Renaissance Thomists knew Thomas Aquinas spoke of natural happiness, but some believed this happiness is absolutely impossible; others impossible in a state of elevation. Most Thomists rejected both forms of skepticism. An example is the Dominican theologian Pedro de Godoy (1608-1677). This article reconstructs Godoy’s main arguments with a view toward uncovering his method and originality. While his arguments are diverse, they mostly depend on the relation of happiness to human psychology. Godoy repeatedly appeals to the natural abilities of intellect and will, yet natural abilities can depend on God’s grace, which is natural or supernatural. Some natural abilities are even impossible without natural grace, like that of loving God above all things. For Godoy’s part, then, it is chiefly psychological considerations that explain why the Thomist School of his day held firm against rising doubts over natural happiness. Above all, it was considerations of knowing and loving God.

Keywords: Pedro de Godoy, Thomas Aquinas, Thomism, Renaissance, Salamanca, Happiness

De beatitudine naturali est controversia, an detur aliqua naturalis beatitudo hominis in hac vita.

Adam Tanner S.J. (1571-1632)

In this study, the concern is Pedro de Godoy’s (1608-1677) De beatitudine naturali, which asks whether we can be naturally happy (An sit possibilis aliqua naturalis felicitas; quae vera sit beatitudo?). If we argue that natural happiness is impossible with elevation, and thus when our nature has been ordered to the beatific vision, then it would seem we must reject a centuries-old Scholastic principle, which is that grace perfects nature, not destroys it. If we argue that natural happiness is always an impossibility, however, whether our nature has been elevated or not, then it is hard to see how we could ultimately know what we are, at least if natures are known by the natural acts they tend to. For natural happiness is purported to be the ultimate natural act
of a rational being. It is unlikely these implications escaped Godoy. The implications of denying natural happiness are likely the reason why he defended this happiness at all. The objective of the present study is to examine how he does it\(^2\). We could concentrate on other commentators, but the choice of Godoy is still wise if, as in the present case, we are trying to understand why, in spite of the spread of skepticism over natural happiness among Renaissance Thomists, it was an unqualified realism about this happiness that remained the norm for the Thomist School. Godoy was arguably the school’s most influential voice to enter the debate, and in focus, balance, and substance, his defense easily stands out above most others of its kind. He therefore makes for a prime starting place for developing our grasp of the matter.

Turning to Godoy’s defense also helps establish the historical background to contemporary controversy over natural happiness. By the middle of the last century, Thomists had come to call this happiness into question once again. Henri de Lubac, for example, and Joseph Buckley both famously denied that the attainment of a natural end could adequately satisfy our desire for happiness\(^3\). They were therefore denying that there could ever really be a happiness that is natural. Besides, for de Lubac and his followers today, the human person is essentially ordered to the beatific vision. So even if a natural end could satisfy us, say, under different circumstances, it is impossible to find happiness by attaining a natural end under current circumstances. There is now only one final end for man and it is supernatural. Thus, the only happiness that can be true for us now is supernatural happiness. All other happiness is false and not really possible. In Godoy’s defense, we find an example of how Thomists have historically argued to the contrary of de Lubac and Buckley: created rational nature can attain a natural happiness that is true, whether this nature has a supernatural end or not. I first explain Godoy on the absolute possibility of natural happiness. I then turn to Godoy’s treatment of the possibility of natural happiness on the supposition of elevation.

1. The Absolute Possibility of Natural Happiness

In commenting on happiness, Godoy chooses to have one tract of eleven disputations treating supernatural happiness and a second tract of three disputations treating natural happiness. The possibility of natural happiness is discussed in the first disputation of the second tract. Godoy immediately identifies three positions: his own position, the position of those like Gabriel Vázquez (1549-1604), and the position of those like Gil.

\(^2\) I rely exclusively on the print editions that have survived for Godoy. Although manuscripts have survived for other works of his, I know of none corresponding to his work on the *prima secundae*, which I consult the most. I rely on *Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae*, t. 1, in Aedibus Episcopalibus, excudebat Fr. Didacus Garcia, Burgi Oxoniensis 1672; and *Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae*, t. 1, editio secunda veneta, Typis Antonii Zatta, Venetiis 1763. Primarily, however, I am relying on, and shall subsequently cite, *Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae*, t. 1, apud Ioannem Iacobum Hertz, Venetiis 1696. Regarding this last edition, one should be aware of the fact that the pagination varies from copy to copy. In use of my references, then, one may always consult the sectional information I provide in the event the page information is unhelpful. All translations in this article are my own.

da Apresentação (1539-1626). He therefore understands the threat to natural happiness as twofold: some deny the possibility of natural happiness absolutely; others in a state of elevation and relatively. Godoy is aware, however, that others besides Gil and Vázquez have also played a role in spreading skepticism over natural happiness. He points to Melchor Cano (1509-1560), for example, and even some outside the Thomist sphere, like Francisco de Herrera (1551-1609), the Scotist fondly cited by Gil⁴. For his own view, Godoy cites some of the most influential in the Thomist tradition, including from the Salamanca School Domingo Báñez (1528-1604) and Bartolomé de Medina (c. 1528-1580); from before the Salamanca School, Tommaso de Vio Cajetan (c. 1468-1534) and Jean Capréolus (†1444). Others included are the Jesuit Diego de Alarcón (1585-1634), the Cistercian Pedro de Lorca (1561-1612), and the Dominican Giovanni Paolo Nazari (1556-1645)⁵. It is clear from the beginning that Godoy thinks the majority of Thomists are in agreement with him.

