

Now consider Goebbels in this period after his repentance and the assignment of punishment (but before the infliction of the punishment, to avoid complicating the thought experiment needlessly). If you had been a contemporary of Goebbels's then, what would your attitude towards him have been? Would you have been willing to admit him to the circle of your friends? Would you have wanted your children to have contact with him? Would you have been willing to have him at your dinner table? For very many people, the answer to these latter questions is an adamant 'no'.

The unshakeability of this 'no' can coexist with bafflement about what could justify it. Before Goebbels was repentant, what would have rendered it objectionable to include him in family life or among friends is just that the non-repentant Goebbels was a morally evil man. But the same thing cannot

be said about the repentant Goebbels. His beliefs and desires are not the same as those of any ordinary human being. Some might suppose that his past evil casts a shadow over the future in this way to generate obligations or guilt on the part of those who did not in any way participate in those actions. But in my thought experiment, I will stipulate that the conversion and repentance were genuine and genuinely fervent, so as to ward off questions of a sort irrelevant to the issue of concern to me. Suppose, too, that Goebbels was duly tried and given a punishment appropriate to his war crimes, though, for the sake of the thought experiment, let it also be the case that that punishment was delayed and not meted out to him for some period of time.

So what is there about his past evil which casts a shadow over the future in this way to generate obligations or guilt on the part of those who did not in any way participate in those actions? What is it which leaves the repentant Goebbels morally tainted by his past evil? This is the smaller puzzle. In this thought experiment, I will explicate in some detail Aquinas's notion of a stain on the soul. I will explicate in some detail Aquinas's notion of a psychic stain. I will explicate in some detail Aquinas's notion of a stain on the soul. I will explicate in some detail Aquinas's notion of a psychic stain. I will explicate in some detail Aquinas's notion of a stain on the soul.

In my view, significant light is thrown on the larger problem in a simpler and more direct way by what it is about the past evil of an individual which casts a shadow over the future in this way to generate obligations or guilt on the part of a family or a nation which were not participants in that historical event. In my view, significant light is thrown on the larger problem in a simpler and more direct way by what it is about the past evil of an individual which casts a shadow over the future in this way to generate obligations or guilt on the part of a family or a nation which were not participants in that historical event.

### THE BACKGROUND

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Aquinas's argument for the presence of other moral defects that a morally evil man has.

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EXPERIMENT

A thought experiment. Suppose that after his wife killed their six children he was able to live and in fact survived till some time immediately after the war something caused Goebbels to see himself as the moral monster, and that in consequence Goebbels had a genuine conversion of heart and confession. (I want to call attention to the fact that conversion and repentance were genuine and not questions of a sort irrelevant to the fact that Goebbels was duly tried and given the punishment he deserved, though, for the sake of the experiment, suppose that that punishment was delayed for a period of time. After his repentance and the assignment of the punishment, to avoid any doubt (and needless). If you had been a contemporary of your attitude towards him have been? Would you include him in the circle of your friends? Would you have dinner with him? Would you have dinner with him? For very many people, the answer is an adamant 'no'. The fact that he coexist with bafflement about what a repentant, what would have rendered his life or among friends is just that the fact that he is an evil man. But the same thing cannot

be said about the repentant Goebbels. If he is genuinely repentant (and by stipulation in my thought experiment he is), then his actions, his volitions, his beliefs and desires are not those a morally evil man has. His moral condition in his repentant state is therefore, apparently, no different from that of any ordinary human being. Some people who favor retributive punishment might suppose that his past evil saddles him with a debt of punishment, and that this debt makes a morally significant difference to our attitudes towards him. But in my thought experiment, the appropriate punishment has been assigned him; only its implementation is delayed. Since this is so, it is hard to see what difference the mere delay of the punishment could make to our moral attitude towards him. Any morally beneficial effect on the character of the perpetrator which has been claimed to spring from punishment is already present in him in his repentant condition.

So what is there about his past evil actions, volitions, beliefs and desires which casts a shadow over our present and future attitudes towards him? What is it which leaves the repentant, reformed Goebbels apparently still morally tainted by his past evil? Clearly, this puzzle is analogous to the problem of communal guilt or responsibility, but it presents elements of that larger problem in a simpler and more manageable form. If we can understand what it is about the past evil of an individual person that appropriately overshadows our attitude towards that person when he is wholly repentant, then perhaps some light will be shed on the way in which the past history of evil on the part of a family or a nation affects the responsibilities of others who were not participants in that history but nonetheless seem to inherit guilt or obligations because of it.

In my view, significant light is thrown on the puzzle in this thought experiment by a part of Aquinas's ethics not much discussed in recent times, namely, his notion of a stain on the soul. In the next section, I will begin by explaining the context of that notion within Aquinas's general theory of action. Then I will explicate in some detail Aquinas's claim that serious moral wrongdoing leaves what he calls 'a stain' on the soul.<sup>11</sup> Finally, I will attempt to show what help his notion of a psychic stain gives with the problems raised by my thought experiment involving Goebbels. I will argue that Aquinas's account helps us to understand not only why the adamant 'no' towards Goebbels in my thought experiment is warranted but also why that 'no' is compatible with our ordinary understanding of the positive moral status of a repentant person.

THE BACKGROUND: AQUINAS'S THEORY OF ACTION

Aquinas's argument for the presence of a stain on the soul depends on ruling out other moral defects that a morally wrong action (even a repented morally

wrong action) can leave in an agent. To appreciate his argument, then, it is important to understand something of his general theory of morally right and wrong actions.

For Aquinas, any action, even a mental action, is the product of a coordinated activity on the part of an agent's intellect and will.<sup>12</sup> Aquinas takes the will to be not a neutral faculty, as we generally suppose when we think of the faculty or module responsible for volitions; rather, it is a certain bent or inclination. The will, Aquinas says, is a hunger, an appetite, for goodness.<sup>13</sup> By 'goodness' in this connection Aquinas means goodness in general, not this or that specific good thing; that is, the will is an inclination for what is good, where the phrase 'what is good' is used attributively and not referentially.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, the good here is the good broadly considered, as distinct from the moral good only.<sup>15</sup>

By itself the will makes no determinations of goodness; apprehending or judging things as good is the business of the intellect. The intellect presents to the will as good certain things or actions under certain descriptions in particular circumstances, and the will wills them because it is an appetite for the good and they are presented to it as good. For this reason, the intellect is said to move the will not as an efficient cause but as a final cause, because its presenting something as good moves the will as an end moves an appetite.<sup>16</sup> On Aquinas's account, the will wills only what the intellect presents at that time as good under some description. Acts of will are for something apprehended or cognized as good at a particular time in particular circumstances, as distinct from something which is good considered unconditionally or abstractly. But all things (other than God and happiness) are such that they can in principle be considered good under some descriptions and not good under others, so that there is nothing about the intellect's apprehension of them which must constrain the will of any agent always to want them.

On the other hand, the will in its turn also moves the intellect. In fact, for Aquinas, the will exercises some degree of efficient causality over the intellect. In some circumstances, it can command the intellect directly to adopt or to reject a particular belief.<sup>17</sup> It can also move the intellect by directing it to attend to some things and to neglect others,<sup>18</sup> or even to stop thinking about something altogether. Since the will wills something only in case the intellect presents it as some sort of good, the fact that the will can command the intellect to stop thinking about something means that the will can, indirectly, turn itself off, at least with regard to a particular action or issue. (This is only a limited ability on the part of the will, however, since the apprehensions of the intellect can occur without any preceding act of will and so in some cases may force the issue back on the agent's attention.)

