

# Toward a Thomistic Account of the Virtues of the Entrepreneur

## Moral, Intellectual, and Theological Strengths for Flourishing

*Paul J. Radich*  
*Assistant Professor, Marketing, Ethics,*  
*and Social Thought*  
*Busch School of Business*  
*Catholic University of America,*  
*Washington, DC*

Although entrepreneurs are a driving force of a free market economy, most of the research on entrepreneurship has focused on the economic outcomes rather than on the flourishing of the entrepreneurs themselves. To understand which strengths of character, mind, and spirit help entrepreneurs to flourish, I propose a Thomistic hierarchy of all the virtues and focus on those that are particularly salient in helping entrepreneurs to excel. This research synthesizes previous research into a framework of moral, intellectual, and theological virtues, and this account resonates qualitatively with the experience of over thirty practicing entrepreneurs. This research breaks new ground by treating the infused cardinal virtues—investigating how the life of faith can impact entrepreneurial endeavors—and it casts virtue ethics into a wider framework of the more recent science of human flourishing, approaching *eudaimonia*. Finally, it brings the Thomistic virtues of the entrepreneur into dialogue with contemporary Austrian economic theories of entrepreneurship.<sup>1</sup>

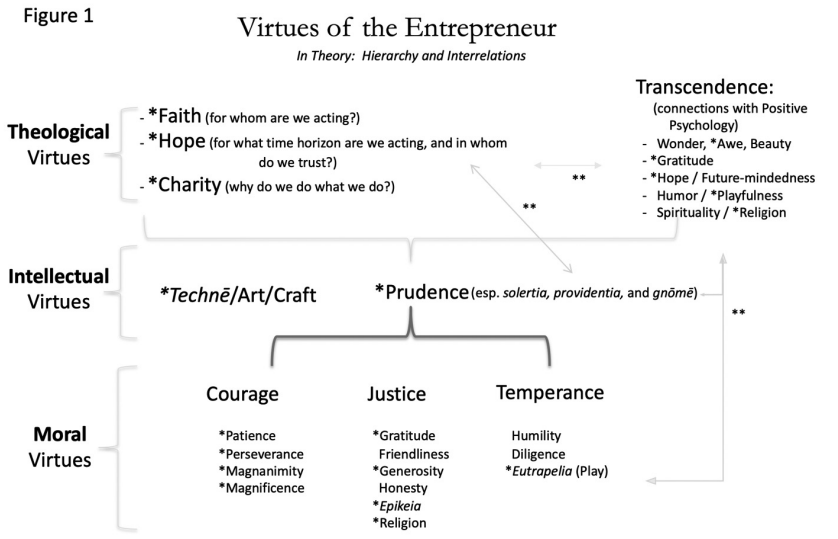
## Introduction

Entrepreneurial endeavors are the soul of the free market economy.<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneurs are people who attempt to “create value for others through human excellence.”<sup>3</sup> Entrepreneurs undertake business ventures, creating new companies or products to serve their customers better. It is important to understand the strengths of character, mind, and spirit that help entrepreneurs do what they do best, and how those virtues help entrepreneurs flourish as human beings. But what are the virtues that help the entrepreneur to flourish? Virtue in general is what makes an action good

and makes the actor or agent good.<sup>4</sup> In the economic realm, some attention has been given to exploring the role of virtue in the life of the entrepreneur. Many studies have emphasized particular moral virtues like magnanimity,<sup>5</sup> courage,<sup>6</sup> or patience/persistence,<sup>7</sup> or an intellectual virtue like *gnōmē*/perspicacity,<sup>8</sup> or even a theological virtue (faith).<sup>9</sup> But less research has considered the moral, intellectual, and theological virtues together, and their respective roles in entrepreneurship.<sup>10</sup>

Taking a holistic view is essential, however, because from a Thomistic perspective it is very difficult or impossible to have just one virtue; the virtues grow and decline together.<sup>11</sup> Even if we were to emphasize all the natural virtues, we would ignore how difficult growing in virtue can be without the life of grace.<sup>12</sup> But how do the moral, intellectual, and theological virtues interact in the life of the entrepreneur? Drawing from interviews and conversations with over 30 entrepreneurs, this theoretical approach resonates with their experience. Michael Novak had suggested adding a virtue to the canon, calling it the virtue of enterprise. This virtue includes creativity and enables entrepreneurs to build new businesses and products and services.<sup>13</sup> But how might this virtue of enterprise be related to the Thomistic virtues?

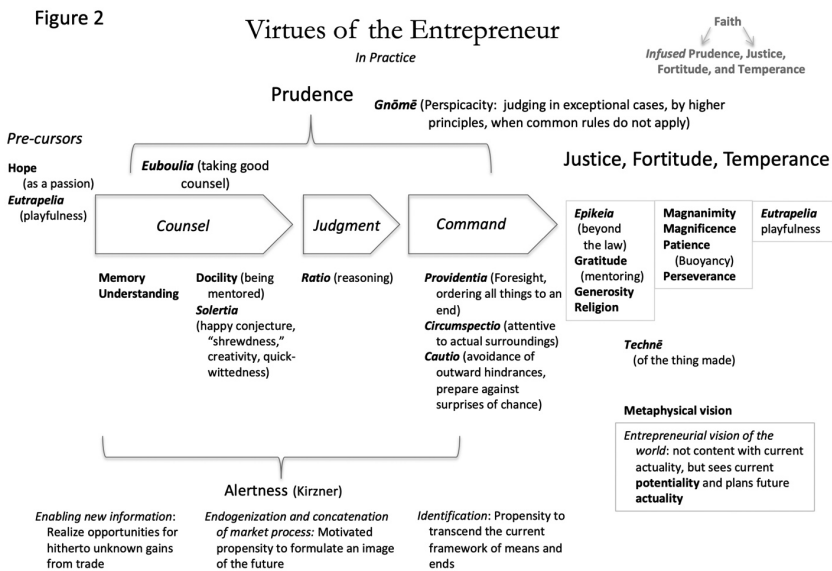
This article offers a hierarchical, Thomistic synthesis across all the virtues—moral, intellectual, and theological—showing in detail which combination of virtues are particularly salient in the lives of entrepreneurs (see Figure 1).<sup>14</sup>



\*Note: Although all the virtues listed do help Entrepreneurs flourish, the virtues with an asterisk are particularly relevant and less emphasized in previous research.

\*\*Note: Gray double arrows imply relations between higher virtues and lower virtues.

It breaks new ground by treating the cardinal virtues infused by faith and by casting all the virtues into a wider model of *eudaimonia* that has been empirically tested. Finally, it outlines the relationship between this Thomistic account of the virtues and contemporary entrepreneurship theory, sketching a path for future research. I detail the various Thomistic virtues which help entrepreneurs flourish and then bring that account into dialogue with contemporary entrepreneurship theory.<sup>15</sup> See Figure 2 for a visual overview and summary of our approach.