To defend his position, Godoy relies on a total of seven arguments. Four defend the absolute possibility of natural happiness and three defend its possibility with elevation. The main pattern that emerges says something methodological about Godoy’s defense. To defend the possibility of natural happiness, Godoy will appeal to our natural abilities in every argument but his fifth. Directly or not, it is always an appeal to the natural abilities of the intellect and will. His general idea would seem to be that, if we are naturally able to perform an act that is sufficient for the real possibility of true happiness taken generally, then because this act would be natural in substance, we can truly be naturally happy. Whatever Godoy’s exact plan may be, what his frequent appeal to our natural abilities makes certain methodologically is that he is arguing mainly on account of the relation of happiness to human psychology. It is the use of this relation that, on one level or another, unites virtually all his arguments. The following four defend the absolute possibility of natural happiness⁶.

⁵ Petrus de Godoy O.P., Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 1, p. 54ª.
⁶ Although I have also analyzed arguments by Godoy’s opponents, as well as his criticisms of them, space does not permit a discussion of this analysis. What is essential to know is the following. The most popular arguments against Godoy’s position came down to two. One was an argument by Gabriel Vázquez that relies on the incompossibility of happiness and mortal sin. Godoy believes the argument can be met in three ways: by distinguishing between true happiness generally conceived and determinate forms of true happiness; by distinguishing between incompossibility with mortal sin in the same order and incompossibility with mortal sin in a different order; or by distinguishing between moral and metaphysical incompossibility. In short, Godoy thinks Vázquez oversimplifies. The next most popular argument against Godoy’s position was an argument defended by Gil da Apresentação. In summary, Godoy focuses on the argument’s premise that, for an act to constitute happiness, it must be our absolutely highest good. Godoy contends to the contrary that, for an act to constitute happiness, it need only be the highest good of a single order, not all orders. Godoy therefore believes that Gil’s basic problem is that he overcomplicates. For the relevant passages, see Gabrielus Vazqueziius S.J., Commentariorum, ac disputationum in primam secundae S. Thomae, t. 1, ex officina Ioannis Gratiani apud viduam, Compluti 1614², disp. 12, cap. 3, p. 88ª; Egidius A Praesentatione O.E.S.A., Disputationes de animae et corporis beattudine, lib. 3, qu. 1, art. 3, sect. 4, p. 348ª; Petrus de Godoy O.P., Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 2, p. 55ª; sect. 3, pp. 56ª-57ª; sect. ultimus, p. 57ª.
1.1. Reasoning from Knowledge

Drawing on human history, Godoy points to antiquity’s pagan philosophers. They were naturally able to know we can be happy. Godoy also adverts to the natural ability of pagan philosophers to demonstrate this knowledge, which he denies was of anything supernatural. A major principle, then, in Godoy’s first argument is that we can truly and naturally be whatever we can naturally know we can be. We can naturally know we can be happy, and we can even demonstrate this, so we truly can be happy naturally. It is Godoy’s philosophical realism that grounds his principle. Like Aquinas, he believes truth and being are convertible and that the principles of existence are reproduced by those of knowing. Consequently, it is the realism of Thomism that Godoy probably thinks is most at stake in his first argument. If we deny that the possibility of natural happiness is implied by our natural ability to know we can be happy, then the relation of mind to reality would be lost. As for which demonstration from the philosophers Godoy has in mind, he fails to say, but Aquinas might have an example of the kind in question. In the prima secundae, Aquinas argues we can be happy for the simple reason that happiness lies in the attainment of the perfect good, and that attainment lies in two acts we are capable of: the intellect’s apprehension of the perfect good and the will’s desire of it.

1.2. Reasoning from Desire

Godoy’s second argument draws on a fact about human experience. Everybody, he observes, innately desires to be happy, which means the will invariably seeks perfection, tends toward unity with its final end, and never fails to desire being free from misery. Godoy’s point also means happiness must be an objective reality. For innate desires, stemming directly from our nature, presuppose the reality of their objects, whereas other desires, sometimes corresponding to fact, can correspond to mere fiction. Both Aquinas and Augustine are cited, but Godoy seems not to think either is seriously needed. He takes our innate desire to be happy as true even a priori. Natures, on his view, just are those things by which substances tend toward their perfection.

But what satisfies an innate desire? Godoy thinks his answer to this question gets him from the observation that we innately desire happiness to the possibility of being naturally happy. So the primary principle of his second argument is that we can truly and naturally be whatever we can innately desire to be. According to Godoy, the only thing that satisfies an innate desire is something naturally possible. He cites Aquinas

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7 Petrus de Godoy, O.P., Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 1, p. 54: «Suadetur primo: nam Gentiles Philosophi duci sola naturali ratione hominem posse esse foelicem, et beatum cognoverunt, et evidenter demonstrarunt; aut de supernaturali nihil cogitavere: ergo possibilis est aliqua naturalis beatitudo».