If the intellect does present something to the will as good, then, because the will is an appetite for the good, the will wills it – unless the will directs the intellect to reconsider, to direct its attention to something else, or to stop

considering the matter at hand. The intellect's presenting such action as an act on the part of the intellect and part of the will directing the attention on Aquinas's account of intellectual feedback system composed of the passions, a complication I am left although Aquinas's account of the not committed to seeing moral mistakes in deliberation, since the by the will. In cases of incontinence presenting something as good which that the intellect, influenced by the desires to represent the thing in (tion) and not good (under a difficult double-minded.<sup>19</sup> In the last analysis person represents as the best alternative not that which the agent takes to the abstract.

If we remember this part of Aquinas's identification of the will as a hunger, we make a mistake and identify the will as a toggle switch with three positions of the will is more complicated. For example, the will can will something specific commands to body parts. Hence what intellect presents to it is a function of the intellect. Finally, because dispositions or habits, so that it can be something. There can be habits which these can also be influential in which

On Aquinas's theory of action, not only from a moral flaw in the intellect, which apprehends good or which takes a lesser good for a greater good. Aquinas recognizes habits or dispositions which render similar wrong acts in the future. The he recognizes virtues and vices of example, wisdom is an intellectual moral discernment on matters of however, can build up in the intellect habit or disposition of folly, which

to appreciate his argument, then, it is his general theory of morally right and

tal action, is the product of a coordination of intellect and will.<sup>12</sup> Aquinas takes the general theory to suppose when we think of the will; rather, it is a certain bent or inclination, an appetite, for goodness.<sup>13</sup> By this means goodness in general, not this or that, is an inclination for what is good, and is attributed to the intellect referentially,<sup>14</sup> and not broadly considered, as distinct from

actions of goodness; apprehending or directing the intellect. The intellect presents actions under certain descriptions in which it fills them because it is an appetite for good. For this reason, the intellect is moved by the cause but as a final cause, because its end is the will as an end moves an appetite.<sup>16</sup> The intellect wills what the intellect presents at that time. Acts of will are for something apprehended at a particular time in particular circumstances, and good considered unconditionally or as good (and happiness) are such that they are good under some descriptions and not good under others about the intellect's apprehension of what any agent always to want them.

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Directing the will as good, then, because the will wills it – unless the will directs the intellect to something else, or to stop

considering the matter at hand. The will's doing this is, of course, a result of the intellect's presenting such actions on the part of the will as good, and such an act on the part of the intellect may itself be a result of previous acts on the part of the will directing the attention of the intellect. It is apparent, then, that on Aquinas's account of intellect and will, the will is part of a dynamic feedback system composed of the will and the intellect (but also including the passions, a complication I am leaving to one side here). For this reason, although Aquinas's account of the will assigns a large role to intellect, he is not committed to seeing morally wrong actions simply as instances of mistakes in deliberation, since the intellect's deliberations are also influenced by the will. In cases of incontinence, where the intellect seems to be representing something as good which the will is not willing, Aquinas would say that the intellect, influenced by the will, is in fact being moved by opposed desires to represent the thing in question as both good (under one description) and not good (under a different description), so that the intellect is double-minded.<sup>19</sup> In the last analysis, what the intellect of the incontinent person represents as the best alternative in these circumstances at this time is not that which the agent takes to be good considered unconditionally or in the abstract.

If we remember this part of Aquinas's account and also take seriously his identification of the will as a hunger or an appetite, we will be less likely to make a mistake and identify the will on his account as nothing more than a toggle switch with three positions: accept, reject, and off. Aquinas's account of the will is more complicated than such an identification implies. For example, the will can will something with more or less strength.<sup>20</sup> It can give specific commands to body parts. Under the pull of the passions, it can influence what intellect presents to it as good by selectively directing the attention of the intellect. Finally, because it is an appetite, the will can have dispositions or habits, so that it can be more or less readily inclined to want something. There can be habits or dispositions of the intellect as well, and these can also be influential in what an agent chooses to do.

On Aquinas's theory of action, then, any act of moral wrongdoing stems not only from a moral flaw in the will but also from a corresponding flaw in the intellect, which apprehends as an apparent good what is not a real good or which takes a lesser good as better than something which is in fact a greater good. Aquinas recognizes that repeated wrong acts can build up habits or dispositions which render a person more liable to the same or similar wrong acts in the future. These are vices, in his terminology; in fact, he recognizes virtues and vices of the intellect as well as of the will. So, for example, wisdom is an intellectual virtue which makes its possessor apt in moral discernment on matters of great weight. Enough moral wrongdoing, however, can build up in the intellect the opposite of wisdom, namely, the habit or disposition of folly, which is a kind of moral stupidity in serious

cases. More familiar cases of morally wrong habits, such as the habit of avarice, are vices in the will.

Any morally wrong act, then, can be considered to leave the agent morally flawed in three respects. The wrong act itself springs from an erring intellect and from a wrongly configured will; and it either contributes to the formation of an intellectual or moral vice or springs from one of them.

The repentance of a wrong act undoes at least some of these flaws. On Aquinas's theory of action, when an agent S does a morally wrong act A, his intellect (perhaps itself under the influence of a flawed will) erroneously apprehends doing A at that time in those circumstances as the good to be pursued, and S accordingly forms a morally wrong volition to do A. If nothing external to the will impedes that volition, S then does A. When S repents, his intellect accepts that doing A was in fact morally wrong, and his will rejects the doing of A, rather than being configured by the desire for it. In consequence of his repentance, then, the flawed configuration of S's intellect and will are removed and replaced by morally good configurations instead.

This can happen in such a way as to leave relatively untouched the building dispositions or habits in the intellect and will, as often happens when a person repents some particular act of moral wrongdoing without a deeper change of heart. But if the repentance is deep enough and fervent enough, then it may also alter for the better the habits of the intellect and will which were building or already in place inclining the agent to morally wrong acts. It is hard to find clear cases of repentance of this sort among well-known Nazis. The most famous (but also controversial) real-life case is Albert Speer, whose *apparently* genuine repentance distinguished him from other high-ranking Nazis, such as the flagrantly unrepentant Goering, in the period immediately after the war. It is easier to find cases in which the change of heart and mind, the repentance, as it were, which erases previous dispositions, is dubiously moral if it is moral at all. Himmler's case is not untypical. Himmler was fervently Catholic in his youth; at 19, he wrote in his diary, 'Come what may, I shall always love God, pray to Him, and adhere to the Catholic Church and defend it.'<sup>21</sup> And yet five years later, in 1924, Otto Strasser (brother of the infamous Gregor Strasser) wrote about Himmler, 'Comes from a strong Catholic family, but does not want to know anything about the Church.'<sup>22</sup> By the time Himmler's father died a decade or so later, although Himmler did attend the Catholic funeral, in public comments he relegated the Catholic liturgy of the funeral to 'all the festivals, all the celebrations in human life, in our life, whose Christian forms and style we cannot accept inwardly, which we can no longer be a party to, and for which, in so and so many cases, we have not yet found a new form'.<sup>23</sup>

## AQUINAS'S NOTION

Given his theory of action, then, tance (at least repentance of a sufficient for wiping out the flaws introduced into an agent by his understanding of the nature of the person should have the same moral in question. But this is not in fact repentant agent, there remains what Aquinas himself poses an objection

... if sin causes a stain, this stain is a privation. If it is something like a habit: for nothing else seems to be in the position or habit, for a stain caused by a position or habit, as is evident in the case of a mortal sin of prodigality, and of the opposite vice. Therefore, the stain is positive in the soul. Similarly, all sins agree as far as turning away from the good would follow that there is only one stain, and it is not the effect of sin.<sup>24</sup>

Here Aquinas's putative objector claims that the stain left on the psyche of a person S who does a morally wrong act A leaves a stain on S's psyche, the stain being either in the presence of some moral disposition or habit, or in the absence of something good that was previously present. It can be neither of these, and the stain is the soul left by moral wrongdoing.