It is important to note at the beginning that we need to look at the virtues not as instrumental, ethical means to the economic end of business success. That perspective would reduce virtues to a tool, a *bonum utile*, as opposed to an end in themselves, a *bonum honestum*, chosen for their own sake. Both Aquinas and Aristotle hold that mode of virtue consists in three conditions: (1) that a person act knowingly, (2) act deliberately, “from choice, choosing that particular action for its own sake,” and (3) “possess the habit and act with firmness and steadfastness.”<sup>16</sup> If we analyze virtue as a mere means to some economic end, we violate #2 and then we would not be considering virtues at all. For example, if a person were to attempt to cultivate the virtues discussed in this article only for the sake of greater economic success, he or she would be reducing the noble good of virtue to a mere means. It would no longer be virtue, because it takes its character from that which it is ordered to: If virtue is ordered to economic

gains, it takes on the character of the economic end, whereas if virtue is chosen for its own sake as an integral aspect of *eudaimonia*, it retains the character of full human flourishing.<sup>17</sup>

## The Cardinal Virtues

### ***Prudence***

While the other three cardinal virtues are moral virtues, prudence is an intellectual virtue. The moral virtues moderate the appetites and provide the good end which a person seeks, and prudence deliberates about good means to achieve the good end, and decides on a good path.<sup>18</sup> The virtue of prudence perfects the practical wisdom of the person and is “right reason applied to action.”<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that the virtue of prudence is different from the contemporary usage of the term *prudent*, which often refers to being “careful,” “clever,” or “expedient.” Prudence by its nature determines the good means to attain the good end; cleverness or mere expediency may or may not have good means or a good end.<sup>20</sup>

Thomas discusses three types of parts or divisions of prudence: integral, subjective, and potential parts.<sup>21</sup> Integral parts are all required for an action to be prudent and are divided into three phases: Counsel, Judgment, and Command.<sup>22</sup> In the phase of Counsel, the first four integral parts or subvirtues of prudence play a role: memory, understanding, docility, and *solertia* (or quick-wittedness). The fifth integral part, reasoning, occurs in the phase of Judgment. Finally, the last three parts occur in the stage of Command: *providentia*, *circumspectio*, and *cautio*. Although all eight are necessary, those which particularly help the entrepreneur to flourish and in which entrepreneurs often excel are docility, *solertia*, *providentia*, *circumspectio*, and *cautio*. Docility refers to coming up with new knowledge by learning from others. Thomas cites Aristotle in exhorting us to “pay . . . attention to the undemonstrated assertions and opinions of such persons as are experienced, older than we, and prudent, . . . for their experience gives them an insight into principles.”<sup>23</sup> Entrepreneurs often speak about the importance of their mentors and how much they have learned from the experienced people who have gone before them. Without docility, entrepreneurs would not be willing and able to learn from others and would likely make more mistakes than they already do.

*Solertia* is a fascinating part of prudence relevant to the entrepreneur; it involves coming up with new knowledge through creativity. It has been translated as “fortunate conjecture,” shrewdness, and quick-wittedness.<sup>24</sup> *Solertia* helps the

person to see quickly what is possible in a given situation, requiring creative imagination based on the nature of things (seeing their natural “potential-to-be-actualized”). How do entrepreneurs cultivate the ability to identify opportunities that others do not see, the creativity to develop new knowledge in order to develop better future outcomes? This virtue of *solertia* develops into a habit of seeing the potential in the present which can become the actual in the future and has also been translated as “discovery” and is related to the concept of “alertness” (as proposed by the contemporary Austrian economist Israel Kirzner). This same habit enables entrepreneurs to shape the vision of the future.

This subvirtue of *solertia* not only enables entrepreneurs to come up with new ideas, but also to glimpse the potential and the ramifications of those new ideas long before other people do. *Solertia* is related to the subvirtue of reasoning (in the phase of Judgment) insofar as entrepreneurs are often quick thinkers who not only come up with new ideas through *solertia*, but also quickly reason to the conclusions and implications with *ratio*.<sup>25</sup> Without *solertia*, entrepreneurs would not be able to see the connections between current arrangements and future possible states of affairs.

In the phase of Command, putting ideas into practice, entrepreneurs exercise *providentia* or foresight in an exceptional way by ordering all things to an end.<sup>26</sup> Thomas calls *providentia* the principal part of prudence, from which *prudentia* takes its name. It is the virtue by which human beings can “see ahead” (*pro + videre*) by preparing and providing. It is a particularly human virtue and makes human beings like the divine, by participating in the providence of God.<sup>27</sup>

Through the subvirtue of *circumspectio*, the entrepreneur is attentive to the actual surroundings in the marketplace and society, “looking around.”<sup>28</sup> A common theme in the lives of entrepreneurs is how they often need to “pivot” in the implementation of their ideas by altering the focus of their product or service, or by changing the target customer, or reworking their supply network, and so forth.<sup>29</sup> Without *circumspectio*, entrepreneurs would not be able to pivot in order to avoid failure and become successful.

Finally, the subvirtue of *cautio* enables entrepreneurs to avoid outward hindrances, to survey the landscape of the market and ensure that they are preventing potential problems.<sup>30</sup> Although not all problems can be avoided, *cautio* helps to prepare against surprises of chance. This subvirtue protects the entrepreneur from unnecessary risks and impractical ventures.<sup>31</sup>

Thomas also discusses the three quasipotential parts of prudence, those adjunct virtues connected to prudence which help a person to make good judgments.<sup>32</sup> *Eubolia* helps the person take good counsel and is related to docility; *eubolia*

helps the entrepreneur to recognize which counsel is most helpful. When 1,001 voices are suggesting various courses of action, *eubolia* helps the entrepreneur to select the best counsel to follow in a given situation. *Synesis* involves judging in common cases, when the normal rules apply; and *gnōmē* or perspicacity helps the person judge in exceptional cases.

The virtue of *gnōmē* is particularly relevant for entrepreneurs. In common, everyday situations, *synesis* or common sense helps people to judge well the good means to good ends. But what can a person do in exceptional cases, when the good end is a not-yet-created product, and the good means have never been implemented before? *Gnōmē* has been translated as “through-sightedness,” “clear-sightedness,” and “the virtue of higher discernment.”<sup>33</sup> It is the aspect of prudence that enables a person to judge and act amid *special* or *uncertain* circumstances where the common guidelines do not apply. Entrepreneurs find themselves in uncharted territory frequently, where common guidelines may not apply. The important subvirtue of *gnōmē* enables entrepreneurs to judge by higher principles, sometimes by the natural law or a deeper understanding of the human person.<sup>34</sup> It becomes clear that *gnōmē* is essential for entrepreneurs: the more rapidly conditions change, the more the entrepreneur needs the virtue of *gnōmē* to break out of the prevailing paradigm and to adopt a new paradigm for more creative and fruitful judgment.<sup>35</sup>

## **Justice**

The virtue of justice involves giving to others what is due to them. In general, in commerce, the entrepreneur typically practices commutative justice in exchange by selling a new product or service or distributing it in a new way. The subvirtue of *epikeia* is relevant here, insofar as it involves going beyond the law in order to honor the intention of the lawgiver.<sup>36</sup> It may be helpful here to introduce a distinction between a normal exchange and a superabundant exchange: in a normal exchange, a buyer pays an agreed upon amount to a seller for a commodity, for example. Both receive exactly what they think the item is worth; they both agree to the exchange because at least in some way each person is better off than before the exchange, so it is an abundant exchange. In a superabundant exchange, however, the seller makes a profit but so too does the buyer: the buyer’s “profit” is the difference between the higher amount of what the buyer was willing to have paid and the lower amount of what the buyer actually paid. In an entrepreneurial economy, there is a rule of thumb that if customers are going to overcome the inertia of familiarity they have with their current goods or services, the entrepreneur needs to demonstrate that the new offering is *ten*

*times better* than what the customer already has.<sup>37</sup> This rule of thumb has a note of superabundance, and relates to the desire of the same entrepreneur to “go beyond” justice, to practice the virtue of *epikeia*, to offer more than is expected by commutative justice, in order to delight the customer. Clearly, this “10x” rule is not always accomplished, which perhaps explains the occurrence of puffery in some advertisements. But occasionally it does occur: some analysts argue that the smartphone, for example, does more than ten times as much as the previous generation of phones without apps (notwithstanding a corollary multiplication of potential harms through distraction and addiction).