8 Thomas Aquinas, Summa theologiae (STh), IA-IIae, qu. 5, art. 1, co.

and Gabriel Vázquez. He also cites an earlier disputation of his on the vision of God, from which he extracts two proofs for his claim. The first argues that all things due to nature are naturally possible, and only what is due to nature will satisfy an innate desire. Godoy thus construes innate desires as conditions of debts, the assumption being the plausible idea that natures institute absolute needs. Whenever we find that a thing absolutely needs something for it to flourish, we also find it is because of what it is. Godoy’s second proof is more theological. Its main assumption is that all innate desires depend on nature, which is created by God, and so all innate desires depend on God only as the Author of Nature, not as the Author of Grace. Consequently, Godoy argues that our innate desires can correspond only to things in the range of the Author of Nature’s abilities. If innate desires could correspond to things beyond the abilities of the Author of Nature, then according to Godoy, God would not really be acting beyond our nature when he infuses certain supernatural forms. Moreover, God would actually be harming the very natures he created as the Author of Nature were he to withhold these supernatural forms. Godoy is clearly worried about the coherence of divine agency. How could God not be acting beyond human nature when he bestows gifts that exceed human nature? And if something exceeds human nature, how could God cause injury by refusing it?

1.3. Reasoning from Possible Worlds

The third argument Godoy gives relies on the possibility of other worlds. The world in question is one in which the only things available to man are in the natural order. To test the possibility of natural happiness, then, Godoy turns to the state of pure nature. He argues that natural happiness is absolutely possible because God, from his absolute power, could have created a completely natural world in which we could still be happy. The operative principle is that God can do at a lower level whatever he can do at a higher level. At the higher level of supernature, God has the power to create a state in which we can truly be happy, and so even at the lower level of pure nature,
Godoy thinks God has the power to do this. A parallel could be virtue that is true. According to Aquinas, God makes it possible both on the supernatural level, where it is infused, and on the natural level, where it is acquired. To prove that God actually has the power to create us in a state of pure nature, Godoy draws on the gratuity of our supernatural end. If the beatific vision is due to no one, then on Godoy’s view, it is clear that God could have created us without elevation, thus creating us in a world that is completely natural. Godoy’s claim that we could still be happy in such a world is the minor premise of his third argument. He gives four reasons to support the premise.

First Proof of the Minor

The first reason holds that, in a purely natural state, misery would be unnecessary. Godoy’s explanation can be gathered from his criticism of Gabriel Vázquez, who argues that, in a purely natural state, misery would be inevitable. According to Godoy, the reality of mortal sin, which Thomists commonly believed is incompatible with happiness, would be unnecessary in a state of pure nature. The will would still have its inclination to the good even though, like now, it would be indifferent to good and evil. This means for Godoy that the will would not be equally indifferent (indifferens aequali indifferentia). As a result, he takes the intellectual act required for determining the will to the good as something that God owes to human nature.

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15 The absolute power (potentia absoluta) Godoy is speaking of stands in contrast to God’s ordinary power (potentia ordinata). Aquinas makes use of the distinction at STh, Ia, qu. 25, art. 5, ad 1: «quod attribuitur potentiae secundum se consideratae, dicitur Deus posse secundum potentiam absolutam. Et huiusmodi est omne illud in quo potest salvari ratio entis, ut supra dictum est. Quod autem attribuitur potentiae divinae secundum quod exequitur imperium voluntatis iustae, hoc dicitur Deus posse facere de potentia ordinata. Secundum hoc ergo, dicendum est quod Deus potest alia facere, de potentia absoluta, quam quae praescivit et praestat se facturum, non tamen potest esse quod aliquam fecit, quae non praescivit et praestat se facturum. Quia ipsum facere subiacet praesentiae et praestationi, non autem ipsum posse, quod est naturale. Ideo enim Deus aliquam facit, quia vult, non tamen ideo potest, quia vult, sed quia talis est in sua natura». For further discussion on the distinction, see W.J. CourténAy, Capacity and Volition: A History of the Distinction of Absolute and Ordained Power, Pierluigi Lubrini, Bergamo 1990. Latin quotations of Aquinas are taken from S. Thomae de Aquino opera omnia, ed. by E. Alarcón, Fundación Tomás de Aquino, Pamplona 2000, http://www.corpusthomisticum.org/iopera.html. The relevant critical texts are listed at the same site.

16 Id., STh, Ia-IIae, qu. 7, co.

17 PETRUS DE GODOY O.P., Disputaciones theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 1, p. 55°: «Et probatur: ordinatio namque ad supernaturalem finem non est debita homini, sed omnino gratiosa; sicuti, nec est debita voluntas, qua Deus homines omnes vult saluñi fieri, nec generalis Dei providentia, qua media supernaturalia sufficientia ad salutem largatur: ergo absque ulla voluntis invidiosa, et absque ulla indecentia, potuit de potentia absoluta condere hominem, illumque ad supernaturalem finem non ordinare».

18 Ibidem: «Tum, quia homo sic conditus non foret necessario miser; ergo ordinaretur a Deo ad aliquid foelicitatem, quam consequi posset».

19 GABRIELUS VAZQUEZIUS S.J., Commentariorum, ac disputationum in primam secundae S. Thomae, disp. 12, cap. 3, p. 88°.

20 PETRUS DE GODOY O.P., Disputaciones theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 2, pp. 55°-56°: «Ad probationem Vazquij, distinguo antecedens: est indifferentes aequali indifferentia, nego antecedens: inaequali, concedo antecedens, et nego consequientiam: quia licet voluntas humana indifferentes sit quantum ad elicientiam ad bonum, et malum; inclinatur tamen ad bonum, et malum est contra inclinationem illius: unde non est indifferentes aequali indifferentia ad utrumque; ac proinde non mirum quod ei debeatur aliquidam determinatio ad bonum».