The putative objector argues that any flaw that consisted in a particular disposition or habit of such wrongdoing would have to be (or be the absence of) a disposition or habit of such wrongdoing. He raises the example of a person who has a vice by some single act of moral wrongdoing. (Imagine a sad version of the prodigal, now at home, who has repented and resolves to hoard it, come what may. In such a case, on the argument in question, the dispositions in the will are removed, but the stain remains in the soul some stain from the fact of having been prodigal, that stain cannot be removed.)



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AQUINAS'S NOTION OF A STAIN ON THE SOUL

Given his theory of action, then, one would suppose that, for Aquinas, repen-  
tance (at least repentance of a sufficiently wholehearted sort) would be suf-  
ficient for wiping out the flaws of intellect and will, occurrent and habitual,  
introduced into an agent by his own moral wrongdoing. On Aquinas's  
understanding of the nature of moral wrongdoing, it seems as if a repentant  
person should have the same moral status as he did before the wrongdoing  
in question. But this is not in fact Aquinas's view. Even for a whole-heartedly  
repentant agent, there remains what Aquinas calls 'a stain on the soul'.

Aquinas himself poses an objection to this position of his of this sort:

... if sin causes a stain, this stain is either something positive, or a pure  
privation. If it is something positive, it can only be a disposition or  
habit: for nothing else seems to be caused by an act. But it is not a dis-  
position or habit, for a stain can remain even after the removal of a dis-  
position or habit, as is evident in the case of a man who has committed  
a mortal sin of prodigality, and then by mortally sinning acquires a habit  
of the opposite vice. Therefore the stain does not denote anything  
positive in the soul. Similarly, it is not a pure privation either. Because  
all sins agree as far as turning away and privation of grace go, and so it  
would follow that there is only one stain for all sins. Therefore the stain  
is not the effect of sin.<sup>24</sup>

Here Aquinas's putative objector is canvassing the possibilities for the effects  
left on the psyche of a person S who does a morally wrong act A. If S's doing  
A leaves a stain on S's psyche, then, the objector says, that stain has to consist  
either in the presence of some new flaw in S's psyche or in the absence of  
something good that was previously in S's psyche. But, the objector argues,  
it can be neither of these, and therefore there is no such thing as a stain on  
the soul left by moral wrongdoing.

The putative objector argues for the first part of his conclusion in this way.  
Any flaw that consisted in a positive attribute caused by an act of moral  
wrongdoing would have to be (or contribute to the establishing of) a dispo-  
sition or habit of such wrongdoing. To rule out this alternative, the objector  
raises the example of a person who leaves entirely behind the habit of a former  
vice by some single act of moral wrongdoing of a sort opposed to that vice.  
(Imagine a sad version of the parable of the prodigal son, where the soul-  
seared prodigal, now at home, steals a huge sum of money from a neighbor  
and resolves to hoard it, come what may, so as never to be poor again.) In  
such a case, on the argument in the objection, the old prodigal habits and dis-  
positions in the will are removed. And so, the objection implies, if there still  
remains in the soul some stain from the former period when the agent sinned  
by being prodigal, that stain cannot be a habit or disposition of the will. Since,

on the objection, those are the only candidates for a positive attribute, then if there is a stain on the soul, it cannot be a positive attribute.

The argument for the second part of the objector's conclusion is more condensed. The stain left by an act of moral wrongdoing cannot consist in a privation or absence either, according to the putative objector, and that is because the only candidate for something which could be taken away from the psyche by a single morally wrong act would be grace itself. But every serious moral wrong deprives a psyche of God's grace, and so there would be only one kind of stain on the soul from every kind of moral evil – and this, the putative objector thinks, is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the claim that the stain could be a privation or an absence. It seems obvious (at least the objector takes it as obvious, and Aquinas agrees, as his rejoinder to the objection shows) that different kinds of wrongdoing stain the soul in different ways; avarice leaves a different sort of stain from that left by murder. Consequently, the stain cannot consist in a privation.

And so, since the argument in the objection has already concluded that the stain cannot be something positive in the psyche, in the view of the putative objector, the only candidates for something that could count as a stain are ruled out. Consequently, it is not true, the objector claims, that every seriously wrong moral act leaves a stain on the soul.

In reply to the objector's argument, Aquinas says:

The stain is neither something positive in the soul, nor does it signify a privation only: rather, it signifies a certain privation of the soul's brightness in relation to its cause, which is sin. And so diverse sins occasion diverse stains. It is like a shadow, which is the privation of light because of the obstacle of some body, and which varies according to the diversity of the bodies which constitute the obstacle [to the light].<sup>25</sup>

The heart of this reply of Aquinas's consists in the claim that the objector's argument rests on a false dilemma. There is a third possibility: in addition to the possibilities that the psychic stain is a disposition or an absence of some intrinsic characteristic, there is the third possibility that the stain is an absence of some relational characteristic which the soul would have had without the morally wrong act and which would have contributed to the soul's loveliness.

Aquinas's terminology here has a certain ambiguity to it. Sometimes he describes the stain as if it were a characteristic stemming from a relation of the agent's, as in the example in the quotation just given, where the stain seems to be a characteristic, namely, darkness, which is in a soul separated from the light of God. But in other places Aquinas seems to take the stain just as the very relation itself, as the separation of the soul from God, for example. For my purposes here, it is not important to sort out this ambiguity, and so for simplicity's sake I will take the stain on the soul to be the relation of being separated, from God or from some other person.

There are places where Aquinas (loveliness which is lost in sinning) : divine grace. So, for example, he

The stain of sin remains in the reason for this is that the stain [the soul] on account of [its] of the divine law. And therefore of this sort of light, the stain

Elsewhere, Aquinas contrasts the relational nature of the stain and the

... a stain implies a loss of brightness clear in the case of corporeal been transferred to the soul & body there are two sorts of brightness disposition of the members a supervening external luminosity of brightness, one which is a flash if it were an external flash of light

That this so-called flash of light to God is made explicit in other

Two things can be considered consequent stain. . . . [Now] if the stain is concerned, it is removed from the soul unless through being separated from the cause, which is the stain . . .<sup>28</sup>

Because the stain is a relational characteristic that caused the stain ceases. Aquinas

The act of sin produces distance; it is consequent on this distance causes local distance; and so, if the cause is not removed, so when the cause is removed.<sup>29</sup>

## WRONGDOING

Aquinas's idea that we have to think about the effect of moral wrong

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from some other person.

There are places where Aquinas speaks of the soul's comeliness (the come-  
liness which is lost in sinning) as a matter of the soul's being illumined by  
divine grace. So, for example, he says:

The stain of sin remains in the soul even when the act of sin is past. The  
reason for this is that the stain . . . implies a defect in the brightness [of  
the soul] on account of [its] withdrawal from the light of reason or  
of the divine law. And therefore so long as a human being remains out  
of this sort of light, the stain of sin remains in him.<sup>26</sup>

Elsewhere, Aquinas contrasts the soul's intrinsic characteristics with the rela-  
tional nature of the stain and the lost comeliness of the stained soul:

. . . a stain implies a loss of brightness as a result of some contact, as is  
clear in the case of corporeal things, from which the term 'stain' has  
been transferred to the soul by a figure of speech. Now, just as in the  
body there are two sorts of brightness, one resulting from the inward  
disposition of the members and from color, the other resulting from a  
supervening external luminosity, so too, in the soul, there are two sorts  
of brightness, one which is a habit and, as it were, intrinsic, the other as  
it were an external flash of light.<sup>27</sup>

That this so-called flash of light is a matter of standing in a certain relation  
to God is made explicit in other passages. So, for example, Aquinas says:

Two things can be considered with regard to sin: the guilty act, and the  
consequent stain. . . . [Now] if we speak of the removal of sin as far as  
the stain is concerned, it is evident that the stain of sin cannot be  
removed from the soul unless the soul is joined to God, since it was  
through being separated from God that it suffered the loss of its bright-  
ness, which is the stain . . .<sup>28</sup>

Because the stain is a relational characteristic, it can remain even when the sin  
that caused the stain ceases. Aquinas puts the point this way:

The act of sin produces distance from God, and the defect of brightness  
is consequent on this distance. Now, in the same way, local motion  
causes local distance; and so, just as when motion ceases, local distance  
is not removed, so when the act of sin ceases, the stain is not [thereby]  
removed.<sup>29</sup>

## WRONGDOING AND RELATIONSHIP

Aquinas's idea that we have to consider disrupted relationships when we  
think about the effect of moral wrongdoing on the perpetrator of the wrong

is helpful; and it seems right even if we bracket his theology and consider only human relationships. So, for example, consider the relations between Martin Heidegger and Hermann Staudinger, a Nobel-prize-winning chemist at the University of Freiburg during the time when Heidegger was rector. Documentary evidence recently come to light shows that Heidegger secretly betrayed Staudinger to the Gestapo and campaigned for his dismissal from the university because of the pacifist sentiments which Staudinger had expressed at an earlier period in his life.<sup>30</sup> Staudinger was interrogated by the Nazis on more than one occasion and, in the end, narrowly escaped the punishment Heidegger had covertly tried to bring about.

Suppose, what does not seem to have been the case, both that Staudinger knew about Heidegger's proceedings against him and that later Heidegger was entirely repentant for his actions. If (contrary to fact) Heidegger had been genuinely repentant, then, like the repentant Goebbels of my thought experiment, Heidegger's intellect and will, and the dispositions of his intellect and will, would (in his repentant state and with regard to Staudinger) have been those of a morally good person. Nonetheless, there would have been a problem for Staudinger as regards Heidegger. After Heidegger's initiation of the Nazi investigation of Staudinger, Heidegger stood in a different relation to Staudinger from that which he had had before. Afterwards, Heidegger was a person who had betrayed Staudinger's trust. Even if Heidegger were sorry for it, even if his repentance was so deep and evident that Staudinger had no concern about Heidegger's future trustworthiness, Heidegger's history then included his betrayal of Staudinger, as it did not before. Heidegger then had a relational property which he lacked before, namely, the relational property of having betrayed his colleague. And this relational property will clearly make a huge difference to Staudinger.<sup>31</sup>

It would be helpful here to be able to say in some more detail what it is to disrupt a relationship or to introduce distance into it. It will, however, be at least as hard to analyze the metaphors in these locutions as it is to say what constitutes the establishing of a personal relationship, or what closeness in personal relationships is. Our untutored efforts in that regard are not likely to be successful. Intimacy, we might say, is requisite. Intimacy, however, is simply a metaphor which is familiar enough to be unnoticed; the Latin word from which 'intimacy' comes means 'innermost' – but then being intimate is a matter of not being at a distance, and the explanation is not advanced. It is not surprising therefore that there are whole books given to trying to explain what goes into the establishing and maintaining of personal relationships.<sup>32</sup> Plainly, then, it will not be possible in passing here to spell out with any precision what goes into the disruption of a relationship or what conditions make a relationship distant. Consequently, for present purposes, I will rely on the ordinary intuitive sense we all have of what a distant or a disrupted relationship is.

It is clear that this relational property of Heidegger, even if we stipulate that so that no one, including even Staudinger, was further through any sort of penance that Heidegger had been forgiven in the manner Aquinas does, that something which would have been forgiven to Staudinger, some innocent person, some innocent brightness and was shadowed or do not mean to say that there is a relationship undermined in this sense. (I explain below in the section on the moral dimension confirm Aquinas's claim that the moral dimension diminishes or darkens, as Aquinas says, good.)

A case can be made that, contrary to what is often said, relational property is accompanied by a moral dimension. There are also relevant to a moral evaluation. There are also untouched by repentance alone, but it is not worthy that, in the moral evaluation, the moral dimension of the experiment, intellect and will were not other mental capacities relevant to the evaluation. For example, also is important in such a case is the agent's psychic economy that he has not morally wrong acts he did. It is not that Heidegger remembers what it was that it should.

This claim rests on intuitions which those inclined to resist them may find compelling. There are those which there seems to be something apart from the other effects of the moral dimension of having engaged in the physical example. Otto Moll was at the gas chambers at Auschwitz; he participated in the gas chambers with many people, and he himself shot the prisoners in the gas chambers. At his interrogation at Auschwitz he dissociate himself from the horror of the case that Moll was genuinely innocent (or was), there would have been some memory of his acts. That may be found such memories an affliction.<sup>33</sup> It is under the strain of the memories.<sup>3</sup>

There is also a sense in which the moral dimension of the psyche with a certain sort of moral

bracket his theology and consider only consider the relations between Martin Nobel-prize-winning chemist at the time when Heidegger was rector. Documentation shows that Heidegger secretly and campaigned for his dismissal from it sentiments which Staudinger had.<sup>30</sup> Staudinger was interrogated by the d, in the end, narrowly escaped the ed to bring about.

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It is clear that this relational property is relevant to a moral evaluation of Heidegger, even if we stipulate that Heidegger's repentance was deep enough so that no one, including even Staudinger, felt any inclination to afflict him further through any sort of penalty or punishment. Nonetheless, even if Heidegger had been forgiven in this way, it does seem right to think, as Aquinas does, that something which was good in his relationship to his colleague Staudinger, some innocence in their relationship, lost some of its brightness and was shadowed or stained by Heidegger's acts of betrayal. (I do not mean to say that there is no remedy for such a problem or that a relationship undermined in this way cannot in fact be restored, as I will explain below in the section on removing the stain. I mean here only to confirm Aquinas's claim that the wrongdoing, considered in itself alone, diminishes or darkens, as Aquinas puts it, something relational that was good.)

A case can be made that, contrary to Aquinas's position, this change of relational property is accompanied by changes in intrinsic characteristics which are also relevant to a moral evaluation of the agent and which are left untouched by repentance alone, however fervent that repentance is. It is noteworthy that, in the moral evaluation of the repentant Goebbels in my thought experiment, intellect and will were the only faculties canvassed. But there are other mental capacities relevant to the evaluation of an agent. Memory, for example, also is important in such cases. Surely, it makes a difference to an agent's psychic economy that he remembers what it was like to do the morally wrong acts he did. It will make a difference to Staudinger that Heidegger remembers what it was like to conspire against him, and it seems right that it should.

This claim rests on intuitions which strike me as very widely shared. But those inclined to resist them may want to consider more extreme cases in which there seems to be something staining just about the memory itself, apart from the other effects of the memory on the rememberer. The memory of having engaged in the physical torture of another human being is an example. Otto Moll was at the head of the work detail managing the exterminations at Auschwitz; he participated in the gassing and cremation of very many people, and he himself shot people too weak to be herded into the gas chambers. At his interrogation at Nuremberg, he evinced a strong desire to dissociate himself from the horrors he had engaged in. But even if it had been the case that Moll was genuinely repentant (and there is no evidence that he was), there would have been something morally compromising about the memory of his acts. That may be one reason why the repentant themselves find such memories an affliction.<sup>33</sup> Moll himself felt that his mind had cracked under the strain of the memories.<sup>34</sup>

There is also a sense in which engaging in a serious moral wrong leaves a psyche with a certain sort of moral slackness, as it were, a sort of moral

flabbiness which it would not otherwise have had. There are cognitive faculties other than intellect and memory, of a sort not imagined in Aquinas's philosophical psychology; and wrongdoing can leave them, too, morally worse. So, for example, consider the ability to simulate the mind of another human being, which is part of the cognitive capacities of all normal human adults.<sup>35</sup> Most people cannot simulate the mind of a person such as Moll; and we give expression to that incapacity by saying things like 'I can't imagine how a person can do a thing like that!' But perhaps someone who has engaged in violent crime or horrible wrongdoing is for that very reason more able to simulate the mind of the person who engages in other serious moral evils.