The virtue of gratitude enables the virtuous person to practice justice among unequals, when what the person has received is far greater than what the person could ever give back.<sup>38</sup> Many entrepreneurs practice gratitude not only to their customers and collaborators, but importantly to the people who have mentored them. Stories abound of how thankful an entrepreneur is who has learned invaluable lessons from a more seasoned mentor. And they often express that gratitude in action through mentoring others, generously paying it forward to the next generation of entrepreneurs. Through the subvirtue of generosity, many entrepreneurs share some portion of their profit with others. As an example of generosity, the companies that follow the principles of the Economies of Communion in Freedom split their profits in three: one-third is re-invested in the company, one-third is used for educational programs for young entrepreneurs, and one-third is shared with the local poor.<sup>39</sup>

Finally, religion is the natural subvirtue of justice through which the virtuous person offers due worship to God by acknowledging the many gifts she or he has received, including the world and life itself.<sup>40</sup> A study by researchers at Baylor University showed that entrepreneurs pray more frequently and are more likely to see God as personal than non-entrepreneurs.<sup>41</sup> While there can be various explanations for this finding, two reasons stand out: first, entrepreneurs are striving for greatness in the midst of uncertainty and they realize their inability to control the future or to guarantee success. They experience their dependence on others (as discussed above in relation to both docility and being mentored), and so too, in the context of religion they can experience their dependence upon the divine. Simply put, they are putting out into the deep, and they need help; so they ask God for help and guidance in their endeavors, and thank him for their successes and lessons learned. Second, entrepreneurs in a concrete manner participate in both the creativity of God and in the providence of God by creating new products and services to provide for others.<sup>42</sup>

## **Fortitude**

In the realm of fortitude, which helps people to face fears and dangers with strength, four subvirtues are relevant for entrepreneurs.<sup>43</sup> First, magnanimity, or “great-souled-ness” involves a “stretching forth of the mind to great things”<sup>44</sup> and enables entrepreneurs to overcome challenges with great effort. History is full of examples of entrepreneurs overcoming great obstacles.<sup>45</sup> Thomas connects magnanimity to both confidence and to the goods of fortune, both of which are aspects relevant to the entrepreneur. Second, magnificence helps entrepreneurs to overcome obstacles at great expense and to “do great things” (*magna + facere*). Many entrepreneurs make large financial sacrifices and risk their entire livelihood in order to bring their product or service to market.<sup>46</sup> Some challenges cannot be overcome in the near term, however, and so must be endured by the third and fourth subvirtues: the virtue of patience or resilience enables entrepreneurs to endure external challenges mentally for the sake of virtue or profit, while the virtue of perseverance helps them to endure challenges over long periods of time through “the fixed and continued persistence in a well-considered purpose.”<sup>47</sup>

## **Temperance**

The virtue of temperance helps people to moderate their desires for good things. In general, many entrepreneurs live a temperate life, especially early in their career while they are making sacrifices for the sake of their enterprise. And some entrepreneurs return to that simplicity of life, even after they have abundant resources.<sup>48</sup> But more specifically, one subvirtue of temperance relates to the desire for play. *Eutrapelia* helps entrepreneurs exhibit an appropriate degree of playfulness in word and in action.<sup>49</sup> This virtue helps them to flourish in two ways: constructively, entrepreneurs are often more willing to tinker with things than other people are, to play around with things and ideas, and this playfulness helps them to rearrange the normal pattern of relationships between things and to see new opportunities others may not have seen. As one example, manufacturers traditionally would build a computer and then sell it. But Michael Dell rearranged that normal sequence by co-locating suppliers right next to his factory; he was able to allow customers to customize and purchase a computer online, and then he would finish building it and ship it to them directly and extremely quickly. Instead of “build, then sell,” he was able to “sell, then build.” This re-imagining of the normal sequence of operations not only enabled customers to engage in the production process and receive their product sooner but also saved Dell considerable money through lower inventory and warehouse costs. The second way *eutrapelia* presents in the lives of entrepreneurs is through their playfulness and habit of practical joking. This is true of Steve Jobs and Steve Wozniak in the



culture at Apple, but it is also true of other entrepreneurs.<sup>50</sup> Amidst challenging times, a light-hearted playfulness can help people not only relieve stress but also see things from different perspectives, fostering creativity. Being a good practical jokester requires creativity and practicing that habit can flow over into business decisions.

### Intellectual Virtue: *Eutechnē*

Beyond the moral virtues described above, there is one intellectual virtue in addition to prudence that is particularly relevant for entrepreneurs. The virtue of art or *technē*, which Aristotle refers to as *eutechnē*<sup>51</sup> or “good craft,” enables entrepreneurs to conceive of new products or services and then to have the habit of bringing them into being, by making them. The other intellectual virtues of wisdom, science, and understanding reside in the knower, in perfections of the person knowing; the intellectual virtue of prudence resides in the doer or the actor, the human agent, as a perfection in human action. This is illustrated in Figure 3 below.<sup>52</sup>

Figure 3

#### Intellectual Virtues of the Flourishing Entrepreneur

Schema and Descriptions

	Human Person As . . .	Power Perfected	Mode	Virtue	Notes		
In the order of <b>knowing</b> . . .	Agent of Truth (Sokolowski's work)	Speculative Reason	<i>Noēsis</i> / <i>Cognoscibilium</i>	<i>Sophia</i> / <i>Sapientia</i>	Combines <i>Nous</i> and <i>Epistēmē</i>	↕ <i>Energieia</i> / ( <i>Entelecheia</i> ) An activity of the person; remains as a <i>telos</i> of the person	
				<i>Nous</i> / <i>Intellectus</i>			Knowing first principles
				<i>Epistēmē</i> / <i>Scientia</i>			Deducing from first principles
In the order of <b>doing</b> . . .	Agent of Good (MacIntyre's work)	Practical Reason	<i>Praxis</i> / <i>Agibillum</i>	<i>Phronēsis</i> / <i>Prudentia</i>	Action		
In the order of <b>making</b> . . .	Agent of Co- Creation (Novak and Kirzner's work)	"Productive" Reason	<i>Poiēsis</i> / <i>Factibilium</i>	<i>Technē</i> / <i>Ars</i>	Producing something outside the person	<i>Kinēsis</i> A movement ending outside the person	

Notably, *technē* is the sole virtue which reaches its completion in the perfection of the product itself, the thing made. It is also the only virtue which Aristotle concedes can be practiced without a good end.

Some theorists hesitate to include *technē* as a virtue,<sup>53</sup> but I posit that it is a virtue particularly relevant for the Christian entrepreneur for at least three

reasons: (1) The Greek gods did not participate in *technē*: they did not create. But the God of the Jews and Christians (and Muslims) did create, and so *technē* becomes more admirable and divine.<sup>54</sup> (2) In the classical world, with *logos* permeating the cosmos, science is possible, but because *technē* was unworthy, creative entrepreneurship was not dignified. In the Christian era, however, in the Benedictine monasteries in particular, we find the co-location of *ora et labora*, contemplation and work, as activities of the *same persons*: these monasteries might be the first institutions in history where those schooled in the liberal arts were the same people practicing the manual or servile arts. It became a new opportunity to have an embodied, grounded “practice” in which new, practical questions arose in the lives of people who were also practicing contemplation on a daily basis. How would the intellectual and theological virtues help resolve challenges in the practical realm? These monasteries became centers of culture and commerce. (3) Finally, due to the Incarnation, with God taking on flesh, all of the created world becomes elevated and more dignified; not only worthy, but also perhaps more interesting. All three of these factors enabled *eutechnē* to become a worthy virtue in the Christian era. With the virtue of *technē* that perfects the artifact which is made (see figure 3), the entrepreneur needs to understand people first of all: their authentic needs and aspirations, so that the excellence of the artifact serves the needs of the person well.