Cf. THOMAS AQUINAS, STh, Ia, qu. 83, art. 2; Ia-IIae, qu. 8, art. 1.
The cogitation in question would be a natural grace, one that would be owed to human nature generally but not to any human in particular. Thus, it would be neither a special grace nor a grace beyond the gift of creation. In a purely natural state, Godoy argues the grace would be given by God through general providence in the gift of creation itself, where it would belong as part of the gift’s accidental integrity. Special grace would also be available in a state of pure nature, but it would be received through God’s special providence. Indeed, special grace is the only reason why, in a state of pure nature, we could ever love God above all things. Godoy thinks the ability to perform this natural act is impossible through God’s general aid alone. What Godoy finds incompatible with a state of pure nature is entitatively supernatural grace. Things that are entitatively natural can also be incompatible, according to Godoy, but only if they depend on a substantially supernatural form. An example is supernaturally healed nature, as we find among those with sanctifying grace in the postlapsarian state.

Regarding special grace, it could seem Godoy only has in mind a relative notion of general grace. That would mean he is merely thinking of God’s general aid but relative to the individual who receives it as something undue. Some passages indicate Godoy is not thinking this way, however. He will speak, for example, about the «general aid included in the gift of creation, or the special aid of God the Maker of Nature». Expressions like this make it appear that the special aid we could have in a state of pure nature is special in part because it exceeds the gift of creation and is really distinct from general aid. And it would not be unthinkable for Godoy to hold there is natural grace aside from the gift of creation. Godoy credits other Thomists for thinking the same, such as Capréolus before him. Of course, if in a state of pure
nature Godoy is thinking there are natural graces beyond the gift of creation, then we might say his notion of pure nature is not really pure at all. Others might contest the charge, however, seeing that Godoy still keeps everything in the order of nature. Regardless, by introducing graces into the state of pure nature beyond the gift of creation, Godoy would be coming into conflict with other classical Thomists, even within his own Salamanca School. An example is Juan de la Anunciación (1633-1701). Writing for the Carmelites of Salamanca, Juan argues that, in a state of pure nature, man «would have no gift distinct from the gift of creation and from those things that are due to human nature from general providence. [. . .] Whatever is conferred on nature existing in that state would not have the character of special grace».

Second Proof of the Minor

Godoy’s second reason for thinking we could be happy in a state of pure nature relies on connotations. He believes that, in a completely natural world, God would still be providential, providing as he would all the things that man needs in order to thrive in this state. The reader is left to speculate about Godoy’s explanation. One possibility is justice. If owing to his created nature man would still have needs in a purely natural state, it would only be just for God, the Author of Nature, to enable man to meet those needs. But justice is a good, so a more general explanation could be God’s goodness. Whether we are created elevated or not, God is always good and, in his goodness, would always provide what we cannot provide for ourselves. In any case, Godoy points to divine providence because he finds in it two things that are jointly sufficient for the possibility of happiness. He finds the notion of an ultimate end and the means to attain it. So divine providence is fundamentally a teleological concept for Godoy. When God provides for us, this is to help us attain some final good. In fact, Godoy is simply following Aquinas, who connects providence with the ordering of things to their last end. Godoy’s teleological notion of providence is also supported by the fact that, if there were no final good for which God provided, there would be no final reason for him to provide. Consequently, there would be no provisions to begin with.

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26 *Collegium Salmanticense, Cursus theologicus*, t. 9, apud Victorem Palmé, Parisiis 1878, tract. 14, disp. 2, dub. 8, sect. 2, p. 288: «Caeterum insufficientia hujus solutionis facile ostendi potest: quoniam etsi verum sit, quod sicut homo conditus in puris tenetur resistere gravibus tentationibus contra legem naturalem; ita etiam Deus debet conferre illi vires, atque auxilia sufficientia ad resistendum: falsum tamen, quod hujsusmodi vires, et auxilia haberent rationem gratiae specialis. Nam homo in puris naturalibus constitutus nullum haberet donum distinctum a dono creationis, et ab illis, quae humanae naturae ex generali providentia debentur: in hoc quippe consistit status purorum, ut loco supra citato descripsimus, quod videlecit natura humana relinquatur sibi, et cum sibi propriis: ergo quidquid confertur naturae ex existenti in praedicto statu, non haberet rationem gratiae specialis. Atqui non posset non Deus illi communicare vires, et auxilia sufficientia ad resistendum gravibus tentationibus, ut haec solutio admittit: ergo natura in puris constitutae posset resistere gravibus tentationibus absque speciali gratia, adeoque per proprias vires».


28 *Ibidem*: «at providentia, est de medij in ordine ad finem: ergo illum ordinaret ad finem aliquem ultimum, quem assequi posset, et consequi eton beatus».

29 *Thomas Aquinas, STh*, Ia, qu. 22, art. 1.
For Aquinas also teaches that with neverending ends in action there arises the problem of action never beginning. Action begins only if intention ends.  

*Third Proof of the Minor*  

Godoy’s third reason for his minor premise turns to the natural law, which he argues would persist in a state of pure nature. The claim is a safe one. The natural law regards everything we are inclined to by our nature, yet in a purely natural state, our nature would persist and our inclinations too. But could we keep the natural law? Godoy thinks we could. The same God who would bind us to the law would give us the powers to honor it. If we lacked these powers, then despite our failure to keep the law, we would not be sinning:

alias [homo] non peccaret legem non observando.  