That a person is morally the worse for being able successfully to form this sort of simulation seems to me clear, although the moral flaw here is not a matter of the agent's having flawed desires or flawed beliefs about what is good, any more than the flaw in the memory of the torturer is. At any rate, that extensive participation in monumental evil can leave a psyche slack in a morally deplorable way, however exactly we are to analyze such slackness, is shown most clearly by the extreme case of Rudolf Hess. The psychiatrists who examined him at Nuremberg testified both to his self-serving cunning and to his 'great instability';<sup>36</sup> and Major Sheppard said of Hess, 'I believe by the nature of his make-up, which reflects cruelty, bestiality, deceit, conceit, arrogance, and a yellow streak, that he has lost his soul and has willingly permitted himself to become plastic in the hands of a more powerful and compelling personality.'<sup>37</sup>

And so Aquinas has conceded more to the argument in the objection quoted above than he needed to do, because he was restricting his consideration of possible changes effected in the psyche of a wrongdoer to only a subset of mental capacities, by focusing on privations or dispositions just in the will and the intellect.<sup>38</sup> Nonetheless, it is his notion of the stain as a matter of disturbed relationships that I want to highlight here.

### MORAL WRONGDOING AND ALIENATION

The relationship Aquinas focuses on is the wrongdoer's relationship to God, which is disrupted because by his wrong action the agent distances himself from God. But there are also other relationships, those just between human beings, to consider; as far as that goes, there is also the matter of a wrongdoer's relationship to himself. A person can be alienated or estranged from himself, as well as from others.<sup>39</sup>

Aquinas's own views entail that there will be such internal alienation in certain cases. According to Aquinas, in doing a morally wrong action a wrongdoer becomes divided within himself. That is because, on Aquinas's optimistic views of human nature, human beings are built in such a way that

neither a human intellect nor a will is directed to the good. For Aquinas, a human will is directed to the good but only in good. Someone who therefore also fails to be integrated with his intellect. To some extent, such a person will be alienated from himself. In order to will the wrong action, the intellect, which thus becomes divided, will reject what some other part of the person will doer will be alienated from himself.

It is worth noting in this context that the thought by others to be alienated from oneself. I saw his closest subordinate Heydrich is 'an unhappy man, completely alienated from himself.'

A person internally divided in himself cannot reveal his mind to another person. The mind from himself. And if he is divided, then whichever part of his divided mind will be separated from some other part. He will want something she does not want. For this reason, in a person who is internally divided, another person isolates himself from the person. The loneliness of the high-ranking Nazis was noted by their biographers. One of Ribbentrop's biographers noted that Ribbentrop was characterized by his 'extremely difficult to like'.<sup>41</sup> Even the most famous and social of the Nazi elite, Goebbels, got close to him. Indeed for all his fame, he was an outsider, keeping people at a distance.

It may be that an agent's alienation from himself is the evil she did, because the repentant person has ceased to be whole-hearted as well. But her alienation from herself alone, restore her relationship to herself. Spandau as well as he did and to be in prison because his friend Rudolf Hees unflinchingly to support Speer a Nazi. *Reich* appeared, Wolters was studying him or acknowledgement of his book. It seems clear, in hindsight, that a Nazi, found it prudent to distance himself from his devotion to Hitler was embarrassing.

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neither a human intellect nor a human will can fail entirely to be connected to the good. For Aquinas, a human being cannot be wholly integrated in evil, but only in good. Someone who fails to will the good in one way or another therefore also fails to be integrated within himself to one degree or another. To some extent, such a person will be divided in will and also double-minded. In order to will the wrong action, he will have to suppress something in his intellect, which thus becomes divided against itself; and some part of his will will reject what some other part of his will desires. To this extent, the wrongdoer will be alienated from himself.

It is worth noting in this connection how often high-ranking Nazis were thought by others to be alienated from themselves in this way. Even Himmler saw his closest subordinate Heydrich in this way. Heydrich, Himmler said, is 'an unhappy man, completely divided against himself'.<sup>40</sup>

A person internally divided in this way cannot be close to others either. He cannot reveal his mind to another person if he has hidden a good part of his mind from himself. And if he is internally divided in what he cares about, then whichever part of his divided will another person allies herself to, she will be separated from some other part. To that extent, they will not be united; he will want something she does not (or vice versa), no matter what the state of her will is. For this reason, in serious moral wrongdoing, to one degree or another, a person isolates himself from others. The social isolation and loneliness of the high-ranking Nazis is a feature regularly remarked on by their biographers. One of Ribbentrop's biographers remarks that by the mid-1930s Ribbentrop was characterized by 'an insensitive remoteness' that left him 'extremely difficult to like'.<sup>41</sup> Even with regard to perhaps the most gregarious and social of the Nazi elite, Goering, one of his biographers says, 'Few got close to him. Indeed for all his excessive sociability he remained an outsider, keeping people at a distance. . . . [H]is sociability was a mask'.<sup>42</sup>

It may be that an agent's alienation from herself ceases when she repents the evil she did, because the repentance undoes the internal division in her intellect and will; with regard to the former morally wrong act, the intellect of the repentant person has ceased to be double-minded, and her will is whole-hearted as well. But her internal integration does not instantly, by itself alone, restore her relationships with others, who were put at some distance from her by her wrongdoing. Albert Speer was able to survive Spandau as well as he did and to write *Inside the Third Reich* while he was in prison because his friend Rudolf Wolters spent his time and his resources unstintingly to support Speer and Speer's family. When *Inside the Third Reich* appeared, Wolters was stunned to find that there was no mention of him or acknowledgement of his help anywhere in Speer's highly successful book. It seems clear, in hindsight, that Speer, in his new role as repentant Nazi, found it prudent to distance himself from Wolters, whose postwar devotion to Hitler was embarrassing to Speer;<sup>43</sup> but Wolters was devastated

by what he took to be Speer's betrayal of his self-sacrificial friendship.<sup>44</sup> Even if Speer had eventually managed to repent that betrayal, his repentance alone would not have been sufficient for restoring the disturbed relationship between them.<sup>45</sup> A relationship has a life of its own; the healing of the relationship between Wolters and Speer was not the same thing as the internal healing of Speer's divided self.

And so Aquinas's position does seem right. Being separated to one degree or another from people to whom one would otherwise have been connected in close or caring ways takes away from the wrongdoer something that would have been lovely in him. Since it is through his own doing that the loveliness is diminished, there is something appropriate in the metaphor that represents the diminution as a stain.<sup>46</sup>

Someone might suppose here that the relationship between friends, such as Speer and Wolters, *should* be healed as soon as the betrayer is repentant; but this supposition rests on the mistaken assumption that a relationship is not affected by the past states of the persons in it, that only their present condition is relevant to it. As my remarks above about memory show, however, at least through memory the past lives on into the future. Wolters knew that Speer had not cared about him or honored his devotion, and both he and Speer remember that Wolters did not matter to Speer in anything like the way in which Speer mattered to him. In that way, a past state influences their relationship at a later time.