## Theological Virtues

Beyond the natural virtues described above, how do the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity impact the entrepreneur? Directly, as a leavening, the theological virtues help entrepreneurs to realize that their customers are also called to live forever and that the customer’s final end is not in this world. In practice, the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity will inspire the entrepreneur to treat their customers and colleagues with dignity. Entrepreneurs are not perfect, but to the degree that business relationships are built on trust, treating people with dignity in light of faith, hope, and charity does foster longer-term relationships.<sup>55</sup>

### **Infused Cardinal Virtues**

In addition to the direct impact the theological virtues have on the flourishing of entrepreneurs, they can have an indirect effect as well, which is more subtle and less recognized: They can give the entrepreneur infused cardinal virtues. Thomas offers an account of an interesting type of virtue that goes beyond the account of the virtues given by Aristotle and Cicero by recognizing that the four natural, acquired cardinal virtues (which we have discussed above) each have

an analogue virtue which is infused by grace.<sup>56</sup> The infused cardinal virtue of prudence, for example, helps the person order all things to a heavenly goal and to make practical decisions for the sake of the kingdom of God. Infused justice goes beyond natural justice and helps the person give others their due in light of the kingdom. Infused fortitude helps a person to overcome or endure severe trials for the sake of the kingdom. Finally, infused temperance helps people moderate their desires for good things in light of their desire for the highest good.<sup>57</sup>

These infused cardinal virtues differ from the natural, acquired cardinal virtues in two important ways: how a person receives them and to what end they are ordered. First, the acquired cardinal virtues take long-term effort and practice and are acquired gradually, sometimes over the course of years. The infused cardinal virtues on the other hand come as a grace: through faith they are bestowed upon a person and are ready to be used. They still need to be practiced or enacted, and they can be lost quickly with a loss of grace, whereas the acquired cardinal virtues cannot be lost quickly. The second important difference is that the acquired cardinal virtues are ordered to the end of flourishing in this life, to natural happiness, whereas the infused cardinal virtues are ordered to the end of flourishing in the life of grace, to supernatural happiness in this life and in the next. Acquired cardinal virtues have a natural end within this world; infused cardinal virtues have a supernatural, heavenly end.

How can the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity have an indirect effect on the flourishing of the entrepreneur, through the infused cardinal virtues? The infused cardinal virtues help both to expand the horizon of entrepreneurs and to raise their zenith. The horizon expands spatially and temporally insofar as the entrepreneur of faith is called to treat everyone as a brother: friend or enemy, co-patriot or foreigner. Research has shown that people in market-oriented cultures have greater trust for strangers than people in nonmarket-oriented cultures.<sup>58</sup> Entrepreneurs who have the infused cardinal virtues take that phenomenon to an even greater degree, with an implicit willingness to do business with anyone in the world. And because the theological virtue of hope helps the person to desire heaven and trust in God's help, their temporal horizon extends to eternity. Their actions are taken in light of eternity. Having a long-term outlook for the higher good can also impact worldly endeavors and foster a longer-term outlook in the business life of the entrepreneur. As an analogy, publicly traded companies plan and budget and are driven to perform on a quarterly basis, whereas family businesses are motivated to perform on a time scale not of three months but of three generations. Likewise, entrepreneurs with the theological virtues of faith and hope can keep the very long-term view in mind when executing their business plans.<sup>59</sup>

For a person with the theological virtues, how do they act differently in the marketplace? More specifically, how do the theological virtues change or transform the natural, cardinal virtues in the life of the entrepreneur providing goods or services in the market? A person of faith still has the natural cardinal virtues, ordered to the goods of this world, and in addition has a companion set of these virtues, a set infused by grace, to help orient the person towards the goods of heaven. How do these natural cardinal virtues and infused cardinal virtues interact? For our purposes here, how do the infused cardinal virtues impact the life of the entrepreneur? In one way, because the infused cardinal virtues orient people to a higher good than this life, entrepreneurs with the infused cardinal virtues may be willing to risk in a different way, because they realize that the goods of this world are not their greatest good. A miser would not likely be an entrepreneur. But in a more fundamental way, the infused cardinal virtues may help the entrepreneur realize the role of co-creator, of being fruitful and multiplying, of participating in the ongoing creation of God.

## **The Metaphysical Perspective of the Entrepreneur— From Potency to Actuality**

This point leads to our final theme, the metaphysical vision of the entrepreneur. The most fundamental division of being for Thomas and Aristotle is the distinction between potency and actuality, cutting across the other divisions of being.<sup>60</sup> More than just a growth mindset, it is a metaphysical vision that looks at the world and sees potentialities embedded naturally within everything: in resources, networks, relations, other people, even in themselves. People without this metaphysical vision of reality tend to look at the world, see the world as it currently is, and often express disappointment, as if the current state of the world is the full actuality and final state.

But those with this metaphysical vision of the world observe the current state of things, and see the potentialities embedded in the current state, the seeds for creative development into a fuller actuality. It is not a static vision of pessimism vs. optimism, as the “glass half-empty” or the “glass half-full”; instead, it is a dynamic perspective of seeing the glass as “being-filled-up.” They see the world as “being-filled-up.”<sup>61</sup> Entrepreneurs can see those otherwise hidden seeds and use the virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance to bring those seeds to develop into actual inventions or arrangements for the sake of serving others and the common good.

This way of seeing is *itself* a habit,<sup>62</sup> a habit that enables entrepreneurs to see potential not only in themselves and in the external physical world, but also

importantly in their colleagues in the organization and their collaborators outside the organization. By seeing the potentialities in others, rather than focusing on what is not there, it enables entrepreneurs to obtain that vision and share it with others. It is not seeing the glass statically as “half-empty” or “half-full,” but dynamically: as “being-filled-up.” By welcoming others to fulfill their potentialities, the entrepreneur can foster outcome-wide human flourishing.<sup>63</sup>

This leads us to an insight about the metaphysics of character development: Aristotle noted that “absence” has two different types: privation and potentiality. People with a more static view of human life may see the privations in others as gaps and faults, but entrepreneurs can see those absences as dynamic potentialities to be developed and actualized. When the entrepreneurial mindset of seeing “what-could-be” is applied to people within an organization, the entrepreneur can be a leader who helps them unleash their human potential for flourishing.

## Summary and Conclusion

We have detailed above in a full Thomistic account of the moral, intellectual, and supernatural virtues how specific subvirtues impact the lives of entrepreneurs. The virtues not only make the actions of the entrepreneur good, but the entrepreneur himself or herself to be good. As parts of prudence, docility, *soler-tia*, *providentia*, *cautio*, *circumspectio*, and *gnōmē* help the entrepreneur to develop creative ideas and successfully apply them in the market in uncommon circumstances. As a part of justice, *epikeia* helps the entrepreneur to delight the customer with a superabundant offering. Fortitude includes as parts magnanimity, magnificence, patience, and perseverance, all of which help the entrepreneur to strive for great things, overcoming obstacles and enduring hardships. As a part of temperance, *eutrapelia* enables the entrepreneur to tinker with things and ideas, to approach the world in a light-hearted manner, and to see things from new perspectives. As an intellectual virtue, *technē* helps the entrepreneur to make products that are excellent and well-suited to the needs of customers. The theological virtues can inspire the entrepreneur to do all things for the love of God and neighbor and can help the entrepreneur to treat others—customers, suppliers, investors—with deep human dignity. Finally, the theological virtues help the entrepreneur through the infused cardinal virtues by raising the zenith and expanding the horizon, ensuring that the entrepreneur sees everything she or he does as ordered to the highest good, God.