Godoy’s claim seems to be at odds with Aquinas. In discussing the state of integral nature, Aquinas argues that, if we could not keep the law, we could not *not* sin:  

aliaoquin [homo] non potuisset in statu illo non peccare.

Is Godoy really contradicting his teacher? It all depends on whether Godoy and Aquinas are speaking of sin in the same sense. But the two are speaking of sin in different ways. Aquinas has in mind acts that are sinful in substance, which becomes clear if we pay attention to the context. As to whether we can observe the law without grace, Aquinas answers:

Respondeo dicendum quod implere mandata legis contingit dupliciter. Uno modo, quantum ad substantiam operum, prout scilicet homo operatur iusta et fortia, et alia virtutis opera. Et hoc modo homo in statu naturae integrae potuit omnia mandata legis implere, alioquin non potuisset in statu illo non peccare, cum nihil aliud sit peccare quam transgredi divina mandata.

The second way in which Aquinas argues we can keep the law is *ad modum*, for example, by honoring the law out of charity. What is important is that the sense in which Aquinas is arguing that we could keep the law in a state of integral nature is *ad substantiam*. Thus, the sense in which he is here arguing that we would be sinning were we unable to honor the law is also *ad substantiam*. In Godoy’s case, however, what is being denied is that, if we cannot keep the law, then we are sinning voluntarily, which is to speak of acts that are sinful *ad modum*. Assume God has denied us the powers to keep the law, as Godoy is hypothesizing. Then we cannot possibly transgress the law freely since we lack sufficient will.

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30 Id., *STh*, Ia-IIae, qu. 1, art. 4.  
31 *Ibi*, qu. 94, arts. 2-4.  
33 *Thomas Aquinas*, *STh*, Ia-IIae, qu. 109, art. 4, co.  
34 *Ibidem*.  
35 *Ibidem*: «Alio modo possunt impleri mandata legis non solum quantum ad substantiam operis, sed etiam quantum ad modum agendi, ut scilicet ex caritate flant».  

At any rate, when it comes to our psychology in a purely natural state, Godoy shows he is quite optimistic. The ability to keep the law in this state implies that the human intellect can both adequately grasp the precepts of the law and correctly apply them. It also implies that the will can prevail over the influence of passion and act according to reason. And fighting our passions in a purely natural state would not be in vain, according to Godoy. He argues that, for those who would honor the law in a state of pure nature, a reward would be given by God as the Author of Nature. The reason is divine providence, which demands that those who keep the law be rewarded\(^{36}\). But Godoy is not repeating himself by returning to divine providence here. Before, he was arguing we could be happy in a purely natural state because God’s providence would persist, yet providence implies a means to an end. Now, Godoy is reasoning we could be happy in a purely natural state because the natural law would persist, yet providence ensures both the powers and a reward for keeping the law.

**Fourth Proof of the Minor**

Godoy’s fourth reason for his minor premise is difficult. To account for why happiness is possible in a state of pure nature, he explains that, even in this state, God as the Author of Nature can do something (\textit{aliquid}) for us graciously and liberally (\textit{gratiose, et liberaliter})\(^{37}\). Godoy then argues that the grace we would need to attain our end in this state would only have to be natural grace. He therefore thinks that the happiness that would result from attaining this end would remain natural as well\(^{38}\). It is unclear what exactly Godoy is trying to argue here. We are told, for instance, that God can do something, but we are not told what. We are only told how, namely, graciously and liberally. At least it is clear Godoy is focusing on God’s grace, perhaps to remind his reader that, even in a world that is completely natural, we would not be left to the principles of human nature alone. To that extent, happiness in a purely natural state would remain possible.

**1.4. Reasoning from the Knowledge and Love of God**

Godoy’s fourth argument turns to knowing and loving, where the main idea is that anything is possible if the things in which it essentially consists are possible. If by some perfection we are united to our first principle, then on Godoy’s view, we can only be happy\(^{39}\). Godoy’s idea finds support in Aquinas’s commentary on the \textit{Sentences}, where union with a thing’s principle is argued to constitute its perfection\(^{40}\). In our case, Godoy thinks that union would be achieved if we could know and love God.

\(^{36}\) \textit{Petrus de Godoy O.P., Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae}, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 1, p. 55: «at suavis Dei providentia in omni statu videtur exigere, ut legem observantes remuneret, et in legis observantia offendentes castiget: ergo praemium aliquod ultimum illis, ut naturae Author proponeret, quod illorum meritis responderet, et quo assequito sua foelicitate gauderet».

\(^{37}\) \textit{Ibidem}: «Tum denique: nam Deus, ut Author naturae potest gratiose, et liberaliter aliquid operari».

\(^{38}\) \textit{Ibidem}: «ergo eti homo ad sui finis assequitionem, qua foelix, et beatus existeret, gratia indigaret, esset gratia Dei Authoris naturae, et consequenter finis assequitio, in qua consideret eius beatitudino, foret naturalis».

\(^{39}\) \textit{Ibidem}: «quaevis natura beata esse dicitur, quando suo principio conjungitur perfectione possibili».