Furthermore, even if Wolters had never learned of Speer's betrayal, Speer's hiding his own memory of it would impact his relationship with Wolters detrimentally in another way. And the point would remain the same even if, after having repented his betrayal of Wolters, Speer himself suffered amnesia about it. There was a point in time after which Speer was a person who had betrayed the trust of his friend; before that time, he was not. And that difference in Speer's history alters his relationship to his friend, in morally relevant ways, which repentance alone does not undo. Or, if this example is unpersuasive in our current forgiving culture, then substitute an act of moral wrongdoing towards which we take a sterner attitude. Johann Paul Kremer, the camp doctor at Auschwitz, recorded in his diary that he would roam the camp dormitories in search of Jews from whom he might take fresh specimens of liver and pancreas by having them killed on his dissection table.<sup>47</sup> Imagine, *per impossibile*, that at a later time in his life a thoroughly repentant Kremer developed amnesia and did not know who he was or what he had done; and imagine also that, by an accident of fate, Kremer wound up at the same dinner table with a survivor of that period in the Auschwitz camp, who failed to recognize his dinner companion as the camp doctor Kremer. People who knew the history of both men and heard of that dinner would wince, wouldn't they? There is something jarring in the thought that those two men, the beast and one of those afflicted by him, should be sharing a meal

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Aquinas says:

... a human being is joined to G  
of sin cannot be removed from  
the order of divine justice, as, for  
upon himself a punishment in re  
he bears patiently a punishment



of his self-sacrificial friendship.<sup>44</sup> Even  
 ent that betrayal, his repentance alone  
 restoring the disturbed relationship  
 a life of its own; the healing of the  
 was not the same thing as the internal

a right. Being separated to one degree  
 would otherwise have been connected  
 the wrongdoer something that would  
 ough his own doing that the loveliness  
 priate in the metaphor that represents

ie relationship between friends, such  
 as soon as the betrayer is repentant;  
 ken assumption that a relationship is  
 sons in it, that only their present con-  
 above about memory show, however,  
 on into the future. Wolters knew that  
 ored his devotion, and both he and  
 atter to Speer in anything like the way  
 at way, a past state influences their

er learned of Speer's betrayal, Speer's  
 mpact his relationship with Wolters  
 oint would remain the same even if,  
 lters, Speer himself suffered amnesia  
 : which Speer was a person who had  
 e that time, he was not. And that  
 elationship to his friend, in morally  
 oes not undo. Or, if this example is  
 ture, then substitute an act of moral  
 rner attitude. Johann Paul Kremer,  
 l in his diary that he would roam the  
 m whom he might take fresh speci-  
 hem killed on his dissection table.<sup>47</sup>  
 time in his life a thoroughly repen-  
 l not know who he was or what he  
 ccident of fate, Kremer wound up at  
 that period in the Auschwitz camp,  
 panion as the camp doctor Kremer.  
 en and heard of that dinner would  
 ng jarring in the thought that those  
 ted by him, should be sharing a meal

without awareness of their past connection. In my view, our sense that it is jarring is a moral judgment on Kremer.

To this extent, then, even apart from the much clearer case involving God, Aquinas seems to me right in supposing that serious moral wrongdoing leaves a stain on the soul which is not eradicated just by repentance.

When it comes to someone such as Goebbels, the wrongdoing is political, on an international scale; but the scale complicates the case without fundamentally altering it. By his complicity in the Holocaust, Goebbels removes himself a distance of light-years from ordinary human beings. He is a person who participated in the murder of millions of people, and any present relationship he might have to other people would have to be affected by that past evil. Even deep, fervent repentance on his part would not alter that past fact about him, and so by itself it also would not alter the disturbed and distant relationship between him and other people either.

### RESTORATION

Although Aquinas thinks that every act of serious moral wrongdoing leaves a stain on the soul, he also thinks that this stain is not permanent; and in various places he discusses the way in which it can be removed. So, for example, he says:

... although the act of sin, by which a human being distanced himself from the light of reason and the divine law, ceases, the person himself does not immediately return to the [state] in which he was [before he sinned]. Rather, there is necessary some motion of the will contrary to the previous motion [of the will in sinning].<sup>48</sup>

This motion of the will includes the acceptance of what Aquinas calls 'satisfaction'. Satisfaction is one of the three integral parts of penance (the other two being contrition and confession).<sup>49</sup> Aquinas sees penance in general as a kind of medicine for sin;<sup>50</sup> and, on his view, it aims primarily at the restoration of friendship between the wrongdoer and the one wronged (at least God, if not also human beings).<sup>51</sup>

Satisfaction is a matter of the sinner's doing voluntarily what would be punishment, simply considered, if it were imposed on him against his will. Aquinas says:

... a human being is joined to God through his will. And so the stain of sin cannot be removed from a human being unless his will accepts the order of divine justice, as, for example, if of his own accord he takes upon himself a punishment in recompense for his past fault, or even if he bears patiently a punishment given him by God. For, either way,

punishment has the nature of satisfaction. Now punishment that is a matter of satisfaction loses something of the nature of punishment: for it is the nature of punishment to be against the will. And although, strictly speaking, satisfactory punishment is against the will, nevertheless then, in this case, it is voluntary. . . .<sup>52</sup>

Aquinas's idea, then, is that the stain left by moral wrongdoing, which leaves relationships disrupted, is removed, and the wrongdoer is restored to a position where friendship is available to him, by satisfaction; and satisfaction is a matter of the wrongdoer's voluntarily doing something which is penal at least to this extent, that in other circumstances it would have been against his will to do. How onerous the satisfaction is must surely be a function of the nature of the original wrongdoing. If in anger a husband deliberately smashed his wife's cherished teapot, the satisfaction necessary would no doubt be considerably less than whatever is required for repairing relations after an affair.

It is important to note here that on Aquinas's view the point of satisfaction is to restore relationships, not to effect punishment for the wrongdoing. (Punishment may also be required for other reasons – for example, because it is a legal sanction for a crime – but that punishment is not the same as the satisfaction of penance.) Furthermore, satisfaction is *not* a matter of the offended party's setting conditions for forgiveness. In discussing the remission of sins, which is on his view the goal of penance, Aquinas maintains that sins are remitted when the soul of the *offender* is at peace with the one offended.<sup>53</sup> This emphasis is what we would expect from the previous explanation of the nature of the stain on the soul. The stain develops when the wrongdoer puts some distance between himself and others by the wrongdoing, and so it will also be the wrongdoer who needs to retrace that distance. There is psychological sense in this view, too. The wrongdoer will be at peace with others when he has a sense of having done what he can to make amends.

And so, on Aquinas's view, contrition and confession, which comprise what we ordinarily mean by 'repentance', are not enough to remove the stain of sin, however efficacious they may be in restoring the wrongdoer to a morally good internal state. That is because the stain of sin has to do with the relationships disturbed by the wrongdoer's acts. Removing the stain of sin requires the wrongdoer's making satisfaction, the third part of penance on Aquinas's view; and this is the wrongdoer's voluntarily doing something of a sort he would otherwise eschew as against his will, for the sake of restoring the relationships disrupted by his wrongdoing.

It is clear that making satisfaction is not the correlate of or even a necessary condition for forgiveness. When the prodigal son in the parable returns home, his father falls on his neck and kisses him before the son has a chance to say a word. The forgiveness of the father is there for him unconditionally.

It would make the story morally unpalatable if the father waited to see what the son would do, whether or not to bestow forgiveness.

But we can see the point of making satisfaction. It restores disrupted relationships if the father's unconditional forgiveness has not been continued. Are we to suppose that the son, who has accepted his father's forgiveness and perhaps been joking with his older brother, would have rebelled against his father's inheritance when he returned? And if the son returned so rebellious, would anyone seriously suppose that the father would have treated him in the way it did before he returned? The son really welcomes his father's forgiveness, and the father really regrets the disruption of his relationship with him. The son himself has a desire to do what he can to make amends, so, he will restore the relationship with his father because he is buying their forgiveness for himself returning to his family, across the distance between himself and them.

And so the stain of moral wrongdoing, which is the effect of moral wrongdoing, is removed by making satisfaction and thereby restoring the relationships affected by his wrongdoing.