To bring this Thomistic synthesis into dialogue with contemporary entrepreneurship theory, further research is needed. How does this Thomistic account of the virtues of the entrepreneur relate, for example, to Israel Kirzner’s account

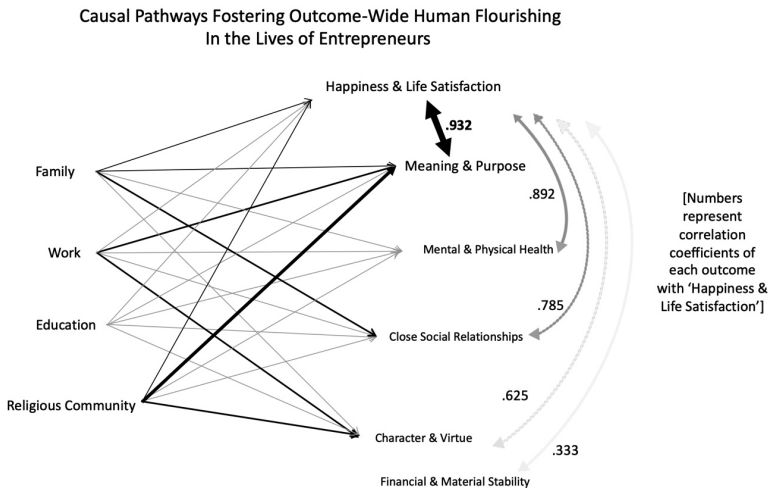
of entrepreneurship? Kirzner points out that the entrepreneurial element is largely absent from classical and contemporary mainstream economics.<sup>64</sup> Kirzner has developed a theory of “alertness”—the propensity to discover previously unknown gains through trade. He details three aspects to describe how entrepreneurs identify opportunities in the market: (1) the entrepreneur’s propensity to *enable new information* through realizing opportunities for hitherto unknown gains from trade; (2) *endogenization and concatenation of the market process*: a motivated propensity to formulate an image of the future; and (3) *identification*: the propensity to transcend the current framework of means and ends.

There appears to be a close parallel with Thomas’s account of prudence: (1) assembling knowledge, (2) reasoning from principles to conclusions, and (3) commanding new pathways to good ends. While alertness is a cornerstone of Kirzner’s theory,<sup>65</sup> the way alertness develops has remained difficult to explain. Kirzner posited that alertness is a propensity, and any explanation as to its origin remains outside the field of economics. Some have argued that it may have more to do with psychology than economics, for instance. Others claim that experience and human capital investments influence alertness,<sup>66</sup> but Kirzner scholars fail to account for the development of the capacity for alertness. More specifically, how is alertness related to Thomas’s account of the virtues of *solertia*, *circumspectio*, *cautio*, and *gnōmē* discussed above? How can Thomas’s commentaries on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, *De Anima*, and *Metaphysics* help form a fuller picture of the habits and potentialities of the entrepreneur? Is Kirzner’s account of alertness a potency, a habit, or some emergent combination of Thomistic virtues? Future research can bring Thomistic virtues into dialogue with Kirzner’s concept of alertness and ground Kirzner’s alertness in Thomistic and Aristotelian psychology and virtue ethics. It may be that the metaphysical perspective of the entrepreneur—seeing the potentialities in things—relates closely to Kirzner’s concept of alertness and provides a metaphysical grounding for it. The development of some virtues that are key to the entrepreneur may have a direct effect on the development of alertness.<sup>67</sup> Hence, alertness may be the most important indirect virtue of an entrepreneur.

In addition to conceptual clarification, it will be helpful to test aspects of this account of the Thomistic virtues of the entrepreneur in an empirical study; the framework described above resonates with the qualitative experience of many entrepreneurs and thus merits being tested quantitatively. Future research can survey entrepreneurs to discover which virtues they have found most helpful in their business endeavors and their overall lives. Further research can also investigate how the development of the Thomistic virtues in the life of the entrepreneur may lead to a greater level of alertness. Further research can bring the

Thomistic account of the virtues into a wider frame of *eudaimonia*: Harvard’s Human Flourishing Project has developed the Secure Flourishing Index to include character and virtue, meaning and purpose, close social relationships, and two other factors in overall happiness and life satisfaction. An initial survey with a small sample size did show entrepreneurs flourishing more fully.<sup>68</sup> See the conceptual diagram here in Figure 4:

Figure 4



So we end where we began, but now with a clearer understanding of what is at stake: Entrepreneurial endeavors are the soul of the free market economy, and it is essential to understand the virtues that help entrepreneurs to flourish. Why should we call the free market economy “capitalism”? Given that Marx developed the term, it should not be surprising that a materialist would focus on the material cause of the economy, or as Aristotle would phrase it, the “out-of-which” the economy is run, the means of production. That material focus, however, limits our perspective. Calling the free market system the “entrepreneurial” economy focuses more on the efficient cause, the human agent who observes the environs in alertness, identifies opportunities for profit through trade, and “creates value for others through human excellence” by bringing to market heretofore unrecognized offerings. This approach highlights the *industria humana* that Aquinas described.<sup>69</sup> And to take one step further, if we were to focus on the formal and final cause, we could call the free market system “the flourishing economy” or “the economy for flourishing.”

## Notes

1. I would like to thank several scholars who reviewed this article and offered valuable commentary: an Austrian economist, a Thomistic virtue ethicist, a Smithian political economist, and two entrepreneurs. The subsequent guidance of this journal's guest editors offered invaluable insights. Any remaining errors are the full responsibility of the author alone.
2. See Jeffrey A. Timmons, *New Venture Creation: Entrepreneurship for the 21st Century*, 7th ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill; Irwin, 2007). See also Dave Valliere and Rein Peterson, "Entrepreneurship and Economic Growth: Evidence from Emerging and Developed Countries," *Entrepreneurship & Regional Development* 21, no. 5–6 (September 1, 2009): 459–80.
3. Andreas Widmer, *The Art of Principled Entrepreneurship: Creating Enduring Value* (Dallas: BenBella Books, 2022), 166–67. Widmer's definition of the entrepreneur is helpful for two reasons: First, the current article focuses on the virtues of the entrepreneur, not on the theory of entrepreneurship. Virtues are exhibited in the action of persons in very practical ways, not in theory. Second, this definition combines elements from certain theorists: "creating value" (Baumol and Kirzner) "for others" (a focus on the customer, the dative of economics) "through human excellence" (Aristotle). See also the helpful survey of Robert C. B. Miller, "Is Entrepreneurship a Virtue?" *Economic Affairs* 39, no. 2 (June 2019): 197–215. After four decades of research, one scholar points out that the definition of entrepreneurship has escaped consensus. See Robert Hébert, "Whither Goest the Entrepreneur?" *Quarterly Journal of Austrian Economics* 26, no. 3 (2023). In all of Israel Kirzner's work, for example, he purposely does not define the entrepreneur, but rather gives examples of how entrepreneurs exhibit alertness in the process of discovery, which will be discussed towards the end of the current article. Source: Personal correspondence with Frédéric Sautet, co-editor of Kirzner's collected works and one of only two people ever to co-author with Kirzner.
4. See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica* (henceforth *ST*), vols. 13–22 in *Opera Omnia of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Latin text based on the Leonine Edition, rev. Enrique Alarcón et al., trans. Laurence Shapcote, OP (Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute, 2012), I-IIae, q. 55, a. 3. Thomas cites this definition of virtue from Aristotle (*Nicomachean Ethics*, II.6.1106a22–24) several times, but also follows Augustine's definition: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use." See Augustine, *De Libero Arbitrio*, 2.19.
5. See Miller, "Is Entrepreneurship a Virtue?" Miller does consider multiple non-Aristotelian virtues from an Aristotelian perspective, but does not consider a Thomistic synthesis. See also Alexandre Havard, *Virtuous Leadership: An Agenda for Personal Excellence* (New York: Scepter, 2007), in which he points to magnanimity and humility as the key virtues for leadership.