\(^{40}\) \textit{Thomas Aquinas, Scriptum super Sententis (Super Sent.)}, lib. 4, dist. 49, qu. 2, art. 1, co.: «ultima perfectio cujuslibet sit in conjunctione ad suum principium».
perfectly as the Author of Nature\textsuperscript{41}. Thus, assuming we can perform these acts, he argues we could be happy through them, and in fact Godoy thinks both acts are possible through our natural powers\textsuperscript{42}. Proof of our natural power to perfectly know God as the Author of Nature is found by Godoy in the angels\textsuperscript{43}. It may seem strange that he appeals to angels to answer a question about humans, as he will do again later in his disputation. But to Godoy’s mind, if both humans and angels are of a created rational nature, then the angels are relevant. Some citations he could have given are those of Aquinas in the \textit{prima pars}, where the angels are said to know God by their essence and their knowledge (\textit{lumen intellectuale}) is said to be perfect\textsuperscript{44}. As for perfectly loving God as the Author of Nature, Godoy finds proof of our natural power to do this in the natural precept to love God above all things\textsuperscript{45}. If it is a precept of the natural law, as Aquinas says it is, then it must be naturally possible. Godoy believes the Author of Nature could never bind us to anything that is physically beyond our natural powers\textsuperscript{46}.

Godoy recognizes, however, that even if we could perfectly know and love God as the Author of Nature, uniting with our first principle in this way would not be perfect \textit{absolutely} speaking\textsuperscript{47}. That is no doubt because Godoy knows that no natural union with God could give us knowledge of his essence\textsuperscript{48}. Even so, Godoy believes the union is true, for he is ultimately trying to show the possibility of a true natural happiness. He could also be thinking the union is true because of Aquinas’s teaching that «man and other rational creatures attain their ultimate end by knowing and loving Gods»\textsuperscript{49}. There are only two ways Aquinas’s words could fail to support the idea that, by perfectly knowing and loving God as the Author of Nature, the resulting union with God is true. Either it would have to be the case that we cannot truly know and love God in the order of nature, or that the God we can truly know and love in the order of nature is not truly God.

2. The Possibility of Natural Happiness with Elevation

The second part of Godoy’s defense contains arguments five through seven, which defend the possibility of natural happiness in a state of elevation (\textit{Quid dicendum}

\textsuperscript{41} \textsc{Petrus de Godoy} O.P., \textit{Disputationes theologiae in primam secundae Divi Thomae}, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 1, p. 55: «at per actus praedictos coniungitur natura rationalis cum suo primo principio perfectione possibili per vires naturae».
\textsuperscript{42} \textit{Ibidem}: «perfectissima cognitio, et amor perfectissimus Dei, ut Author naturae, sufficiunt beatificare hominem».
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{Ibidem}: «Minor quantum ad cognitionem certa videtur: Angeli namque Deum, ut Authorem naturae, cognoscent perfecte eti non intuitive».
\textsuperscript{44} \textsc{Thomas Aquinas}, \textit{STh}, Ia, qu. 62, art. 7, co.; qu. 58, art. 4, co.
\textsuperscript{45} On the medieval controversy over the natural love of God, see T.M. \textsc{Osborne Jr.}, \textit{Love of Self and Love of God in Thirteenth-Century Ethics}, University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame (IN) 2005.
\textsuperscript{46} \textsc{Petrus de Godoy} O.P., \textit{Disputationes theologiae in primam secundae Divi Thomae}, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 1, p. 55: «amore suadetur nam praeceptum de amore Dei super omnia naturale est; Deus autem ut Author naturae praecipere nequit, id quod est physice impossibile per vires illius».
\textsuperscript{47} \textit{Ibidem}: «sufficiunt beatificare hominem, etsi non beatitudine, quae sit talis simpliciter, et omnino perfecta, bene tamen quae naturalis sit; aut utrumque est possibile per vires naturae: ergo naturalis beatitudo est possibilis».
\textsuperscript{48} \textsc{Thomas Aquinas}, \textit{STh}, Ia, qu. 12, art. 4; Ia-IIae, qu. 5, art. 5.
\textsuperscript{49} \textsc{Id.}, \textit{STh}, Ia-IIae, qu. 65, art. 4, ad 1; Ia qu. 1, art. 8, co.: «homo et aliae rationales creaturae consequuntur ultimum finem cognoscendo et amando Deum».
But here Godoy’s defense is not a total departure from his defense’s first part. There is some thematic continuity, for example. The angels appeared in Godoy’s fourth argument and we will see them reappear in his fifth and sixth arguments. Also, the theme of knowing and loving that emerged in Godoy’s fourth argument will return in his sixth argument and seventh. Another expression of continuity lies in the principles Godoy uses. His fourth argument relied significantly on the idea that anything is possible if the things in which it essentially consists are possible: we can be naturally happy because we can naturally know and love God perfectly. That is basically the reasoning of Godoy’s fourth argument. Similar reasoning will surface in Godoy’s sixth and seventh arguments. His fourth argument, in turning to the angels, also relied on the idea that higher forms of created rational nature can teach us about lower forms of created rational nature. The principle is primary in Godoy’s fifth argument and will play at least a secondary role in his sixth.

A final bridge between the first and second parts of Godoy’s defense is the methodological continuity we noted earlier. Godoy’s sixth and seventh arguments, in virtue of turning to the natural knowledge and love of God, will be appealing to the natural abilities of the intellect and will. We have been seeing that same appeal being made throughout the first part of Godoy’s defense. The first argument appealed to the natural abilities of the intellect by turning to our natural ability to know and demonstrate that we can be happy. The second argument appealed to the natural abilities of the will by turning to our natural ability to desire happiness. And the third argument appealed to the natural abilities both of the intellect and of the will by turning to our natural abilities to keep the natural law. The fourth argument also appealed to the intellect’s and will’s natural abilities, but by turning to our natural ability to know and love God, as arguments six and seven will do.