Aquinas clearly presupposes that in this life the wrongdoer can restore the relationships his wrongdoing has disrupted. The cause of the disruption lies in the wrongdoer, and so it can also be other causes of disruption, such as the unwillingness of the other party to forgive the wrongdoer, and by itself not be sufficient to remove the stain. This is a presupposition of Aquinas's. Some might object that anything a person such as Goebbels could do to disrupt relationships between him and those who are his victims are limits on the kinds of stain that can be removed. I do not wish to take sides on this question. It is not intended to be dealt with as a side issue. I think about it by considering what a deity would find it hard to call a deity's child a repentant people, then perhaps a world of such a kind is part of our idea of what it is. A monster such as Goebbels could be forgiven in such circumstances for forgiveness to apply to

satisfaction. Now punishment that is a function of the nature of punishment: for it is against the will. And although, punishment is against the will, nevertheless...<sup>52</sup>

left by moral wrongdoing, which leaves the wrongdoer and the wrongdoer is restored to him, by satisfaction; and satisfaction is only doing something which is penal at the circumstances it would have been against his will. Satisfaction must surely be a function of the wrongdoer. If a husband deliberately smashed a glass, satisfaction necessary would no doubt be required for repairing relations after an affair. Aquinas's view the point of satisfaction is to do something which is penal at the circumstances it would have been against his will. Satisfaction is not the same as the satisfaction is *not* a matter of the wrongdoer's forgiveness. In discussing the remission of penance, Aquinas maintains that the offender is at peace with the one who would expect from the previous explanation of the soul. The stain develops when the wrongdoer in himself and others by the wrongdoer who needs to retrace that path. In this view, too. The wrongdoer will find satisfaction in having done what he can to

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It would make the story morally ugly if we were to rewrite it in such a way that the father waited to see what penance his son would do before he decided whether or not to bestow forgiveness on him.

But we can see the point of making satisfaction and the way in which it restores disrupted relationships if we take the parable as it stands, including the father's unconditional forgiveness, and then consider how the story might have been continued. Are we to suppose that the returned prodigal simply accepted his father's forgiveness and picked up at home where he had left off, maybe joking with his older brother about how fast he had wasted his share of his father's inheritance when he deserted the family in a fit of narcissistic rebellion? And if the returned son did comport himself in this way, does anyone seriously suppose that the rest of the family would be able to relate to him in the way it did before he left home? If he really is repentant, if he really welcomes his father's forgiveness as needed but not deserved, if he really regrets the disruption of his former family relations, then he will himself have a desire to do what he can to make amends to his family. In doing so, he will restore the relationships between himself and his family, not because he is buying their forgiveness but because by making amends he is himself returning to his family, across the distance which *he* – not they – put between himself and them.

And so the stain of moral wrongdoing, as distinct from any of the other effects moral wrongdoing has, is removed when the wrongdoer finds a way to make satisfaction and thereby undo his being at a distance from those affected by his wrongdoing.

Aquinas clearly presupposes that there is no wrongdoing and no stain such that in this life the wrongdoer cannot make satisfaction for it and by that means restore the relationships his wrongdoing disrupted, at least insofar as the cause of the disruption lies in something in the wrongdoer. (There could also be other causes of disruption, such as the unwillingness of the injured party to forgive the wrongdoer, and the wrongdoer's making satisfaction will by itself not be sufficient to remove these.) But not everyone will accept this presupposition of Aquinas's. Some people will reject the idea that there is anything a person such as Goebbels could do which would restore relationships between him and those horrified by his actions. For such people, there are limits on the kinds of stain on the soul that making satisfaction can remove. I do not wish to take sides here, because the question is too complicated to be dealt with as a side issue in this article. But we can perhaps begin to think about it by considering what we would expect of a good God. If we would find it hard to call a deity good who was implacable towards some repentant people, then perhaps a willingness to forgive repented evil of any kind is part of our idea of what it is for a person to be good. And if a moral monster such as Goebbels could be forgiven, if he were in the right circumstances for forgiveness to apply to him, then it is not so easy to see what

would prohibit his doing something by way of satisfaction in order to find his way back to life in the human community.<sup>54</sup>

### CONCLUSION

At the outset of this article, I called attention to the strong sense most people share, that they would be adamantly against admitting Goebbels into their families or including him among their friends, even if he had lived after the war to experience a thorough-going repentance; and I asked what might explain and justify this reaction. Aquinas's concept of a stain on the soul, which is a matter of the alienation that moral wrongdoing produces in the wrongdoer, helps to do so.

Aquinas's idea that the stain is removed by satisfaction is also helpful. I have no idea what would count as satisfaction for Goebbels, given the magnitude and the depth of the moral evil of his actions. Nonetheless, Aquinas's idea seems to me intuitively right even in his case. The powerful moral rejection most people would feel towards Goebbels even in a repentant state would not remain the same in the face of unstinting attempts by a repentant Goebbels to repair anything at all of the devastation he had wrought. That this is so helps explain the fact that Albert Speer, whose role in the Nazi regime was at least as important as that of Goebbels, was to some considerable extent rehabilitated in the view of many people.<sup>55</sup> Speer not only appeared thoroughly repentant after the war's end, but he also accepted his punishment from the Nuremberg court willingly; and in one way after another he used his public position as a forum for educating his audience about the evils of the Nazis, thereby doing something to make amends for his earlier contribution to their success and so doing something to make satisfaction, in Aquinas's sense.<sup>56</sup>

Aquinas's account of stain and satisfaction is also suggestive for the larger problems with which this article began. Perhaps there is something transitive about disturbed relationships. If my brother and his wife have a bitter, hostile divorce, my relations with her will inevitably be altered, no matter how much I love her, because of my familial relationship to my brother, whose relationship to her is broken. In a similar way, because the relation between parent and offspring is far-reaching in its influence, even if it is not close and loving, perhaps the relationships of children are somehow disturbed by the disturbed relationships their parents have had. Maybe, *mutatis mutandis*, there is even some transitivity to the complicatedly disturbed relationships among peoples or nations that a huge political evil such as the Holocaust produces. If so, then Aquinas's account would also give some help with the larger-scale problems I deliberately set to one side at the outset of this article. In that case, Aquinas's account also sheds light on the notion of a duty to remember great evils

involving whole communities. To a great evil undermines the possibility there is an obligation to remember. Whether in fact Aquinas's account is to be applicable to these more is another article. For this article, Aquinas's account gives some insight into the problem posed by the repentant

I am grateful to Paul Roth and Mark of this paper.

- 1 Sereny (2001: 362).
- 2 Knopp (2003: 96).
- 3 Sereny (2001: 305).
- 4 *ibid.*: 290.
- 5 *ibid.*: 291.
- 6 See Posner (1991: 13).
- 7 See, for example, May and Hoffr
- 8 This is a view that some take to be example, Romans 5.
- 9 May and Hoffman (1991: 265).
- 10 Margalit (2002).
- 11 Although I will not always add 1 be understood. My description convey to a contemporary audier mortal sin. For Aquinas, only in *theologiae* IaIIae.89.1.
- 12 For a detailed discussion of Aqu chapter 'The Mechanisms of Cogn as we currently think of it, is part below the level of intellect are set
- 13 *ST* IaIIae.10.1 and Ia.82.1.
- 14 The distinction between referenti easier to illustrate than to define. If have been the son of Chinese in President of the United States' attr the position of President could ha on the other hand, we were using the current President could have h
- 15 See *ST* Ia.5.6 where Aquinas disti and the pleasant.
- 16 *ST* Ia.82.4.

by way of satisfaction in order to find immunity.<sup>54</sup>

CLUSION

ention to the strong sense most people against admitting Goebbels into their friends, even if he had lived after the repentance; and I asked what might Aquinas's concept of a stain on the soul, what moral wrongdoing produces in the

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ction is also suggestive for the larger Perhaps there is something transitive ther and his wife have a bitter, hostile ably be altered, no matter how much ship to my brother, whose relation- because the relation between parent nce, even if it is not close and loving, somehow disturbed by the disturbed ybe, *mutatis mutandis*, there is even sturbed relationships among peoples s the Holocaust produces. If so, then help with the larger-scale problems of this article. In that case, Aquinas's of a duty to remember great evils

involving whole communities. To the extent to which the failure to remember a great evil undermines the possibility of communal reparations for that evil, there is an obligation to remember it.