6. See Michael J. Naughton and Jeffrey R. Cornwall, “The Virtue of Courage in Entrepreneurship: Engaging the Catholic Social Tradition and the Life-Cycle of the Business,” *Business Ethics Quarterly* 16, no. 1 (2006): 69–93. See also Kristi Bockorny and Carolyn M. Youssef-Morgan, “Entrepreneurs’ Courage, Psychological Capital, and Life Satisfaction,” *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2019): article 789.
7. See Thomas Duening, Matthew Metzger, and Gregory N. Stock, “Entrepreneurial Persistence: Entrepreneurial Virtues as Dynamic Constraints over the Entire Lifepath,” *IEEE Engineering Management Review* 47, no. 3 (2019): 42–56. More generally, see Anita Kralj, Dejan Jelovac, and Vasilij Mate, “Organizational Values and Moral Virtues of Entrepreneur: An Empirical Study of Slovenian Entrepreneurs,” *Innovative Issues and Approaches in Social Sciences* 6, no. 2 (2013): 109–38, where they consider moral virtues of the entrepreneur and the relation to organizational values; although they rank order a list of twenty virtues in two different cultures, they do not discuss the qualities of those virtues.
8. See the thorough Thomistic and linguistic analysis of *gnōmē* in Massimiliano Matteo Pellegrini and Cristiano Ciappei, “Ethical Judgment and Radical Business Changes: The Role of Entrepreneurial Perspicacity,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 128, no. 4 (2015): 769–788. By way of contrast, although Buchholz and Rosenthal treat of imagination, creativity, and sensitivity as key qualities of the entrepreneur, they do so with a process ethics approach within a pragmatist framework, explicitly disavowing virtue ethics and the formation of character; see Rogene A. Buchholz and Sandra B. Rosenthal, “The Spirit of Entrepreneurship and the Qualities of Moral Decision Making: Toward a Unifying Framework,” *Journal of Business Ethics* 60, no. 3 (September 2005): 307–15.
9. See Rahayu Tasnim, Salleh Yahya, and Muhammad Nizam Zainuddin, “‘I Believe...’ The Normative Commitment of the Successful Entrepreneur,” *Journal of Asia Entrepreneurship and Sustainability* 9, no. 2 (December 2013): 188–217.
10. One analogous example is Deirdre N. McCloskey, *The Bourgeois Virtues: Ethics for an Age of Commerce* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), although the scope of that work is for the whole of society and is not focused primarily on the entrepreneur. Interestingly, McCloskey situates entrepreneurship within the virtue of hope, along with courage. Our research agrees with that approach initially, but we detail specific aspects of the other virtues as well.
11. See *ST I-IIae*, q. 65, a. 1 and q. 109, a. 2. See also *ST II-IIae*, q. 129, a. 3, obj. 2 and ad 2. Cf. also Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble, OP (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1995).
12. See Dominic Farrell, LC, “Two Versions of Moral Ethics? Aquinas on Moral Virtue in Revelation and Reason,” in *The Virtuous Life: Thomas Aquinas on the Theological Nature of Moral Virtues*, Publications of the Thomas Instituut Te Utrecht, New Series,

- vol. 17 (Leuven: Peeters, 2017), 222–43, where he points out that mainstream virtue ethics does not typically take into account the infused moral virtues. This observation is true especially of philosophical ethics and business ethics. This issue is one of the weaknesses in MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian approach, insofar as he does not emphasize the role of grace in the life of virtue. He briefly acknowledges that role in Alasdair MacIntyre, *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), 205 but later does not emphasize or recognize it: See idem, *Dependent Rational Animals: Why Human Beings Need the Virtues* (Chicago: Open Court, 1999), 128, 129; idem, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
13. See Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Free Press, 1993), in the final section of the book; but the seeds of that idea appear in his earlier work, idem, *The Spirit of Democratic Capitalism* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1982), 76–77.
  14. Cf. Aquinas, *ST I-IIae*, qq. 49–70 and *II-IIae*, qq. 1–170. Although this schema focuses on the Thomistic virtues, it is interesting to note that the field of positive psychology has developed a list of virtues that mirrors the Thomistic virtues; e.g., the virtue of transcendence in positive psychology has five sub-areas listed in the upper right portion of Figure 2, and many of the sub-items have relevant analogues in the Thomistic schema. See Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman, *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).
  15. As a precursor to the virtues, Aquinas treats the passions in *ST I-IIae*, qq. 22–48. He discusses hope as a natural passion by which the person desires a future good. The passion of hope is a precursor to entrepreneurial endeavors: without natural hope for a future good, no entrepreneur would even begin a venture. This passion is distinct from the theological virtue of hope that will be treated later; the author would like to thank Mary Hirschfeld for this clarification. Sources for Figure 2 include Aquinas, *ST I-IIae* and *II-IIae*; Israel Kirzner, *Competition and Entrepreneurship* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1973); idem, “Uncertainty, Discovery, and Human Action: A Study of Entrepreneurial Profile in the Misesian System,” in idem, ed., *Method, Process, and Austrian Economics: Essays in Honor of Ludwig von Mises* (Lexington: Lexington Books, 1982), 139–59; Frédéric Sautet, “Alertness: An Aristotelian Approach,” in *A Modern Guide to Austrian Economics*, ed. Per Bylund (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2022), 39–63.
  16. See *ST I-IIae*, q. 100, a. 9, *resp.* and Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. J. Litzinger, OP (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1993), II, lect. 4, no. 283. For Aristotle, see *Nicomachean Ethics*, II.4.1105a26-1105b7.

17. The author would like to thank one of the guest editors for elevating this point.
18. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 47, a. 7. More precisely, *synderesis* provides the good end to the moral virtues, which in turn provide the good end to prudence. *Synderesis* is the natural habit by which the first principles of action are grasped, and *synderesis* inclines only to the good. *ST Ia*, q. 79, a. 12, s.c. *Synderesis* is a habit that contains all the precepts of the natural law. *ST I-IIae*, q. 94, a. 1, ad 2. See Michael Pakaluk, “‘Rectification of Appetite’ as Education of Desire Within ‘Moral’ Virtue,” in *Desire and Human Flourishing*, ed. Magdalena Bosch (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020), 435–51.
19. *ST II-IIae*, q. 47, a. 2.
20. MacIntyre, in his successful endeavors to refocus the debates in moral philosophy around the virtues developed within practices embedded in institutions, has a somewhat famous critique of the manager as someone who receives *ends* from directors higher up in the organization, and is merely tasked with finding the most efficient *means* to achieve those given ends. In that view, the manager does not exercise prudence, both because the given ends may or may not be ethical, and because the manager does not deliberate about those ends. It seems that MacIntyre inherits his view of the manager from Max Weber, and it is a caricature of a bureaucratic automaton. See especially Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd ed. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), 25–26 and 86. Although there may be some managers who operate in this manner, other scholars have critiqued MacIntyre’s account and have even proposed that management can be seen as a domain-relative practice in which people exercise the virtues. See Gregory R. Beabout, “Management as a Domain-Relative Practice That Requires and Develops Practical Wisdom,” *Business Ethics Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (April 2012): 405–32; see also the works of Moore, e.g., Geoff Moore, “Virtue in Business: Alliance Boots and an Empirical Exploration of MacIntyre’s Conceptual Framework,” *Organization Studies* 33, no. 3 (2012): 363–87. But our discussion in this article rises above MacIntyre’s critique and even above the responses of Beabout and Moore, insofar as they treat the manager *within* the organization, whereas we treat the entrepreneur who leads the direction of the organization as a whole. Whereas the manager is practicing within the institution of the business organization, the entrepreneur at a higher level is practicing within the institution of the wider market. The entrepreneur necessarily deliberates about which ends are worthy and so MacIntyre’s critique does not directly apply. The author would like to thank the guest editors for raising these issues which deserve clarification. These issues also raise a more fundamental question: What is the *telos* of a business? If the *telos* is merely to make a profit, then MacIntyre’s critiques may apply; but if the *telos* is “to create value for others through human excellence” then there is room for further research to incorporate MacIntyre’s neo-Aristotelian account of ethics into a fuller account of the art and practice of the virtues of the entrepreneur. An area for future research relates this

teleological critique with the nature of the market: What is the *telos* of the market and how does it relate to human flourishing?

21. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 48, a. 1.
22. See *ST I-IIae*, qq. 13–17. See also Josef Pieper, *Reality and the Good* (Chicago: H. Regnery Co., 1967).
23. *ST II-IIae*, a. 49, a. 3, citing Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, 11.
24. *ST II-IIae*, q. 49, a. 4.
25. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 49, a. 5.
26. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 49, a. 6.
27. See Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles*, III, chapters 77, 81, 90, 113, and 128.
28. *ST II-IIae*, q. 47, a. 7.
29. See, e.g., Seth Goldman and Barry Nalebuff, *Mission in a Bottle: The Honest Guide to Doing Business Differently—and Succeeding*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Business, 2013), in which they detail the many surprises and twists and pivots they executed while building their company, Honest Tea.
30. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 47, a. 8.
31. As an example of empirical research confirming virtue ethics, some studies have shown that the relationship between risk tolerance and the probability of entrepreneurial success is not linear but an inverse U-shape: Too low tolerance for risk inhibits entrepreneurship, and excessive risk tolerance leads to projects with high failure rates. Virtue is the mean between too extremes, as evidenced here in the example with risk tolerance. See Marco Caliendo, Frank Fossen, and Alexander S. Kritikos, “Personality Characteristics and the Decisions to Become and Stay Self-Employed,” *Small Business Economics* 42, no. 4 (April 1, 2014): 787–814.
32. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 51.
33. *ST II-IIae*, q. 51, a. 4.
34. See *ST I-IIae*, q. 57, a. 6. see also Pellegrini and Ciappei, “Ethical Judgment.” In commenting on Aristotle’s treatment of *gnōmē*, as if to indicate how *gnōmē* can be developed, Thomas again exhorts us to “pay attention to the thoughts and decisions of the experienced, old, and prudent men on what is to be done.... Although such opinions and resolutions do not lead to demonstrations, they are nonetheless heeded even more than if they were demonstrations themselves. Such men understand practical principles because they have an experienced eye, i.e., right judgment in practical matters. And principles are more certain than the conclusions of demonstrations.” Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, lect. 9, no. 1254.

35. Thomas offers one final division of the virtue of prudence, into subjective parts (*ST II-IIae*, q. 50). Based on the scope and the end, there are four subjective parts: regnative, political, domestic, and military. Regnative prudence resides in the ruler of the political body and is directed towards the common good. Political prudence resides in the governed person, as subject, and consists in the way the citizen participates in the common good through obedience to the law. Domestic prudence or prudence *oeconomica* extends to the household and relates to the procurement of the good of the household, for the family and anyone who is part of the household. Finally, military prudence relates to the directing of the military to protect the political body. Now, the entrepreneur shares aspects of each of these subjective types of prudence: It is like military prudence in so far as those in a company are united in a particular purpose, and that purpose is sub-political, not extending to the whole of life. But the entrepreneur shares in regnative, political, and domestic prudence by analogy: They are moved to that which is conducive to their well-being. As with the entrepreneur, these three types of prudence relate to the concupiscible appetite, whereas military prudence relates to the irascible appetite, protecting the political city or state from physical threat or danger.
36. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 120. Thomas also connects the virtue of *gnōmē* with the virtue of *epikeia*: whereas the legally just is determined according to what happens in the majority of cases, the law is necessarily deficient in the minority of cases, and that is where *epikeia* offers guidance. As *synesis* is to the legally just in the majority of cases, so *gnōmē* is to the object of *epikeia* in those minority of cases where the common rules do not apply. *Gnōmē* is a correct judgment of that which is the object of *epikeia*. Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, VI, lect. 9, no. 1243.
37. See Peter A. Thiel, *Zero to One: Notes on Startups, or How to Build the Future*, 1st ed. (New York: Crown Business, 2014).
38. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 106. In art. 6, Thomas explains how gratitude inclines to something greater, to pay back *gratis* something more than one has received.
39. Chiara Lubich, founder of the Focolare Movement, began the Economy of Communion in Freedom in 1991 in Brazil as an experience of solidarity in economy. Today over 750 companies worldwide follow the principles of the Economy of Communion. They try to “give a human face to the economy” while they use entrepreneurial endeavors to serve the needs of the people in their area. See A. J. Uelmen, “*Caritas in Veritate* and Chiara Lubich: Human Development from the Vantage Point of Unity,” *Theological Studies* 71 (2010): 29–45.
40. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 81. Religion is a natural virtue, not a theological or supernatural virtue. Thomas calls it the chief of the moral virtues (art. 6).

41. See Kevin D. Dougherty et al., “A Religious Profile of American Entrepreneurs,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 52, no. 2 (2013): 401–9.
42. For “putting out into the deep,” see Luke 5:4. For aspects of co-creativity and providence, see Michael Novak, *Business as a Calling: Work and the Examined Life* (New York: Free Press, 1996).
43. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 128; for magnanimity, q. 129; magnificence, q. 134; patience, q. 136; and persistence, q. 137.
44. *ST II-IIae*, q. 129, a. 1, resp.
45. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 129, a. 6 for confidence and a. 8 for the goods of fortune. And as if to warn us of the potential dangers surrounding magnanimity, Thomas follows this question with questions treating presumption, ambition, and vainglory, reminding us that honor is due to God, and is given to us so that we may profit others. The dative of honor is for the sake of others, not for the magnanimous person herself or himself. Regarding ambition, Thomas notes that “honor denotes reverence shown to a person in witness of his excellence. Now two things have to be considered with regard to man’s honor. The first is that a man has not from himself the thing in which he excels, for this is, as it were, something Divine in him, wherefore on this count honor is due principally, not to him but to God. The second point that calls for observation is that the thing in which man excels is given to him by God, *that he may profit others thereby*: wherefore a man ought so far to be pleased that others bear witness to his excellence, as *this enables him to profit others*” (q. 131, a. 1, resp.; emphasis added). One example is Milton Hershey, who built four businesses that failed and had to file for bankruptcy twice, before he found success and built his caramel and then chocolate company. He is also an interesting example of generosity.
46. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 134. In article 2 of this question, Thomas notes that “if magnificence be taken to denote the doing of something great, the doing [*factio*] being understood in the strict sense, it is then a special virtue. For the work done is produced by act: in the use of which it is possible to consider a special aspect of goodness, namely that the work produced [*factum*] by the act is something great, namely in quantity, value, or dignity, and this is what magnificence does,” *corp.* In ad 2 of this article, he cites Cicero’s definition, showing that magnificence relates to “great and lofty undertakings, with a certain broad and noble purpose of mind” (*De Invent. Rhet.* II). Not only is this what entrepreneurs do, but this translation of “undertakings” echoes the original French meaning of “entrepreneur” from the verb *entreprendre*, “to undertake.” See Miller, “Is Entrepreneurship a Virtue?” citing Richard Cantillon, *Essai sur la nature du commerce en général* (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd. for the Royal Economic Society, 1931). Jeff Bezos is one example of an entrepreneur who risked everything, leaving a lucrative job, investing his own savings of \$10,000, and

borrowing \$245,573 from his parents (the company Amazon is now worth \$1.65 trillion). See Robyn Kerkhof, “Exploring the Roots of Success: Jeff Bezos’ Parents and Family” (Blinklist Magazine, September. 13, 2023), accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.blinkist.com/magazine/posts/jeff-bezos-parents>.