Although, by now, it is clear that, for Godoy, a natural ability is not tantamount to an ability apart from the aid of God. Also clear by now is the notion of natural happiness that Godoy is working with. One notion among Aquinas’s Renaissance readers is imperfect natural happiness, which is a temporal kind of natural happiness that Aquinas appropriates from Aristotle. Another notion is perfect natural happiness (perfecta intra ordinem naturae), which Thomists commonly thought possible at least for separated souls created with a natural end alone. The notion of natural happiness that Godoy mainly has in mind is the perfect one. In his previous argument, for example, he focuses on the perfect knowledge and love of God, and again he returns to this kind of knowledge and love in the second part of his defense. However, Godoy’s choice to deal primarily with perfect natural happiness does not undermine his chances of proving the possibility of imperfect natural happiness. The possibility of the latter is proved by proving the possibility of the former.

2.1. Reasoning from Angelic Creation

Turning to Godoy’s fifth argument, we find a marked increase in his use of Question 62 of the prima pars, and the practice continues in his next two arguments. In this question, Aquinas treats of the angels in the order of grace. Article 1 establishes that the angels, at the moment of their creation, were naturally happy. Owing to their dignity as simple substances, not hylemorphic ones like ourselves, Aquinas believes the angels had all the natural perfection they could attain when they were created. They
had no need as we have to obtain this perfection progressively over time\textsuperscript{50}. In Article 3, however, Aquinas goes further and contends that, at the moment of their creation, the angels were elevated. He argues by analogy. As all corporeal things have been created with their seeds (e.g., the trees and animals), and as sanctifying grace is the seed of happiness, so the incorporeal angels must have been created in sanctifying grace\textsuperscript{51}. This fact, together with the fact that the angels were created naturally happy, convinces Godoy that natural happiness must be possible in a state of elevation\textsuperscript{52}. An apparent problem, however, is the fact that he assumes the possibility of natural happiness in one of his own premises. An opponent like Gabriel Vázquez would deny him this move, arguing instead that the natural happiness of which Aquinas is speaking in Article 1 is only metaphorical (\textit{vestigium quoddam, et imaginem quandam beatitudinis})\textsuperscript{53}. Regardless, Godoy is right not to worry. In this section of his defense, he has already argued that natural happiness is absolutely possible.

2.2. \textit{Reasoning from Angelic Knowledge and Love}

Godoy’s sixth argument cites Article 7 of Question 62. Aquinas argues that, even among the beatified angels, there persists a natural knowledge and love of God\textsuperscript{54}. That means that, at one and the same time, the beatified angels can know and love God naturally and know and love God supernaturally. The intellect can simultaneously elicit two different acts, and so can the will. To explain this possibility, Aquinas relies on the concept of subordination, which is the ordering of one thing to another. Natural knowledge can be subordinated to supernatural knowledge, so the two types of knowledge are simultaneously possible for the intellect. And because natural love can be subordinated to supernatural love, the two types of love are simultaneously possible for the will. Subordination is always key to the simultaneity of a power’s different operations, especially when the operations at issue belong to different orders\textsuperscript{55}. According to Godoy, the

\textsuperscript{50} \textit{Ib.}, \textit{STh}, Ia, qu. 62, art. 1, co.: «Sic igitur dicendum est quod, quantum ad primam beatitudinem, quam Angelus assequi virtute suae naturae potuit, fuit creatus beatus. Quia perfectionem huismodi Angeli non acquirit per aliquem motum discursivum, sicut homo, sed statim ei adest propter suae naturae dignitatem, ut supra dictum est».

\textsuperscript{51} \textit{Ibi}, qu. 62, art. 3, co.: «hoc tamen probabilis videtur tenendum, et magis dictis sanctorum conscientiis, quod fuerint creati in gratia gratum faciente. Sic enim videmus quod omnia quae processus temporalis per opus divinae providentiae, creatura sub Deo operante, sunt producta, in prima rerum conditione producta sunt secundum quandam seminales rationes, ut Augustinus dicit, super Gen. ad Litt.; sicut arbores et animalia et alia huismodis. Manifestum est autem quod gratia gratum faciens hoc modo comparatur ad beatitudinem, sicut ratio seminialis in natura ad effectum naturalem, unde 1 Ioan. III, gratia semen Dei nominatur. Sicut igitur, secundum opinionem Augustini, ponitur quod statim in prima creatione corporalis creaturae inditae sint et seminales rationes omnium naturalium effectum, ita statim a principio sunt Angeli creati in gratia».

\textsuperscript{52} P\textsc{ETRUS DE GODOY} O.P., \textit{Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae}, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 3, p. 56: «Hanc statuio contra secundam sententiam; et suadetur primo ex D. Thom. 1. part. quast. 61 [cf. 62], artic. 1. 1. ubi asserit, Angelos creatos fuisse in beatitudine naturali, at Angeli creati fuerunt cum elevazione ad supernaturalem finem: ergo etiam in homine sec elevato admissenda est naturalis beatitudo».

\textsuperscript{53} G\textsc{ABRIELUS VAZQUEZIUS} S.J., \textit{Commentariorum, ac disputationum in primam partem Sancti Thomae}, t. 2, editio novissima, sumptibus Iacobi Cardon, Lugduni 1631, disp. 226, cap. 2, p. 452\textsuperscript{a}.