Whether in fact Aquinas's account of a stain on the soul could be shown to be applicable to these more complicated cases is, however, a topic for another article. For this article, it is enough to have shown the way in which Aquinas's account gives some insight into the smaller and more tractable problem posed by the repentant Goebbels of my thought experiment.

NOTES

I am grateful to Paul Roth and Mark Peacock for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

- 1 Sereny (2001: 362).
- 2 Knopp (2003: 96).
- 3 Sereny (2001: 305).
- 4 *ibid.*: 290.
- 5 *ibid.*: 291.
- 6 See Posner (1991: 13).
- 7 See, for example, May and Hoffman (1991).
- 8 This is a view that some take to be expressed as early as the letters of Paul; see, for example, Romans 5.
- 9 May and Hoffman (1991: 265).
- 10 Margalit (2002).
- 11 Although I will not always add the qualifier 'serious' in what follows, it should be understood. My description 'serious moral wrongdoing' is an attempt to convey to a contemporary audience what Aquinas has in mind with the notion of mortal sin. For Aquinas, only mortal sin leaves a stain on the soul. See *Summa theologiae* IaIIae.89.1.
- 12 For a detailed discussion of Aquinas's account of the human intellect, see the chapter 'The Mechanisms of Cognition' in my *Aquinas* (Stump, 2003). Perception, as we currently think of it, is part of intellectual functioning for Aquinas; faculties below the level of intellect are sensory rather than cognitive.
- 13 *ST* IaIIae.10.1 and Ia.82.1.
- 14 The distinction between referential and attributive uses of linguistic expressions is easier to illustrate than to define. If we say 'The President of the United States might have been the son of Chinese immigrants', we might be using the phrase 'the President of the United States' attributively, rather than referentially, to indicate that the position of President could have been filled by a person of Chinese ancestry. If, on the other hand, we were using the phrase referentially, we would be saying that the current President could have had different parents from the ones he had.
- 15 See *ST* Ia.5.6 where Aquinas distinguishes the good into the virtuous, the useful, and the pleasant.
- 16 *ST* Ia.82.4.

- 17 Although faith is divinely infused, according to Aquinas, he also seems to suppose that faith results from such an action of the will on the intellect. See, for example, Aquinas's *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* where Aquinas talks of the will's commanding intellect to produce faith; QDV 14.3 reply, ad 2, and ad 10. For further discussion of this issue, see the chapter on faith in Stump (2003).
- 18 See *ST IaIIae.17.1* and *IaIIae.17.6*. For further discussion of Aquinas's account of the will's control over the intellect, see the chapter on wisdom in Stump (2003).
- 19 Cf., for example, *ST IaIIae.17.2* and *IaIIae.17.5* ad 1.
- 20 *ST IaIIae.50.5*, *IaIIae.52.1*, and *IaIIae.66.1*.
- 21 Padfield (1990: 3).
- 22 *ibid.*: 80.
- 23 *ibid.*: 172.
- 24 *ST IaIIae 86.1* obj. 3.
- 25 *ST IaIIae 86.1* ad 3.
- 26 *ST IaIIae 86.2*.
- 27 *ST IaIIae 89.1*.
- 28 *ST IaIIae 87.6*.
- 29 *ST IaIIae 86.2* ad 3.
- 30 See Ott (1993: 210–23).
- 31 It is a salient feature of my example that Staudinger knows of Heidegger's betrayal, and someone might suppose that there would be no disturbance of the relationship if the matter had remained hidden from Staudinger. But this supposition is clearly mistaken. To keep the matter hidden, Heidegger would have had to engage in deception where Staudinger is concerned; he would have had to dissemble about important parts of his past and about significant parts of his inner life. Clearly, this walling-off and deception would effect serious separation between the two of them.
- 32 See, for example, LaFollette (1996).
- 33 For a case in which a blow to the head releases previously repressed memories whose recall is traumatic for the rememberer, see Sacks (1985: 161–5).
- 34 See Overy (2001: 392–3).
- 35 For a helpful introduction to the literature on simulation theory, see Davies and Stone (1995).
- 36 Overy (2001: 419).
- 37 *ibid.*: 401.
- 38 For Aquinas, intellect does include a faculty of memory, too; but the memory case in my example of what it felt like to do a serious moral wrong is an instance of what Aquinas takes to be sensory memory, and sensory memory is not included within the intellect on his views. See the chapter "The Mechanisms of Cognition" in Stump (2003).
- 39 For an excellent recent discussion of this possibility, see Moran (2001).
- 40 Hoehne (2000[1969]: 162). It should be added that Himmler explained what he saw in Heydrich with the erroneous theory that Heydrich had Jewish blood somewhere in his family tree.
- 41 Bloch (2003[1992]: 125).
- 42 Overy (2003[1984]: 15–16).
- 43 Sereny (1995: 36–7).
- 44 *ibid.*: 141.

- 45 This claim will remain true even if about Speer's failure to acknowledge given in note 31.
- 46 In the case of the others who are considered in the nature of a loss b
- 47 The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Mu
- 48 *ST IaIIae.86.2*.
- 49 *ST IIIa.90.2*.
- 50 *ST IIIa.84.5*.
- 51 *ST IIIa.85.3* and *IIIa.86.2*.
- 52 *ST IaIIae.87.6*.
- 53 *ST IaIIae.113.2*.
- 54 I am grateful to Paul Roth for astute to address this question.
- 55 Speer's manifold involvement in complicity in Germany's use of sla
- 56 For a detailed discussion of Speer's of whether or not Speer really was

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eory that Heydrich had Jewish blood

- 45 This claim will remain true even if it were the case that Wolters had never learned about Speer's failure to acknowledge him and his help. Support for this claim is given in note 31.
- 46 In the case of the others who are separated from him, the separation might be considered in the nature of a loss but not a stain.
- 47 The Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum (1998: 167).
- 48 *ST* IaIIae.86.2.
- 49 *ST* IIIa.90.2.
- 50 *ST* IIIa.84.5.
- 51 *ST* IIIa.85.3 and IIIa.86.2.
- 52 *ST* IaIIae.87.6.
- 53 *ST* IaIIae.113.2.
- 54 I am grateful to Paul Roth for astute questions that called my attention to the need to address this question.
- 55 Speer's manifold involvement in every part of Germany's war effort and his complicity in Germany's use of slave labor is well documented in Sereny (1995).
- 56 For a detailed discussion of Speer's role after the war and an excellent evaluation of whether or not Speer really was repentant, see Sereny (1995).

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## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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# History writing and the restor

CAROLY

AB:

This article investigates how historical writing identifies victims in va European Jewry. It takes historical Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Exe.* argues that most historical narrative writing about atrocities generates and victims. The essay then analyzes successfully or not, to overcome

*Key words* dignity, empathy, perpetrator

The notion that historians of the Holocaust restore to victims their dignity – in posthumous victory – seems to be the aim of Anglo-American historical writing. This ideal is arguably manifest in some contrast to postmodern literary matter. Jane Caplan writes that

... it is one thing to embrace postmodernism, to disseminate power, to decenter the kinds of meaning contend, when the issue. But should the rules of c