47. *ST II-IIae*, q. 128, a. 1, corp.; regarding patience, he cites Cicero: “patience is the voluntary and prolonged endurance of arduous and difficult things for the sake of virtue or profit” (*De Invent. Rhet.* II). Beyond patience, some theorists propose a related virtue of buoyancy, which combines resilience with a light-heartedness that may come from joy. See Jonathan Beale and Iro Konstantinou, “Building Academic Resilience in Secondary School Students: A Research Review and Case Study,” in Marci Cottingham, Rebecca Erickson and Matthew T. Lee, ed., *Transcending Crisis by Attending to Care, Emotion, and Flourishing* (London: Routledge & CRC Press, 2023), chap. 3.
48. See Tom Monaghan, *Pizza Tiger* (New York: Random House, 1986); Robert G. Hagstrom, *Warren Buffett: Inside the Ultimate Money Mind* (John Wiley & Sons, 2021).
49. See *ST II-IIae*, q. 168.
50. See Charalampos Mainemelis and Dionysios D. Dionysiou, “Play, Flow, and Timelessness,” in Christina Ellen Shalley, Michael A. Hitt, and Jing Zhou, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Creativity, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015): 121–40.
51. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, VI.4.1140a1–23. Thomas comments on this passage, noting that the principle of creation of works of craft is in the craftsman first and in the thing made as something extrinsic to it.
52. See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book VI; Aquinas, *ST, II-IIae*, q. 57; Robert Sokolowski, *Phenomenology of the Human Person* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*; idem, *Dependent Rational Animals*; Michael Novak, *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 232–37; Israel Kirzner, *Perception, Opportunity and Profit: Studies in the Theory of Entrepreneurship* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973). Diagram from Paul Radich, “Alasdair MacIntyre on the Role of the Economy in Fostering the Political Common Good” (PhD diss., The Catholic University of America, 2022), 424.
53. When *technē* is a virtue, in a person with the four cardinal virtues and the theological virtues, technocracy is not a problem. The assumed motto of technocracy could be stated as follows: “If it *can* be accomplished technologically, then it *must* be.” Technocracy is related to a progressive assumption about the course of history. Because prudence employs *cautio* and *circumspectio*, not all products or services that *can* be brought to market *should* be brought to market, and the moral compass

of the entrepreneur with virtue will guide him or her to honor human dignity and promote the common good.

54. The author would like to thank Daniel Finnegan for this insight. In Genesis 31:1–11, God gives Bezalel and Oholiab the skills of craftsmanship needed to furnish the tabernacle. The author would like to thank Erik Matson for this reference. It is remarkable to note that when the Son of God became a human being, he was a craftsman: His neighbors refer to him as a *tekton*, a producer, an assembler of things, a “master in any art,” a word that has the same root as *technē*. See Liddell and Scott’s *Greek-English Lexicon*; see also Jonas Holst, “The Fall of the Tektōn and The Rise of the Architect: On The Greek Origins of Architectural Craftsmanship,” *Architectural Histories* 5, no. 1 (2017). The author would like to thank Fr. Robert Gahl for this insight. There may also be a connection to the “first creation of creation,” namely wisdom, who was the “master craftsman” by God’s side (Prov. 8:22–30); see “Why Jesus Was No Ordinary Carpenter,” Abarim Publications, accessed February 1, 2024, <https://www.abarim-publications.com/DictionaryG/t/t-i-k-t-om.html>.
55. See Stephen M. R. Covey, *Smart Trust: Creating Prosperity, Energy and Joy in a Low-Trust World* (New York: Free Press, 2012).
56. See Dominic Farrell, LC, “Two Versions of Moral Ethics.”
57. See Angela Knobel, *Aquinas and the Infused Moral Virtues* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021). For sources in Aquinas on how infused virtue transforms and elevates natural virtue, see Thomas Aquinas, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, a. 4 (253) in *Thomas Aquinas: Disputed Questions on Virtue*, trans. Jeffrey Hause and Claudia Eisen Murphy (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2010), with parallels in Aquinas, *Commentary on the Sentences* 3 33.1.4, *ST I-II* 67.1, and *ST II-II* 136.1 *ad* 1; and also idem, *Disputed Questions on the Virtues*, a. 10, *ad* 4 and *ads* 8 and 9, respectively (60, 61), with parallels at *ST I-II* 51.4, 63.3, 63.4, and idem, *Commentary on the Sentences* 3 33.1.2 subq. 3.
58. Rachel Kotkin, Joshua Hall, and Scott Beaulier, “The Virtue of Business: How Markets Encourage Ethical Behavior,” *The Journal of Markets & Morality* 13, no. 1 (2010): 45–58. See also Joseph Henrich et al., “Cooperation, Reciprocity and Punishment in Fifteen Small-Scale Societies,” *Research Papers in Economics*, 2001; the authors found that in primitive societies, “the higher the degree of market integration [in a given culture] ... the greater the level of cooperation...” This finding was surprising to some of the researchers who had a Marxist background. See also Benito Arruñada, “Protestants and Catholics: Similar Work Ethic, Different Social Ethic,” *The Economic Journal* 120 (September 2009): 890–918.
59. Related to hope, one study showed that optimism is a key dimension of resilience and predicts entrepreneurial success. See Juan-Carlos Ayala and Guadalupe Manzano,



- “The Resilience of the Entrepreneur: Influence on the Success of the Business—A Longitudinal Analysis,” *Journal of Economic Psychology* 42 (June 1, 2014): 126–35.
60. See Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, V.7, and IV and IX; cf. the related sections in Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle’s Metaphysics*, rev. ed., trans. John Patrick Rowan, Aristotelian Commentary Series (Notre Dame, IN: Dumb Ox Books, 1995).
  61. Nor is this akin to a progressive political vision that assumes that everything historically is getting better and will get better. On the contrary, without people practicing virtue, historically things will often get much worse. See MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., esp. chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6. See also idem, *Three Rival Versions of Moral Enquiry: Encyclopaedia, Genealogy, and Tradition* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1990); idem, *Ethics in the Conflicts of Modernity: An Essay on Desire, Practical Reasoning, and Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), chap. 3.
  62. See the concept of appreciative intelligence, in Tojo Joseph Thatchenkery and Carol Metzker, *Appreciative Intelligence: Seeing the Mighty Oak in the Acorn*, 1st ed. (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 2006). See also Giuseppe Argiolas, *Social Management: Principles, Governance and Practice* (New York: Springer, 2017).
  63. See Tyler J. VanderWeele, “On the Promotion of Human Flourishing,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 31 (August 2017): 8148–56, in which he developed a fuller human flourishing index that approximates *eudaimonia* and that includes happiness, meaning and purpose, virtue and character, health, close relationships, and material stability. See Figure 4.
  64. See Israel Kirzner, *Competition and Entrepreneurship*, ed. Peter Boettke and Frédéric Sautet (Indianapolis: Liberty Fund, 2013), esp. chap. 2.
  65. See Frédéric Sautet, “Alertness: An Aristotelian Approach,” 39–63.
  66. See, e.g., Jason Arentz, Frédéric Sautet, and Virgil Storr, “Prior-Knowledge and Opportunity Identification,” *Small Business Economics* 41, no. 2 (2013): 461–78.
  67. On Kirzner’s account, alertness cannot be an object of action for the reason that alertness is not a resource but only a propensity. In that account, it is difficult to consider alertness itself as a virtue that the entrepreneur could develop, but in our account the development of other virtues can help in the development of alertness.
  68. Figure 4 synthesized from VanderWeele, “On the Promotion of Human Flourishing” (based on over seventy empirical studies meeting the three criteria for demonstrating causality), and Dorota Węziak-Białowolska, Eileen McNeely, and Tyler J. VanderWeele, “Human Flourishing in Cross Cultural Settings: Evidence From the United States, China, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, and Mexico,” *Frontiers in Psychology*

10 (2019): 1269. Numbers along the curved arrows on the right of Figure 4 show the strength of the correlation between the given outcome domain and Happiness/Life Satisfaction.  $p < 0.001$  for all correlations given,  $n = 8,800$ ; for upcoming Global Flourishing Study,  $n = 200,000$  with representative samples from twenty-two countries in a longitudinal study across five years.

69. See *STII-IIae*, q. 78, a. 3, corp. See also Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Aristotle's Politics*, trans. Richard J. Regan (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2007), I, lect. 1, no. 32.