\textsuperscript{54} T\textsc{HOMAS AQUINAS}, \textit{STh}, Ia, qu. 62, art. 7, co.: «in Angelis beatis remanet cognitio et dilectio naturalis».

\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibi}, qu. 62, art. 7, ad 3: «Ad tertium dicendum quod due operationes non possunt esse simul unius potentiae, nisi una ad aliam ordinetur. Cognitio autem et dilectio naturalis ordinantur ad cognitionem et
fact that the beatified angels can still know and love God naturally is proof that natural happiness and elevation are compossible. Angels that are beatified are angels that are elevated to a supernatural end. Thus, if the natural knowledge and love of God can persist among beatified angels, then Godoy argues that these acts can persist in us if we are elevated. He therefore concludes that, in a state of elevation, natural happiness is possible, as it could only be the natural knowledge of God, the natural love of him, or possibly both acts that essentially constitute natural happiness.

2.3. Reasoning from Grace as the Perfection of Nature

Godoy’s seventh and final argument also cites Article 7 of Question 62. But in this case, Godoy draws specifically from the *sed contra*, where Aquinas reasons this way:

> Where nature persists, its operations persist. 
> But the beatitude of the angels perfects nature, not destroys it. 
> Thus, the angels’ beatitude is compossible with their natural knowledge and love of God.

Godoy assumes the major premise and, much like the way in which Aquinas uses the minor, Godoy uses Aquinas’s principle that grace never destroys nature but perfects it. If nature is never destroyed by supernatural grace, and if nature’s operations persist wherever nature does, then Godoy contends that the proper acts of nature are never destroyed by supernatural grace. The same conclusion is assumed in Aquinas’s syllogism. To reach his second conclusion, Godoy makes the assumption that supernatural grace implies elevation to a supernatural end, and in fact Aquinas teaches that an ordering to a supernatural end is intrinsic to supernatural grace. Godoy also assumes, as he has before, that the natural knowledge and love of God are nature’s proper acts. A simple rationale is that, in knowing and loving God naturally, created rational nature has God as the object of its activity, whereas Aquinas teaches that having God as the object of activity is only proper to created rational nature. From the foregoing assumptions, Godoy draws his second conclusion: the natural knowledge and love of God are compossible with elevation. Together with the idea that these two acts essentially constitute natural happiness, Godoy argues from his second conclusion to his third, which argues that natural happiness and elevation are compossible.

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56 *Petrus de Godoy O.P., Disputationes theologicae in primam secundae Divi Thomae*, tract. 2, disp. 12, sect. 3, p. 56: «Et in eadem quast. artic. 7. docet, manere in Angelis beatis cognitionem, et amorem Authoris naturae: ergo etiam manebunt in homine; cumque in uno ex his actibus, vel in utroque simul consistat, consequens sit, quod in homine elevato maneat naturalis beatitudo».

57 *Thomas Aquinas, STh*, Ia, qu. 62, art. 7, s. c.: «Sed contra, quandiu manet natura aliqua, manet operatio eius. Sed beatitudo non tollit naturam; cum sit perfectio eius. Ergo non tollit naturalem cognitionem et dilectionem».

58 *Id*, qu. 1, art. 8, ad 2: «gratia non tollit naturam, sed perficiat».

59 *Id., Super Sent.*, lib. 2, dist. 29, qu. 1, art. 3, ad 3: «Illud enim ad quod per se gratia est ordinata, scilicet gloria, supra vires hominis est, sive ante peccatum sive post peccatum».

60 *Id*, lib. 4, dist. 49, qu. 1, art. 2, qu. 2, co.: «Alio modo pertingiendo ad ipsum Deum: quae quidem conjunctio soli creaturae rationali est possibilis, quae potest ipsi Deo conjungi per cognitionem et amorem, eo quod Deus est objectum operationis ejus, non autem operationis alium alterius creaturae».

3. Conclusion

Godoy’s arguments are not without variety. Some rely on human history, like the philosophers of antiquity, or human experience, like our desire for happiness. Other arguments rely on the possibility of other worlds, the angels, and the knowledge and love of God. Creativity is not absent from Godoy’s defense, and neither is simplicity. Godoy mostly argues on account of the relation of happiness to human psychology. His thinking repeatedly appeals to our natural abilities, which consistently means our natural abilities of intellect and will. And in Godoy’s case, a natural ability is not necessarily independent of God’s grace, which can either exceed the natural order or be given within it. Some natural abilities are even impossible without a special grace within the natural order, for example, the natural ability to love God above all things.

For Godoy’s part, then, psychological considerations were chiefly the reason why the Thomist School of his day held firm against rising doubts over natural happiness. Above all, it was considerations of knowing and loving God. Godoy significantly relies on these two acts both in defending the absolute possibility of natural happiness and in defending the possibility of natural happiness with elevation. The knowledge and love of God is what principally constitutes the thematic and methodological unity of his defense. A secondary constituent is the angels. As created rational natures, they too are used by Godoy in his defense’s first and second parts. Thus, should we ask Godoy for a reason why natural happiness is always a possibility, he could give several. But if only one, it might well be that, whether we are elevated or not, we can still know and love God naturally. The angels prove it so. It is on those two grounds that, in the final analysis, Godoy has tried to preserve his realism about natural happiness – the angels and the knowledge and love of God62.